



For Women's Lives

Spring 2007

Florida National Organization for Women

A Message from Jessica

Florida NOW President

Dear Activists,

I'm proud to be the president of Florida NOW. It's very exciting to work with so many talented and strong women from across our state. Already, we have two important actions being planned and I look forward to seeing many of you at Lobby Day and the Abortion Rights Rally in Tallahassee. I know I don't need to tell you how important it is that these events be well attended. Showing that we are a force to be reckoned with is a critical ingredient to putting women's rights and the feminist agenda back into the mainstream. We can't do this by ourselves. Not everyone will be able to come - that's ok. We need the support of every activist who can come but we also need activists who can help write checks to send an activist to Tallahassee; we need activists to write and call their legislators and talk to them about our issues and about how these things have impacted their lives, we need activists to hold actions in their local area and we need activists to write letters to the editor. We're here to support you. On our website we will post legislative updates, bill tracking information and talking points; this information will also be distributed over the flownet.

Additionally, in the next several months I will be visiting local chapters across the state. In a state as large and diverse as Florida, I feel that this face to face contact is essential in promoting communication and coordination between the state and local chapters. During these meetings I hope to gain an understanding of how the chapters function, their individual strengths, and their challenges. Together we can work through our challenges and build on each other's strengths.

In Sisterhood,

Jessica McCaffrey

Saluting Long Term Members

How long have you been a member of NOW?

We are proud to note the following:

Ms. Janice Felixson Member since 1975

Ms. Marcia S. DeFren member since 1975

Ms. L Mandy Stelman member since 1977

Florida NOW State Conference 2007

The conference was held January 5, 6, and 7 in Orlando. Highlights included the unveiling of the new United for Choice license plate, a moving keynote speech by abortion rights pioneer Bill Baird, and election of new officers. See more about resolutions that were passed at <http://www.flnow.org>

Your new officers are:

Jessica McCaffrey—President

president@flnow.org

Donna Slutiak--Vice-President

vp@flnow.org

Lisa Labbe—Treasurer

treasurer@flnow.org

Kelly Mangan—Secretary

secretary@flnow.org

Jane Blanchard--Membership Director

membership@flnow.org

Cicely Scheiner--Legislative Director

legislative@flnow.org

We also have a lobbyist and intern:

Jessica Lowe—Lobbyist

lobbyist@flnow.org

Jessica Harmsen—Intern

intern@flnow.org

Chapters—do you need to pay new member dues?

Members—would you like to donate to Florida NOW?

Please send all checks to:

Lisa Labbe
6825 NW 43 Place
Gainesville, FL 32606

FLORIDA NOW LOBBY DAYS 2007

JOIN US IN TALLAHASSEE TO TELL YOUR LEGISLATORS WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU

Agenda

Tuesday, March 20:

8:00 – 8:30 AM: Arrive in Tallahassee; registration
8:30-9:00 AM: Welcome and Introduction to Lobbying, Jessica Lowe
9:00-12:00 PM: Observe legislators in session from Gallery
12:00-1:00 PM: Lunch and briefing on FL NOW legislative issues
1:00-5:00 PM: Lobbying legislators
5:00-6:00: Debriefing
6:00: Dinner on your own and/or begin traveling back home

NOTE: It is highly likely that there will also be a committee hearing for us to go to on the E.R.A. on Tuesday, and so this schedule is subject to change as soon as that information becomes available.

Wednesday, March 21 (OPTIONAL DAY FOR THOSE WHO CAN STAY):

8:00 – 9:00 AM: Breakfast in the Capitol Cafeteria
9:00 – 12:00 PM: Attend session and/or meet with legislative staff
12:00 – 1:00 PM: Lunch
1:00 – 5:00 PM: Lobbying legislators
5:00-6:00: Debriefing
6:00 PM: 6:00: Dinner on your own and/or begin traveling back home

Top 10 Bills to Follow:

Details are available at

<http://www.flnow.org/billstowatch.htm>

EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

S272 ratifies proposed amendment to Constitution of United States re equal rights for men & women.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

S186 provides exemption from public-records requirements for certain records & time sheets submitted

S188 defines terms "domestic violence," "family or household member," & "victim"; requires that certain employers permit employee to take leave from work to undertake activities resulting from act of domestic violence.

S880 provides for early termination of lease if victim of domestic violence, sexual violence, dating violence, or repeat violence elects to leave residential.

SEX EDUCATION

S162 Provides parental right to know re abstinence-only instruction

S1156 Requires Secretary of Health to develop & maintain certain information concerning family planning & resources on website of DOH.

LGBT ISSUES

S1012 H0789; Provides that person who is homosexual is eligible to adopt child under certain enumerated circumstances

S114 H0575; cites act as "Jeffrey Johnston Stand Up for All Students Act"; prohibits bullying or harassment during education programs or activities.

H639 Revises provisions to include sexual orientation & familial status as impermissible grounds for discrimination

WOMEN'S HEALTH

S660 H0561 requires public & private middle schools in state to provide to certain students & their parents or guardians information re HPV, its vaccine, & cervical cancer;

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

S1602 Provides that in hearing re waiving requirement for parental notice, court consider certain additional factors.

Want to go but can't afford it? Contact a board member about assistance.

Need a ride? Contact Membership Director Jane Blanchard membership@flnow.org to see if there is a van picking up near you.

Can't go but want to help? There is a PayPal button at <http://www.flnow.org/FloridaNOWLobbyDays2007Agenda.htm> to make donating easy

Abortion rights rally

Background Information:

During the November election last year, the people of South Dakota rejected a proposed abortion ban in their state. While running for governor in Florida, Charlie Crist said that he would sign a similar bill into law if given the chance. Given the fact that state legislatures all over the country are rushing to outlaw abortion (including our neighbor Georgia), we consider this a serious threat that requires a serious response from the women of Florida!

Nine other states have proposed total or near total abortion bans already this legislative session. Join us in telling Florida Governor Charlie Crist that we won't be next! We are gathering petition signatures from people across the state to bring to Tallahassee on Friday, April 13. Our petition warns Crist and other Florida politicians not to touch our abortion rights, and it demands that women have access to abortion and contraception as a matter of basic justice—no restrictions, no judgments, no apologies—just birth control when we want it.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED:

---Get on the bus from Gainesville to Tallahassee on Friday, April 13th! Bus seats are sliding scale \$30-40

Checks payable to "Gainesville Area NOW" and mailed to: Gainesville Area NOW, PO Box 2235, Gainesville, FL 32602

or pay with a credit card on www.paypal.com Just use the email address paypal@gainesvillenow.org

---Sign our petition at www.gainesvillenow.org

---Donate money so more feminists can go even if you can't!

Chapter Happenings:

Orlando NOW:

Orlando NOW continues to work on the "United for Choice" Florida Pro-Choice License Plate campaign. Recently, Orlando NOW received a lot of press after the Associated Press and the Miami Herald ran articles about the license plate which were picked up by over 17 news outlets in the State of Florida. A Tampa Bay TV station covered the license plate story, and asked Gov. Charlie Crist if he would vote for the plate. Gov. Crist, whose position on choice has been unclear, stated that he wouldn't rule out voting in favor of the United for Choice Plate. The Florida Association of Planned Parenthood Affiliates has also endorsed the license plate effort and is soliciting donations from supporters. Please visit www.licensechoose.org for the latest news on the license plate and to sign the petition and donate to the cause.

Resolutions passed at 2007 State Conference:

Bylaw Change: The name of the Grievance Committee was changed to "Dispute Resolution Committee"

Resolution to support HR 676, the National Health Insurance Act

Resolution to appoint a committee to study the Florida NOW bylaws with an eye to possible revisions.

Resolution to support the pro choice license plate.

Complete text of 2007 resolutions is available at <http://www.flnow.org/2007resolutions.htm> or contact Donna Slutiak

Venice/Northport:

Women's Herstory Project:

We donated \$50 to our public library along with books of feminist content

The library is going to post a copy of our Proclamation we received from the City of North Port with some book marks and historical newspapers.

They are also going to display books written by great feminists.

We are showing the movie Iron Jawed Angels March 18 at the Library and serving popcorn and bottled water.

SPBC:

We formed the Families Against Court Travesties (FACTS) group almost 4 years ago. In the past year we have done many court watches, primarily in Family Court. Just this month we were approached by the PBC State Attorney's Office and the DV Council to arrange for court watches in the DV courtrooms as well. Our accomplishments and tenacity have gained us recognition here in South Florida and even statewide.

We succeeded in having 2 family court Judges rotated into other courts, and participated strongly in defeating another Family Court Judge who was running for re-election. He is now out of the judicial completely. We have also been instrumental in having some judges recused.

Members of FACTs testified before the Supreme Courts Committee on Fairness and Diversity 3 times last year. Hopefully it will make a difference.

FACTs' goal is to make positive changes in the State Legislature regarding laws that govern the courts, which greatly affect Woman and Children and their rights.

We also formed a committee called the "Women's Prisoner Project", which concentrates on and exposes the inhumane treatment women are given in the county jail systems. So far we have visited 4 jails in Broward and West Palm Beach Counties. We printed up a very striking brochure which included sketches done by a woman prisoner this past year, of conditions in these jails. The response from the public has been positive and motivating.

The Women's Prisoner Project hopes to instigate changes in the local jail system that will allow for more humane treatment and initiate rehabilitation programs for the inmates.

These 2 projects, plus our annual events, such as The Scholarship and the Susan B. Anthony Luncheons, and other fundraising events, have kept our chapter active.

Have you been to our website lately?

Have you seen the new, revamped <http://www.flnow.org>?

On our website you can:

- *Find contact information for officers and chapters*
- *Check the calendar to see what's going on*
- *Stay informed on legislative issues*
- *Find out what happens next*