

From “Sacred Values: A Multifaith Celebration of Freedom, Health, and Justice,” held on 2/8/2007 at the Indiana Statehouse, sponsored by the Indiana Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

“Call to Commitment” by Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso

A story is told of a young man whose father asked him to study with a certain rabbi. The son wondered why he needed to spend his time studying with that particular rabbi. “After all” he said, “his lectures only deal with secular matters.” “What do you mean?” asked the young man’s father. The son replied, “The rabbi’s lessons are devoted to understanding how the body functions and how to live to stay physically fit. There is nothing holy about that.” The father rebuked his son, “The rabbi teaches about the body, about health, and you call that secular. All the more reason that you should study with him”

Rabbi Nachman, a 19th century Hasidic sage, taught – If you can do damage, then you can also do repair.

There is much damage being done to the lives of women and families in the state of Indiana. Overall we rank 49th in the United States in providing funding, comprehensive sex education, accessibility to health services and contraception that enable young people to make healthy decisions about their sexuality, decisions that prevent unintended pregnancies and protect them from disease.

The laws and policies of our state have done damage, but we can do repair.

We can do repair

- by giving people the information they need to make responsible choices,
- by empowering women through access to crucial health services
- by shedding light on human sexuality rather than shrouding it in mystery and shame.

We have done damage, but we can do repair

- by focusing on prevention rather than punishment
- by spreading hope instead of fear.

By advancing science instead of superstition

We have done damage, but we can do repair

by raising our voices on behalf of all those who have no voice

by joining hands with those who seek the welfare of all families

for speaking out to those who make the laws and policies that affect the
quality of life of all our citizens

We have done damage.

We can and we must do repair.

The task is sacred.

The work is holy.

The time is NOW!

We pause for a moment of silence as we reflect on what needs to be done now, this day and the days ahead.