

# BROOKLYN-QUEENS NOW NEWS



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## BROOKLYN-QUEENS NOW CHAPTER CALENDAR-2012



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 to the number provided or call 718 769-0101. Call the numbers below for exact location and directions.

- Jan 5, *Thursday*      **Chapter meeting** in Forest Hills, Queens. Call 718-896-9130.
- Feb 6      **Chapter meeting** in Sheepshead Bay. Call. 646-228-7570.
- Mar 5      **Chapter meeting** in Howard Beach, Queens. Call 718-843-7978.
- Mar 10, *Saturday*      **Issues in the Anti-Pornography Struggle** at Brooklyn College. Details on Page 2.
- Apr 2      **Chapter meeting** in Sheepshead Bay. Call 718-769-8901.
- May 7      **Chapter meeting** in. Forest Hills, Queens. Call 718-263-7638

Check for Calendar updates on our website: [www.brooklynqueensnow.org](http://www.brooklynqueensnow.org).

## New York State Assembly Pay Equity Hearing

On Monday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2011 representatives from organizations, and unions gathered at the NYS Assembly Offices in NYC to testify on behalf of the need for Pay Equity legislation. The legislation, not yet drafted, would update the protections established by the Federal government through the Equal Pay Act of 1963, and would go beyond that. It would update the results of a study commissioned by the NYS legislature in the 1980s that evaluated comparable worth. Further, it would make wages and salaries transparent, consider race as well as sex when evaluating discrimination in pay, and prevent retaliation against employees discussing salary and opportunities.

Assemblymembers who chair powerful committees (Labor, Gov't Employees, Operations, Women's Issues, and Oversight) listened intently to the testimony. Among the speakers was BQ NOW's Sherry Rogers, who described the impact of pay inequity on families (both single-parent and

traditional), single women, and those who are charged with the care of a relative. She personalized the discussion by referring to her own experiences as a child of two working parents, and as a teacher and later in the brokerage industry. Her experiences mirrored those of many women of her generation, whose jobs paid them less than their male counterparts. As the result of the pay gap, women stand to lose significantly more money over the course of their lifetimes. This can often make the difference when sending a child to college, taking out a mortgage on the home, or being able to pay for basic necessities, such as medical care, retirement, food, clothing, and rent.

Others who testified represented New York Women's Agenda, YWCAs, the Equal Pay Coalition (BQNOW is a founding member), the

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## 10 MAJOR UNRESOLVED ISSUES *within* the ANTI-PORNOGRAPHY STRUGGLE

1. The anti-pornography movement was large and making headlines, in the late 1980's and early 90's. Today, it has largely disappeared from public awareness and debate. Is it possible to reverse this, and how?
2. Is "pornography" essentially one phenomenon, as the single word implies, or, a combination of several different factors, with different effects?
3. Should "pornography" refer only to depictions that are "sexually explicit"?
4. Should the categories of "Sex Education Materials" and "Equalitarian-Respectful Erotica" be excluded or included from harmful "pornography" ?
5. Harm: How is a woman "harmed" by pornography, if she is (personally) never the victim of a sexual assault or coercion? How are men "harmed" by pornography at all?
6. Is gay male pornography fundamentally similar in harmful effects to straight male pornography, or fundamentally different?
7. The argument that pornography is "Speech" and thus protected by the First Amendment, has won repeatedly in the US courts, and defeated all efforts to limit the scope of pornography. How can we ever beat this argument?
8. Despite denials, the Anti-Pornography movement is still widely viewed as prudish, uptight, old-fashioned, anti-erotic, even anti-sexual. Is there any truth to this?
9. Should anti-pornography feminists communicate, or cooperate, with Church-based groups that are working against pornography?
10. As to future legislation: should we advocate the Dworkin-MacKinnon Anti-Pornography Ordinance or civil rights approach, or look for a different legal approach?

\*Robert Brannon is a feminist Social Psychologist who has taught for 35 years at Brooklyn College. His book, on 'the Male Sex Role', *The Forty-Nine Percent Majority*, was at one point the most widely-assigned college textbook in gender studies in the United States. Dr. Brannon was honored in 1986 by the NYS Dept of Education for "*Outstanding Achievement in Sex Equity in Education*".

Dr. Brannon was a co-founder of NOMAS, the National Organization for Men Against Sexism, and served as its first National Chair. He has spoken about men's involvement in Feminism as a TV guest of Phil

Donahue, Barbara Walters, and in academic settings across the country. Much of his most recent work has focused on the difficult issues of violence against women, and the commercial "sex industry". He writes and speaks about sex trafficking, the use of women in prostitution, and the deeply complex issues raised by the pornography industry. Dr. Brannon served for 20 years as co-chair of NOW New York State's Task Force on Pornography.

**WHERE: The Women's Center  
at Brooklyn College  
New Ingersoll Bldg, Room 227  
#2 train to Flatbush Avenue**

**WHEN: Saturday, March 10, 2012  
at 12 PM**

### ACTION ALERT

New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn is holding up passage of the Living Wage Bill. This legislation would make the minimum hourly wage \$10 or \$11.50 without benefits for companies receiving \$1 million or more of assistance from the city and those that make more than \$5 million a year. A recent poll showed that more than 4/5 of voters surveyed believe it is the government's responsibility to ensure a fair wage for workers.

Speaker Quinn is also not behind Equal Pay legislation for NYC. We believe she is catering to business interests in her quest to become New York City's next mayor. Call or write to express your opposition to her pro-business agenda - 224 West 30th St (Suite 1206), New York, NY 10001, (212) 564-7757.

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NOW is the time.  
Keep up the good work!

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## PAY EQUITY HEARING

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New York State Coalition against Domestic Violence, Communication Workers of America, and experts from New York University and Cornell University. These advocates gave more quantitative and analytical presentations explaining the need to pass the legislation, focusing on how these laws have been implemented in other states and cities in the US & Canada. Governor Bill Richardson of New Mexico implemented similar fair pay legislation at the state level back in January of 2009. It established a taskforce, charged with developing recommendations for addressing pay equity in New Mexico's own workforce and in companies contracting with that state. Some of the most compelling testimony came from

women who spoke personally about the current job situation. These are union women in non-traditional jobs whose unions fail to place them on long-term projects. One woman, a sheet-metal worker, spoke of having only 8 months of work in a two year period while other, equally experienced male workers from the same local worked constantly. The Assembly members paid close attention to this type of testimony.

Hopefully, the New York State legislature will follow New Mexico's example, and take the next step in promoting pay equity for all workers. The wage gap has been stagnant since

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## **BROOKLYN-QUEENS NOW LEADERSHIP CONTACT NUMBERS**

President: Julie Kirshner 718-769-9607  
Vice President: Rachelle Suissa 646-228-7570  
Treasurer: Barbara Sheren 718-891-2490  
Membership: Judy Barkoski 718-843-7978  
PAC President: Shirley Ranz 718-769-8901  
Editors: Shirley Ranz, Joyce Mizrachi

## **OUR CORE ISSUES:**

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

Our activities focus on political, legislative and educational arenas.

## **PAY EQUITY HEARING**

*-continued from Page 3-*

the late 1980's—women earn 78 cents on the dollar compared to men. Pay equity remains an important priority at the state level for 2012, and one that Brooklyn-Queens NOW will work to achieve during the next legislative session.

Last year we came very close to making Pay Equity a reality. It is up to all of us to put pressure on our legislators and Governor Cuomo to work with the Equal Pay Coalition to draft and pass Pay Equity legislation this term. Contact Sherry Rogers at 718 263-7638 or [srogers46@nyc.rr.com](mailto:srogers46@nyc.rr.com) to get involved.

## **Tell President Obama: Free The Pill From the Bishops!**

President Obama is on the brink of a decision that could throw access to basic birth control under the bus. Under intense lobbying from the U.S.

Conference of Catholic Bishops, the president is poised to potentially expand an already sweeping refusal clause that allows employers to deny birth control coverage under the Affordable Care Act.

In a major victory for women's rights, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) affirmed contraception as basic health care earlier this year, and HHS agreed, issuing an interim final rule that would have health insurance plans cover contraception with no co-pay. And the bishops already got what they wanted then: HHS crafted a loophole just for the bishops, allowing many religious institutions to take

decisions away from women who depend on them for health insurance coverage.

Now the bishops have moved on to the next step in their war against the pill: They want to take it away from women who attend primarily secular colleges and universities with a religious affiliation; and those who depend on other primarily secular institutions with a religious affiliation, such as hospitals, for health insurance.

President Obama needs to hear from those who do not represent the narrow view of the bishops (who publicly refer to offering contraceptive coverage to individual women in the United States as an attempt to "neuter religion") -- he needs to hear from you now. Here is a sample letter you can use:

Dear President Obama,

I am deeply concerned to hear that you are considering an expansion of an already discriminatory and disgraceful refusal loophole that denies contraceptive coverage to some women under the Affordable Care Act. Please do not refuse access to birth control just because the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops calls for it. Ninety-nine percent of sexually active people have used contraception, including 98 percent of sexually active Catholic women. These women are counting on you to stand up for their rights. I will be closely watching your actions on this matter and urge you to free the pill from the bishops.

Sincerely,