

# BROOKLYN-QUEENS NOW NEWS



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## KANSAS: SO MUCH FOR CRITICIZING SUFFRAGE

(Associated Press)

A state senator who said in 2001 that giving women the vote was a symptom of weakness in the American family is seeking the Republican nomination for secretary of state, the state's top elections official. In 2001, the senator, Kay O'Connor, disparaged the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote. "The 19th Amendment is around because men weren't doing their jobs," Ms. O'Connor said, "and I think that's sad. I believe the man should be the head of the family." She now dismisses the controversy as silliness.

## BQ NOW PAC ENDORSEMENTS

Over the past few months, our Political Action Committee (PAC) has been active in re-writing the PAC questionnaire, identifying and contacting candidates, reviewing their responses and interviewing the "cream of the crop." [Look at your mailing label. CC followed by a number represents your council district number.]

Our questionnaire covered the spectrum of our issues: reproductive rights, civil rights, employment, domestic relations, and health and welfare. For a copy of the questionnaire, email [srogers46@nyc.rr.com](mailto:srogers46@nyc.rr.com) or call Sherry Rogers: 718 263-7638.

We identified over 100 candidates who filed petitions with the NYC Board of Elections. We confined ourselves to city-wide candidates and those whose races cover districts in Brooklyn and Queens. We mailed out 97 questionnaires. Of the 97, we received responses from 14 candidates. We selected 8 candidates for interviews which were held August 20th and 23rd. Our evaluations and the PAC recommendations appear below.

**Mayor:** Only Michael Bloomberg responded. He received a rating of 80%. He sidestepped clear answers to our questions on education vouchers, workfare exemptions, welfare issues, healthcare, and childcare centers. We declined to interview him.

**Public Advocate:** Both Norman Siegel and Betsy Gotbaum responded. Both received a rating of 100%. After interviewing them, we found Siegel the more focused, dynamic candidate with plans to increase the activism of the office: ***WE ENDORSE NORMAN SIEGEL.***

**Brooklyn District Attorney:** Mark Peters responded. **He received a rating of 100%.** Peters has plans to revamp the District Attorney's outreach to communities and actively prosecute corruption in the judiciary. ***WE ENDORSE MARK PETERS.***

**Brooklyn Borough President:** Marty Markowitz responded. He received a rating of: 65% Mostly because he refused to answer Domestic Relations

## BROOKLYN-QUEENS NOW CHAPTER CALENDAR

Chapter meetings take place the first Monday of the month at 7pm.

Call the numbers listed for exact location and directions



- Sept. 12** Chapter meeting, in Sheepshead Bay. Call 718-769-8901 .
- Sept. 13** Primary Day, see BQ NOW endorsements.
- Oct. 11, (Tue)** Chapter meeting, in Forest Hills, Queens. Call 718-263-7638.
- Oct. 15-16** NOW-NYS Convention in Manhattan, CUNY Graduate Center.
- Nov. 7** Chapter meeting in Sheepshead Bay. Call 347-200-4320.
- Dec. 5** Chapter meeting in Sheepshead Bay. Call 718-891-2490.

### **At the National NOW Conference: A Workshop on Title IX**

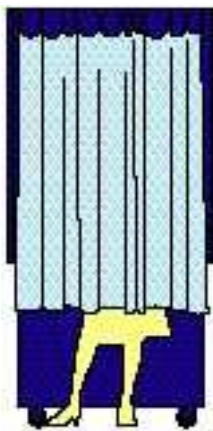
By Rachele Suissa

At the 2005 NOW Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, I had the privilege of attending a workshop about recent developments related to Title IX legislation. Title IX has come a long way since its passage in 1972. Recently, the National Wrestling Coaches challenged Title IX claiming it is responsible for schools cutting men's athletic programs. The Supreme Court refused to hear the case, letting stand the District of Columbia lower court's decision that Title IX must be applied. Although this was a big victory for gender equity law, a lot of work still needs to be done to ensure that Title IX remains a part of our legal system in schools. If ERA was passed, this funding could not be challenged

A new tactic being tried concerning Title IX happened on March 18. The Department of Education posted a letter that stated that colleges are allowed to use surveys to determine the level of interest of women in athletics. Many legal experts and supporters of Title IX feel that this would create a big problem because the results from the survey will not be an accurate representation of females in schools. A Title IX Action Network was created to address threats to the legislation. It sets up the mechanism to review laws affecting gender equity and education. Sex equity coordinators were established in each state to administer program funds to institute gender equity in athletic programs for women.

As a feminist and education major, I found this workshop to be very informative about recent developments relating to Title IX, and how they will affect the future for female athletes in schools. Title IX developments will affect athletic programs for men and women alike in the years to come. So far, the past half year has been a victory for Title IX, both in and out of the Supreme Court. However, there is still a lot of work to be done. We need to work to ensure that the basic principle of gender equity is upheld in schools and on the new Supreme Court come the start of the new session in October, 2005.

## BQ NOW PAC ENDORSEMENTS (continued from Page 1)



questions, saying they had no relevance to his office.

**Council District 21:** Marlene Tapper. While she has many fine qualities as a candidate, we found her lacking in understanding of several key issues, notably same-sex marriage. We felt these were strongly held convictions. She received a rating of 90%. We voted not to endorse her.

**Council District 23:** Celestina Akbar. She received a rating of 72%. She differed with us on civil rights and reproductive rights issues. We declined to interview her.

**Council District 24:** Renee Lobo. She received a rating of 100% **WE ENDORSE RENEE LOBO.**

**Council District 25:** Helen Sears. She received a rating of: 96%. While we differ on universal single payer health care, she has consistently supported our issues in her votes and was at the forefront of the move to keep Wal-Mart out of Queens. **WE ENDORSE HELEN SEARS.**

**Council District 28:** Charles Bilal. He received a rating of 72 % and differed with us on school vouchers, custody and divorce issues, personhood of fetus, and same-sex marriage. We declined to interview him.

**Council District 29:** Melinda Katz. She received a rating of 100%. A long-time civil rights and pro-choice advocate, Katz puts her votes where her heart is. **WE ENDORSE MELINDA KATZ.**

**Council District 31:** James Sanders. He received a rating of 88 % but by his own admission, will focus almost exclusively on economic issues. We declined to interview him.

**Council District 41:** Pamela Junior. She received a rating of 100%. A long-time community activist and community board member, Junior has enthusiasm and genuine concern for her entire community, with a special focus on improving opportunities for women. **WE ENDORSE PAMELA JUNIOR.**

If you would like to help *any* of the candidates we've endorsed, please call Sherry at 718 263-7638 or email [rogers46@nyc.rr.com](mailto:rogers46@nyc.rr.com).



## National Celebration of the 85th Anniversary of Women's Right to Vote

**On August 26th, 1920**, the 19th Amendment granting to women the right to vote became law. This year, all across the country, women gathered to mark the occasion and to strategize on the next steps to take to achieve full equality for women in the U. S. Constitution. Philadelphia's Constitution Center became the gathering place for two days of films, panels, and fund-raising, hosted by the National Women's History Project. It was exhilarating and informative and got feminist batteries re-charged for the ongoing battles.

Many of us know the true history of women's suffrage, but not because it was taught to us in school. History books state that women were "given" the right to vote. **NOT SO!** We know that women *won* the vote not by waiting or pleading, but with dedication, with hard work, with civil disobedience, *WITH REBELLION*. They fought to gain a voice, to be represented in a country where we are still not full citizens. You may think you know the story if you've seen the film "Iron-Jawed Angels," but that's the Hollywood version, which romanticized and undercut the actual struggle. The book's author, historian Linda Ford, took us through the film and related what **REALLY** happened.

We cannot not just congratulate ourselves and remember the victory our foremothers won; we must dedicate ourselves to completing the job they started: **We must be written into the Constitution. We must achieve the Equal Rights Amendment!** Alice Paul, focus of the film and book mentioned above, saw suffrage as only the beginning. Panelists urged us to continue the fight by as many alternative strategies as possible: running for Governor in unratified states, taking control of state legislatures, passing state ERAs, revising the Alice Paul Amendment.

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# ACTION ALERTS

Use NOW's Capwiz interactive political page  
(<http://www.capwiz.com/nw/dbq/officials/>)  
to send messages to your elected officials.



## Save the Court ... Save Women's Lives! Oppose Roberts' Nomination!

George W. Bush has nominated extremist Judge John G. Roberts to fill the Supreme Court vacancy left by the resignation of Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

**Tell your Senators** to oppose Roberts and any Supreme Court nominee who would overturn *Roe v. Wade* and limit the rights, freedoms and legal safeguards we have fought for and won.

**Contact your Senators immediately** and demand their opposition to Supreme Court nominee John G. Roberts, a staunch opponent of women's rights and civil rights.

### Background:

Throughout his 26-year career, John G. Roberts has continually supported and promoted an anti- anti-woman, anti-civil rights, and anti-worker agenda. NOW opposed his nomination to U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit in 2003 on these grounds and will continue to do so to protect the lives of all women and girls in the U.S.

Among our many concerns, Roberts actively opposes *Roe v. Wade* and wrote several *amicus* briefs while a Deputy Solicitor General. In one case where *Roe* was not even at issue, his brief offered gratuitously: "*Roe* was wrongly decided and should be overruled." He also wrote a brief in a case NOW brought against Operation Rescue in an effort to stop violent blockades at abortion clinics. His brief and oral argument supported Operation Rescue, and argued that the blockades were merely an expression of opposition to abortion. The Court's failure to protect women and clinics from these attacks helped us pass the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act the following year. [*Bray, et al. v. Alexandria Women's Health Clinic, et al.*]

In 2001, Roberts filed an *amicus* brief in *Adarand v. Mineta*, supporting a challenge to federal affirmative action programs. He also argued against Title IX, the equal educational opportunity law for women and girls as applied to college athletic programs in *NCAA v. Smith*.

He is also member of the Federalist Society, an ultra-conservative organization committed to returning to a pre-Civil War era of unquestioned states' rights and rolling back legislation that has advanced women's rights, civil rights, environmental protections and health and safety standards. Federalist Society heroes and leaders you might recognize are Supreme Court Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas, former U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft and Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah).

## Women's Health At Risk: Was Data Withheld on Breast Implant Dangers?

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has expressed its intent to approve silicone breast implants made by Mentor Corporation, despite the lack of safety data and despite serious allegations that the company misrepresented safety information. A May 22 *New York Times* article revealed that Mentor Corp. may have falsified its safety data. According to sworn depositions from former employees, Mentor withheld information about high rupture rates from the FDA and directed employees to destroy key documents. **Women's health is at risk.** Congress must conduct an investigation and oversight hearing into the FDA's handling of the approval process and determine whether Mentor falsified data and destroyed evidence.

### SEND A MESSAGE TO CONGRESS

This may be just one more outrageous instance in which the FDA was misled by companies and provided with "doctored data." Please **send a message** to your representatives.

The FDA must release the information from its criminal investigation of Mentor Corporation so that a determination can be made as to whether that information reflects on Mentor's current application. **Please write to the FDA** commissioner and ask that they release the information and that they not approve the Mentor application without an independent investigation. (FDA, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Maryland 20857, phone:1-888-463-6332, web: <http://www.fda.gov/comments.html>)

### BACKGROUND:

By approving silicone gel breast implants, the FDA will be putting the interests of implant makers and plastic surgeons ahead of women's health. Mentor provided only two years of data about implant rupture for a product that women will rely on for the rest of their lives.

**Safety must come first! Approval of silicone breast implants based on only two years of data will undermine the integrity of FDA as the defender of public health.**

From the late 1990's through 2002, the FDA conducted a criminal investigation of Mentor Corporation. **The results of that investigation were never made public by the agency.**

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***ABOUT OUR ORGANIZATION***

**OUR CORE ISSUES:**

- ◆ **Reproductive Rights**
- ◆ **Passage of the ERA**
- ◆ **Equal Economic Opportunity**
- ◆ **Stopping Violence Against Women**
- ◆ **Ending Discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation**

**Our activities focus on the political, legislative and educational arenas.**

Use NOW's Capwiz interactive political page (<http://www.capwiz.com/now/dbq/officials/>) to send messages to your elected officials.

Visit our web site: [www.brooklynnow.org](http://www.brooklynnow.org)

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**85th Anniversary of Women's Right to Vote**

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Surprisingly, it took an outburst from the audience to remind those gathered of something BQNOW members have known for some time: The Alice Paul Amendment, the original Equal Rights Amendment, passed by Congress and by 35 states of the 38 required states still lives! Can you imagine, scholars of note from Yale and Rutgers weren't aware of the 3 State Strategy! They prefer to re-write the amendment (which hasn't yet been done) and try to get it through 2 successive Congressional sessions and then submit it for ratification by 38 states instead of working to complete ratification by only 3 of 15 remaining states! The original ERA easily passed through Congress in 1972 by votes of 350 to 15 in the House and 84 to 8 in the Senate. Can you imagine what the vote would be today?

We can only briefly touch on the issue here. Come to the chapter meetings (see our calendar page); attend the September 10th **OWL** meeting (at Brooklyn College, New Ingersoll Room 432 at 10:30 AM) where ERA's current status will be more fully presented. Come to the October 15th NOW-NYS Conference in NYC (CUNY 365 Fifth Ave, Manhattan) and attend the 10:45 AM ERA workshop.

If you'd like to become more knowledgeable on the Equal Rights Amendment, get online at [www.ERACampaign.net](http://www.ERACampaign.net). To learn about the Women's History Project, go to their website at: [www.nwhp.org](http://www.nwhp.org). To register for the state NOW conference, go to [www.nownys.com](http://www.nownys.com) and look for the conference link. Speaking of voting, remember to exercise this hard-won franchise on Primary Day, September 13th, and on Election Day, November 8th.

We cannot, we will not be distracted from attaining our goal. Keep in mind the motto of The Revolution, 1868: "Principle Not Policy, Justice Not Favors – Men, Their Rights and Nothing More; Women, Their Rights and Nothing Less." (With thanks to Linda G. Ford *Iron-Jawed Angels*). Remember what Alice Paul said: ***FAILURE IS IMPOSSIBLE!***