

Faith & Freedom

Fall 2008

Newsletter of the Indiana Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

The stakes are high—let's "lift every voice" in the upcoming elections!



At every level of government—national, state, and local (see at right)—the ability of people to make reproductive health decisions in keeping with their religious beliefs and conscience is at great risk.

We can take a stand for reproductive justice and religious freedom by lifting our voices.

What we can do—

- **Learn** where the candidates stand on important issues relating to reproductive health and religious freedom.
- **Ask** the candidates questions. Go to <http://rcrc.org/pdf/askthecandidates08.pdf>
- **Support** and help candidates that will stand up for reproductive justice and religious freedom.
- **Help** with voter registration drives.
- **Tell** your friends how important this election is and encourage them to vote.
- **Join** RCRC's "Lift Every Voice" campaign. Go to http://rcrc.org/issues/election08_candidates.cfm

	McCain	Obama
Abstinence-only programs	YES	NO
Comprehensive sexuality education programs	NO	YES
Publicly funded family planning services	NO	YES
Access to safe legal abortion services	NO	YES

Coming soon to a county near you?

Anti-choice laws would close abortion provider clinics

Leaders of Indiana Right to Life and other anti-choice groups in our state have been unsuccessful in getting "doctor admitting privileges" laws passed by the state legislature, so they are now turning their attention to county governments.

In August, the Vanderburgh County Commissioners (Evansville) approved an ordinance which would require doctors who perform abortions to have admitting privileges at local hospitals. A similar measure was passed shortly after in Dubois County. Now, anti-choice leaders have targeted Allen County (Fort Wayne), where a similar restriction is under consideration.

Proponents of these restrictions cite a concern for patient safety as their motivation, but in fact there is no substantiated evidence that there is a problem with patient safety. Make no mistake about it—**these efforts have nothing to do with patient safety but everything to do with trying to shut down abortion provider clinics.** Here are the facts:

- Abortion in Indiana is already one of the safest procedures available. The Indiana State Department of Health reports the complication rate for first trimester abortions (the only type that is currently allowed in Indiana clinics) is less than 0.5%, less than the complication rate of carrying a pregnancy to term.
- Ordinance supporters cite the need for follow-up care in local hospitals, but the Indiana State Department of Health already requires clinics to provide patients with information regarding follow-up care, including 24-hour emergency phone support.
- Abortion clinics in Indiana are already heavily regulated and are required to follow a host of rules to ensure patient safety in areas such as operations, licensing, and inspection. Procedures are already in place to track and review any issues regarding follow-up care.
- Only five counties in the state have abortion provider clinics. Vanderburgh and Dubois Counties, where commissioners recently spent time and taxpayers' money to pass these restrictions, do not even have clinics.
- Doctors who provide abortion services frequently travel to clinics from out of town. If they are required to obtain admitting privileges at local hospitals, many of which are Catholic hospitals, they may no longer be able to provide services. Because many of the patients are also from out of town, requiring the physician to have local hospital privileges is not particularly helpful.
- These restrictions do not address the very real concerns of health complications related to other types of in-office surgical procedures such as plastic surgery and dental surgery. They are focused solely on abortion.

In short, **these proposed measures will help no one and potentially hurt many.** We urge county leaders to learn the facts and consult with health and medical professionals as they consider these anti-choice proposals. Rather than creating more restrictions and trying to shut down clinics, people who are concerned about abortion should be working to reduce unintended pregnancies through better sex education and access to family planning services.

We urge IRCRC members to keep tabs on your own community and if one of these proposals comes before your county commission, be ready to speak up. ♦

Do you live in Allen County?

County Commissioners have invited community input on the proposed ordinance. A copy is posted at www.allencounty.us. Send your comment by **9/19** to: Allen County Commissioners, 1 E. Main St., Rm 200 Fort Wayne IN 46082 email: commissioner@allencounty.us tel: 449-7555

Proposed regulation jeopardizes the right to acquire birth control

The time to speak up is NOW!

On August 26, the Bush Administration proposed a new regulation that expands the rights of health care workers to follow their own conscience with regard to providing and referring for contraception and abortion services. This time the regulation is not a draft. It has been officially proposed and **a 30-day comment period is in place until September 24.**

The new proposed regulation avoids defining abortion, and leaves a dangerously wide gap for denying women needed services. The new regulation is written so broadly that it would allow an anti-contraception appointment scheduler to refuse to schedule patients seeking birth control. This would deny women access to legal medical services and could undermine the work of family planning clinics.

The twisted sense of priorities expressed in this regulation damages our nation's healthcare system, tramples on individual lives and belies our commitment to separation of church and state. **It is yet one more example of ideology trumping sound health care.**

We live in a religiously pluralistic society, and, as a nation, we believe in protecting religious expression and freedom. Yet this regulation uses the cloak of provider conscience to mask a major attack on access to reproductive services. **There are conscience protections already in law that allow providers to opt out of offering services if they have moral or religious objections. This new regulation broadens refusal rights to an untenable degree.**

Finalizing these rules would impose, through government mandate, a narrow religious ideology and undermine the commitment of major religious traditions to accessible reproductive healthcare.

We ask all Americans of faith to register their opposition to this proposed new rule by sending an email to Health and Human Services Secretary Leavitt. Remember: **the deadline is Sept. 24!** ♦

Go to www.ircrc.org and click on **Proposed Regulation Undermines Access to Reproductive Health Services**



Many pro-choice people trust in God, too

by Kaye McSpadden, President

Did you happen to see a letter to the editor published in the July 26, 2008, edition of the *Indianapolis Star* entitled "In God We Trust" plates out of place at abortion clinics? The letter writer, a doctor who says he is a regular protester at a local abortion provider clinic, said he is "astonished" and "saddened" by the number of cars in the clinic parking lot bearing the "In God We Trust" license plate. Apparently he does not believe that a person of faith could or should be a client or staffperson at a clinic. He calls this a "disconnect" that is "inexplicable."

Well, guess what. A June, 2008 report from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life shows that **a strong majority of members of mainline Protestant churches, Orthodox Christians, Jews, Buddhists, and Hindus believe that abortion should be legal in most or all cases.**

Of course, that is not news to us as members of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. As members of a wide diversity of religious groups, we know that **our pro-choice views are entirely consistent with our faith beliefs.**

However, we also recognize and honor the other part of the Pew Report which showed that members of the Catholic church, Muslims, and historically African American Protestant churches are evenly divided on the issue, and furthermore, the majority of Mormons, Evangelical

Christians, and Jehovah's Witnesses tend to oppose legalized abortion.

In fact, it was respect for this very diversity of faith beliefs which was part of the basis for the U.S. Supreme Court landmark *Roe vs. Wade* decision. Recognizing "the wide divergence of thinking on this most sensitive and difficult question," the Supreme Court justices decided it was not up to them to determine when personhood starts when "those trained in the respective disciplines of medicine, philosophy, and theology are unable to arrive at any consensus."

In view of this wide divergence of beliefs, and in honor of our nation's principle of religious freedom, members of IRCRC believe **we should all strive for tolerance and understanding of religious differences, search for common ground on these difficult issues, and work to establish a dialogue based on mutual respect** rather than making judgments and false assumptions about each other.

Just think what would happen if, rather than harassing vulnerable women entering clinics and judging someone's religion based on a license plate motto, people in the faith community who are concerned about the high rate of abortion would instead join together to reduce the rate of unintended pregnancy by providing better sex education and access to family planning. Would that be so astonishing? ♦

Read the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life's report, "US Religious Landscape Survey," at <http://religions.pewforum.org/reports>

IRCRC brings the moral power of religious communities to ensure reproductive choice and health through education and advocacy. IRCRC is a state affiliate of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

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SYRFers at IU!

Spiritual Youth for Reproductive Freedom (SYRF) is back in action at Indiana University in Bloomington. This year there are three campus organizers:

- **Nina Loftsprig** is a senior from Cincinnati, Ohio, studying History, Jewish Studies and Nonprofit Management.
- **Andrea Perlman** is a junior, also from Cincinnati, Ohio, studying Political Science, Gender Studies and Liberal Arts and Management.
- **Allie Cogan** is a sophomore from Cherry Hill, New Jersey, and is studying Social and Cultural Anthropology and Jewish Studies.

We're all excited and ready to get things going here in Bloomington! We're kicking off the year with two days of *Cookies and Condoms*, a previously successful event of passing out information, along with cookies and condoms! After that we're planning events, including an event with *Take Back the Night*, an election-based event and more! It's going to be a jam-packed semester.

If you would like to contact any of us, the best way to reach us is through email—

Nina: nloftspr@indiana.edu, Andrea: alperlma@indiana.edu, Allie: acogan@indiana.edu

Learn more about SYRF, Spiritual Youth for Reproductive Freedom, and how you can bring SYRF to your campus, at www.syrf.org



Announcing...

The 2009 Faith & Freedom Dinner
Saturday evening,
April 25, 2009
Radisson North,
Indianapolis

Guest speaker:
Loretta Ross
National Coordinator of
SisterSong: Women of Color
Reproductive Health
Collective

Also... an exciting workshop
will be held in the afternoon,
prior to the dinner.

Watch for more details in the
coming months.

2008 Faith & Freedom Dinner, held in Indianapolis for the first time, is a smashing success

The 2008 Faith & Freedom Dinner was a big success! For the first time ever, the event was held in Indianapolis on Saturday, May 3, 2008. The evening sparkled with a pre-dinner reception featuring live music and a silent auction. Highlights of the program included:

- lively music by Sapphonia, ensemble of the Indianapolis Women's Chorus,
- presentation of the 2008 Dr. Stella Boyd Award for Service to Susan Tyler, R.N.,
- presentation of the 2008 Faith & Freedom Award for Advocacy to Rep. Philip Hoy, and
- a rousing and inspiring keynote speech by Rev. Carlton Veazey, President of the national RCRC.

We were delighted to have special guest Rep. Barbara Lee from California in the audience. Rep. Lee is a sponsor of the REAL (Responsible Education about Life) Act in the U.S. Congress. Many people at the dinner signed a petition in support of REAL.

We appreciate the support of everyone who attended, as well as all those who helped and contributed in various ways, making this important annual event possible.

At right, IRCRC friends and supporters enjoyed an evening of fun and fellowship. At far right: **Sapphonia** performs "God is in All" and other inspirational songs.



At left, **Rev. Carlton Veazey** speaks on "Pro Choice from an African American Perspective." Below, left: **Rev. Richard Clough** accepts the 2008 Faith & Freedom Award for Advocacy on behalf of **Rep. Philip Hoy**, who could not be present. Below, right: **Susan Tyler, R.N.**,



accepts the 2008 Dr. Stella Boyd Award for Service.

National Black Religious Summit filled with energy and inspiration

by Anne Roberts

Note: IRCRC was pleased to award the 2008 National Black Religious Summit scholarship to Anne Roberts, a student at IUPUI. Following is Anne's report on her experience at the Summit, which was held in Washington DC on July 9-11, 2008



It was serendipitous for me to attend this summer's National Black Religious Summit (NBRS) in Washington, DC.

I first met serendipity when a faculty member at Christian

Theological Seminary (CTS) and I entered into a casual conversation over a year ago that has developed into an independent research project for my undergraduate degree at IUPUI; and again when my academic advisor had just published an article that was connected to the issues of homosexuality and the black church; and yet again when a field supervisor's last email to the community at CTS (before her departure to other employment) was an announcement of available funding for the NBRS event. My attendance was meant to be.

My name is Anne Roberts. I am white. I'm a full-time student at IUPUI and work full-time at CTS. The opportunity to attend the NBRS conference came at a time when I began to wonder if my life's work would ever be revealed to me. I'm 48 years young and a life-time learner. I'd like to share my experience as well as express my gratitude to Indiana Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice for their financial support.

In my request for funding I related that I was working on an independent study project for my BA that asks the question "Why is homosexual practice taboo in the Black Church?" I have been knee deep in reading Alice Walker, Kelly Douglas Brown, Horace Griffin, James Cone and others.

Having recently finished reading *The Whosoever Church* by David Comstock,

my experience at the conference affirmed my belief that there has been movement toward dialogue outside the benevolent outreach to HIV/AIDS patients. Many have heard the call to be welcoming and affirming to the LGBT community.

Still, I was in awe at the work that has been done. The palpable energy that was preached from the pulpit took a life of its own and made me proud to be among this group of people who are in the trenches fighting the war for acceptance, inclusion and affirmation.

The highlight of the conference for me was the workshop led by Horace Griffin titled "Their Own Receive Them Not." He authors a book by the same title. The discussion that took place was dynamic and life giving. Countless stories of shame and prejudice erupted during that all too brief meeting but the level of compassion was unmatched. The group was an eclectic mix—old and young, professional and lay, men, women, self-identified straight and gay.

It was evident to me that a yearning exists to understand the roots of prejudice in the church but maybe even more so with this crowd a yearning for next steps for healing. As a life-long lover of learning I am again convinced that education is the only way to move a people from prejudice to acceptance.

Advocacy for the oppressed, training for clergy, and dialogue with congregants have their roots in Rev. Carlton Veazey and he not worry that his fight will continue and his dream realized. This was evidenced by the participation of many young teenagers who are obviously dedicated and clearly supported by their peers and superiors as they find their way to spread the message of inclusion.

I am both grateful and humbled by the experience and know now, that the life work that I thought had to be realized, in truth has been evolving along. ♦

Organizational Supporters*

Congregation Beth-El Zedeck,
Indianapolis

First Congregational Church UCC,
Indianapolis

Social Justice Committee,
Unitarian Universalist Community
Church of Hendricks Co.

Temple Israel, Gary

Unitarian Universalist Church,
Lafayette

Planned Parenthood of Indiana

*Organizations in Indiana show their commitment to reproductive rights and religious freedom by signing up to be IRCRC Supporters. Supporters can include congregations, committees, chapters, and other local groups, as well as regional and state-level groups such as conferences, districts, presbyteries. Both religious and secular groups are welcome. Contact IRCRC or go to <http://www.ircrc.org/signup.html>

Hoosier Clergy for Choice**

Rev. Dr. Jay E. Abernathy, Jr.

Rabbi Jon Adland

Rev. Deanna Brown

Rev. Andy Burnette

Rev. Richard Clough

Rev. Hilary E. Cooke

Rev. Dr. Carl Malmgren

Rev. Christen Pettit Miller

Rev. William F. Ping

Rabbi Dennis C. Sasso

Rev. Doddie L. Stone

Rev. Teri Thomas

Rabbi Mira Wasserman

**Indiana clergy show their support for reproductive rights and religious freedom by signing the *Clergy for Choice Pledge*. Clergy of all faiths are welcome to join. Also, clergy in all positions are welcome, including clergy in congregational work, hospital chaplaincy, campus ministry, counseling, and retired clergy. Contact IRCRC or go to www.ircrc.org/joinclergyforchoice.html

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Indiana Congressman signs on to REAL

IRCRC is thrilled to announce that **Rep. Andre Carson** (Indiana District 7) has signed on as a co-sponsor of the Responsible Education about Life Act (REAL, H.R. 1653).

REAL is federal legislation that would provide funding for honest, medically accurate, age-appropriate sex education programs that the public supports and that studies show can be effective in helping teens stay healthy.

So far, Rep. Carson is the **ONLY** cosponsor from Indiana in either the House of Representatives or Senate. If you live in District 7, please write and THANK Rep. Carson for supporting H.R. 1653 and for working for the health and education of our young people.

If you live in another district, encourage your Representative to support REAL. ♦

Join People of Faith for REAL

[http://ircrc.org/issues/
People_REAL.cfm](http://ircrc.org/issues/People_REAL.cfm)

Help keep the faith for choice in Indiana!

Use the enclosed envelope to make a donation.

Or, donate online at www.ircrc.org.



Many thanks to our supporters for your gifts*

Linda Cohen	Bruce & Kaye McSpadden
Frances Fach	Richard & Betty Nelson
Dr. Teena Flook	Nancy Patchen
Celia Hartley	Gail Pebworth
Jerrilyn & Tim Herd	Debra Sherman
Joan & Karl Lohmann	Cassie Stockamp

* *Your* name can be in the next newsletter! In our most recent call for contributions, we offered the option to have your name listed in the newsletter for the first time. Watch for it again when you receive your annual letter in November.

Tippecanoe County Fair booth was a big success!

Many thanks to the 25 volunteers who worked the county fair booth in Lafayette from July 19-25, 2008. Over the course of the week, volunteers talked with hundreds of fair-goers, raising awareness about Prevention First legislation, inviting them to sign the Prevention First petition, and registering new voters. Brochures on various aspects of education, advocacy, and access were also distributed.

The booth was sponsored by HAPA (Health Access and Privacy Alliance). Special thanks goes to Indiana Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, League of Women Voters of Greater Lafayette, and Planned Parenthood for providing most of the planning and leadership.

Learn more about HAPA at
www.hapaindiana.org

Learn more about Prevention First and sign the Prevention First petition at
[www.ircrc.org/
preventionfirst.html](http://www.ircrc.org/preventionfirst.html)



Above, members of the planning committee show their enthusiasm for the 2008 Fair Booth

Fall 2008 Issue—Put your faith in action!
 Allen County residents, speak up by 9/19 (page 1)
 Everyone: contact HHS by 9/24 (page 2)
 Upcoming elections: Lift Every Voice! (page 1)

Change Service Requested

Resources for action and learning



What Every 21st-Century Parent Needs to Know: Facing today's challenges with wisdom and heart

by Debra W. Haffner. Newmarket Press, 2008.

Haffner, a public health educator, minister, Director of the Religious Institute, and author of two award-winning books on parenting, tackles the challenges facing parents in today's world.

Drawing upon research and offering concrete examples, Haffner addresses the concerns of parents as they try to raise physically, emotionally, and sexually healthy children.

She debunks myths and offers practical, positive advice in chapters like "Just say know: raising sexually healthy children," "The truth about abductions and sexual abuse," and "Couch potato, mouse potato: navigating the new electronic world." ♦

Fast Facts is powerful new online tool

The Kaiser Family Foundation has launched *Fast Facts*, a new online tool that provides direct access to facts, data and slides about the nation's health care system and programs, in an easy-to-use format. Check out the facts on topics such as women's health policy, minority health, and HIV/AIDS, and use tools such as creating your own slideshows. **Go to www.facts.kff.org.**

Check out these two great e-newsletters—

📧 **Rhrealitycheck**, one of the best websites with news and commentary on reproductive health issues, offers both a daily and weekly e-newsletter. **Go to www.rhrealitycheck.org and click on "Enews Updates."**

📧 **The Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice and Healing** offers a monthly e-newsletter with thoughtful commentary on issues relating to faith and sexuality. **Go to www.religiousinstitute.org and click on NEWS--Newsletter.**

SIECUS' new State Profiles includes info about Indiana



SIECUS (Sexuality Information & Education Council of the U.S.) has published a new edition of its *State Profiles*, the most complete portrait ever assembled of abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in the U.S.

The report includes individual profiles of every state. It is intended to serve as a guide and major resource for advocates, policymakers and other interested parties.

The report also discusses recent trends. For instance, the number of states that have decided to decline Title V abstinence-only funds continues to grow. That number is now 25.

To read the State Profiles, go to www.siecus.org and click on "SIECUS State Profiles Fiscal Year 2007 Edition."

To learn specific information about Indiana, including which programs receive these funds and what the programs teach, click on the state of Indiana on the map. ♦