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.
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, U.S.A
- 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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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.

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

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.
KRCRC’s Clergy Advisory Board (CAB) is made up of 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.

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
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!

Notes from the Board Chair

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
<th>Spring 2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pill</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injectable</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ring</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IUD</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>62%*</td>
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* Based on combined data for spring 2013, fall 2013 and spring 2014 because the number of IUD users surveyed was small.
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.

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 CCCKY, 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
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, Community 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?
"Opt In" vs. "Opt Out":

We Goofed.

"Opt IN"

Most of KRCRC's followers recently received a letter from us, asking "Are You With Us?" and requiring that, to stay on our list, you must RETURN the letter to us to affirm your belief in our mission and that you wished to be a KRCRC member.

We said that, if you did not return the letter, we would remove you from our rolls.

Live and learn... KRCRC's board members are only human, and we discovered it was a mistake to require you to take the extra step to "Opt In." We expected a decrease in our numbers as we reduced our membership to only those supporters who directly expressed an interest in continuing their membership. However, we never dreamed that our good faith effort to become "leaner and stronger" would see fewer than 200 of our 4,000 members returning their letter. After speaking with a good handful of KRCRC supporters who did not get around to returning their letters, we feel sure that many more wish to remain with us, but simply never returned their letters.

"Opt OUT"

Rather than lose those of you who DO wish to stay informed through KRCRC's newsletter, we are switching to an "Opt Out" approach: If you do NOT support our mission, and/or no longer wish to receive KRCRC's newsletter, please let us know at info@krcrc.org or (866) 606-0988 and we will remove your name.

Your board sincerely apologizes for this mistake. We took a risky approach in an attempt to strengthen our organization, but it just didn't work. Thank you for your understanding.

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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.