

Reproductive Justice—Necessary Steps

The South Dakota legislature voted to ban all abortions except in the case where the mother's life is in danger. This is a gauntlet thrown down in the face of all women. The challenge must be met.

Why we must fight:

- 1) Women have the right to control their lives.
- 2) Women have the right to live life fully, including the right to sexual expression.
- 3) The necessary corollary of this right is the right to control reproduction.
- 4) Without the right to control reproduction, a woman's biology becomes her destiny.
- 5) Because fertility commences before legal majority, the right to control reproduction is also the right of minor women.
- 6) Sex education is the first step to the expression of this right.
- 7) To be effective, sex education must be available, scientific, non-judgmental, and honest.
- 8) Safe, available, and affordable contraception is the next step.
- 9) No contraceptive is 100 per cent effective.
- 10) Unwanted pregnancies do occur.
- 11) Pregnancies should not be deemed as a punishment for a woman's sexual activity.
- 12) No woman should be forced to bear an unwanted child.
- 13) Therefore, the right to safe, affordable abortion is critical to ensuring full reproductive justice.
- 14) Because she is the one to bear the consequences of her decision, for good or for ill, the decision to have an abortion must be made solely by the woman, in consultation with only the persons whom she chooses to consult.
- 15) People who are anti-choice are fundamentally opposed to the right of a woman to control her life.

What we must do:

1) South Dakota

- Petition the governor of South Dakota to veto the abortion ban
- Solicit financial support for legal challenges undertaken by the ACLU, Planned Parenthood, etc.
- Consider the submission of *amicus* briefs in these cases

2) Other fronts

- actively support the passage of the Responsible Education About Life (REAL) Act, which would require sex education classes to be science-based, non-judgmental, and accurate;
- urge democratic lawmakers to introduce legislation to require the FDA to approve over the counter sales of emergency contraception;
- campaign for budget increases for Title X clinics;
- campaign to revoke the gag rule prohibiting foreign recipients of UN aid from discussing and providing abortions to their clients
- urge lawmakers to introduce legislation guaranteeing the right to access to sex education, contraception, and abortion
- use the internet to reach out to potential allies—explain why we need to fight and what we can do by working together