

BROOKLYN-QUEENS NOW NEWS



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CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

The NYC elections are behind us! Healthcare Reform continues to burn white hot over whether or not to include provisions for reproductive services and government options. Join us on December 4th when we tell Senator Charles Schumer he must say NO to amendments which deprive us of coverage for reproductive choices (See Page 5 for more info).

The NYS Legislature session is about to heat up in January and Fair Pay is definitely on our agenda. The NYS Board of Elections is currently deciding the way we'll cast our ballots this coming November. There is now hard evidence of electronic voting machine irregularities in the results of a special election vote in Congressional District 23 upstate.

National NOW and NOW NYS have completed their conventions and all indications are that the economy has hit our beloved movement very hard.

We mourn the passing of a feminist warrior, Lillian Kozak, who steadfastly fought to make marriage and divorce laws fairer and equal. We'll tell you more about all of this within this issue.

And we soldier on. Speaking of soldiering, while many of us oppose the current wars, none of us wants to see women who serve treated as less than equal to their male counterparts. We cannot achieve this without equality in the US Constitution. There's a new "one-stop" information website, www.ERAonceandforall.org that's been rolled

out. Check it out!

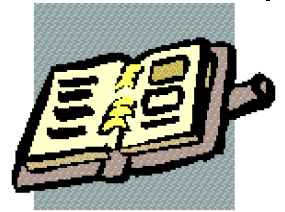
Over the past few months, by email and at chapter meetings, we've worked to acquaint you with NY City Council candidates our PAC endorsed, inform you where the mayoral candidates stand on Pay Equity issues, update you on the Monserrate assault trial. We've testified at NYS Assembly and Senate hearing on electronic voting. At upcoming meetings we'll be discussing health reform, human trafficking and other global issues, new guidelines on cancer screenings and much, much more.

Our President and Vice-President have represented us wherever a strong feminist voice from Brooklyn and Queens has been needed. They've made sure BQNOW is on record both at National and State conventions and council meetings. Locally, we've seen an increase in activism among our Queens and Long Island members. For that reason we're scheduling more Queens-based chapter meetings. We try hard to make our meetings accessible by subway and bus. If anyone wants to come to a meeting and has trouble traveling, call the meeting contact number and we'll try to arrange car-pool transportation for you. We want our members to be involved in BQNOW and we definitely want to hear from you.

Finally, it's holiday season. That brings both joy and stress to many. We encourage you to reach out to your sisters in need and spend some time together. Come to meetings, give the gift of yourself. We're thankful for your membership and we hope for your increased participation in 2010.

BROOKLYN-QUEENS NOW CHAPTER CALENDAR-2009

Chapter meetings take place the first Monday of the month at 7pm, unless otherwise noted. Inclement weather may force the rescheduling of a chapter meeting, so be sure to RSVP the number provided or call 718 769-0101. Call the numbers below for exact location and directions.



- Dec 4 **Rally for Abortion Coverage** in Health Care Reform.
See Page 5 for details.
- Dec 7 **Chapter Meeting** in Forest Hills. Call 718-896-9130
- Jan 4 **Chapter Meeting** in Howard Beach. Call 718-843-7978
- Feb 1 **Chapter Meeting** in Jackson Heights. Call 718-672-6399.
- Mar 1 **Chapter Meeting** in Sheepshead Bay. Call 718-891-2490.

Ted Kennedy -- Women's Rights' Strongest Champion in Congress

For decades Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) was the Senate's strongest advocate for women's rights and gay rights. Of the more than 300 bills that the senator and his staff wrote and helped pass into law, many were directed at promoting equality and making the U.S. a fairer and more just nation, especially for those less advantaged.

NOW was often able to meet with Sen. Kennedy to urge that he take leadership in passing important legislation that would advance equality and well-being for women. His Senate office was always open to women's rights advocates and the senator saw to it that staff was ready to work with us on our issues. His liberal leadership served as an important counterbalance during the dark years of right-wing conservative Republican leadership of Congress and the White House.

The senator was a dedicated supporter of women's reproductive rights, a sponsor of the Equal Rights Amendment, a Senate leader in passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1994, a supporter of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and an advocate for many later improvements to civil rights laws that have benefited women. The senator was an early advocate of Title IX, the signature law that advances women's equality in academic and athletic programs at educational institutions receiving federal funds. Kennedy continued to support the principle of equal funding for women's sports throughout successive attacks on the Title IX.

If you are willing to receive our newsletter via email instead of having a hard copy mailed to you, please contact us at shranz@optonline.net.

LILLIAN KOZAK - FEMINIST WARRIOR

Lillian Kozak, ardent leader in the fight for women's rights in marriage and divorce passed away peacefully in her home on November 11, 2009. She would have been 86 on February of 2010. Lillian, an accountant and auditor in the Nassau County Attorney's Office, Family Court Bureau from 1977-2002, was chair of NOW-NYS Domestic Relations Task Force in 1975. Surveys show that the number one reason women contact NOW is for issues related to divorce.

Lillian and the core of women she attracted to work with the NOW Task Force were fierce in their determination to end the impoverishment of women once they went through the legal process of divorce. Her background gave her the skills to monitor technical issues like laws covering joint bank accounts, the hidden drawbacks in equitable division of property and poorly drafted divorce mediation agreements. Early on she warned that alternate dispute resolution programs could put women at a disadvantage economically or in cases of child custody and support. She advocated not only for making domestic violence an element in any court evaluation about the "best interests of the child" but also for ending practices that resulted in fraudulent statements about assets.

Lillian received the Susan B. Anthony award of NOW-NYS, The National NOW Woman to Woman Award, the Long Island NOW Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Award for Lifetime Service from the Coalition for Family Justice. In 1994 VFA presented her with our Medal of Honor.

Lillian taught us to understand the motives of people (usually abusive husbands/fathers) using these words: "Remember, the bottom line is green."

Excerpted from Veteran Feminists of America tribute.

ACTION ALERTS



Ask State Senator Gillibrand to co-sponsor the **Breast Cancer Patient Protection Act**

Here is a sample letter:

The Honorable Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senate
478 Russell
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Gillibrand:

I am amazed to learn that you are not a co-sponsor of the Breast Cancer Patient Protection Act of 2009 (S688 and HR1691).

This legislation includes the requirement that Group Health Plans and other health insurers cover a 48-hour *minimum* hospital stay for women undergoing mastectomies. It would eliminate the "drive-through mastectomy" which despite the wishes of their doctors forces women to return home from the hospital just hours after surgery, still groggy from anesthesia, and with drainage tubes still attached.

Since 1997, six previous Congresses have allowed similar legislation to languish in committees, and in the Senate never to be called to the floor for a vote. Meanwhile, tens of thousands of us---either ourselves or our daughters, sisters, or friends---continue to undergo this traumatic surgery while facing the uncertainties of self-administered post-surgical care foisted upon us when we are most vulnerable, unsure, and frightened.

Therefore, now in 2009 after twelve years of unconscionable delay, it is essential that you sign on as a co-sponsor and actively advocate for a bipartisan thrust to report S688 out of committee for an "up or down" vote on the Senate floor. Compassion and the best of medical opinion dictate that this legislation finally becomes law in this session of Congress.

Sincerely,

Abstinence-Only Education Shouldn't Make the Cut

Abstinence-only education is dangerous and ineffective, and has no place in our health care reform legislation. But Senator Orrin Hatch's (R-Utah) abstinence-only-until-marriage amendment has been tacked in with the health care reform legislation -- and we need your help to strike it when it reaches Senate floor. Women everywhere need the Senate to support comprehensive sex education programs, not ideological crusades.

Two amendments regarding sex education were passed with the health care reform legislation in the Senate Finance Committee: one by Chair Max Baucus (D-Mont.) authorizing federal funding for comprehensive sex education programs and one by Sen. Hatch to restore funds for abstinence-only programs.

When health care reform legislation reaches the Senate floor, we need to ensure Congress supports only a comprehensive approach to sex education and does not promote dangerous and ineffective abstinence-only-until-marriage programs that put young women and girls at serious risk.

Please take time now to call or e-mail your US senators to urge that the Hatch abstinence-only-until-marriage amendment be eliminated from health care reform legislation, and that they strongly support a comprehensive approach to sex education.

Paid Parental Leave Urge Senators to Support This First Step

Ask your US senators to support upcoming legislation to guarantee federal workers four weeks of paid parental leave for a new child, as a first step toward universal paid leave.

Providing paid leave to parents is only fair to working families who need to both care for a new family member as well as maintain an income. Most industrialized nations have provided paid parental leave for decades.

Paid parental leave for 2.7 million federal workers can be the model that we can work to achieve for the rest of the country. This important "balancing work and family" legislation would help ensure that federal workplace benefits are competitive with the private sector and it also sets an important precedent demonstrating that our country values the "work" that parents and caregivers provide.

Send an email message to your senators using www.now.org's website. We need your help to increase the number of co-sponsors in the Senate so that this legislation has a better chance of passage.

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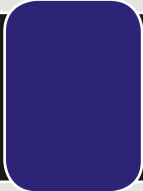


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Demand Health Care Reform That Includes Full Reproductive Rights For All Women

Join with the National Organization for Women-
New York State
Local NOW Chapter Activists and
Prominent Reproductive Rights Advocates

Say **NO** to *Stupak/Pitt-like* amendments in
the National Health Care Reform Package

Location: Senator Schumer's office 757 Third Avenue (at 48th St)

Date: Friday, December 4th,
Time: 12:00 noon - 2:00 PM

The NOW NYS Convention and Post-Convention News

By Rachele Suissa, Chapter Vice-President

This year's NOW NYS Convention featured guest speaker was Ellen Snortland from California, who has an interesting background in teaching women self-defense tactics. She taught us how to handle an attacker, including what strategies to use to our advantage and what a woman's weak points are compared with her strong points. For example, women have more lower-body than upper body strength, an area in which men usually dominate.

Snortland explained that the safest place for a woman to be in an attack is on the floor, so that she can use her legs to keep her attacker at a distance from her and then proceed to injure the attacker enough so that he does not attempt to strike again. She emphasized the importance of using our lower-body strength to our advantage. It is good to have this information available in the unfortunate event that we are a victim of an attack..

Since the convention, many things have happened that affect women in a negative way. The passage of the healthcare bill in the House included the Stupak Amendment, which prohibits women from purchasing private health insurance which includes abortion coverage with *their own money*-how absurd is that! In order to

receive coverage for abortion, they would have to purchase a separate abortion rider, in addition to the existing coverage that they already have. Stupak wants women to plan for their unplanned pregnancies. This is a little out of the ordinary, considering that men are not asked to plan for any medical procedures that may befall them, such as a vasectomy or prostate removal.

The Senate has voted to proceed to a full discussion of the pending health care bill with no amendment similar to the one that Stupak has attached. This is good news, although it will not stop certain Centrist Democrats in the Senate from attempting to add on such an amendment.

President Obama has indicated that he will not sign a bill into law that completely restricts a woman's right to choose, which is a good sign. However, he has stated support for the Hyde Amendment and for the general trend of restricting abortion coverage through the denial of federal subsidies.

Please show your support for women's rights by opposing this overarching invasion of women's reproductive rights.

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

**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

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