

Voice for Choice

Newsletter of the Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Spring 2019

Mixed Results on Reproductive Choice in the 2019 General Assembly

By Amber Duke, ACLU-KY Communications Director



Amber Duke

The 2019 General Assembly produced both beneficial and harmful legislation. The same legislators who enacted some of the most extreme abortion bans in the country also passed the Pregnant Workers Act, which requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers: for example, by allowing employees to have a stool or to carry a water bottle during a shift.

Emboldened by the shifts on the U.S. Supreme Court, Kentucky legislators considered a record six pieces of anti-abortion legislation and enacted four anti-abortion bills into law. The ACLU sued immediately to block the implementation of two of those bills, the six-week and the "reason" abortion bans. Both of those laws had emergency clauses, which meant they went into effect immediately after the Governor signed them. A judge granted our request for a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) blocking enforcement of the bills. He extended that TRO indefinitely through the final ruling of the court in our lawsuit.

Here's a more detailed look at this year's legislation:

Senate Bill 9/House Bill 100: A so-called "heartbeat bill," which prohibits abortion at around six weeks of pregnancy, when fetal cardiac activity can be detected. This extreme measure bans abortion before many people even know they are pregnant. Senate Bill 9 was passed and signed into law on March 14. The ACLU filed suit immediately and the law was blocked by the court less than twenty-four hours after it was signed. The provisions of House Bill 100 were similar to those of Senate Bill 9, but the house bill was never moved past the introduction phase of the legislative process.

With these actions, the General Assembly made Kentucky the second state to enact a near-total ban on abortion in 2019. The Kentucky ACLU lawsuit was the first challenge to such a ban this year. Mississippi has also passed a similar ban, but it is not scheduled to take effect until July 1, 2019. Legislatures in several other states, including Ohio, Missouri,

and Tennessee, are contemplating similar bans.

House Bill 5: A so-called "reason ban." It prohibits abortion in Kentucky if the patient's reason for the abortion, "in whole or in part," involves the fetus' race, gender, color, national origin or disability status. Proponents of the bill called it an "anti-discrimination and human rights measure." House Bill 5 was passed on March 13 and signed into law March 19. It was blocked from enforcement about 24 hours after it was signed.

House Bill 148: A so-called "trigger law." It provides that if SCOTUS at some time overturns Roe v Wade, thus permitting states to prohibit abortion, Kentucky will ban abortion outright. House Bill 148 has been signed into law by the Governor. It is future-focused and does not restrict abortion access in Kentucky right now.



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Wayne's Words

by the Rev. Wayne A. Gnatuk,
Chair of Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

We've been talking a lot lately in the KRCRC family about "broadening our base." With the Supreme Court teetering on the brink of reversing Roe v. Wade, and with this year's actions of a misogynistic Kentucky legislature, it's very clear that those of us who care deeply about choice and reproductive justice need to be doubling down on our efforts to speak out for what we value! And the more of us there are to do that, the louder our voice will be! So: broaden our base we must!

While it's true that KRCRC has been a force in Kentucky for decades, and that KRCRC has supporters (thank you!) throughout the Commonwealth, it's also true that we've been primarily a Louisville-centric organization. It's time for that to change.

KRCRC is now engaged in starting regional groups to support the work of reproductive justice advocacy. Our work in Louisville continues, of course. We now also have a chapter in Lexington (which, not coincidentally, is where I live). It started a little more than a year ago, and is now thriving. We'd like to support new groups elsewhere in the state, too, so if you live outside the Louisville or Lexington metropolitan areas and would like to start a local KRCRC chapter, please be in touch!

I'm also thrilled to announce that Kentucky RCRC has

now engaged in a multi-year collaboration with National RCRC, or "DCRCRC," we sometimes say, since they're headquartered in our country's capital city. Goal number one for the KRCRC-DCRCRC collaboration is base-broadening. We plan to expand our reach not only in breadth, by recruiting a larger and more diverse pro-choice constituency, but also in depth, by creating deepened relationships with faith communities.

First step in the collaborative effort will be a day for representatives of KRCRC and DCRCRC to sit down with colleagues including persons from ACLU, A Fund, EMW Clinic, Kentucky Health Justice Network, Louisville Clinic Escorts, Planned Parenthood, and other organizations. Together, we'll explore collaborative possibilities for base-building here in Kentucky.

As the collaborative work unfolds, we'll keep you up to date in these pages. In the meantime, please let us know if you'd like to become more involved than you already are. This movement needs all the help we can get!

You can reach Wayne A. Gnatuk at wagnatuk@outlook.com



Rev. Wayne A. Gnatuk

What's Up KRCRC?

Recent events:

January 26 and 27:

Roe v. Wade Anniversary Celebration

Saturday January 26:

"Reversing Roe." Documentary Screening with Potluck Dinner

Sunday January 27:

Book Release and Signing by Robin Marty, author of *Handbook for a Post-Roe America*. Co sponsored with Kentucky Health Justice Network, ACLU-KY, PPINK, A Fund, Inc. and Louisville Safety Zone.

February 7:

Lobby Day in Frankfort. Meetings with Legislators and Rally in the Rotunda

February 21:

KRCRC Lobby Day in Frankfort

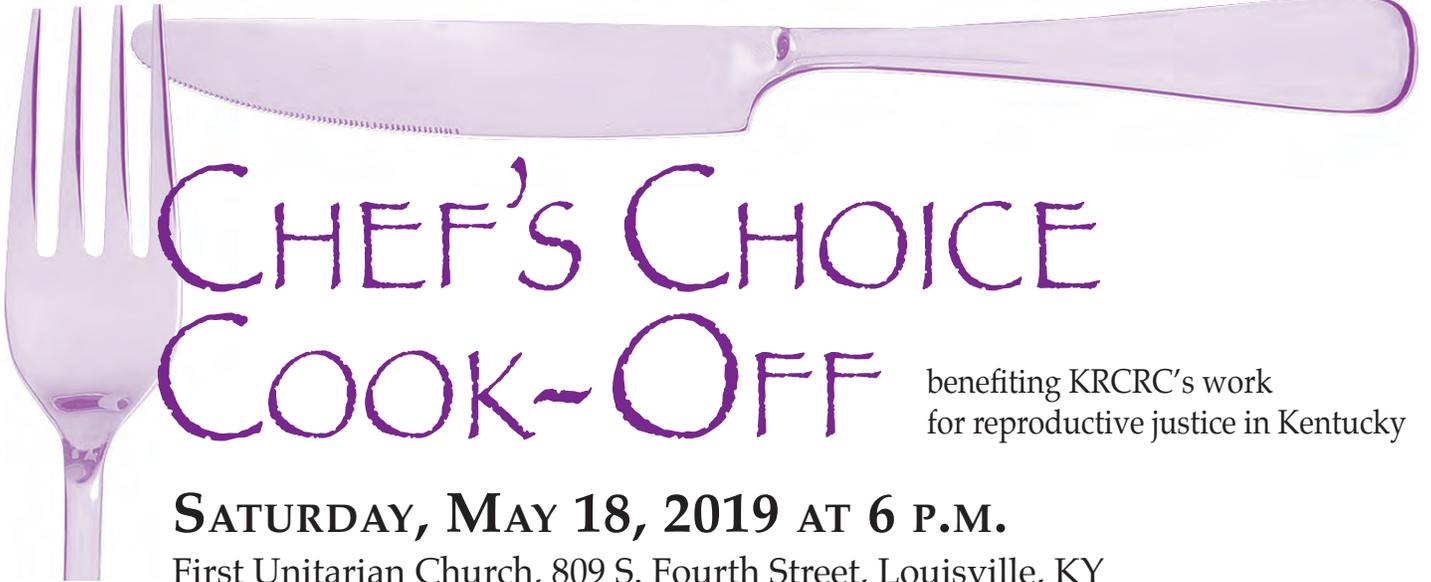


Above: KRCRC Lobby Day (from left): Laurent. V., Carol S., Leigh B., Jill H., Linda S. Josh B., Rep. Mary Lou Marzian, Heather L., Ann A.



Left: Hannah Drake speaks to demonstrators in Frankfort

The **KENTUCKY RELIGIOUS COALITION FOR REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE**
announces our first-ever...



CHEF'S CHOICE COOK-OFF

benefiting KRCRC's work
for reproductive justice in Kentucky

SATURDAY, MAY 18, 2019 AT 6 P.M.

First Unitarian Church, 809 S. Fourth Street, Louisville, KY

A FUN EVENING FEATURING...

Competition in 4 categories:



Salad with beans (any kind! Green beans, kidney beans, lentils, jelly beans... chef's choice! Some kind of bean must be an ingredient)



Stew or Soup (any kind! Awards for Best Vegetarian and Best Carnivore)



Bread (any kind! Cornbread, olive loaf, crescent rolls, monkeybread... chef's choice!)



Dessert in a 9x13 pan (any kind! Dump cake, sheet cake, fruit crumble, brownie... chef's choice!)

NOTES – 1. All entries must serve at least 25. 2. Entries will be judged on TASTE and CREATIVITY. 3. Cooks must pre-register at info@krcc.org; include name, contact info, and Cook-Off Category (only one category per contestant, please). 4. **First 4 chefs per category get free admission!**

Local Celebrity Judges

Delicious dinner for all attendees, including Sangria Punch
(non-alcoholic punch will also be served)

Multi-Item Raffle!

Presentation of the
**Rev. Gil Schroerlucke
Reproductive
Justice Award to
MEG SASSE STERN**



TICKETS are \$40/adult, \$25/student in advance; \$45/adult, \$30/student at the door.

For credit card purchase: go to our Network for Good site (tinyurl.com/y9fehujf), contribute the total amount of your ticket purchase, and under "Designation" please note "Chef's Choice tickets." (Do NOT select "anonymous" donation, we need your name!) Or, mail your check (made out to KRCRC, and notated "Chef's Choice tickets") to KRCRC, P.O. Box 4065, Louisville, KY 40204. ** Advance tickets will be held at the door. **



**Kentucky Religious Coalition
for Reproductive Choice**

P.O. Box 4065 • Louisville, Kentucky 40204
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Making a Difference: Meg Sasse Stern

Winner, Rev. Gil Schroerlucke Reproductive Justice Award, 2019

By Ann T. Allen, Editor

Meg Sasse Stern, this year's recipient of the KRCRC Rev. Gil Schroerlucke Reproductive Justice Award, has escorted patients to the EMW Clinic on Market Street for the past twenty years. What keeps her on the sidewalk, she says, is her sense that she is making a difference. Some patients cling to escorts as they walk through the threatening crowd of protesters. "The escorts saved my life today," wrote one patient gratefully.

Stern, a Louisville native, first worked in food service and child care, often combining both. She has served as a nanny in families, as a cook in several restaurants, and as a caterer. In 1999, she began escorting patients to the EMW clinic, and she fondly remembers her fellow escort, Gil Schroerlucke. As a member of a small group, she extended and reorganized the struggling escort program. The number of escorts increased, from about five on a typical Saturday morning in the 1990s to around twenty today. Smaller groups work on weekdays. The Louisville Clinic Escorts now have a training program and a blog entitled

"Every Saturday Morning." <https://everysaturdaymorning.net/>



In 2009, Stern attended the first meetings of a new organization, Kentucky Health Justice Network (KHJN). A statewide survey that

this group conducted in 2010 found that Kentuckians who needed abortions faced obstacles of many kinds. Not only did they lack the funds to pay for the procedure, but some were also in need of transportation

to clinics, lodging, assistance with language, and care for their children. When Stern was a board member from 2013 to 2016 the group launched their Abortion Support Hotline with 100% volunteer power. Meg joined KHJN's staff as Support Fund Director in 2016. She is responsible for providing not only funding but also practical assistance to hotline callers from all over Kentucky, and oversees a large and dedicated group of about seventy volunteers. KHJN also provides a healthcare access support program for transgender people.

Stern and her colleagues have already created a contingency plan for the worst-case scenario: the closing of Kentucky's only abortion clinic. Transporting patients to clinics in other states and providing them with lodging will require more money and volunteer effort. Whatever happens, KHJN will work with its community allies, including KRCRC, to preserve Kentuckians' right to reproductive autonomy.



Meg Sasse Stern

"So That Others Will Know That They Aren't Alone:"

Annie Prestrud Talks about her Abortion

By Ann T. Allen, Editor

Amid the raucous, brutal debate on abortion, the voices that we do not hear are those of the people who are most closely affected. These are the people who choose to terminate their pregnancies. They seldom speak publicly. Not only reluctance to discuss very private matters, but also fear of intimidation, harassment, public shaming, even violence, keeps them in silence.

Annie Prestrud, a Louisville health services researcher, broke that silence when she testified before two committees of the Kentucky General Assembly on February 19 and February 27, 2019. Prestrud was twenty-three years old when she accidentally became pregnant. At the time, she had no stable job and certainly was not in a position to support a child. She had an abortion at Planned Parenthood but told very few people. "What I didn't know then was that almost half of all pregnancies are unintended. And that one in four women

has had an abortion. So now I'm making another choice—the choice to share my abortion, so that others will know they aren't alone."

Prestrud is now an advocate for reproductive justice who serves on the KRCRC Board of

Directors as co-chair of the Legislative Advocacy Committee and as a volunteer with Kentucky Health Justice Network. Amid so many divergent views of women's health care, she insists, only the individual conscience can provide guidance. Every person must have the liberty to decide about personal issues such as parenthood.



Annie Prestrud

“Equal Rights and Abortion Rights: You Can’t Have One Without the Other”

Doris F. Schneider, 1926-2018

In Memoriam

By Ann T. Allen, Editor

Doris Schneider, a founder of the Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, was born on a farm in Tennessee and became the female head of her family at the age of 15, when her mother died. Having graduated from the University of Tennessee, she moved with her family to Louisville in 1958. There she joined Crescent Hill United Methodist Church, which in 1973 became a charter member of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC). The origins of the Religious Coalition dated back to 1967 and to an interdenominational network called the Clergy Consultation Service, which helped women find safe abortion services. In 1973, the Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade*, which defined pregnancy termination as a constitutional right, raised hopes that the struggle was over. It had barely begun.

Schneider became the first coordinator of the RCRC’s Kentucky chapter (KRCRC) in 1974. A news release announced that “this coalition is not for abortion, or against abortion, but believes that the legal option must be left open so that individuals, with dignity and responsibility, may make their own private decisions within the framework of their own conscience and their own religion.” Schneider spoke at meetings, on the radio, and on TV, often on panels that included anti-choice activists. She tirelessly lobbied for reproductive justice in the city government and the General Assembly. She was confident that most people agreed with her, but “we had to get them to come out.”

In 1977, Schneider resigned her position of KRCRC coordinator and entered a graduate program in Community

Development at the University of Louisville. From 1979 until 1991, she served as Executive Director of Planned Parenthood of Louisville. She received the Dr. David Gunn Award for her contribution to women’s reproductive rights in 1995.



*Doris Schneider
Louisville Courier-Journal, Jan 7, 2019.*

Schneider insisted that reproductive autonomy was a fundamental part of the right to free exercise of religion, as guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. “I am continually appalled by the pious arrogance of those who know not only what they believe but what I should believe also,” she declared. “We can be grateful for the wisdom of our forefathers, who recognized the danger of this human trait and wrote into our Constitution a wall of separation between church and state. That wall must remain.” Schneider’s public personality combined gentleness with fierce conviction. A co-worker and fellow Methodist, Dolores Class, remembers her friend Doris, “her brown eyes smiling...returning with an answer, her words soft accents formed in Tennessee.”

Doris Schneider died December 25, 2018.

Sources: Fran Eilers, *Standing Up for Reproductive Rights: The Struggle for Legal Abortion in Kentucky*. Louisville: Chicago Spectrum Press, 2007.
Louisville Courier-Journal January 7, 2019.

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1. Go to www.kroger.com/communityrewards.
Create an account or sign in.
2. Follow the instructions to select an organization.
KRCRC is #SU106.

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Reproductive Health and Justice at Central Presbyterian Church



by the Rev. Wayne A. Gnatuk

On four Sundays in March, one of the adult education groups at Louisville’s Central Presbyterian Church participated in a pilot project series of programs on reproductive health and justice. Fifteen to twenty people participated in the Faith Forum class each week.

The first week of the series was an overview of the reproductive justice work being done in Kentucky. The panel for that week included Dr. Ann Allen of A Fund, Inc.; Tamarra Wieder of Planned Parenthood (PPINK); and the Reverend Wayne A. Gnatuk, Chair of KRCRC. A representative of Kentucky Health Justice Network was unable to participate because of an illness.

In Week Two, the speakers were Dr. Ernest and Ona Marshall of EMW Clinic, who shared an overview of the clinic, their work, and their personal faith journey as Christians.

The speakers in Week Three were two of the EMW Clinic Escorts, Becky Holloman and Paula Schneider, who detailed the work they do at the clinic.

During the last week of the series, we heard a presentation entitled “Sex Education in the Church.” Presenters were Dr. Sue Ellen Braunlin and Carolyn Meagher, the co-chairs of Indiana Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.



(from left) Ann T. Allen, Tamarra Wieder, and the Rev. Wayne A. Gnatuk speak at Central Presbyterian Church

The series was well received by participants, and now serves as a model that can be emulated by other faith communities interested in learning more about reproductive health and justice.

KRCRC Chair Rev. Wayne A. Gnatuk attends Central Presbyterian Church, and was responsible for organizing the four presentations. He’s willing to assist other faith communities who would like to present such a series. Gnatuk can be reached through KRCRC.

News From KRCRC’s Lexington Chapter

The Lexington Chapter of KRCRC, or Lex KRCRC, as they’re calling themselves, is proud to report on their recent accomplishments:

Karen Conley, a member of the group’s Steering Committee, has started a Lex KRCRC Facebook page, which has had thousands of “likes” and hundreds of “shares.” Please “like” their page – you’ll find it by entering “Lexington Chapter – Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice” in the Facebook search field.

Lex KRCRC is also working on a brochure that will introduce the organization to visitors to tabling events in the Lexington area. In addition, the group is preparing another brochure that summarizes a wealth of information about reproductive choice. They hope to share this publication with RCRC and with other KRCRC chapters.

Lex Chapter usually meets the fourth Thursday of each month at 6:00 PM. The group will be glad to meet and greet new members from the Lexington area. Contact the Lex Chapter through their Facebook page.

Junk Science in the Kentucky General Assembly: SB 50 and Abortion-Pill Reversal

By Ann T. Allen, Editor

On March 26, 2019, Kentucky legislators enacted another law that regulates the private relationship of patient and physician. Senate Bill 50 requires the providers of medical abortions to inform their patients that they can reverse the procedure if they change their minds and want to continue their pregnancies.

Patients who terminate a pregnancy by means of a medical abortion—an increasingly popular method—take a combination of drugs: first mifepristone, and then misoprostol. Mifepristone stops the pregnancy from developing by blocking the hormone progesterone; misoprostol, which the patient takes after a twenty-five to forty-eight hour wait, makes the uterus contract to expel the fetus and complete the termination.

Abortion “reversal” is advertised as a way for a woman who regrets her decision after taking the first pill, mifepristone, to preserve her pregnancy by taking a large dose of progesterone. The researcher who promotes this therapy,

Cont. on page 7.

2019 General Assembly *Cont. from page 1.*

Senate Bill 50: A bill that updates requirements for medication abortion (a procedure using pills) and requires providers to share unproven information about a medical procedure known as “abortion reversal” with patients. The Governor signed the bill into law. ACLU attorneys will monitor the implementation of this law when it takes effect in July.

Senate Bill 18: The Pregnant Workers Act, which requires employers to provide modest on-the-job accommodations for pregnant workers, so that no Kentuckian is forced to choose between a healthy pregnancy and a paycheck. After many years of advocacy by a wide variety of organizations, this bill finally awaits the Governor’s signature.

Senate Bill 227: A bill that purports to provide “protection for infants born alive during an abortion” passed the Senate but failed to receive final passage in the House. The anti-abortion measure, which had provisions that could threaten the privacy of people seeking abortion services, was a reaction to sensational and misleading news about the New York and Virginia reproductive freedom laws.

Over the last few years, the Kentucky legislature has passed or attempted to enforce other laws restricting access to abortion care, including laws that would have shut down the



Heather Gatnarek and Amy Cabbage, ACLU Attorneys

last remaining clinic in the Commonwealth. EMW and the ACLU have gone to court to challenge three such laws; all three have been blocked. We will keep the KRCRC network updated as our newest case moves through the courts.

Thank you to each of you that came to the Capital, emailed your legislator, called and left a message on the hotline, shared an action on social media, or donated to our organization. Your support carried us through many a difficult day in Frankfort.

Junk Science *Cont. from page 6.*

Dr. George Delgado, is an anti-abortion activist who bases his claims only on a series of case-studies. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists objects that “this study was not supervised by an institutional research board or an ethical review committee required to protect human research subjects,” thus raising “serious questions regarding the ethics and scientific validity of the result.” The fact that some women who took progesterone after taking mifepristone and omitting misoprostol continued their pregnancies does not provide scientific evidence for the effectiveness of the “reversal.” In fact, about half of all patients who take mifepristone and omit misoprostol will continue their pregnancies without any further intervention. Because the research was done without a control group, no reliable data shows that a high dose of progesterone makes this outcome more probable.

Anti-abortionists promote “reversal” chiefly for propaganda purposes. The increasing use of medication abortion presents a new challenge, for this is a quick,

safe, and private procedure from which patients cannot be deterred by bloody images of surgery or dismembered fetuses or threats of dangerous infections. Therefore propagandists emphasize another danger, this time to mental health. Laws that require health providers to inform patients that they can take action to reverse their abortion send the message that women are irrational people who tend to make emotional decisions, risking lifelong regret and depression. In fact, women usually know what is best for them and seldom regret terminating an unwanted pregnancy. And even those who do wish to reverse the effects of a medication abortion will probably not be helped by this therapy.

State legislatures are in no way qualified to interfere in the private relationship of patient and physician. By requiring providers to give out misleading information, SB 50 will harm many Kentucky citizens who seek reproductive health care.



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The Religious Community in Support of an Individual's Right to Choose!



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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.