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MONTANA

WOMEN'S RESOURCE

Special Issue
1983 Legislative News

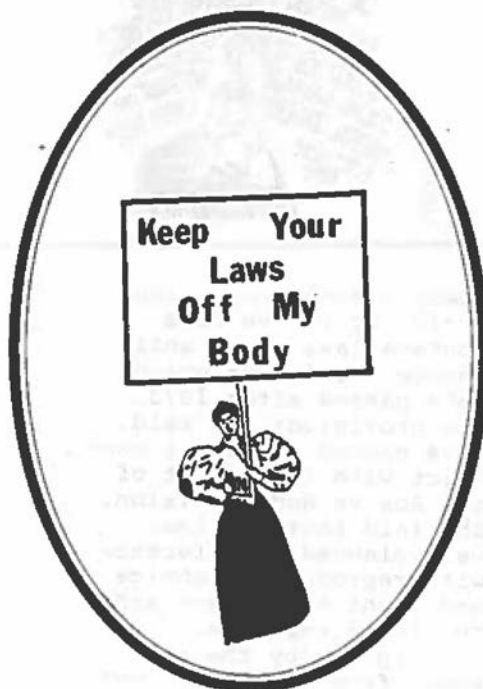
"Women's

In celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, women from across the state gathered for "Women's Lobby Day", sponsored by the Montana Pro Choice Coalition (MPCC).

About 75 women, including 30 from Missoula, attended a noon workshop on effective citizen lobbying conducted by Gail Stoltz of Mont-CEL. The workshop was to prepare women to individually lobby their home district representatives later in the day. Other speakers included Kathy Walden-MPCC lobbyist, Diane Sands-MT Women's History Project, and Pam Campbell-MPCC coordinator. Participants included women from Kalispell, Missoula, Butte, Bozeman, Anaconda, Billings, Deerlodge, and many other communities.

Throughout the week prior to "Women's Lobby Day" MPCC lobbyist Kathy Walden and coordinator Pam Campbell sought support for the introduction of pro-choice legislation.

The MPCC legislative advisory committee had considered two proposals. The first, a resolution stating that the Legislature supports the "constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices free from state intrusion or interference" would not become law, but would be the statement of intent



of this particular legislature. Though it would not be legally binding, it would be the first time that a Montana Legislature considered a pro-choice proposal. Its passage would lead the way to further change-including changes in the MT Abortion Control Act and restoration of medicaid funds for abortion.

The second proposal was to rewrite the Abortion Control Act to eliminate anti-choice language and restrictive provisions. The statement of purpose of the act (50-20-101) says that the tradition of the State of Montana is to "protect every human life whether unborn or aged..". The act also contains several provisions designed to "restrict abortion to the extent permissible."

Lobby Day"

The restrictive provisions include:

Informed Consent--A woman seeking an abortion must first be given information designed to discourage her from choosing abortion. She is told to consider childbirth and adoption even though the pregnancy is unwanted.

The woman must be made aware of the developmental stage of the fetus, the method of abortion, and the effects of the abortion on the fetus.

The physical and psychological effects of abortion must be discussed (but not the effects and risks of a full term pregnancy!). The provision also requires the woman must be told about the viability of the fetus (the ability of the fetus to live outside the womb with artificial aid).

Parental Notification
Written notice to parents or legal guardian is required if the woman is under the age of 18 or is not married (the act used to include notification of spouse). This provision causes many young women to delay seeking abortion until later in the pregnancy when health risks are greater.

Required Hospitalization
Any abortion after the first three months of pregnancy must be performed in a hospital. This further limits access to abortion by making the costs prohibitive.

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Lobby Day Continued . . .

No abortion may be performed after the viability of the fetus unless three doctors have examined the woman and concur with her abortion decision, or if her physician certifies that the abortion is necessary to save the woman's life.

Any health care facility or hospital can refuse to give advice concerning abortion on the general grounds of "religious belief and moral convictions."

All of these provisions are strictly anti-choice and were passed by the MT State Legislature with the sole purpose of interfering with a woman's right to reproductive choice.

Both of the proposals considered by the committee would have given pro-choice supporters something positive to act on. Both were submitted to the Legislative Council for drafting. After much discussion and consultation with other groups the committee decided to go with the resolution.

Though Pam and Kathy talked with many legislators who supported pro-choice and were willing to co-sponsor the proposal, they found not one who would introduce and carry it. Each legislator felt that she or he had compelling reasons for not introducing pro-choice legislation this session. (See other article)

Kathy presented these reasons to the group at the lobbying workshop and the group traveled to the Capitol prepared to counter them. The strategy was to have constituents lobby their own legislators to introduce the proposal.

At 2:00 p.m. the group reached the Capitol where a rally was to take place. The number of the group had more than doubled. Legislators Toni Bergene and Jay Fabrega (both R-Great Falls) each gave a brief presentation in support of choice. Then Judy Smith of Missoula gave a

fiery address promoting action to remove from Montana laws those anti-choice provisions which were passed after 1973. The provisions, she said, were passed in direct conflict with the spirit of the Roe vs Wade decision. She said that the laws were planned interference with reproductive choice and right to privacy and should be repealed.

Inspired by the rally, women from many different legislative districts talked with their legislators about pro-choice legislation. Still, no primary sponsor emerged. Many legislators were found to be uninformed about the Abortion Control Act and most were responsive to this new information and showed willingness to learn more.

Several legislators attended a wine and cheese reception later that afternoon at a private home near the Capitol. Many people who were unable to attend the rally, which was held on a work day afternoon, did come to the reception. Informal lobbying took place in this more relaxed setting and relieved some of the tension of the afternoon. Again, no legislator accepted responsibility for introducing the pro-choice proposal. The reception did, however, bring

QUESTIONS A RICH WOMAN
MUST ANSWER TO GET AN
ABORTION:

CASH OR CHARGE?



QUESTIONS A POOR WOMAN
MUST ANSWER TO GET AN
ABORTION:

LNS/QPF



out more pro-choice support and a seeming willingness on the part of some to prepare for the introduction of such legislation next session. (See separate article)

A benefit dance was held at the Helena Elks Club that evening, winding down a complete day of celebration and activism. Music was provided by the Continentals and over 100 people paid admission to help defray the costs of the days events!

Thank You!



A special and well deserved THANK-YOU goes to all those who helped to make "Women's Lobby Day" a successful and exciting event!!

Pro Choice Legislation

Pros

and

Cons

Based on a survey of candidates in November and legislative voting records from the previous legislative session, the Montana Pro Choice Coalition decided that the political climate for pro-choice legislation was very good. Two proposals were submitted by Rep. Jim Jensen (Billings) to the Legislative Council for drafting. As bill drafting requests were monitored by the MPCC lobbyist, it became apparent that no anti-choice legislation was to appear this session. Many legislators felt that this lack of anti-choice legislation should be considered a victory and that any attempts by MPCC to force them to consider any abortion related proposal would prove to alienate even pro-choice supporters in the Legislature.

While we do need to see lack of a call for a constitutional convention to ban abortion as a victory, it is not as though things are well enough to be left alone. Montana has on its books the Montana Abortion Control Act which is intended to restrict abortion as much as legally possible. (See more information on the act in "Lobby Day" article)

It is the Legislature which passed these provisions and it is our elected representatives who must be called upon to repeal them! Pro-choice activists across the state worked on local and statewide campaigns on a successful effort to assure the protection of reproductive rights. As long as anti-choice laws exist, it is not too much to ask our representatives to take the necessary positive steps toward repealing them!



Here are some of the arguments given by legislators for not introducing pro-choice legislation, and possible responses to those arguments. Please keep in mind that the legislators who gave these reasons had given positive responses to the MPCC candidate survey or have good pro-choice voting records.

There are many important issues that are being addressed this session. There is not enough time.

While it is true that the legislative body addresses many important issues each session, pro-choice is not any less important than any one of these other issues! Legislators are often uncomfortable talking about abortion. Still, they are elected and paid to deal with all types of important matters.

Bringing up the topic of abortion will hurt other women's issues.

First of all, abortion is not an issue apart. It is an issue central to all women's issues and it must not be compromised. The MPCC is primarily single issue in focus, but is not separate from other issues. The MPCC worked closely with the Women's Lobbyist Fund during its formative stages and is now a supporting member of WLF.

Second, each legislative proposal should be supported or opposed on its own merit. Consideration of a pro-choice resolution would be unlikely to influence votes on other legislation.

A resolution is not legally binding so it doesn't really mean anything.

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Contributions to the Montana Women's Resource are needed and always greatly appreciated. Please send your donation to
Montana Women's Resource
Women's Resource Center
University Center
University of Montana
Missoula, MT 59812



\$ _____ ENCLOSED

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Missoulian

Fails Its

Readers!

Newspapers throughout the state chose to print photographs and articles about "Women's Lobby Day" and the 10th anniversary celebration of legal abortion. The Missoulian, rejected these news stories, however, and chose only to cover the Right-to-Life rally held the following day. It is hard, in this case, not to avoid the conclusion that the Missoulian purposefully chooses not to cover pro-choice activities, and that this decision may be based on the personal sentiments of Missoulian staff members.

Forty women from Missoula attended the Lobby Day event. Ride sharing was arranged through Missoula Pro Choice. A letter about the celebration was submitted to the editorial page editor, but was not published.

The refusal to publish pro-choice related news and events is not new to the Missoulian. It has consistently failed to cover Freedom Celebration Day even though this annual event draws 400 to 700 people for a day of music, theatre, and speeches centered around a controversial issue. The Missoulian considers it "not newsworthy".

Missoula Mobilization to Defeat the Human Life Amendment staff members were particularly attentive to the Missoulian in October of '82, personally delivering Freedom Celebration Day information and extending an invitation to the city editor, Brad Hurd, to attend or send a reporter. Still, no press coverage appeared in the Missoulian.

The press, and especially the Missoulian has been frequently unfair and insensitive to women's issues. Its hard to know what action people can take to show dissatisfaction. Letters to the Missoulian may be helpful. For those of us who like to read the local news over morning coffee, it is difficult to consider canceling a subscription.

Ronni Hacken

Individual, Couple & Group Counseling

406-549-2211

Missoula, Montana



The fact is, women are in chains, and their servitude is all the more debasing because they do not realize it. O to compel them to see and feel and to give them the courage and the conscience to speak and act for their own freedom, though they face the scorn and contempt of all the world for doing it!

SUSAN B ANTHONY

CONTRIBUTORS

Susan Ashcraft
Judy Smith
Maureen Jones
Candace Crosby
Diane Sands

Legislation Continued . . .

While a resolution is not legally binding, it does demonstrate the sentiment of the Legislature. Its passage could lead the way to more meaningful change. Mobilizing pro-choice supporters around a positive proposal is an exciting proposition, a turning point for a group which has long been on the defensive. Right-to-Life proposals in the past sessions have been in the form of resolutions; the strongest being a call for a Con-Con to ban abortion. (This did not pass)

The resolution wouldn't pass anyway, so what's the point?

The discomfort legislators feel with the topic of abortion will never be relieved if there is no legislation proposed to prompt open discussion. This issue will not just disappear and neither will pro-choice constituents.



Introduction of legislation is the best way to encourage constituent-representative communication. If the goal is to keep abortion safe and legal and to make it accessible to all women, the legislators must be kept informed. A resolution proposal would be a vehicle for continuing education on abortion related issues.

There is only one way for a proposal to pass-it must come to a vote. It frequently takes several attempts to gain enough support to pass a new proposal. The more intense and effective the educational efforts, the sooner that support is gained.

Support for pro-choice would be best demonstrated in the voting records. The records could then be used for identifying pro-choice candidates to support in the next election, which is never far away!

Planned Parenthood and Teen Pregnancy

The department of Health and Human Services just published the parental notification rule (squeal rule) for minors receiving contraceptives from federally funded family planning clinics. The rule requires that clinics violate client confidentiality and notify one parent of any minor within 10 days of her receiving contraceptives.

This regulation will result in an increase in unwanted teen pregnancy and abortion. Fifty per cent of all sexually active minors say they would not go to a family planning clinic if their parents were notified. Twenty-five per cent of teens who already go to family planning clinics report that they will stop going if their parents are notified. Only two per cent say they will stop being sexually active.

Family planning clinics already encourage clients to talk to their parents—but some feel they can't. This regulation will not change that problem, it will only deny these teens access to contraceptives.

It's important to oppose the enforcement of these regulations. Several organizations are seeking a court action but are unsure what the results will be. Margaret Heckler, the new Secretary of Health and Human Services, publically opposed this regulation before she joined the Reagan Administration. Now is the time to write to her in opposition to this regulation.

Letters need to be sent to Montana's Congressional members asking them to urge Heckler to withdraw this regulation. Montana had over 2800 teen pregnancies and 1100 teen abortions in 1981. Obviously we need to encourage teens to make responsible decisions about their sexuality. This rule would deny teens access to education and counseling which would help them to recognize their options for responsible decision making.

NUMBER OF TEENS WHO HAVE HAD SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

By Age 16



By Age 19



Adolescent pregnancy is the number one cause of female high school dropout.

- *Over 1/4 of all teens have been pregnant by age 19
- *Total number of abortions in Montana in 1981 was 3,838. Teens experienced 28% or 1,068 of these.
- *Of all teens who seek family planning services for the first time, 70% do so because they think they are already pregnant. Before starting to use
- *Before starting to use any form of birth control, the average teenager has already had intercourse for one year.



Secretary Margaret Heckler
Dept. of Health and Human
Services
Washington, DC 20201

Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(Baucus, Melcher)

House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
(Williams, Marlene)

Family Planning Money Secure

State family planning funds seem secure now. The Governor's budget proposed to change the source of family planning money from federal funds to the state general revenue fund. This would have made full funding for family planning much more difficult to maintain because of the increased competition for general revenue funding as a result of the cutting of federal funds for social programs and services. Action by family planning supporters in the House and Senate put family planning funding back into Montana's Title XX allocation.

Comments

"Planned Parenthood has turned away from its phony facade of respectability and concern for teenagers... (and) is an insidious cancer defying parents and the law in a pathological attempt to fill the eugenic dreams of its founder, Margaret Sanger."

From

"Ironically we have seen no major effort on the part of Planned Parenthood toward male teen responsibility. Granting the dubious premise that teenagers either will or must be sexually active, why not a major toward the use of the condom? The condom is an over-the-counter device readily available with no known side effects."

Montana's

"...Judy Smith, an avowed feminist, advocate of legal abortion, spokesman for lesbian rights, and speaking for Planned Parenthood, apparently prefers the use of potentially dangerous items like the pill and IUD for girls without parental notice. She appears to have either abandoned the feminist goal of equal reproductive responsibility or sold out to the drug firms..."

Right-to-Life

"It is time that...pseudo-feminists in Montana...demonstrate some real compassion for the female teenager whose body is being poisoned by pills and IUDs which they dole out...True feminists should scorn Planned Parenthood for the elitist, eugenic group of fanatics that it is."

Legislative Update

Three Major Issues . . .

Comparable Worth

The issue of comparable worth will be addressed as a resolution requesting the State of Montana to study the implementation of a system of equal pay for jobs of comparable worth.

The concept of equal pay for equal work was originally meant to close the gap between women's wages and men's wages. And it has, if a woman and a man do the exact same job. The problem is that women and men still do not do the same jobs. Women are clustered in the lower paying service jobs while men work in higher paying blue collar and management jobs. This is what is known as occupational segregation.

Occupational segregation has led many unions and women's groups to pursue job classification and renumeration based on a system of jobs that are comparable. A job evaluation system that rates jobs on factors such as skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions is used. In a recent case in San Jose, the Association of Federal, State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) won "equity adjustments" of 5 to 15% for many women's salaries through reclassifications. A librarian was ranked as performing work similar to that of a landscaper, a clerk/typist was similar to a security officer.

Several states have already researched the issue of comparable worth as well as major corporations, such as Westinghouse (Westinghouse faced suits in three plants). The Montana study will not duplicate what has already been done, but will simply gather the data and address how such a system could be implemented in our state.

Insurance

Women presently receive positive and negative "benefits" from the insurance system. Although we enjoy lower rates, especially in teenage automobile rates, our life insurance policies pay us less money in retirement years. This is when the differential is of most concern because many older women end up living in poverty during their later years.

The proposals before the legislature this session would require insurance agencies to look at factors other than sex when determining rates. Other factors include medical physicals, smoker or non-smoker, occupation, and lifestyle choices. These factors were implemented when consideration on the basis of race and religion were made illegal.

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WOMEN'S PLACE

☆Counseling and loving support from a feminist perspective in dealing with issues of:

- domestic and sexual violence against women
- divorce
- women's health

☆Also, educational programs, support groups, and referral services.

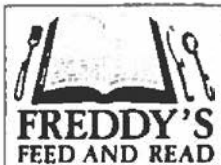
New Location!
127 E. Main, Rm. 218
Missoula, Montana 59802
Office Hours: 9-3 Mon.-Fri.

24 Hour Crisis Line
543-7606

OUT IN MONTANA

Gay men and Lesbian organization of Montana maintains a Resource Center in Missoula.

Call 728-6589
Men's Hotline 728-8758
Womyn's Hotline 542-2684



Women's Literature

Doris Lessing * Adrienne Rich
June Jordan * Dorothy Bryant
Margaret Atwood * Marge Piercy

549-2127

1221 Helen

Three Major Issues Continued . . . Veteran's Preference

The legislature is looking at the issue of preference given to veterans, disabled vets, and the handicapped in the hiring, layoff, and rehiring processes. In a landmark decision in 1982, Helena's Judge Bennett ruled that absolute preference must be given to disabled vets, vets, and handicapped who are minimally qualified for a job position. This ruling, known as the Crabtree decision, and proposed legislation affect state, county, and city employees as well as the University System and all school districts.

Few would argue with strong preference requirements for disabled vets or the handicapped. However, women's groups are strongly opposed to legislation that affirms that absolute rights of all veterans who are minimally qualified. While there is recognition that some points might be awarded to the veterans, to state that absolute preference be given unfairly affects other discriminated constituencies within Montana, especially women and minorities. Currently veterans are employed at rates higher than their percentage in the Montana population. This is not the case with women and minorities.

In addition, the use of "minimally qualified" language, rather than "substantially equally qualified", wrongly implies that veterans, handicapped and disabled vets can't qualify for jobs unless standards are lowered and reverses a societal value on excellence in work by seeking the lowest common denominator as acceptable in the workplace.

The absence of "affected class" language is the most serious problem with bills currently proposed. Affected classes--women, minorities, and handicapped--would continue to suffer from underutilization in the Montana work force. In spite of affirmative action and the Montana Bill of Rights, discrimination in the workforce is a major problem. The majority of Montana women work in deadend sex-segregated fields, earning 55¢ for every dollar a man makes (this is even less than the national average of 59¢). Without affected class language, affirmative action will become impossible within Montana.

Whichever of several proposed veteran's preference bills passes the legislature, many Montana women will feel the impact of this new requirement. Over 20% of Montana's workforce will be affected by this decision, making veteran's preference one of the most far reaching pieces of legislation considered this session.



Mountain Moving Press
315 S 4th Street East
Missoula, MT 59801
543-4523

Watch for these

Upcoming Events!



More Women's Music in Mslai!
If you liked Holly Near...
If you liked Meg Christian...
You'll like Ferron.
Ferron is a well known
musician in Canada and has
released two albums.
The Women's Resource Center
is exploring the possibility
of bringing Ferron to
Missoula on June 3rd.
Call 243-4153 for more info.

In Honor of Women's History Week
The Montana Women's History Project
Presents
A Celebration of Our Tradition

Nancy Schimmel- storyteller and
"Love It Like A Fool" film about
folk singer/songwriter Malvina
Reynolds. (Nancy is Malvina's
daughter.)

Thurs. March 10, 1983 7:30 p.m.
Helena Movement Center
Tickets \$4.00

Fri. March 11, 1983 7:30 p.m.
Room 221 Strand Union Building MSU
Bozeman Tickets \$3.00 General
\$2 Students

Sat. March 12, 1983 7:30 p.m.
Music Recital Hall U of M
Missoula Tickets \$4.00

Call the Women's Resource Center
243-4153 for more information.

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Missoula, MT 59812

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