

Life and Liberty for Women

Abortion Safe & Legal - Today, Tomorrow, Forever
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PROACTIVISM AND RADICALISM

Over the years, abortion rights organizations have become more "conservative" in their approach to protecting Roe vs. Wade. In the 1980s, seeking to expand their base of support at the ballot box and bank, they courted moderate republican and independent voters. Their vote and money began to exert tremendous influence over the type of defense strategies employed, virtually disarming the abortion rights movement and leaving it unable to employ proactive and radical strategies to protect Roe. Such disarmament has resulted in state and congressional legislation that's unraveling the balancing of the right to life and liberty of woman and fetus that Roe accomplished. That disarmament facilitated the election of a President hostile to Roe who is likely to be successful in overturning Roe through Supreme Court appointments.

The proactivism and radicalism of the 60s and 70s had won women the right to finally control their own fertility, an important step toward obtaining equality. But since the 80s, proactivism and radicalism have become so unacceptable to an aging and increasingly conservative or middle of the road abortion rights constituency with the ability to deny their vote and generous amounts of money, that proactivism and radicalism haven't just been abandoned as strategies to protect Roe, they've become strategies to fear and run from.

Life and Liberty for Women is not ashamed of legal abortion as defined by Roe vs. Wade, and that includes a public defense of a woman's right to terminate her pregnancy late into the second trimester, still prior to viability.

Life and Liberty for Women does not fear and will not run from radicalism or from the opportunity to be proactive. We will embrace those strategies.

We believe that we can no longer afford to leave the anti-abortion street corner baby-killing rhetoric and pictures of alleged aborted fetuses unchallenged. We can and should challenge those street corner images with ones of our own, with the horrific sights and sounds of illegal abortion. Not to do so leaves post-Roe generations without a way to contrast the negative impact and devastation that illegal abortion had upon women's health and lives with what safe and legal abortion services means to women's health and lives and their ability to obtain equality. We must also present post-Roe generations with the graphic reality that illegal abortion never did nor ever will translate into saving "babies."

On Saturday night, January 20, 2001, Life and Liberty for Women stood outside the Fort Collins, Colorado Planned Parenthood holding signs and the picture of Gerri that you see on page two of this newsletter. We were not expected at that anti-abortion candlelight vigil against Roe vs. Wade, but there we were.

On Sunday, January 21 we appeared outside of the Peak Community Church where the Larimer County Right to Life was holding their annual anti-Roe rally prior to their anti-Roe march and again, we were unexpected. Their leadership approached us and asked if we would cover our picture when their children exited the building to begin the march.

Considering the graphic pictures of alleged aborted fetuses their own children stand side by side with, that was quite an audacious request, don't you think? Within twenty minutes, an elderly man from the pro-life group went across the street with their picture of an alleged aborted fetus.

We told the leadership of this group that we would not cover our photo of Gerri and that parents could either steer their children away from the photo or explain it to them.

We also received press coverage, something harder and harder for abortion rights groups to garner for their events these days. But let's be honest, our press coverage was because, and only because, the press are always at anti-abortion event, aren't they?

No word was heard from any anti-abortion person about our presence at their rally, no letter to the editor, nothing. Maybe that isn't so hard to understand considering that they have not met with this kind of challenge before and they know as well as we do at Life and Liberty for Women that we have the higher moral ground and the truth. This truth will protect Roe vs. Wade forever only if we have the courage to take to the streets again and display the graphic and horrible sights of illegal abortion to the public.

There's no reason to re-invent the wheel my friends. Visual images and emotional language moves people. Let's co-op that strategy simply because in the end it will be the strategy that best educates post-Roe generations and protects every woman's right to safe and legal abortion.

GERRI WAS A VICTIM...

Three generations of women and men have grown up with legal contraceptives and safe legal abortion. They've had no exposure to the horrific sights and sounds of illegal abortion so there's no reason to expect them to fear what seems to them ancient history. Without an emotional bond with that history, we can't expect people to perceive the terrible threat to legal contraceptives and abortion looming in any piece of state or congressional legislation or the political maneuvering of the Supreme Court. We can understand that they can't identify that a woman's access has been threatened by anti-abortion violence aimed at scaring away abortion providers. All they've ever known is that abortion is legal.

Creating that emotional bond begins with exposure to graphic pictures and language about illegal abortion. These images can stir up emotions about desperate and determined women who self-aborted and suffered a needless death. The general public has been affected by anti-abortion pictures of alleged aborted fetuses and baby-killing rhetoric. These pro-life demonstrations have gone virtually unopposed by abortion rights organizations. These anti-abortion images have pushed the stories and pictures of women who have been victims of illegal abortion out of sight and out of mind. Unfortunately, the strong showing of pro-life messages leaves the abortion rights constituency feeling guilty and ashamed for believing that women also have a right to life and liberty.

Geraldine Twerdy Santoro was a 28 year-old mother of two young daughters when she died a very painful and frightening death from self-induced abortion, the way most women died pre-Roe. Gerri was estranged from her abusive husband when she met Clyde Dixon and became pregnant by him. Terrified that her abusive husband would kill her if he found out it was Dixon's baby she was carrying, Gerri became desperate and determined to end her pregnancy. She was six and half months pregnant in June of 1964. When Dixon obtained a medical textbook and borrowed some surgical equipment they went to a motel where he tried to perform the abortion. His attempt failed and he left her there to die, alone. She was bleeding profusely and tried with towels to stop it but she couldn't. How frightened she must have been, knowing she was going to die. She was found on her stomach with her knees under her, her face not visible, bloody, nude, alone and dead. The photo from the New York Coroner first appeared in MS Magazine in April of 1973.

Life and Liberty for Women enlarged the black and white photo to 30" X 40" and have woven it into our Drama, "Abortion's Silenced Legacy," highlighted in the insert in this newsletter. We hope that with our efforts, women will never have to face illegal abortion again.

A Message From the Founder...

I thought very seriously before I made the commitment to launch Life and Liberty for Women in 1999. I knew that once I started this organization I would obligate myself to work long hard hours and to put my money where my mouth is to fulfill my commitment to the constituency I was building and representing.

Last year my wonderfully supportive husband and I contributed just over \$7,000 in cash to LLW and another \$538 in in-kind donations. LLW took in a total of just over \$9,000 last year. Over \$6,000 went to program work. I work from my home; we have no paid staff and three dedicated board members.

Our first year was extremely successful in setting a path toward our mission. Now we must travel that path. My husband and I have committed \$8000 to LLW's 2001 budget which will cover our general operating expenses; approximately \$800 per month for the remainder of the year. However, to continue our most ambitious program work, we're going to need your help.

In 2000, we created a very emotional and graphic drama depicting the horrific consequences of illegal abortion. Three live performances of "Abortion's Silenced Legacy" has been performed in Colorado. We also helped defeat a mandatory counseling 24-hour waiting period ballot initiative in Colorado, published our first newsletter and mailed it to 1,000 people nationwide and submitted letters to the editor and op-ed pieces.

Life and Liberty for Women has begun this year with a very clear vision of how to pursue our mission.

We re-tooled our drama to focus strictly on the history of illegal abortion. We'll continue to do live performances and by the end of the year we'll make a professional video of the drama and make it available for purchase to women's organizations, churches, colleges, schools and individuals.

In addition, we made the decision to expand our constituency by investing in the Internet. We hired a web developer who created a user-friendly website. It highlights great new Issue Articles and information about the Drama, Speakers Bureau and Newsletters. Look for us at lifeandlibertyforwomen.org.

We added a credit card service to our web site. As we build our base of constituents through the Internet, we can give them a convenient way to support our educational efforts with a monthly, quarterly or annual donation.

Soon we will also offer for sale a cassette and video of group discussions on various and important reproductive health care issues and t-shirts and mugs to support the effort.

We'll continue to write op-ed pieces for local publications and hopefully gain interest from national publications as well, and do several counter-demonstrations with our graphics of illegal abortion.

By January 2002, we're hoping to produce cable television ads to recognize the 29th anniversary of Roe vs. Wade.

We need your help.

We are very excited about our 2001 vision. We believe that if our efforts see fruition, we can forever impact and change the landscape of the abortion debate. We serve to defend and protect Roe vs. Wade as it hasn't been in recent years. We believe that post-Roe generations will come to know the truth and be unwilling to be persuaded by anti-abortion extremism anymore.

Any amount you give will help assure our educational goals can be realized. \$25 per month is only 83 cents per day. \$35 per month is only \$1.16 per day. Or donate a little more on a quarterly basis. \$100 per quarter is only 83 cents per day. A \$200 per quarter is only \$1.67 per day. That's not much to assure that Roe vs. Wade is protected and defended.

Please fill out and return the enclosed form in the envelope provided with a check or a credit card number and signature and indicate whether you are giving monthly, quarterly or annually. OR if you'd prefer, donate by credit card on our secure web site at www.lifeandlibertyforwomen.org

I know you care as deeply as I do about educating our daughters and granddaughters about the life saving implications of access to safe and legal abortion and contraceptive services. Everyday I generously, un-begrudgingly give according to my abilities, financial and otherwise, to protect and defend every woman's right to make her own reproductive health care decisions based on her own set of religious and moral values. Please help me by giving a regular generous contribution so we may continue our much needed educational efforts. I'm asking no more of you than I've asked of myself. PLEASE, I can't do it all alone.

The board and I extend our deepest and most heartfelt gratitude,
Peggy, Annmarie, Julie, and Marcy

Abortion Ruling Spurs Colorado Group to Action

By Jon Sarche
The Associated Press

DENVER - An anti-abortion group that has introduced three proposals to regulate abortions in Colorado since 1998 will try again next year.

The Colorado Pro Life Alliance said Tuesday that in light of a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that let stand South Carolina regulations affecting clinics where abortions are performed, it will propose similar regulations in Colorado.

Abortion-rights activists said such regulations are unnecessary and would only restrict access to a legal and safe medical procedure.

Pro Life Alliance spokesman Gary Rogers of Fort Collins said the South Carolina regulations seek only to bring abortion clinics into compliance with the same regulations affecting all other health-care providers.

The South Carolina rules cover everything from the training of clinic workers and the type of equipment that must be on hand to the width of office doors.

"The information we have is that clinics in Colorado are not required to meet the medical standards that we see in the rest of the medical community in Colorado," Rogers said. "Abortion is such a politically controversial issue that state legislatures have simply not been willing to confront the abortion industry."

Clinics that provide abortions in Colorado are regulated the same way as any other medical practice and should not be subjected to special regulations," said Ellen Brilliant of Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains.

"The Colorado Pro Life Alliance is opposed to abortion and will say anything that will help further their agenda," she said.

Dr. Warren Hern, director of the Boulder Abortion Clinic, said special regulations for clinics that provide abortions would only harass doctors and restrict patients' rights.

"This is an attempt to subvert state government," Hern said. "I think that the state Board of Medical Examiners is quite competent to decide whether medical care is adequate and safe in all specialties.

"This has absolutely nothing to do with the quality of abortion services and has everything to do with harassing doctors who provide abortions," he said.

The Colorado Pro Life Alliance last tried to restrict abortions in November when voters rejected Amendment 25. The proposal would have required women seeking an abortion to give their consent to the operation at least 24 hours after receiving specific information from a doctor about the procedure, its risks, alternatives and the development of the fetus.

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