

Life and Liberty for Women

Abortion Safe & Legal - Today, Tomorrow, Forever
Volume I - Issue I - Fall 2000

The Colorado Pro-life Alliance, headed by Gary Rogers, of Fort Collins, Colorado, has promised to put anti-abortion initiatives on our ballots every two years and this year is no exception. We face a so-called "Woman's Right To Know" Amendment that would require the state to produce state written material about the procedure, risks, complications and aftercare, **which all abortion providers and clinics in the state of Colorado already provide.** The state would produce a video describing fetal development. This material would have to provide referrals to adoption agencies and so-called alternative organizations a.k.a., crisis pregnancy centers, a.k.a., anti-abortion centers, who by the way, would not be subject to this law. Amendment 25 will also make these requirements of any doctor prescribing RU-486, the French abortion pill just approved by the Federal Drug Administration. AND most significantly, the last line in the ballot language reads, "...requiring physicians to annually report specified information, requiring the State Department of Public Health and Environment to annually publish a compilation of the physician's reports..." Doctors would face criminal prosecution if they failed to comply.

Amendment 25 will jeopardize women's medical privacy and doctor's privacy making doctors easy targets for harassment, intimidation, and assassination by anti-abortion extremists who want to stop abortion anyway they can. It's important to know that currently all abortion statistics are gathered by location of the abortion clinic itself which is what is identified on the statistical forms submitted to the State Health Department for compilation. **BUT UNDER AMENDMENT 25, the statistics gathered would be identified by the name of the doctor.** While it is unclear whether the doctor's name and address would be included in the final report that is released to the public, because the statistics doctors would be required to gather would be public record, these identities could be accessed through the Colorado Open Records Act. Additionally, Carrie Earl Gordon of Focus on the Family says that including doctor's names in the public report is "ultimately up to [the] Department of Health."

There is no paranoia here. The number of clinics bombed and vandalized and the number of providers already dead by anti-abortion assassins dispels the notion of paranoia. Dr. O'Loughlin, an abortion provider in Denver, has been harassed at his home on Saturdays for over a year now, protesters screaming, scaring his wife and son and his neighbors and their children. Rep. Tom Coburn, R-OK, said he wants to restrict distribution of RU-486 to doctors who do surgical abortions AND he's considering **CREATING A REGISTRY OF THOSE DOCTORS.** Dr. Slepian, the last doctor assassinated in October 1998, was shot as he stood in the kitchen of his own home; his assassin is still at large.

Additionally, anti-abortion extremists are likely to pursue civil lawsuits against doctors whom they believe may have violated the law. That would force doctors into lengthy expensive legal battles that could send them into bankruptcy. Doctor's records could be subpoenaed and while patient's identities may not be revealed, their medical histories and abortion experience may be. That would be a form of violating the medical confidentiality of a woman who had an abortion.

Currently, when a woman seeks an abortion with a provider in Colorado, she receives ALL medically pertinent information about the surgical abortion procedure, the risks, complications, and after care and she signs the informed consent form. **It should also be pointed out that standards of medical practice and malpractice insurance carriers demand of all physicians a signed informed consent from their patients.** For example, "facts For Abortion Patients" produced by Planned Parenthood, contains 19 pages that in addition to describing the above information, it lists the lab tests to be done and talks about the ultra sound they'll do to determine the gestational age of the fetus. It tells patients about the medical history form they will fill out and it says that an abortion patient will, **"Talk about your choices with a health center staff**

person. Decide whether you want to have an abortion and go over the informed consent form. The “facts” booklet also tells women that birth control information will be discussed, a discussion that no woman would have in a so-called crisis pregnancy center, like for example the Alpha Center in Fort Collins and other anti-abortion crisis pregnancy centers that will be listed as alternatives in the state material. It’s apparent that doctors and medical clinics like Planned Parenthood work hard at reducing the number of abortions by providing responsible sex education and family planning and no one cares more about women’s reproductive health care than they do.

Proponents argue that this law would pass constitutional muster, having been passed in 19 states, and enforced in 14. However, in 1998 Colorado voters rejected Roger’s so-called “partial birth” abortion ban that had it passed, it would have been declared unconstitutional by this summer’s Supreme Court decision on a Nebraska law that was nearly identical to Rogers because the language was deliberately vague so as to ban all abortions. Further, the parental notice law that Rogers placed on the ’98 ballot, though it won voter approval, it was found to be unconstitutional by a federal district court because it lacked a health exception and it had no real judicial by-pass, a requirement demanded by the U.S. Supreme Court. In September this year, the Tennessee Supreme Court struck down portions of the state’s abortion law as over burdensome to women, including a 2-day waiting period and mandatory counseling. The justices said that most women already have their minds made up before seeking an abortion, the waiting period only increases the psychological and financial burden, and the provisions fail to accomplish the state’s goal of protecting women and their unborn children.

Finally, a vote against Amendment 25 says loud and clear to doctors that we trust them to provide women with the best medical care available, that we trust them to talk with women about the procedure, its risks and complications, and obtain their signature on the informed consent form. A vote against Amendment 25 also says we trust doctors to discuss with their patients their decision to terminate their pregnancy.

This is our opportunity to cast a firm, loud, and clear vote of confidence and support for doctors who care so much about women and their reproductive health care. It’s our opportunity to say no to giving dangerous extremists the opportunity to invade the privacy of a select number of doctors, just because they perform legal abortions.

The fact is that no matter what anyone believes about abortion, or waiting periods, or state mandated material for that matter, **protecting doctor’s privacy and protecting the lives of their staff, families, and patients is the right thing to do here and it is the moral thing to do.**

Life and Liberty for Women urges voters to VOTE NO on AMENDMENT 25 on November 7th.

A Message From the Founder

I founded Life and Liberty for Women, a non-profit organization, to do aggressive, passionate, abortion RIGHTS education. The current abortion rights movement has not been successful in preventing the anti-abortion extremists from stealing away the higher moral ground in the abortion rights debate. And it is time we steal it back because it does indeed belong to us. It is rightfully ours.

Just what is the higher moral ground? The above Moral Statement captures it perfectly. Anti-abortion extremists have been successful in taking the woman out of the picture frame and they are well aware that the weakest spot in their message is their lack of concern for a woman as compared to a fetus. They have been highly successful in creating guilt and shame in women and within the public in general, for daring to choose not believe and feel that the fetus has an absolute right to life over a woman, from conception to birth, no exceptions, ever. For those who firmly believe that Roe vs. Wade balanced the right to life of both, this seems foreign, unfair, and absolutely immoral. However, because of a fear of losing middle of the road voters, who, in the '80's they targeted for inclusion within their circle of supporters, a fear of losing financial contributors, and a fear of being labeled immoral and not in touch with family values, the current abortion rights movement has failed to challenge the anti-abortion movement in the manner the above Moral Statement does.

Consequently, Life and Liberty for Women, who sprouts up outside of the constraints of the current abortion rights organizations, will began a campaign to take this Moral Statement on Abortion Rights to as many as we can, both in this state and across the nation and we will present that Moral Statement with the passion and emotion that it deserves.

That is our promise and commitment to you, who support Roe vs. Wade. In addition, we promise to fight any and all anti-abortion legislation and ballot initiatives that would restrict abortion rights beyond the boundaries of Roe or that, in the words of many, chip away at the foundation of Roe.

Warm regards,
Peggy Loonan
Founder & Executive Director

Sponsors Come in All Sizes-So Do Their Contributions

Both of my daughters came to me with their financial contributions for Life and Liberty for Women with such excitement to help Life and Liberty for Women with the enormous educational task ahead, that in private, I cried. I was so proud of their recognition of the importance of this issue and Life and Liberty for Women to their mother and of their recognition of this organization's efforts. They each gave according to their means and from their heart to a cause they believe in and that is what matters most. My oldest, 14 years old, gave \$10.00 and my youngest, just 9, gave \$4.00.

"Every penny counts," the saying goes and nothing could be as true for a new young organization like Life and Liberty for Women. Combined their \$14.00 will send newsletters to 70 abortion rights supporters at the bulk mail rate. Combined their \$14.00 will print 350 pages of information to be distributed as facts sheets on say RU-486 or Equity in Contraceptive Prescriptions at our discounted rate of .04 cents per page.

Combined their \$14.00 will buy over 1,000 sheets of colored paper, nearly pay one month's web site fee, pay to mail 3 press packets, or pay 1/8th of our monthly phone bill. So every penny does count, especially when you are just starting out and trying not only to inform supporters of the issues but about your organization as well.

Thanks to my wonderful, giving, and supportive, hard working, husband Jim, this full time mother and full time volunteer political activist, has had the financial support to keep this organization afloat until I and my committed and hard working board can get Life and Liberty for Women on the map with current abortion rights supporters, like yourselves.

Please give generously today so we can plan our next newsletter, set up more dates for our drama performance, and keep our website updated for you.

Thank you, very much!

Mark your Calendars

PEGGY LOONAN WILL DEBATE AN ANTI-ABORTION EXTREMIST

WEDNESDAY EVENING NOVEMBER 15, 2000

AT COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

TIME AND ROOM TBA – LOOK FOR A POSTCARD IN THE MAIL

PEGGY, a former high school competitive debater is a tough dynamic debater who goes on the attack - If you haven't heard her debate before – I promise you a show you won't soon forget! FINALLY, the kind of tough challenge to the anti-abortion extremist position you've been waiting for. DON'T MISS IT!!

We Have Been *On The Move*

Since becoming a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization in March, 2000 we have:

- Placed an ad with our moral message in The New York Family Planning Advocates Legislative Conference Brochure in January 2000.
- Placed an ad with our moral message in the Feminist Majority Foundation Feminist Expo Program in March of 2000 where thousands of activists gathered.
- Placed an ad in the Fort Collins Rocky Mountain High School Newspaper in May of 2000 with a statement on the issue of parental notice.
- Placed an ad with our moral message in the 9 to 5 Working Woman's Survival Guide due out any day now.
- Had our educational boards, brochures, and fact sheets at the Loveland, CO., 4th of July Celebration and Summer Festival.
- Made an Editorial Board appearance to introduce Life and Liberty for Women with the Fort Collins, CO Newspaper, The Fort Collins Coloradoan. Has resulted in their calling us for comment when RU-486 was approved in September 2000.
- Produced our 1st newsletter and mailed to about 1,000 people across the country.
- Engaged in coalition work with Protect Families Protect Choice, the NO on Amendment 25 Campaign in Colorado and contributed \$400.00 to that effort.
- Put up a Web Site.

What's Happening Around the World with Abortion Rights

- HALLILUIAH!! The FDA finally approved RU-486 on September 28, 2000. Anti-abortion right extremists vow to fight it by targeting the doctors who use it and anti-abortion legislators in Congress are already preparing legislation that would restrict distribution to doctors who already do surgical abortions AND would create a REGISTRY of doctors who can proscribe the drug, ONCE AGAIN looking for a way to target abortion providers for harassment, intimidation, and assassination.
- The Tennessee Supreme Court, on September 15, struck down portions of the state's abortion law, including the 2-day waiting period and mandatory counseling.
- Have organized a major late October drama event – an alternative to the “Halloween hell houses” version of abortion rights – that will dispel some of the myths about illegal abortion and discuss Amendment 25. PLEASE JOIN US. SEE INSERT FOR DETAILS.
- Despite this summer's Supreme Court's clear decision that so-called ‘partial birth abortion’ bans are unconstitutional because the language is vague enough to ban all abortions, anti-abortion legislators on Capital Hill in D.C., will pass another ban that Clinton will once again veto.
- Women insured under the Federal Employee's Health Benefit Plan are restricted from choosing health plans that offer abortion services. The Center for Reproductive Law and Policy (CRLP) is continuing their challenge of this restriction.
- CRLP filed a lawsuit in federal court in July challenging a Louisiana statute that authorizes the Department of Public Safety and Corrections to issue special license plates that say “Choose Life.” Using state monies for these plates and considering no abortion rights plate is available to purchase, violates the First Amendment.

*Information provided here taken in part from The Center for Reproductive Law and Policy Newsletter, Sept. issue.