

"As abortion becomes less stigmatized, as it will in time, it will come to be regarded like other medical decisions--thoughtfully taken and exercised without a gauntlet of picketers on the pavement or hard looks at home." — Carol Sanger, About Abortion

Voice for Choice

Newsletter of the Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Spring 2018

A Dispatch from Frankfort: Attacks on Abortion Access Continue

By Amber Duke, ACLU-KY Communications Director

It's Groundhog Day in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. No, Punxsutawney Phil hasn't moved here. Groundhog Day as in the 1993 movie, where time gets caught in a loop and the same events happen over and over again. Once again the Kentucky General Assembly introduced a number of bills that would further limit access to abortion. Once again the General Assembly passed a bill that limits abortion access and Governor Matt Bevin has signed it into law. And once again the ACLU has filed suit in Federal Court to block it. Faced with our lawsuit, the state has agreed not to enforce the law. A hearing in the case has been set for June 5th.

House Bill 454, now law but blocked from enforcement, makes it a crime for doctors at our sole remaining abortion clinic to perform one of the safest, medically-proven



abortion procedures: dilation and evacuation, or "D&E." The anti-abortion politician behind the law suggested that doctors could induce labor in patients. Induction usually takes place in a hospital because it is associated with a higher risk of complications, threatening the safety of women.

Medical experts like the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists oppose this type of measure. While the law was being considered two OBGYNs came to the Capitol to testify against the ban, pointing out that a woman's health, not politics, should drive important medical decisions. Their comments were disregarded.

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KRCRC's New Board Chair: The Reverend Wayne A. Gnatuk

A Presbyterian minister advocates reproductive justice.

The Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice fights back against the anti-choice religious right by enlisting people of faith and conscience in the struggle for reproductive justice. We are pleased to announce that the Reverend Wayne A. Gnatuk will serve as the next chair of our Board of Directors.

Gnatuk was born in Western Pennsylvania to a family headed by a Presbyterian pastor and a Christian educator. He attended Waynesburg College, where he had already helped classmates who needed abortions by the time Roe v. Wade made headlines in 1973. After graduation he changed his original plan to begin a career in broadcasting and entered Pittsburgh Theological Seminary to prepare for the ministry.

Gnatuk worked in social ministry with several programs that

served poor people, including the national Presbyterian Church's Self-Development of People, a denominationally-funded organization that provided grants to disadvantaged communities. "As I watched poor families struggling to feed and clothe their children," he recalls, "my heart was broken time and again." Every unplanned birth placed such families "in a situation where society was not willing to provide a safety net for any of their children, including the newest one."



The Rev. Wayne A. Gnatuk

As a result, Gnatuk not only strengthened his commitment to reproductive justice but became aware of

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I Believe...

By the Reverend Wayne A. Gnatuk
Board Chair, Kentucky Religious Coalition for
Reproductive Choice

“God has given us both the capacity and the responsibility to order our lives and to make difficult decisions about them.”

As a retired clergyperson of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who is quite public about supporting a woman’s right to choose, I’m often asked how I square my faith with my pro-choice views. I find no conflict between the two.

I believe God has created each of us as a unique individual: different genders, different races, different orientations, different personalities, different gifts and aptitudes. Different, yes! but in God’s eyes, equal.

I believe that our God wants us to flourish, to actualize ourselves as fully as possible, and to employ all the gifts God has given us for the common good, so that we help to make our world a better place for all.

Whenever there is injustice and oppression that prevent others from achieving this fullness of personhood and purpose which God intends, we are called to stand up against that injustice or oppression, to work for a peace and justice that is fully holistic and that allows each of us to celebrate our full humanity.

When we do these things well, we achieve fullness of life, and practice a humble and earthy spirituality. “What does our God require of us, but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God?” (Micah 6:8)

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*Rev. Wayne A. Gnatuk
gives the benediction at
“On the Table,” April 7, 2018*

I believe that God has gifted us with sexuality for love, for intimacy, for physical pleasure, and (if we so choose) for procreation.

I further believe that God has given us both the capacity and the responsibility to order our lives and to make difficult decisions about them.

This is especially the case for a pregnant woman deciding whether to end an unwanted pregnancy. She has her own reasons, one way or the other, and it should be her decision, and hers alone.

Supporting her, in both the one way and in the other, is a matter of living into the justice which our God wishes for our society. Therefore:

Because excellent health care should be a right and not a privilege, our society, through its government, should stand by a woman regardless of whether her decision is to abort or to give birth. Poverty should never dictate a woman’s decision in this matter.

Rev. Gnatuk *Cont. from page 1.*

intersectionality—the ways in which race and gender disadvantages work together to shape individual destinies.

Now retired, Gnatuk lives with his wife Carole in Lexington, Kentucky. He is much in demand as a volunteer, but has decided that “pro-choice advocacy and reproductive justice” is the cause to which he feels most strongly committed. “If you and I have not yet met,” he asks KRCRC supporters, “please make yourself known. Together, we have a lot of work to do.”

Wayne A. Gnatuk, wagnatuk@outlook.com

KRCRC MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice is to mobilize the moral power of people of faith and conscience to safeguard and advance reproductive justice in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

We do this through advocacy, education, and support of organizations with related goals.

A Fund Kicks Off ABC Campaign!

By Kate Cunningham, Board Chair, A Fund

A Fund celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary by expanding its agenda to include contraception.

As part of an anniversary celebration that commemorates 25 years of service to Kentucky women seeking abortion, A Fund announces that it is expanding its scope this year to include funding for Plan B and for LARCs (Long Acting Reversible Contraceptives, including intrauterine devices and implants), with the ABC Campaign.

“A Fund is embarking on a special fundraising campaign to provide monies for this ABC Campaign,” announces Kate Cunningham, the A Fund Board President. “We believe our faithful donors will support this opportunity to help Kentucky women avoid unplanned, unwanted pregnancies and thus reduce the need for abortion care.



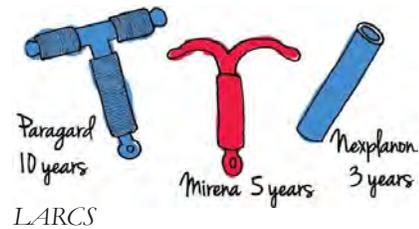
The “A” in our ABC Campaign, of course, is Abortion Access, and that remains our primary purpose. We are expanding our services to provide Plan “B”, emergency contraception, and “C” Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives more readily to metro area women. Depending on our fundraising, we may initiate similar programs in Lexington and on other campuses.”

Initially, funding will be available to patients at campus health services and at the Ryan Family Planning Center. The Ryan Center serves women from the

metro Louisville area who seek care at their community Family Health Centers or University Hospital. Although the Ryan Center provides LARCs at low cost, sometimes even the nominal \$125 requested fee (to cover pregnancy testing and insertion) is a bar to access.

A Fund is working out the funding mechanics with providers but foresees a block grant to the Ryan Center—a grant that will assist women who have difficulty paying this fee. Last year, the Ryan Family Planning Center provided 143 LARCs. It is possible that another dozen or so women did not return to the Center for LARC insertion due to lack of money to pay the fee. A Fund is determined that access to contraceptive services must not depend on income.

If you would like to donate to this special ABC Campaign, please send a check to A Fund, Inc., PO Box 221286, Louisville KY 40252-1286, and mark “ABC” on the memo line. Or donate online at <https://kyafund.org/>. Select the PayPal option and mark “ABC” in the space for special instructions.



A Fund, Inc. Celebrates Its 25th Anniversary

By Ann T. Allen, Editor, *Voice for Choice*, A Fund Board Member

Cathy, who wishes to be identified only by her first name, remembers a telephone call she received sometime in the 1990s. “It was a mother who told me that her eleven-year-old daughter had been raped by a family member,” she remembers. “I didn’t know how much money we had in the bank but I promised her we would cover every penny. That’s what we were there for.” At the time, Cathy was co-chair of A Fund, a non-profit organization founded in Louisville in 1993 that helps women who need abortions to pay the cost.

A Fund, Inc. originated at a meeting called in 1993 by a group of Louisville reproductive-rights activists. Those present included Cathy herself, Bob Horner, Betty Brown,

Ginny Copenhaver, Angeline Golden, Lyn Marshall, and Donna Morton (then the Executive Director of Planned Parenthood of Louisville). Most of these participants were members of the Board of Directors of Planned Parenthood, where the counselors who referred women for abortions reported that many could not afford to pay for them and needed financial assistance. As a solution to this problem, Planned Parenthood advocated the expansion of Medicaid to cover pregnancy terminations.



Bob Horner, a political conservative, disagreed. He argued that many taxpayers opposed abortion and therefore private rather than public funds should support it. Although some others at the meeting did not share this view, all saw that, under the present circumstances, the private sector must provide the aid that the public sector denied. Horner's daughter worked with an abortion fund in another state and provided a model for the new organization, which was called A Fund, Inc. Cathy and Angeline Golden served the first Board of Directors as co-chairs, Bob Horner as treasurer, and Betty Brown as secretary.

“Social injustice was one of the things we couldn’t stand.”

Maria Fernandez, a lawyer with a background in tax accounting, assisted with the bureaucratic complexities of the incorporation process. Fernandez grew up in Miami in a family of Cuban immigrants. Her father belonged to the Teamsters’ Union and she walked with him on picket lines. “Social injustice,” she declared, “was one of the things we couldn’t stand.” Fernandez accompanied a friend to an abortion clinic in Miami, where at that time abortion was accessible and “no big deal.” When she moved to Kentucky, she was surprised at the threatening atmosphere that surrounded this legal and common medical procedure.

Fernandez served on the A Fund Board of Directors and also worked as a volunteer escort at the Women’s Health Services clinic on Broadway. Among the many patients she met, she particularly remembers a couple who had traveled for many hours to reach the clinic. The husband, a Kentucky state trooper, told Fernandez that his wife had an ectopic pregnancy that could have been fatal, but a local doctor had denied her an abortion. When an anti-abortion demonstrator accused him of selfishly refusing to support another child, this big man wept as he explained that they had five children and would have been willing to have a sixth, but did not want to leave the five they already had without a mother.

On behalf of A Fund, Fernandez prepared and filed an elaborate, thirty-two-page application for non-profit, or 501 (C) (3) status, with the IRS. When required to declare what “public benefit” the group supplied, she stated that A Fund supported “gynecological services.” After six weeks of suspense, she received a positive response. A Fund began its operations in February of 1993.

During its first years, A Fund received its income from a small group of donors who committed themselves to contribute annually over a period of five years. At first, the Board distributed money on a case-by-case basis.

“A” stands for Angie?

Providers referred needy patients to the late Angie Baker, an A Fund Board member and retired school teacher. Baker screened each case thoroughly to determine how much money each

woman needed—funds had to be used responsibly, and each patient was expected to pay as much as she could afford. When Baker decided on the amount A Fund would grant to each individual, she notified the clinic that treated the patient, and the clinic billed A Fund.

Baker “did yeoman work for many years, from 1993 until about August, 2008,” said Kate Cunningham, who joined the board in 1998. “The phone used was her personal phone and was not widely advertised except to our cooperating clinics...Many people thought the ‘A’ in ‘A Fund’ stood for ‘Angie,’ as it might well have. Our treasurer had to keep track of pledges made to patients and pledges billed for those patients. For every woman helped, there were many phone calls between the woman in need and Angie, between Angie and the clinic, and between Angie and our treasurer and founder, Bob Horner.”

Kate Cunningham and her fellow Board member Betty Brown took over the screening calls in 2008. Their telephones rang at every hour of the day and night. “The calls soon became overwhelming, thanks to the Internet that allowed women nationwide to Google ‘abortion funding’ and get my home phone number,” Cunningham remembers.



Kate Cunningham speaks to the Louisville Metro Council

It was at that point that the Board decided to change the funding process by allotting block grants to clinics, which assumed the burden of screening the applicants. A Fund now sends grants to the EMW Clinic, Kentucky’s last open abortion clinic, and to clinics in surrounding states that serve Kentucky patients.

Under the leadership of Kate Cunningham, who took over as Chair of the Board of Directors in 2013, A Fund, Inc. celebrates twenty-five years of service in 2018. The donor base has steadily expanded; in 2017, A Fund received 368 gifts from 267 donors. As an all-volunteer organization without paid staff, A Fund devotes almost all its income to its major purpose: assistance with the cost of pregnancy terminations. In 2017 it expended a total of \$49,700 to help 469 patients.

A Fund faces ever greater challenges as reproductive rights come under attack in Kentucky and throughout the nation. We celebrate the dedication of our Board members and volunteers, the generosity of our donors, and the courage of patients and clinic staff in the face of constant threats and harassment. We rely on all these supporters and allies as we prepare for whatever the future may bring.

A New Chapter in the Life of KRCRC

By Melissa Bane Sevier, Board Member, Lexington Chapter, KRCRC

A new chapter of KRCRC starts its work in Lexington.

The newest phase of the Kentucky Religious Coalition for Religious Choice is the formation of a chapter in the Lexington area. The new group has had only three meetings, but is already active.

This location was the right choice for the first “satellite” of the KRCRC. As the second largest city in Kentucky, with a university at its center, Lexington and its surrounding counties are vibrant and have an inherent need for a pro-choice message.

After only a few months of existence, the group participated in the anniversary rally of the Women’s March in Lexington, where the KRCRC message was well-received.

Additionally, the facilitator of the group (and new board chair of the state KRCRC board), Wayne A. Gnatuk, recently spoke at the Symposium for Reproductive Justice, an event sponsored by the Department of Gender and Women’s Studies at the University of Kentucky. Wayne is a minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA) who recently retired from a career in the denominational offices working with the self-development of communities both in the United States and abroad. His important perspective gives him a unique voice,

and he used that voice to speak on pro-choice issues from the religious viewpoint of KRCRC.

Members of the new chapter have identified three goals for 2018:

- to increase membership and influence;
- to provide a table and information at appropriate events in the Lexington area;
- to create a phone and/or email tree to support pro-choice legislation.



Wayne A. Gnatuk and Sarah Olive at the Women’s March Anniversary Celebration in Lexington, Kentucky, January 20, 2018

If you or someone you know is interested in participating in this group, the next meeting is Thursday, April 19. Details are available from Wayne A. Gnatuk at wagnatuk@outlook.com. Not keen on taking on a new meeting every month? No worries. The chapter will meet on a regular basis for a while, then only as needed.

Reported by Melissa Bane Sevier, owner of MBS Writing Services and Photography, melissa@mbswriting.com.

KRCRC Brings in the New Year with Activism

by Kate Foster, KRCRC Intern

KRCRC joins allied organizations to lobby in Frankfort, and will stay engaged after the session ends.

Women from all over the Commonwealth began the new year with a new commitment to reproductive justice. We rallied at our capitol, we celebrated the 45th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, and we lobbied our representatives during the legislative session.

The first day of the legislative session, Board Chair Wayne A. Gnatuk joined with Concerned Clergy for Choice to hold a press conference in Frankfort. Numerous clergy members from across the state gathered and shared the stories of their religious calling to support pro-choice legislation.

On January 4th, KRCRC sponsored a bus to take supporters to the capitol for the annual Reproductive Rights Rally, organized by Planned Parenthood of Indiana and Kentucky (PPINK). Participants lobbied their legislators in the morning, then gathered for a large rally in the State Capitol

Rotunda that featured speakers from the legislative body, reproductive justice advocates, and students.



Heading for Frankfort on the KRCRC bus.

KRCRC’s annual Roe v. Wade celebration was held at Thomas Jefferson Unitarian Church on January 21st and showcased the film *Obvious Child*, a romantic comedy about abortion. A discussion followed the film showing.

On February 1, KRCRC once again partnered with PPINK to host the first Throwback Thursday lobby day. KRCRC scheduled meetings with legislators and briefed participants on the numerous pieces of anti-choice legislation making the rounds through committee. We met and conversed

ACLU-KY's Advocacy Director testified in opposition to the bill, pointing out that similar bans in Kansas, Oklahoma, Alabama, Louisiana, Texas, and Arkansas have all been blocked when challenged in court. Her comments were disregarded. (Interestingly, one thing that distinguishes this new Kentucky law from all the others is that the Kentucky law was passed with an emergency clause, meaning it became law as soon as the Governor signed it, limiting access until the Joint Consent Order blocking enforcement was signed between the ACLU and the state.)

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Indiana and Kentucky organized women to come and share their abortion stories with legislators, and faith leaders came to ask legislators to respect people's autonomy to make their own decisions. Their comments were disregarded.

This restriction is part of a national strategy to push abortion out of reach. Since January 2011, state politicians have enacted more than 401 new restrictions on abortion that force patients to delay care, shut down clinics, and make abortion care unaffordable. Here in Kentucky, the ACLU sued last year and successfully blocked an attempt to force doctors to narrate an ultrasound before an abortion procedure. The state is now appealing that decision. We also sued to keep the doors at our last clinic open when the state attempted to enforce unconstitutional requirements that the clinic must have a hospital transfer agreement and ambulance transport agreements to keep their license. We're waiting for a judge's ruling in that case.



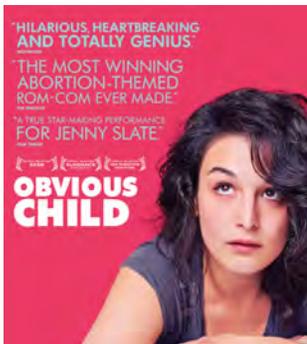
(from left) *Brigitte Amiri, Andy Beck, Alexa Kolbi-Molinas, Attorneys, National ACLU Reproductive Freedom Project*

We are glad that the other anti-abortion measures that were introduced did not become law. They included:

- House Bill 103, which would have forced doctors to provide a written description of an ultrasound before an abortion procedure.
- House Bill 455, which would have banned abortion in cases where there was a fetal diagnosis of Down Syndrome.
- Senate Bill 164, which would ban abortion in the Commonwealth altogether.

Just as Kentucky politicians seem determined to introduce and pass legislation to limit abortion access each year, we are just as determined to fight them in court so that Kentuckians can get the care they need. We wouldn't be able to do what we do without the support of the national ACLU Reproductive Freedom Project (particularly attorneys Brigitte Amiri, Alexa Kolbi-Molinas, and Andy Beck). We're also grateful for the work of our members, supporters, and ally organizations like Planned Parenthood Advocates of Indiana and Kentucky, Kentucky Health Justice Network, KRCRC, and so many others. Thank you!

Activism *Cont. from page 5.*



A risqué rom-com about abortion

with State Senator Julie Raque Adams, and stopped in to thank Sen. Morgan McGarvey and Rep. Mary Lou Marzian for their commitment to support reproductive justice.

Despite all we have done over the years, Kentucky still has only one abortion clinic in operation. While we wait for the decision on last year's legal challenge to the state's closing

of this one remaining clinic, state government passes even more harmful anti-choice legislation. Supporters need to stay engaged and watchful throughout the year.

If you've ever felt called to support the cause of social and reproductive justice, now is the time to answer that call. Call your metro city council member and talk about the need for a safety zone around the EMW clinic. Call your state representatives and let them know that the last thing Kentucky needs is more anti-woman, anti-science, and anti-choice legislation, and most importantly, do not forget to VOTE.



Lobby Day (from left) Kate Foster, Mary Lou Marzian, Ann T. Allen

Women of Courage: The Reverend Gil Schroerlucke Reproductive Justice Awards, 2018.

Anne Ahola

Introduction by Carol Savkovich

In 1957, John F. Kennedy published a book entitled “Profiles in Courage.” Anne Ahola was born that same year – and could have been profiled in that book.

Anne’s first two decades began in Finland and Sweden. When her family moved to the U.S. in the late ‘70s, Anne learned to be a hairdresser, then a dental tech, then studied nursing.



Anne Ahola

By the late ‘80s and with a young son, Anne settled in Louisville. During the next few years she held several jobs, including one in a florist’s shop, and earned three degrees: a BA in psychology, an MA with a concentration in children and families, and a MSSW. In 2000, Anne responded to an advertisement for a counselor’s position at a medical facility. The facility was EMW clinic, and her interviewer was Dona Wells. Anne landed the job; and six years later, when Dona left Louisville’s EMW to work at the Lexington clinic, Anne became EMW Clinic Director – a job she has now held for 17 years.

Being director of a medical facility would be challenge enough; but, in the U.S., an abortion clinic is a “hostile work environment” that most people would run from. In addition to her normal duties, Anne faces the Kentucky state government’s attempts to shut her clinic down and the daily and constant barrage of hate coming from protesters outside.

She handles all those pressures with grace and courage, setting the tone for all the clinic staff. Counseling-- “often a short few minutes when I can approve, empower, be kind and compassionate”-- is the part of her job that she likes best. She also appreciates the clinic’s physicians and staff, and especially thanks the volunteers who escort patients through the noisy mob of demonstrators into the clinic. “I couldn’t be more grateful, to everyone who has helped women and families have a choice in their family planning,” she concludes.

Anne, it is truly my honor to thank you for your many years of courageous work at EMW, and to present you with KRCRC’s Rev. Gil Schroerlucke Reproductive Justice Award.

Dona Wells

Introduction by Ann T. Allen

For many years, Dona Wells has been a locally and nationally known provider of reproductive services and defender of abortion rights. Dona, a native of Fort Thomas, Kentucky, graduated from Bellarmine College with a degree in education. She began as a teacher, but in 1973 changed careers when she took a job as an administrator at the Relsco Clinic—a Louisville clinic that provided abortions as well as other gynecological services. By 1981 she was working as a counsellor and administrator at the EMW Women’s Surgical Center, a clinic owned and operated by three physicians—Dr. Walter Wolfe, Dr. Sam Eubanks, and Dr. Ernest Marshall (the name came from the initials of the three owners). The clinic offered abortions along with other medical services.



Dona Wells

In the 1980s, abortion providers faced increasing harassment from anti-choice demonstrators. In this threatening climate, the others closed their doors, until the EMW clinics in Louisville and Lexington became the only places in Kentucky where women could legally terminate a pregnancy. Dona, her co-workers, and her patients faced insults, intimidation, property damage, and threats of violence.

Even in the midst of these obstacles, Dona did not retreat—on the contrary, she became more outspoken and active. Her visibility expanded from the local to the state and national level. She served as the acting Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Kentucky, where she helped to found the Reproductive Rights Project, as the President of the National Abortion Federation, and as the Legislative Chair of the national Business and Professional Women (BPW). The statement that she wrote for BPW influenced the Platform Committee of the Democratic Party, which gave reproductive rights a central place in the campaign that put Bill Clinton in the White House.

Dona Wells is a woman of courage—a woman who even in the face of hostility, hardship and danger works for the cause she believes in. She has set an example for all of us, and we must now continue her work.



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KRCRC

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“Choice” Wine and Food: KRCRC’s Wine-Tasting Event

On the evening of April 7, guests at “On the Table,” KRCRC’s fundraising event, moved among six tables, each offering a specific type of wine with appropriate snacks. Volunteer servers poured out samples and urged guests to appreciate the blended flavors of wine and food. Sandi Solis, a supporter of KRCRC and an expert on wine and wine-tasting, donated her time to organize the event. She worked to persuade various distributors to donate the wine. Signarama Downtown donated the signs that identified the offerings at each table

As the guests were munching and sipping, outgoing Board chair Carol Savkovich announced the annual awards, named for a founder of the group, the Reverend Gil Schroerlucke. The award ceremony was followed by a raffle that brought the winners some memorable objects: paintings, a Venetian mask, and a cigar and bourbon basket donated by Cox’s Smokers’ Outlet and Spirits Shoppe.



Sandi Solis serves dessert.

Please see page 7 for the award ceremony details.