

*"It is essential to a woman's equality with man that she be the decision-maker, that her choice be controlling.*

*If you impose restraints, you are disadvantaging her because of her sex."* — Ruth Bader Ginsburg

# Voice for Choice

Newsletter of the Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

Summer 2018

## Weep No More, My Lady — Get Out And Vote!

By Ann Taylor Allen, Editor



*A conservative majority on the Supreme Court may threaten reproductive rights. Who can resist? We can!*

### Unwelcome but hardly suprising news

The news of Justice Anthony Kennedy's retirement from the Supreme Court came to many of us as unwelcome, but hardly as surprising news—after all, he is eighty-one years old! His successor will probably eliminate the “swing” vote that in the past has upheld reproductive rights and create a conservative majority that will further restrict these rights. On a lower level, the many district judges whom the federal government is appointing will probably reinforce this conservative agenda. What might the consequences of these changes be for Kentucky?

Although some legal experts fear that a new Supreme Court majority might overturn *Roe vs. Wade*, others doubt that this will happen, at least in the near future. Rather than overturn *Roe*, a new majority may continue on the Court's present course, further cutting back on access to abortion by upholding various restrictive measures at the state level. Some states will continue to affirm and protect reproductive rights. In others such as Kentucky, however, a majority of legislators may follow the example already set by their colleagues elsewhere.

To give only two examples: in March, the Mississippi state legislature banned abortions after fifteen weeks of gestation, making no exception for victims of rape or incest, and the state governor took credit for signing the nation's toughest

*Cont. on page 6*

## Wayne's Words

by the Rev. Wayne A. Gnatuk, KRCRC Board Chair

*We call on each of you to stand up and speak up for reproductive justice!*

### A political and moral quagmire

Recent current events have upset all of us in the progressive community. The separation of immigrant children from their families, a resurgent racism, a society where the one percent get richer while the rest of us become poorer, an intolerant religious and political right, senseless shootings... The list goes on and on, and we reel from the soul-wrenching experience of watching our country sink into a political and moral quagmire the likes of which we haven't seen in our lifetimes until now.

Abraham Lincoln once said, “My dream is of a place and a time where America will once again be seen as the last best hope of earth.” His words ring as true today as they did in

a country torn asunder by civil war.

As I write these words, Anthony Kennedy has recently resigned from SCOTUS, and his likely successor, Judge Brett Kavanaugh, will probably not be friendly to progressive causes, and especially not to abortion rights. Will the new Justice be the fifth vote misogynistic conservatives need to overturn *Roe v. Wade*? And even if *Roe v. Wade* survives the onslaught, will not our cherished right to choice still be threatened with death by a thousand cuts?



*The Rev. Wayne A. Gnatuk*

All of us on the Board of Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (KRCRC) are deeply concerned. As

*Cont. on page 2*

a degraded and demonic spirit blows across our beloved country, we fear not only for the reproductive justice movement, but also for all the values we hold dear as a community committed to justice and equality.

As the Board of KRCRC, we call upon each of you in this movement to stand up and to speak up for justice in all its forms. We especially call you to stand up and speak up for reproductive justice. If it's true, as Coretta Scott King once said, that "the greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members," then now is the time for those of us who are people of true compassion to take action to protect the rights that have been won ever so slowly by us and those who went before us.

**Become a Repro Justice Champion!**

**We call upon you to be a Reproductive Justice Champion! KRCRC will be making buttons available which read "Repro Justice Champion!" We'll be handing them out at the State Fair and through other means as well. Get one! Wear it! When someone asks you what it means, speak up for what we believe!**

As a Repro Justice Champion, we encourage you to:

- Ask your friends if they've registered to vote. If they haven't, offer to help them register. We need a huge turnout at the polls in November.
- Support candidates that share our values; give them money, knock on doors for them, tell your friends to vote for them.

— Support KRCRC, A Fund, ACLU, PPINK, KHJN, RRFKY. These organizations not only need financial support, they need you to follow their Facebook pages, their tweets, etc. Sign up for their email alerts, which are sent out during legislative sessions when particular pieces of pending legislation need to be advocated for (or against).

— Let your legislator know how you feel about reproductive rights; tell them how you expect them to vote.

— Write letters to the editor.

— March! Protest!

Yes, I know that many of us have been doing these things all along. Certainly that's true, and I thank you for what you've done. We're all deeply grateful for your efforts. But we are now at a critical point where each of us must do more than we've ever done before.

It's a scary time, but we must not feel hopeless. George Washington said, "We must never despair; our situation has been compromising before, and it has changed for the better; so I trust it will again. If difficulties arise, we must put forth new exertion and proportion our efforts to the exigencies of the times."

So let us do! Become a Repro Justice Champion, and together let's do all that's possible to save choice for yet another generation.



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## **The Best Way to Make Change in Kentucky? Support Kentucky's Pro-Choice PAC!**

by Carol Savkovich, Board member, KRCRC and RRFKY

*Why should I support RRFKY PAC? Because Louisville and Lexington already elect progressive representatives. But that's not enough to sway statewide legislation. This PAC can take our dollars and use them around the state in carefully-selected races where \$1,000-\$2,000 can make a real difference in the outcome!*

With the impending shift on the Supreme Court, we cannot expect the federal protections of reproductive rights that we've clung to in the past. More and more it will be our legislature in Frankfort that decides what Kentuckians can and cannot do with our bodies.



**While lobbying is important, what is most important is putting the right people into office. We need to change the faces in Frankfort!**

# News from the Lexington Chapter

By Melissa Bane Sevier

*The Lexington Chapter makes a strong start.*

The not-yet-one-year-old Lexington chapter of KRCRC has been active this spring and summer. Two of its members participated in Compassionate Care Training led by national RCRC (Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice), and the new chapter recently went public by participating in its first event, the Lexington Pride Festival.

Wayne A. Gnatuk and Melissa Bane Sevier spent May 26-27 attending RCRC's Compassionate Care Training in Cincinnati. The two days were filled with interactive work regarding how to be present for those facing decisions about their reproductive options. Staff and volunteers from national RCRC provided written, visual, and spoken inspiration and encouraged open participation. Attendees explored their own values and provided a safe place to express similarities and differences of thought, faith, experience, and opinion. The group explored principles of reproductive justice and discussed how to allow for and encourage the grieving process. Wayne and Melissa, both Presbyterian ministers, commented that the training was beneficial and will help them in their work.



The Lexington Chapter spins the wheel.

## Spinning the wheel at the Pride Festival

At the Lexington Pride Festival on June 30, the chapter staffed a table for conversation, provided several types of informative literature, and encouraged guests to spin a wheel and take a prize for correctly answering a question about reproductive choice. On the heels of the recent Supreme Court decision, festival attendees seemed particularly interested to ask questions and receive information about Crisis Pregnancy Centers in Kentucky. Many signed a list to receive our electronic newsletter.

At the end of the day, participants from our group (Joanna B., Wayne A. Gnatuk, Elizabeth N., Neha N., Sarah O., and Melissa Bane Sevier) believed our first such effort was quite successful. The Pride Festival itself was extremely well-attended and attracted over one hundred and fifty exhibitors. There were at least eight religious groups represented. Despite loud verbal protest from a different type of "religious" organization just outside the festival's perimeter, the event ran very smoothly and had an upbeat, supportive atmosphere.

The next meeting of the chapter (time and date TBD) will include an evaluation of the above events, and planning for what comes next. Those interested in becoming part of the Lexington Chapter should contact Wayne A. Gnatuk at [wagnatuk@outlook.com](mailto:wagnatuk@outlook.com).

*Melissa Bane Sevier is the owner of MBS Writing Services and Photography, <http://Melissa@mbswriting.com>*

## Spin the Wheel at the Kentucky State Fair!



# PAGE 4 Safety on the Sidewalk

by Ashley Carroll, Organizer, Louisville Safety Zone

*Join the Louisville Safety Zone initiative: push our Metro Council to create a small buffer that will keep abortion clinic patients safe from harassment.*



*Demonstrators block the entrance of the EMW Clinic.*

The EMW Women's Surgical Center is the only clinic currently providing abortions in the state of Kentucky, and treats patients from all over the region. This clinic is under constant attack in the courtroom, by the state legislature, and by extremist anti-abortion protesters. Every day this clinic is open, protesters line the sidewalks and follow, shout at, and physically assault patients and their companions. Surveys conducted among EMW patients show that over 80% of patients are negatively impacted by protester presence, feeling upset by protesters' behavior, nervous or unsafe entering the clinic, or fearful of what protesters will do to them.

Although the federal FACE (Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances) Act addresses extreme acts and threats of violence or obstruction towards abortion providers -- such as the clinic blockade perpetrated in May 2016, which prompted a federal judge to create a temporary buffer zone -- the constant harassment and aggression that protesters perpetrate remains unchecked, and creates a volatile environment that could trigger further violence. Local law enforcement currently takes very limited action to prevent the harassment that patients experience, so protesters have few restrictions and face few consequences for their threatening and intimidating behavior.

The Louisville Safety Zone is a coalition of organizations and individuals who are working together towards the passage of a safety zone ordinance in our community. This ordinance will protect public safety by creating a clear zone in which patients and their companions have unobstructed

access to the clinic at a short but safe distance from anti-abortion protesters. Kentucky Health Justice Network, Planned Parenthood Advocates of Indiana and Kentucky, Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, Louisville Clinic Escorts, Concerned Clergy for Choice, and A Fund have all signed on in support of this effort.

In order to secure introduction and passage of this ordinance, however, we need vocal support from across all Metro Council districts. Our elected officials must see that their constituents view public safety at clinic entrances as a top concern, and see a safety zone ordinance as a key tool for ensuring safety.

As Organizer, I am leading efforts to build community-wide support: canvassing neighborhoods, showing up at local festivals and community gatherings, and planning events for concerned residents to come learn more about the ordinance. I invite you to get involved and show your support for the Louisville Safety Zone by taking the following actions:

- Sign our petition to show your support and receive action alerts: [tinyurl.com/LSZpetition](http://tinyurl.com/LSZpetition)
- Sign up to volunteer or canvass: [tinyurl.com/LSZvolunteer](http://tinyurl.com/LSZvolunteer)
- Contact Mayor Greg Fischer at 502.574.2003, Metro Council President David James at 502.574.1106, and your Metro Council representative at 502.574.1100 to tell them you support a safety zone.
- Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram: @LouSafetyZone
- Email [louisvillesafetyzone@gmail.com](mailto:louisvillesafetyzone@gmail.com) if you have questions or ideas!

*Ashley Carroll is the organizer of the Louisville Safety Zone Committee. She is a recent graduate of the University of Louisville.*



*The safety zone as it was in July 2017, during the OSA demonstrations.*

# Planned Parenthood Stands Up As Kennedy Steps Down

By Heather Bruner

Donor Engagement Officer, Planned Parenthood of Indiana and Kentucky



Justice Anthony Kennedy is retiring from the Supreme Court. The president has named his choice to fill the seat on the bench—an appointment that will have consequences for generations of Americans.

This court could have enough votes to dismantle the Affordable Care Act, restrict birth control access and roll back LGBTQ rights and immigration policies—decisions that would threaten all that supporters of Planned Parenthood of Indiana and Kentucky (PPINK) hold dear.

Challenging and dismantling *Roe v. Wade* may be the first item on the agenda of a new conservative majority. Forty-five years ago, the Supreme Court gave women the legal right to their bodies. And forty-five years later, the court could be aligned to take that right back.

While an immediate and complete reversal of *Roe* is unlikely, it is highly probable that it will be gutted. An unprecedented number of new TRAP (Targeted Regulation of Abortion Providers) laws may be passed by the Kentucky Legislature and unopposed by the Supreme Court. Women who need to terminate their pregnancies will meet roadblock after roadblock, and these measures will affect chiefly women of color, the poor, and rural communities.

PPINK will never stop fighting back or defending the rights of those who need us the most, but we need your support.

## 1. Kentucky LARC Project

Our strongest weapon is reliable birth control. PPINK health centers in Louisville and Lexington now offer long-acting reversible contraception (LARCs) to women in need, free of charge. A LARC can last between 3 and 12 years, but they cost on average of \$1,000 for those without health insurance. This project is funded entirely by individual donors, and your donation is a gift to a woman who needs your protection.

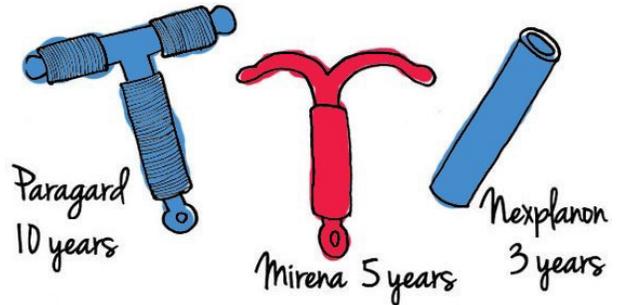
## 2. Planned Parenthood Advocates

We employ the only reproductive justice lobbyist in the state, and we fight against threats to reproductive justice and stand in solidarity with community partners whose rights are also threatened. Together we fight for women, for people of color, for immigrants and refugees, for teachers, and for unions. Together we fight for all.

## 3. Planned Parenthood's Political Action Committee

This year, for the first time, we will have the power to endorse and support candidates for local office. Our staff

spent the summer interviewing candidates across the state, listening to their views regarding social issues and civil liberties. Donating to the PAC is entrusting us to back candidates across the Commonwealth that are committed to standing with us.



LARCS (long-acting reversible contraceptives)

## Groups that Support Reproductive Justice

A Fund, Inc.  
PO Box 221286  
Louisville KY 40252-1286  
<https://kyafund.org/>

ACLU of Kentucky  
315 Guthrie Street, Suite 300  
Louisville, KY 40202  
<https://action.aclu.org/give/support-aclu-kentucky>

Kentucky Health Justice Network  
PO Box 4761, Louisville, KY 40204  
<http://www.kentuckyhealthjusticenetwork.org/donate.html>

Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice  
P.O. Box 4065  
Louisville, KY 40204  
<https://krcc.weebly.com/donate.html>

Louisville Clinic Escorts  
<http://everysaturdaymorning@gmail.com>

Planned Parenthood of Indiana and Kentucky  
Heather Bruner, Donor Engagement Officer  
842 S 7th St.  
Louisville, KY 40203  
[www.ppink.org/donate](http://www.ppink.org/donate)  
(use the memo line of your check to indicate a specific fund)

Reproductive Rights for Kentucky PAC  
PO Box 33071  
Louisville, KY 40230-3071  
<http://rrfky.org/contribute/>

abortion ban. That distinction, however, now rightfully belongs to Iowa, where the governor recently signed a bill that prohibits the abortion after a fetal heartbeat is detected, usually after only six weeks of pregnancy. State courts have blocked these laws—litigation sometimes works even in conservative states. In the future, however, a conservative judiciary at the state level may allow such laws to stand.

Such measures will fall most heavily on the vulnerable people who already make up the majority of patients at abortion clinics. These are the people who have least access to effective contraception, and are thus most likely to need abortion services. A large number of them are young, poor, and members of minority groups. Many will not be able to afford to travel to other states to obtain services that are inaccessible at home. (The Guttmacher Institute gives more information on who is getting abortions: <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-united-states>)



*Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg isn't considering retirement. We wish her good health!*

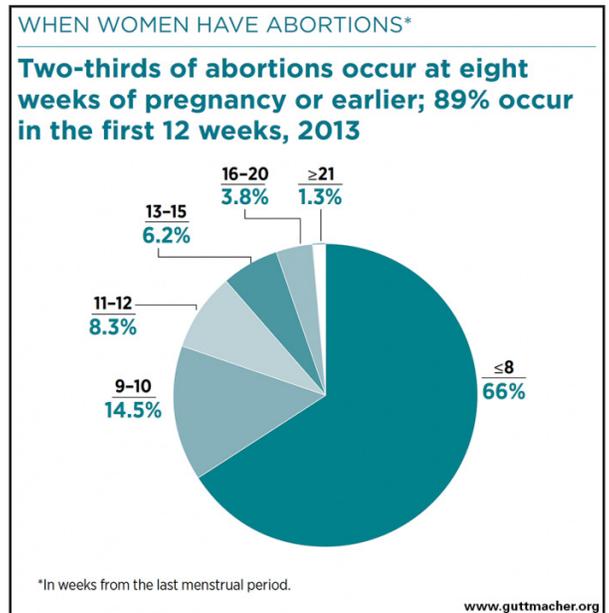
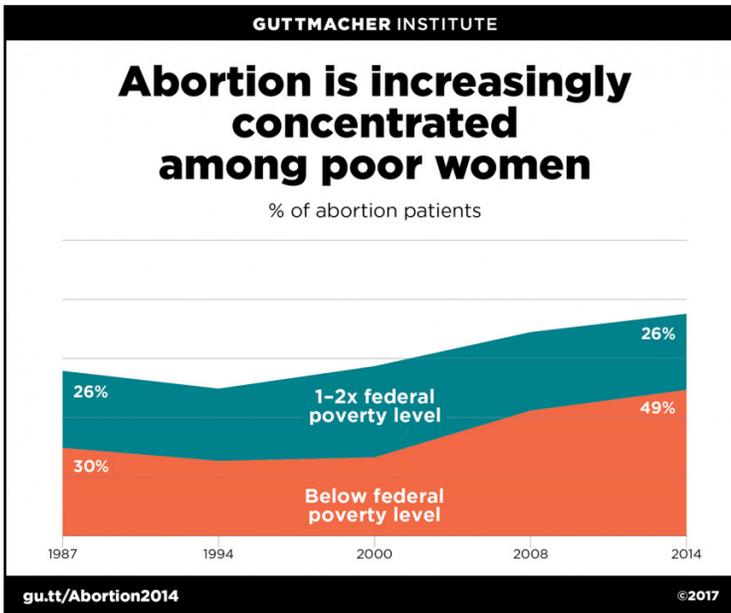
**To protect reproductive rights, vote!**

*Who is responsible for this situation? We are—we the citizens and voters of Kentucky as well as other states. A majority of public*

opinion supports the right to terminate a pregnancy under some circumstances. According to a recent poll, only twenty-nine percent of Americans want to see *Roe* overturned. Why, then, has a vocal minority of anti-abortion activists gained control of state legislatures in Kentucky and many other states? Because the majority of voters who favor reproductive rights has relied on the Court and has failed to organize a political base of support.

For the most part, the anti-abortion laws that the Court may uphold will originate in state legislatures. Therefore, Kentucky voters must elect legislators who will not enact such laws. And reproductive rights are not the only rights that a newly constituted court may threaten. The rights of government agencies to protect the environment, of labor unions to organize, of poor people to obtain health care, of women to have access to the contraceptives of their choice, of LGBT people to live free of discrimination, and of many others are in jeopardy. Advocates of reproductive justice must take this opportunity to join with like-minded allies to preserve the values that we all believe in.

In November, Kentucky voters will have the opportunity to choose their state senators and representatives. Voters are often apathetic about midterm elections, but this time your vote really matters. Inform yourself about the positions of candidates on reproductive issues, invest time and money in supporting these candidates, join groups that support reproductive justice, vote, and encourage your like-minded friends to vote. Citizens of a democracy are responsible for upholding the policies they value at the ballot box.



## **Pro-Choice Pac** *Cont. from page 2.*

So, you say, I already contribute in my local election campaigns. Why do I need to support Kentucky's only pro-choice PAC, Reproductive Rights for Kentucky PAC?

Because: Louisville and Lexington already elect progressive candidates. The beauty of this PAC is that it can take our dollars and use them around the state in carefully-selected races where \$1,000-\$2,000 can potentially make a real difference in the outcome!

Let's back up. What, exactly, is a PAC? According to Wikipedia, "a political action committee (PAC) is an organization that pools campaign contributions from members and donates those funds to campaign for or against candidates, ballot initiatives, or legislation."

### **RRFKY is a nonpartisan, multi-candidate federal political action committee. Its mission is to:**

- Raise and funnel much needed financial campaign support to those elected Kentucky federal and state officials who safeguard women's rights,
- Identify and financially support those viable candidates who will fight against anti-contraceptive and anti-abortion legislation as well as any attempt to criminalize or restrict access to abortion, or to curtail access to contraception under any circumstances.

Reproductive Rights for Kentucky PAC ([rrfky.org](http://rrfky.org)) was founded in 2013 and celebrates its fifth anniversary this year. With the help and donations from supporters, Reproductive Rights for Kentucky PAC (RRFKY) financially supported and endorsed 30 Kentucky federal and state candidates in the November 2014 and 2016 elections. Those candidates were committed to safeguard reproductive rights for women in Kentucky and this country.

### **How does the PAC decide whom to endorse and whom to fund? It sends a questionnaire to ALL candidates, asking whether they AGREE or DISAGREE with such statements as:**

- I fully support guaranteeing the right of access to all reproductive services.
- I will not initiate anti-choice legislation, and I will vote against any legislation that restricts abortion access.
- I support comprehensive sexual health education, including information about both abstinence and contraception, in public schools.

Based on the candidates' answers as well as other factors the PAC board considers (e.g. vulnerability of a particular seat, chance to oust a particularly bad incumbent, etc.), RRFKY makes decisions about which candidates to endorse and how much money to send them (up to \$2,000 per Kentucky race, up to \$5,000 per federal race is allowed by law).

Will you add RRFKY PAC to your short list of causes worthy of your dollars? Note that donations to the PAC are NOT tax-deductible, as they support political candidates.

Reproductive Rights for Kentucky PAC  
PO Box 33071  
Louisville, KY 40230-3071  
<http://rrfky.org/contribute>



### **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.



**Kentucky Religious Coalition  
for Reproductive Choice**  
PO Box 4065  
Louisville, KY 40204

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

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



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**KENTUCKY STATE FAIR**

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!**

KRCRC needs **YOUR** help for our fair booth!  
*Free admission & parking for volunteers.*

**Fair dates: August 16-26.**

Back by popular demand:  
our fun **Spinning Wheel**  
of Reproductive Health!

For details and to  
volunteer, contact KRCRC  
at [info@krcrc.org](mailto:info@krcrc.org).