

*"It is unthinkable to allow complete strangers, whether individually or collectively as state legislators or others in government, to make such personal decisions for someone else." — Sarah Weddington, A Question of Choice*

# Voice for Choice

Newsletter of the Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

Spring 2017

## Keep the EMW Clinic Open!

by Ann T. Allen, Editor

On the afternoon of Sunday, April 2, a colorful crowd of about three hundred people gathered outside the EMW Women's Surgical Clinic at Second and Market Streets in Louisville. They carried signs reading "My Body! My Choice!" "Trust Women!" "Resist!" The demonstrators were there to defend Kentucky's last open abortion clinic from closure by state government.



Pro-choice demonstrators at the EMW clinic

Earlier this month EMW received a letter from Kentucky's

Cabinet for Health and Family Services advising the clinic staff that their license would be revoked and the clinic shut down, effective Monday April 3. The Cabinet charged that EMW's agreements with a local hospital and ambulance service were deficient. The state approved these same agreements last year, when the clinic applied to renew its license.

The Kentucky branch of the ACLU successfully applied for a fourteen-day restraining order to block the closing. "The state's bureaucratic sleight of hand is fooling no one," declared Brigitte Amiri, a senior staff attorney with the ACLU's Reproductive Freedom Project. "This is an attempt to ban abortion in Kentucky, plain and simple. We're fighting to keep this from happening."

Speakers at Sunday's rally reminded the participants of what was at stake. Remembering a friend who was pregnant from rape, Barbara Sexton Smith, the Metro Councilwoman for District 4, declared that "We can choose—yes we can!"

*Cont. on page 7*

## ACLU of Kentucky Defends EMW and Reproductive Choice

American Civil Liberties Union of Kentucky, Press Release, March 31, 2017

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — The American Civil Liberties Union today challenged the imminent closure of Kentucky's last abortion clinic.

The ACLU and attorneys at Lynch, Cox, Gilman & Goodman P.S.C. filed the federal lawsuit aimed at blocking unnecessary and unconstitutional state laws. In a letter earlier this month, the state threatened to revoke the license of EMW Women's Surgical Center. The letter alleged that the clinic's agreements with a hospital and ambulance service contained technical deficiencies, even though the state

*Cont. on page 7*



PAGE 2 **What's Up At KRCRC?**

**January 4-5, 2017:  
“We are Kentucky!”  
Repro Rights Rally,  
Frankfort**

*Members of KRCRC joined other groups such as ACLU, Planned Parenthood, Kentucky Health Justice Network, and others to protest measures under debate in the Kentucky General Assembly that restrict reproductive rights. KRCRC sponsored a bus which brought many of the Louisville ralliers to Frankfort.*



**February 14, 2017:  
Repro Rights Lobby and Rally Day,  
Frankfort**

*Members of KRCRC joined allies to talk to legislators and to come together in defense of reproductive rights.*



**February 28, 2017: “Bringing Sexy Back; Sexual Health in African-American Women,”  
University of Louisville**

*KRCRC and A Fund intern Mycala Baker showed the film “Abortion Diaries” and led a discussion.*

**January 22, 2017: A Prayer Vigil of Hope and Determination,  
Central Presbyterian Church**

*Clergy and lay people of many different faiths came together to renew their commitment to the struggle for reproductive justice.*



Board member Rev. Ann Hardman at the Candlelight Vigil

**March 7, 2017:  
“When Abortion was Illegal,”  
University of Louisville**

*KRCRC and A Fund intern Olivia Given showed the film, “When Abortion was Illegal.” The film was followed by a discussion led by Dr. Christine Cook, Emerita, Louisville School of Medicine, Professor Jamie Abrams, Brandeis School of Law, and Giselle Henry, of Kentucky Health Justice Network.*

**April 2, 2017: Keep EMW Open!**

*KRCRC Kentucky Health Justice Network, and other ally organizations... organized a rally at the EMW clinic at Second and Market Streets to protest the threatened closing of Kentucky’s last abortion clinic*



Demonstrators at the EMW Clinic

**Upcoming event:  
May 13, KRCRC Board Retreat**

*Members of the Board will meet and plan strategy for the coming year.*

## 2017 Legislative Wrap-Up

by Kate Miller, Advocacy Director, ACLU of Kentucky

In the recent session, the Kentucky General Assembly moved forward on two bills that added to existing restrictions on Kentuckians' access to abortion and a third measure aimed at limiting public funds for Planned Parenthood. Senate Bill 5 (SB 5) bans abortions after 20 weeks, and House Bill 2 (HB 2) forces pregnant Kentuckians who have decided on an abortion and are undergoing the required ultrasound test to hear audio of a heartbeat and listen to a verbal description of the ultrasound image. While patients cannot refuse the unnecessary ultrasound, or ask the technician or doctor to stop, they may avert their eyes or ask that the volume of the heartbeat be lowered.

There are very few exceptions to the 20-week abortion ban, and they provide only for conditions that might cause death or serious bodily injury to the pregnant person. These exceptions are so limited that a patient's health may be put at serious risk. There are, moreover, no exceptions for situations in which there has been a serious diagnosis related to the fetus. Heather Hyden of Lexington testified at both the Senate and House hearings about her baby's own tragic diagnoses, explaining that measures like SB 5 forced people like her and her partner James Earley to make momentous decisions about their pregnancies before they had all of the information. Hyden's story showed that everyone's circumstances are different and that the best people to make decisions about their pregnancies are those who are pregnant, not the members of the Kentucky General Assembly.

Neither SB 5 nor HB 2 includes any exceptions for people who are survivors of rape or incest. Partly because such exceptions were absent, the Kentucky Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers testified their opposition to the bills. Additionally, Rep. Joni Jenkins filed the R.I.S.E Act (House Bill 280) to allow for such exceptions.



Kate Miller  
American Civil Liberties  
Union of Kentucky

Finally, Senate Bill 8 (SB 8) puts Planned Parenthood last in line for public family planning funds. Currently Planned Parenthood of Kentucky and Indiana does not seek out or use any of this funding to provide care, but SB 8 prevents them from doing so in the future.

The only positive events of this legislative session were the visits of many advocates, activists and everyday Kentuckians who came to the Capitol to make their voices heard. Over the short thirty-day session hundreds of Kentuckians took part in the legislative process by participating in two rallies, six legislative hearings, dozens of one-on-one meetings with legislators, and a press conference. A record number of Kentuckians participated in the rallies sponsored by several groups, including the Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

## Mykala S. Baker, Our University of Louisville Intern

*This past semester, KRCRC and A Fund have worked with two student interns from the University of Louisville: Olivia Given (profiled in the Winter 2017 issue) and Mykala S. Baker. Mykala is a senior who will graduate with a degree in Women's and Gender Studies. During her semester as an intern, Mykala has worked to raise awareness of reproductive rights among students at the University of Louisville and has cooperated with Debbie Finkel, a professor of psychology who is a KRCRC board member, to compile a survey of A Fund's clients (see page 6). Mykala introduces herself here.*

As a Women's and Gender Studies major I have developed a strong interest in women's reproductive rights and choices. Women may have the legal right to obtain an abortion but not all of them have the "choice" to do so. Many of the women supported by A Fund earn less than \$15,000 each year and have dependents. Due to limited funds, many women may not have the time, transportation, or access to birth control or other forms of contraception. I chose to work with the Kentucky Religious Coalition for

Reproductive Choice and A Fund because of their ability to give women the choice of acting on their reproductive rights. Since I have worked with these two organizations, I have become more aware of the need to reach out to women and educate them on family planning, sexual health, and their reproductive rights. I want to continue to learn more about how I can help these women gain access to birth control to prevent the extra step and cost that abortion brings. I hope that, with the help of my mentors, I too can assist my community and help women make reproductive choices freely.



Mykala S. Baker

# KRCRC “Choice Stuff” Online Silent Auction A Big Success!

By Carol Savkovich, auction co-chair

April 15 marked the end of KRCRC’s second online silent auction (the first was held in 2014), and it was a great “fun-raiser” as well as fundraiser. The auction raised about \$4,000 for KRCRC’s work.

60 donors contributed the 160+ items that made up the auction, held on the Auctria website. This year’s auction was heavy on both jewelry and fine art, but the range of items was wide. Some of our auction’s many items included:

- a 4’ tall plaster statue of “The David”
- a 150-year-old quilt, and a millions-years-old ammonite fossil brooch
- a wealth of lessons (learn knitting, woodworking, breadmaking, mah jongg, or your choice of fiddle, flute or banjo) and services (massage, yoga, airplane ride)
- autographed books and posters
- a Venetian Carnivale jester mask
- gift certificates to area restaurants and retail stores, as well as for several special meals prepared for your home
- vintage evening bags and fashionable purses
- artworks by Louisville-area artists
- a range of necklaces, brooches, earrings and bracelets, both contemporary and vintage
- tickets to soccer and orchestra

KRCRC board members Carol Savkovich and Jean Abshire co-chaired the auction, putting in countless hours in preparation. Thanks also to board members Michael Ginsberg and Ann Hardman, who helped as well. And a special thank-you to Carol’s friends Cynthia M. and Betty H., who lent their assistance to the preparations.

Our huge thanks to our donors! Special shout-outs to Jessica L., Rose I., Katie B. and Alex W., who, between them, donated more than 45% of the items. And a big thank-you to all who shopped and helped KRCRC fund our reproductive justice work.



Good things to eat



Fun yard art

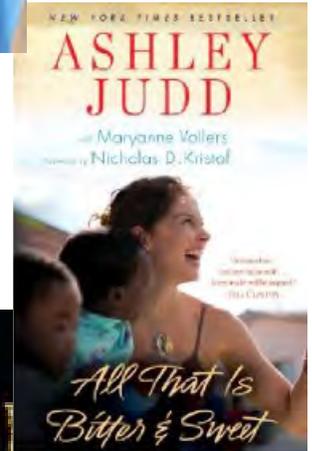


Jewelry

Lessons in breadmaking, knitting, woodworking, instruments and more



Airplane ride



Autographed books



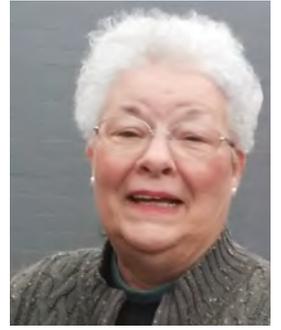
Event tickets



Fine art pieces

# RCRC Celebrates Its Founding: The 50th Anniversary Of The Clergy Consultation Service

By the Reverend Millie Horning Peters, Co-Chair, KRCRC



*The Reverend Millie Horning Peters*

Fifty years ago, in 1967, twenty-one New York City clergy started a counseling and referral service. The Clergy Consultation Service rapidly grew to a national network of 1400 clergy, who before the Roe v. Wade decision made abortion widely available referred 100,000 women to places where they could get a safe abortion.

Howard Moody of Judson Memorial Church, and Finley Schaefer of Washington Square Methodist Church, who were the pastors of neighboring churches in New York City, had observed the dangerous conditions that women encountered when seeking an abortion. They believed it was their moral duty and pastoral obligation to take action. Together with Protestant and Jewish religious communities, they founded the Clergy Consultation Service. Arlene Carman, Moody's assistant, went under cover, pretending to need an abortion, in order to make sure that physicians actually offered compassionate care and high-quality medical service.

When abortion became legal in New York State in 1970, CCS opened an abortion clinic called Women's Service. Because hospital costs and regulations had become burdensome, Moody and others aimed to provide safe, affordable medical care in a pleasant, compassionate, and low-cost facility.

This is a rich, glorious history that celebrates compassionate people who took bold action to provide justice for women at a challenging time in our nation's history. Our founders' spirit of courage and love shines as a guiding light for all of us to follow. A weekend celebration is planned on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of CCS, May 20-22. Dr.

Willie Parker, a Mississippi physician, activist, and national RCRC board member, will speak at Judson Memorial Church on May 21. On Monday, an Evening of Theologies will be held at Auburn Seminary, sponsored by RCRC, Judson and Auburn.

When the 1973 Supreme Court ruling on Roe v. Wade gave women the constitutional right to safe and legal abortion, CCS chose to continue its work for only one year, believing that this would be sufficient. But it was not—women who needed abortions faced an increasing array of obstacles. Now, forty-four years later, a successor organization, The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, continues the fight for women to be free from harmful legislative restrictions.

Not only do women have the constitutional right to self-determination, but they deserve access to safe and accurate medical care provided by compassionate physicians. Abortion is health care. And health care is a basic religious value.

The way forward toward success will be a path of strong, sustained advocacy of policies that protect women and permit each individual to come to her own personal, private decision. We have been on the defensive for too long. We must create positive strategies to promote public debate and bold action.

Are we ready for this challenge?

## Is your Kroger Card Working for KRCRC?



With 2 simple steps, you can be helping KRCRC fight for reproductive rights each time you shop – at no cost to you!

1. Go to [www.kroger.com/communityrewards](http://www.kroger.com/communityrewards). Create an account or sign in.
2. Follow the instructions to select an organization. KRCRC is #11048.

If you've signed up for us before, thank you! But Kroger "zeroes out the books" each August 1st. Please take a couple of minutes to make sure your Kroger purchases are working for us all year!



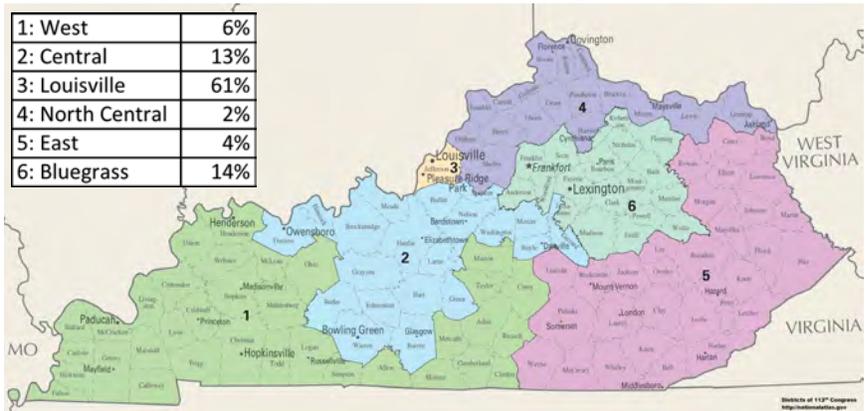
## KRCRC Intern Analyzes Data, Finds More Support Needed

By Mycala S. Baker, KRCRC Intern, and Debbie Finkel, KRCRC Board Member (pictured at right)

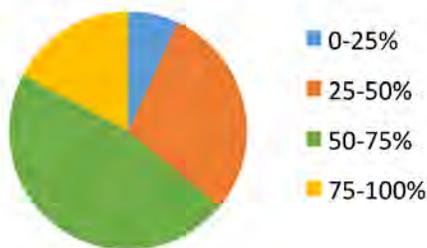


Since 1993, A Fund has been providing financial support to Kentucky women seeking abortions in Kentucky clinics and in clinics in neighboring states. Most of the women helped by A Fund seek care at the EMW Women’s Clinic in Louisville. Women from Southern Indiana who seek care at EMW and need financial assistance also are eligible for A Fund support. Quarterly, A Fund sends a block grant to EMW Women’s Clinic in Louisville and clinic staff distributes funds to patients as needed. We analyzed data collected from 730 EMW clients who received A Fund support during 2014-2016 and this is what we found.

Eighty-four percent of our clients were from Kentucky; the remainder were primarily from Indiana and Tennessee. The state map shows that 61% of Kentucky clients came from Louisville, but clients come from all over the state to be seen at the EMW clinic. In Louisville, zip code information indicates that clients tend to come from neighborhoods with lower than average incomes, although even high-income districts are represented. In fact, clients came from 38 different zip codes in the Louisville metro area.



**% Clients Pay After Support From NAF & A Fund**



Clients ranged in age from 11 to 46, with an average age of 25 years. Gestational age ranged up to 20 weeks, with an average gestation around 11 weeks. While we might assume that income and use of birth control are related, we found that they were not. The income information we have shows that a majority of assisted patients (74%) fall in the income bracket of \$0-\$10,000 each year, only 1% made more than \$30,000 per year. The average total cost of an abortion was around \$980. After receiving funds from the National Abortion Federation (NAF) and A Fund, the average out of pocket cost for each patient was still around \$525. In other words, as the pie chart shows, nearly half of the clients in our sample are

still paying between 50% and 75% of the total costs of abortion, even after receiving assistance from A Fund and NAF.

What can you do to help? By supporting A Fund you help women afford their reproductive choices.

## Keep the EMW Clinic Open! *Cont. from page 1.*

Marcie Crim, the head of the Kentucky Health Justice Network, charged that the state's claims to protect women's health are "transparent in their deception."

If the Kentucky state government shuts down all the state's abortion clinics, said Millie Peters and Carol Savkovich, the co-chairs of the Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, we will see the return of illegal and unsafe abortions. "This is not protecting women's health—just the opposite," declared Savkovich.



Carol Savkovich

Peters recounted how clergy of many faiths had been involved

in this cause since the 1960s, when the Clergy Consultation Service helped Kentucky women to obtain abortions in other states. After 1973, when *Roe v. Wade* made abortion legal everywhere, these clergy formed the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (previously named RCAR, the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights) to educate the public and assist women to overcome the many obstacles that prevented them from exercising their constitutional right to terminate a pregnancy.

Tamarra Wieder of Planned Parenthood of Indiana and Kentucky—an organization that is also under attack—promised that EMW's doors would stay open "and so will ours." "Dirty Politics!" proclaimed the poster held by Honi Goldman, the head of the Reproductive Rights for Kentucky PAC. Bethany Patrick of Democratic Socialists of America, and Katherine Topmiller of Parents for Social Justice insisted that the struggle for reproductive rights was part of a movement for social and racial equality.

Will Kentucky be the first state in the United States to shutter its last abortion clinic? This is the momentous question that ACLU's attorneys will raise in court during the next few weeks. In fact, the law that justified Kentucky's action, attorneys argued, was very similar to the Texas laws that the Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional in 2016, in the *Whole Women's Health v. Hellerstedt* case. Whatever happens, participants in the rally said that they are not willing to return to the dark ages when women were forced to choose between involuntary pregnancy and unsafe abortion. They will continue to resist.

## ACLU *Cont. from page 1.*

approved those same agreements last year in renewing EMW's license.

"The state's bureaucratic sleight of hand is fooling no one. This is an attempt to ban abortion in Kentucky, plain and simple. We are fighting to keep this from happening," said Brigitte Amiri, a senior staff attorney with the ACLU's Reproductive Freedom Project.

The laws that Kentucky is using to attempt to shut down the clinic are very similar to Texas laws that the Supreme Court recently struck down in June in *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt*. In that case, the court held that requiring business arrangements with a hospital served no medical purpose and instead posed real harm to women.

The ACLU also represents the clinic in a challenge to a state law that requires doctors to display, and narrate in detail, an ultrasound to a woman prior to providing an abortion procedure, even if the woman objects and even if the doctor believes that it will harm the patient. A hearing in that case was held last week.

"With just one clinic to care for the women in need of abortion services, the forced closure of EMW will have devastating consequences for women in Kentucky. The state is hiding behind sham justifications when its true intent is to shut down this clinic and prevent a woman from making a real decision about her pregnancy," said attorney Don Cox, American Civil Liberties Union of Kentucky, [www.aclu-ky.org](http://www.aclu-ky.org)

The latest from ACLU: A federal court has signed an order permitting the clinic to stay open during the pendency of the case. The case will be argued in court in September.

### KRCRC MISSION STATEMENT

**The mission of the Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice is to direct the moral power of people of faith and religious organizations to safeguard and advance reproductive justice in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. We do this through education, advocacy, counseling and support of organizations with related goals.**



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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

*The Religious Community in Support of an Individual's Right to Choose!*



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*ACLU Pro-Choice Demonstrators.  
Credit: American Civil Liberties Union.*