

"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor." – Desmond Tutu

Voice for Choice

Newsletter of the Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

Winter 2015



Roe v. Wade:

*Commemorate the Achievement,
Envision the Future*



**3 to 5 pm, Sunday January 25, 2015
at First Unitarian Church**

809 S. 4th Street in Louisville (*across from the main public library*)

Join KRCRC for an afternoon of **reflection** on the legalization of abortion, **discussion** of current threats to abortion access, and **actions** to ensure a future where all people can freely make reproductive decisions.

Light refreshments will be served. Free parking available at the venue. Wheelchair-accessible.

“Leading the U.S. forward”: Mayor signs resolution supporting women and girls

by Rev. Mary Sue Barnett, Louisville Coalition for CEDAW

On Monday, November 17, 2014, Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer signed a history-making resolution that puts Louisville in the lead nationally when it comes to ending discrimination and other forms of violence against women and girls. The resolution states that Louisville will use the principles of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) as a framework for local policy aimed at promoting the health and safety of women and girls; affording them equal academic, economic and business opportunities; and ending discrimination and violence against them.

Councilwoman Tina Ward-Pugh, who introduced the resolution in Metro Council, said “How exciting today to be with Mayor Greg Fischer as he signed the Louisville for CEDAW resolution. Mayor Fischer was part of the unanimous passage of a similar resolution earlier this year at the U.S. Conference of Mayors. He and a bipartisan coalition of Metro Council members have committed to approving an ordinance, with funding in the upcoming budget, so we can begin assessing and improving where needed.”

Marilyn Fowler, with the Women’s Intercultural Network, congratulated the Louisville Coalition for CEDAW, saying “I’m sure you are flying high from your launch into the historic CEDAW initiative; you are leading the U.S. forward.” The Women’s Intercultural Network and San Francisco’s Department on the Status of Women launched the Cities for CEDAW campaign in March at the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

Louisville is only the second city nationwide to be recognized as a “Cities for CEDAW” city. Cities for CEDAW promotes the adoption of CEDAW principles in cities large and small as a framework for improving the status of women and girls. Mary Sue Barnett, director of the Women’s Center at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and

leader of the Louisville Coalition for CEDAW, expressed deep gratitude to coalition members in Louisville and to supporters around the country who helped lead the effort to pass the resolution. Coalition members include:

American Jewish Committee · Social Responsibility Committee, Epiphany Catholic Church · Center for Women and Families · Church Women United, USA · League of Women Voters · Louisville Girls Leadership · Louisville Human Relations Commission · National Association of Women Business Owners · Presbyterian Women in the PC (USA), Inc. · Zonta International · and others

CEDAW, the only international human rights treaty to focus exclusively on the rights of women, aims to ensure women’s equal access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life, education, health and employment, and calls for protection of women against discrimination and violence.

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Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer signs the Cities for CEDAW Resolution that Metro Council passed April 6. Joining him are city councilwoman Tina Ward-Pugh (District 9) (third from left) and members of the Louisville Coalition for CEDAW—from left, Michael Aldridge (ACLU); Teena Halbig (president, Kentucky Division, UNA-USA); Mary Sue Barnett (chair, Louisville Coalition for CEDAW, and director, Women’s Center, Louisville Seminary); Sariena Sampson (JCPS educator); and Victoria Markell (League of Women Voters).

“Leading the U.S. forward” *Cont. from page 2.*

Implementation of CEDAW principles at the local level improves the status of women/girls in many areas including:

- employment and compensation policies
- enforcement of assault and domestic violence laws
- childcare policies and services
- partnerships with nonprofit organizations that provide direct services to women
- and much more

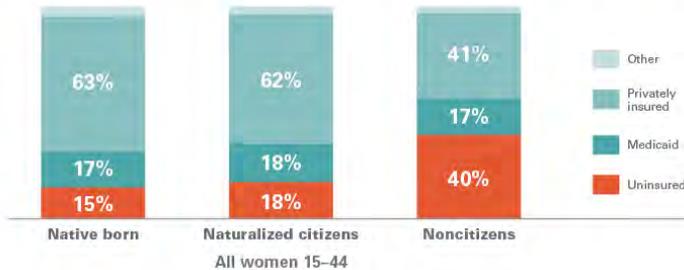
The next immediate step of the Louisville CEDAW Coalition is to build local alliances and offer educational opportunities related to girls’ and women’s human rights.

For additional information, contact Mary Sue Barnett, (502) 296-8653, louisvillecedawcoalition@gmail.com, or Louisville Coalition for CEDAW
1044 Alta Vista Road
Louisville, KY 40205

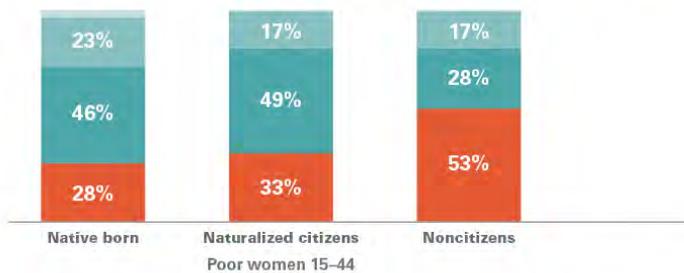
Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice is a proud supporter of the effort to recognize and implement CEDAW in Louisville and across our state.

Immigrant women need health coverage, not legal barriers.

The 6.6 million women of reproductive age who are not U.S. citizens are much less likely to be insured...



...especially those who live in poverty and are often barred from Medicaid.



Notes: Poor women are those in families with incomes under the federal poverty level (\$19,530 for a family of three in 2013). Data include some information on undocumented immigrants, although that information is generally acknowledged to be a considerable undercount of that population group.
Source: Special tabulations of data from the 2014 Current Population Survey (data are for 2013)



KRCRC and Provide produce informational brochure to inform Kentuckians of their abortion rights

By Caitlin Willenbrink, Chair, KRCRC board

Over the course of 2014, KRCRC was fortunate to work with the Kentucky staff of the national organization Provide (www.provideaccess.org) to produce a brochure with basic information about abortion. We are excited to release the full brochure now at our website!

Provide works in areas where abortion is least accessible, training and providing support to social workers, nurses, doctors, and other service staff who work with women who may need to consider all their pregnancy options. KRCRC is excited to collaborate with Provide because Provide staff will share this brochure in areas where accurate, non-biased information about abortion may be difficult to access, and will get the brochure in the hands of staff who are trusted advocates and can share it with the people they serve to ensure they know their options.

You can view the brochure at www.krcrc.org, and if you’d like an electronic copy for yourself or a group or agency you work with, send us an email at info@krcrc.org.



Clergy members of KRCRC raise their voices for youth sex education

By Caitlin Willenbrink, Chair, KRCRC board

KRCRC's Clergy Advisory Board (CAB) is made of up active and retired clergy who meet yearly to lend their pastoral experience and expertise to make recommendations on our organization's work. This year, one action the Clergy Advisory Board recommended, and then three CAB members took on themselves, was to write to the Jefferson County (Louisville) Public Schools superintendent and board chair, to express our concern at the lack of comprehensive sex education in district schools. The text of the letter, sent separately to both Superintendent Dr. Donna Hargens and Board Chair Diane Porter, is below.



Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

P.O. Box 4065 • Louisville, Kentucky 40204
866-606-0988 (toll-free) • info@krcrc.org • www.krcrc.org

Dr. Donna Hargens,
Superintendent
Jefferson County Public Schools
3332 Newburg Rd.
Louisville, KY 40218

Ms. Diane Porter,
Board Chair
Jefferson County Public Schools
3332 Newburg Rd.
Louisville, KY 40218

Dear Dr. Hargens, / Dear Ms. Porter,

We express our great appreciation for the excellent leadership which you are providing for our public school system.

As members of the Clergy Advisory Board of Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (KRCRC), we use this means to urge you to see that the children and youth in our school system receive quality, scientific education in human sexuality. We take this position because we believe that it will aid in the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of these persons. There will be fewer instances of children having children, less need for pregnancies to be terminated, and a greater percentage of young girls completing high school and possibly higher education programs. Further it is our hope that fewer children will be raised in a poverty situation.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. Feel free to call upon us to assist in this concern in any way.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Dr. Donna T. Morton
Louisville, KY

The Rev. Dr. Sharon Deatz
Louisville, KY

The Rev. Mr. Maurice H. LeFevre
Louisville, KY

Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

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Rev. Melody Wolder, *United Methodist*

Notes from the Board Chair

Dear friends of KRCRC,

I hope you enjoyed a relaxing and safe holiday season with lots of time well spent with loved ones!

This month, we're excited to present our annual event honoring the anniversary of the US Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade* that legalized abortion. The theme of this year's event is bold action.

Not only will we gather to commemorate *Roe v. Wade*, but we will also gather to reflect on the ways in which abortion access is still severely limited in this country, and to take bold actions to change that.

We'll discuss actions we can take as individuals, and actions we can encourage our faith leaders and elected officials to

take, to make our communities and nation less judgmental and more compassionate when it comes to affirming every woman's right to decide if, when, and how to parent.

We hope you can join us for this afternoon of action! More information is included later in this newsletter.

Here's to a 2015 filled with compassion for people facing difficult or unwanted pregnancies, and filled with bold action to protect all their reproductive options!

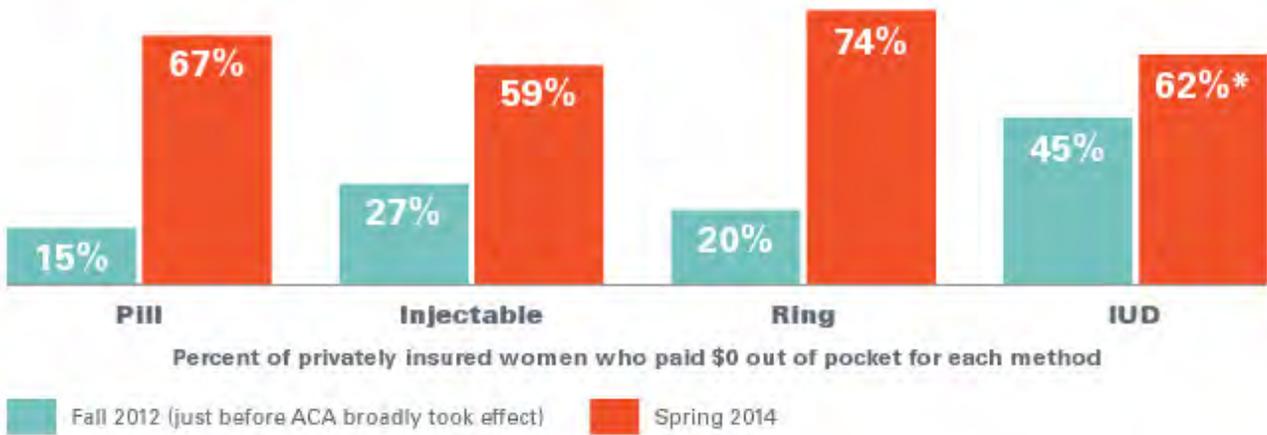


Caitlin Wilkenburg

.....

The Affordable Care Act's contraceptive coverage guarantee is working...

Privately insured women are increasingly paying \$0 out of pocket for a range of contraceptive methods.



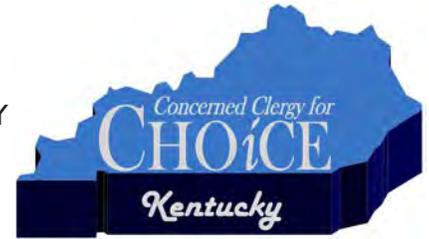
...and soon even more women will benefit.

*Based on combined data for spring 2013, fall 2013 and spring 2014 because the number of IUD users surveyed was small.



Concerned Clergy for Choice Kentucky: Endorsing Reproductive Justice

By Rev. Millie Horning Peters and Rev. Dr. Sharon Yunker-Deatz, Co-directors, CCKKY



On a cold November day, Kentucky clergy traveled through snow to attend only the second gathering of Concerned Clergy for Choice Kentucky. The Training and Learning for Action event, held at the Women's Center on the campus of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, was led by Derek Selznick of ACLU Kentucky and Patti Stauffer, Sonia Santana and Margot Riphagen of Planned Parenthood of Indiana and Kentucky.

We traveled through snow and gathered happily to learn how to be effective voices of faith stepping out on the journey to justice for Kentucky women and families. Derek gave an overview of the current state of reproductive health in Kentucky including current laws which restrict a woman receiving quality healthcare. He also presented the nationwide trends on reproductive health policies. A well-organized effort to ban abortion, contraception and clinic operations, reducing quality healthcare and family planning

support, is the pattern spreading across our country.



Reverends Millie Peters and Sharon Yunker-Deatz hold the CCKKY letter for legislators.

Sonia and Margot explained how concerned clergy and concerned citizens may take direct action as advocates for justice. They addressed the importance of language in having an authentic conversation about a difficult, complicated topic. The focus is on the woman, her faith,

her family, her pregnancy, her decision. We are encouraged to engage in conversation to hear and respect one's situation, because we do not walk in her shoes.

The enthusiasm of like-minded people generated energy among the participants, encouraging one another toward bold action, and uplifting our leaders with the positive response to their informative presentations.

A high point of the day was the presentation of the clergy sign-on letter to be presented to our state legislators on a Day of Action at the Capitol during the 2015 Kentucky

General Assembly in February. The letter is an urgent request to

respect and support a woman's right to determine what is best for her and her family. Following the reading of the letter, "Endorsing Reproductive Justice," which affirms full equality for women including reproductive freedom, the clergy in attendance enthusiastically added their signatures. The letter is being circulated among Kentucky clergy for their signatures electronically. Any clergy may have their name added by responding with name, faith affiliation, and city of residence, to milliehpeters@gmail.com. KRCRC readers, please speak with your pastor and urge their signing of this letter as well.

The voices of millions of pro-choice people in America today are not being heard. Time is of the essence for people of faith to stand united in respect for a woman as a person who deserves quality healthcare, and the acceptance of compassionate clergy giving guidance in family decision-making. A woman's freedom to decide what is best for herself hangs in the balance. We must rise up and be heard for our rights to be protected. It is critical for people of faith to unite to create a pro-active strategy to "simply do justice," which is our calling from God as well as the historical practice of many faith traditions.

Here are upcoming opportunities to take such action:

- Attend the KRCRC Roe-Wade Anniversary Commemoration, January 25, 2015, First Unitarian Church, Louisville, 3 pm. [See info on cover.] The letter "Endorsing Reproductive Justice" will be available, along with several other action stations.
- The next Quarterly Gathering of CCKKY, will be held Tuesday, February 17, 2015 11:30-1:30 to offer pastoral care to one another and to plan support of our state

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HOLD THE DATE

"Reproductive Justice from the Pulpit 101"

-- Not for Clergy Only - Everyone Welcome! --

Tuesday March 24, 12-1 pm

Winn Center, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
Co-sponsored by Concerned Clergy for Choice Kentucky
and The Women's Center at LPTS

For more info, contact milliehpeters@gmail.com

or mbarnett@lpts.edu

CCCKY *Cont. from page 6.*

legislators and a trip to Frankfort. Also, we will begin our inspirational study of “God in Our Relationships, Spirituality between People” from the teachings of Martin Buber.

- The February Day of Action at the Capitol, details to come later from ACLU KY, will include the presentation of the clergy sign-on letter, “Endorsing Reproductive Justice.”
- Reproductive Justice from the Pulpit 101, Tuesday, March 24, 2015, Noon to 1 pm, Winn Center, Louisville Presbyterian Seminary is planned. Not for preachers only - everyone is welcome to lunch together and hear a panel discussion on why it is necessary to address reproductive justice from the pulpit and how scripture informs us on how/why preaching reproductive justice. Co-sponsored with the Women’s Center.

Top 2 Reasons
to send us your email address:

1. So you can **get our newsletter by email**, saving KRCRC money on printing and postage – money we can use to advance reproductive justice in Kentucky.
2. So you can receive **ACTION ALERTS** when bills affecting choice are up before the legislature, in time to make a difference with your grassroots voice!

Email us at info@krcrc.org; be sure to include your name.

Louisville to host White Privilege Conference in March

By Rev. Molly Casteel, Presbyterian Church USA

March brings opportunity for engaging with social justice advocates to connect across intersecting identities and realities. I’m biased, I’ve attended five previous conferences; but I want to invite you as a reproductive justice advocate to consider participating in WPC16.

Loretta Ross is but one of the keynote speakers confirmed for the 16th White Privilege Conference coming to Louisville March 11-14, 2015. Ms. Ross is a founder of SisterSong. With her inclusion, the conference will have reproductive justice at the center of at least one keynote. Loretta Ross “is one of the creators of the term “Reproductive Justice” coined by African American women in 1994 following the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, Egypt.” (excerpt from Bio: <http://www.lorettaross.com/Biography.html>)

The conference travels around the country, averages over 2,000 participants a year, and has only once before met in the South (that time in Memphis). In Madison, WI, in 2014, they had 2,400 attendees. They draw participants of all ages, and have special programming for younger members for the first few days. Event registration opens on January 1. For more information, see the website: <http://www.whiteprivilegeconference.com/index.html>.

Not just for white folks, this conference is for all social justice advocates. Learn to recognize the common enemies of white privilege and its stronger partner white supremacy; learn about the role they have in shaping how society values

people differently across identities, and the resulting deep inequities.

WPC is an event for persons committed to racial justice and social justice work who want to hone skills and build relationships with other advocates. The theme this year is *Resistance, Action, Courage and Equity: the South Leading the Way!* The host team is happy to highlight the role of white anti-racist activists in resisting the powers of racism and other oppressions in the South. Will you join us?



Loretta Ross, SisterSong founder





**Kentucky Religious Coalition
for Reproductive Choice
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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 direct the moral power of people of faith and religious organizations to safeguard and advance reproductive justice in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. We do this through education, advocacy, counseling and support of organizations with related goals.