



PENNSYLVANIA NOW TIMES

**Pennsylvania NOW
Inc.**

Pennsylvania NOW Times
Spring 2008

Constitutional Ban on Marriage in Pennsylvania Legislature

On March 18, 2008, the Pennsylvania Senate Judiciary Committee voted 10-4 to report out Senate Bill 1250, a proposed state constitutional amendment that its supporters say would prevent the recognition of gay marriages and civil unions. The constitutional amendment proposed by SB 1250 reads, **“No union other than a marriage between one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as marriage or the functional equivalent of marriage.”**

This sweeping constitutional ban on benefits and protections for people in non-marital relationships is likely to do much more than ban gay

marriages, which are already prohibited by Pennsylvania’s Defense of Marriage Act. In fact, SB 1250 would have severe consequences for many women who are not married to their boyfriend or partner. It could deprive unmarried Pennsylvanians of health insurance coverage, hospital visitation rights, and other important protections; create uncertainty and confusion in private contracts and domestic relations law; interfere with local governments’ domestic partnership ordinances; and possibly even foreclose domestic partner benefits offered by private corporations. Because it affirmatively requires that married couples be treated

differently from unmarried couples, SB 1250 constitutionalizes marital status discrimination. Its impact on legislation that would ban marital status discrimination in employment is unclear, but it arguably would prevent such legislation from being enforced at least in some applications.

Worst of all, this constitutional amendment will fan the flames of bigotry against lesbian and gay people. Please contact your state senator immediately and ask for a NO VOTE ON SB 1250.

— Susan Frietsche,
Senior Staff Attorney,
Women’s Law Project

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We sent out a fundraising letter in late February. We would like to thank those of you who donated to Pennsylvania NOW, the PA NOW Education Fund, and/or the PA NOW PAC. We will acknowledge the donations in the next newsletter. If you haven’t already made a donation, you can do so online at <http://panow.org>.



PA NOW PAC Endorses Joanne Tosti-Vasey for General Assembly

Pennsylvania NOW is pleased to announce that the Pennsylvania NOW PAC has endorsed Democrat Joanne Tosti-Vasey, our current President of Pennsylvania NOW, for the Pennsylvania State Assembly 171st District.

On April 22, feminist voters in the 171st District have the tremendous opportunity to send one of our own to the Pennsylvania State Assembly. Joanne is a committed feminist who has spent more than two decades working for the full equality for all women. Besides her work with NOW, Joanne currently serves as a Commissioner and Chair of the Legislative Committee on the Pennsylvania Commission for Women (she was appointed to the Commission in 2003 by Governor Rendell) and as a member of the Centre County Advisory Council to the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission.

Victory: Domestic Violence and Policing in Pittsburgh

In mid-June, the Pittsburgh Mayor and Police Chief promoted three police officers alleged to have perpetrated domestic violence. NOW and other feminists were incensed at the official attitude about violence against women.

On September 10, Pittsburgh City Council President held a "Post-Agenda Hearing." The hearing was coordinated by Squirrel Hill NOW member Audrey Glickman. Advocates, domestic violence service providers, a family court judge and David Thomas, a former police officer and national expert on police-perpetrated violence spoke at the hearing. NOW participants included Jeanne K.C. Clark of Pittsburgh and PA NOW President Joanne Tosti-Vasey.

After the hearing, Shields proposed an ordinance on police-

Her platform includes:

Health Care

A comprehensive health care reform plan that gives everyone an equal opportunity to be healthy, without forcing anyone to give up the care they already have. Joanne supports a single payer health insurance program: Health care that is privately provided and publicly funded to ensure access to health care for all.

Preservation

Preservation in three aspects: preservation of agriculture, preservation of environmental integrity, and historical preservation in the 171st House District area. Joanne supports efforts to encourage the continued survival of family farms with sustainable agriculture programs, while paying close attention to environmental integrity and the preservation of our historical landscape and buildings.

Joanne supports efforts to control rising energy costs due to deregulation and efforts to reduce CO₂ emissions, find sources of cleaner fuel, and fund research on all promising sources of renewable energies to help stop global warming.

Election Protection

Joanne supports a verifiable paper ballot trail in every county in the state that is accessible to all, including people with disabilities.

Choice

Joanne is firm believer in a woman's right to make choices about her reproductive life.

Joanne's campaign needs your help. To learn more about her campaign and how you can be of assistance, check out her website at <http://www.tosti-vasey.com>.

— Justine Andronici, Interim Treasurer, PA NOW PAC

In Memoriam

We mourn the loss of Emmalou Lukert who passed away in January. A longstanding member of NWPA NOW, Emmalou served in many capacities in Northwest PA NOW; in the past ten years, she served as NW PA NOW's state board delegate. In 2005 she was appointed to the Pennsylvania NOW Political Action Committee. Deeply committed to NOW's goals, Emmalou was active in every aspect of NWPA NOW's operation and approached each task with unflagging good cheer, optimism and a contagious sense of fun. How we will miss her!



Legislation in the PA General Assembly

PA NOW is monitoring several pieces of legislation in the Pennsylvania General Assembly.

Reproductive Justice

Emergency Contraception

HB 288—PA NOW **supports** passage WITHOUT any amendment. Requires hospitals to provide Emergency Contraception (EC) to all sexual assault victims who come to the emergency room. The hospital & staff must provide every woman clear & unbiased information on EC. Anti-choice advocates & legislators want to amend this bill to allow hospitals & doctors to opt out of providing EC. This bill is stalled awaiting final vote

on the House floor before it goes to the Senate.

Reproductive Health

HB 49—PA NOW **supports** passage of the Breast & Cervical Cancer Treatment Act. This bill would add uninsured women under the age of 65 with a diagnosis of cervical or breast cancer to Medicaid for treatment of the cancer if her family income does not exceed 250% of the federal poverty guidelines. This bill is currently being reviewed by the House Appropriations Committee.

HB 874—PA NOW **opposes** this bill in its current format. If passed this bill would require

health care facilities & providers to give pregnant patients information regarding umbilical cord blood banking & to arrange for umbilical cord blood donations. This would allow a woman to bank the cord blood for future use by her child should the child or another sibling need a stem-cell transplant. However, there is a hospital & doctor's conscience exemption in the bill that would allow any hospital to disregard the law for religious reasons. This exemption would deny the mother the right to make medical decisions about her child's future health. If this clause would be removed, we could support this bill.

HB 874 has passed in the

House & the Senate Public Health & Welfare Committee. It is currently being reviewed in the Senate Appropriations Committee

SB 966—PA NOW **supports** passage of this bill. If passed, additional targeted funds would be sent to rural & non-rural hospitals that provide more than 50% of their ob/gyn & neonatal care to Medicaid recipients. This bill continues to sit in the Senate Public Health & Welfare Committee.

Economic Justice

Family Equality

SB 35—PA NOW **supports** passage of this

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Chapter Exchange

NWPA NOW participated in Women's History Month at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania on March 5. Developed by Susan Woodland and Caroline Rhodes, the presentation "Passing the Torch: Feminism Then and NOW" considered the similarities in issues addressed and conflicts within organized feminism from 1848 to the present. Besides the general public, area high school students from five districts attended. On April 5, **NWPA NOW** will present "Your Body Image and Self Esteem: Under Attack and Ways to Fight Back" as part of a conference on gender held at Penn State Behrend

University in Erie. Betty Young, the chapter's vice president, will lead the discussion. NWPA NOW has also been interviewing candidates for PAC endorsement, and recommended Cindy Purvis, Democratic Candidate for State Senate and Mike Waltner, Democratic candidate for the 3rd US Congressional District. The PA NOW PAC has endorsed both Purvis and Waltner.

Philadelphia NOW joined with other local women's organizations to celebrate International Women's Day. The day's events began with a rally at City

Hall and a march. An indoor program followed and included lunch, structured speakouts, breakout sessions, and cultural performances. It concluded with the creation of a Women's Agenda For Philadelphia. The chapter thanks members Sherrie Cohen, one of the principal organizers, and Francesca Alvarado, who represented the chapter on the planning committee. Many thanks as well to all who participated in this inspiring event. Other co-sponsors included YWCA of Philadelphia, Coalition of Labor Women, Local 2187 of DC 47, Women's

Community Revitalization Project, CHOICE, Women's Way, Global Women's Strike, Granny Peace Brigade, Family Readiness Group, National Women's Fightback Network, and The Womyn's Village.

To be included in future Chapter News columns, send your information on your chapter's activities to woodlands103@yahoo.com We know you are all active on many of NOW's issues, so keep us posted and share the joy!

— Susan Woodland, At-Large Member, PA NOW Executive Committee



Legislative Summary (cont'd)

bill. This bill would add breastfeeding or expressing breast milk at work as a protected employment class in the PA Human Relations Act. This bill was referred to the Senate Labor & Industry Committee in February; hearings have not yet been held on this bill.

SB 36—PA NOW **supports** passage of this bill. The Breastfeeding Promotion & Support Tax Credit Act would give a 50% tax credit to businesses that promote & supply breastfeeding equipment for use by their employees who are breastfeeding their children. This bill was referred to the Senate Finance Committee in February; hearings have not yet been held on this bill.

HB 280 / SB 280 — PA NOW **supports** passage of this bill. Pennsylvania NOW along with the PA Commission for Women & Moms Rising held a rally in Harrisburg in October in support of this bill. Both bills add language to the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act to make it illegal to discriminate against someone in employment based on either their marital or familial status. PA NOW is recommending that this bill be expanded to housing & public accommodations & be amended to add family responsibilities to the Human Relations Act so that people who have the responsibility of caring for another family member, regardless of age, also do not experience discrimination. SB 280 was

referred to the Senate Labor & Industry Committee. HB 280 is currently in the House State Government Committee.

Health Care

There are two different health care proposals currently before the state legislature. Both are improvements over the current health care insurance programs.

SB 300 / HB 1660 — Provides comprehensive, universal health coverage regardless of preexisting conditions; it would also preserve the private health care system with the right of individuals to choose their own doctors. This bill is currently in the Senate Banking & Insurance Committee. If passed, all of the following health care bills would not be needed.

SB 1137 — this is the substitute for Governor Rendell's "Rx for PA" health care plan, now called "Access to Basic Care (ABC)." This plan would be available to small businesses (those with fewer than 50 employees) as well as to individuals who live in households with incomes under 300 percent of poverty. Passed the House & has been returned to the Senate for concurrence.

HB 1556 — Allows families to continue basic health care insurance coverage of their adult children up to the age of 29 who are unmarried, without dependents, & who are either residents of PA or are

full-time students. Employers would not be required to pay any additional premiums for this extension of coverage. This bill is waiting for final passage in the House before moving to the Senate.

HB 2005 — PA NOW **supports** passage of this bill. This bill would make it impossible for people to be denied coverage OR to have their premiums raised because they have a pre-existing condition. This bill is awaiting final passage in the House before moving on to the Senate

Title IX

SB 985—PA NOW **supports** passage of this bill. This bill would require junior & senior high schools to collect secondary school athletic equity data & send it to the PA Department of Education to determine if secondary schools are complying with the federal Title IX educational equity law. Currently this type of data collection is only mandated for colleges & universities. This bill has not moved since being introduced into the Senate Education Committee last June.

Lesbian Rights

SB 761 / HB 1400— LGBT Civil Rights Bill. PA NOW **supports** this bill, which seeks to amend the PA Human Relations Act to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation & gender identity in employment, housing, & public accommodations.

SB 761 is currently in the Senate Judiciary Committee; hearings have not yet been held on this bill. HB 1400 was just introduced on June 18 & placed in the House State Government Committee.

SB 1250 — the so-called Marriage Protection Amendment rears its ugly head again! PA NOW **opposes** the bill, which would amend the Pennsylvania Constitution to ban gay marriage. The text of the ban states, "**No union other than a marriage between one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as marriage or the functional equivalent of marriage by the Commonwealth.**"

If this bill passes & becomes an amendment to the Pennsylvania State Constitution, we would for the first time enshrine discrimination into our state Constitution. This is the second attempt by the General Assembly to enshrine discrimination into the Pennsylvania Constitution. This amendment is unwise, unnecessary, & divisive. This bill was introduced in February & passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee by a 10-4 vote on Monday, March 16. See page 1 for further details & talking points to oppose this amendment. Plans are in the works to hold a rally in opposition to this bill sometime early in May 2008. Details will be available on the web at <http://panow.org> &

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Legislative Summary (cont'd)

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<http://equalitypa.org> once plans are finalized.

Promoting Diversity & Ending Racial Discrimination

HR 296—PA NOW **supports** this resolution opposing implementation of the Federal REAL ID Act. REAL ID is a federally mandated identification program that would force states to create a national ID. It violates individuals' privacy rights & could result in citizens & resident aliens being discriminated against because they look

or sound "foreign." REAL ID requires states to set up computerized databases that share personal details of ID card holders. Since its passage, the US Department of Homeland Security has flatly refused to guarantee privacy protections in the ID card itself or in the mandatory databases. Resolution has passed the House & was referred to the Senate Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness Committee on June 25. It has been stalled in committee since last summer.

Stopping Violence Against Women

SB 150 — Sexual Violence Victim Protection Act . PA NOW **supports** this bill. It creates a "Sexual Violence Victim Protection Order" similar to a Protection from Abuse order for domestic violence victims. The protection order would last up to 18 months, but could be extended if the accused violates the order. It also requires training of members of all police departments about sexual violence victim protection orders & requires police notify all victims of sexual violence verbally & in

writing of community sexual assault services. Passed the Senate in March 2007. The bill has been sent to the House for consideration. It is currently in the House Judiciary Committee.

HB 95 — PA NOW **supports** this bill, which would repeal the statute of limitations on rape & involuntary deviate sexual intercourse. This bill is currently in the House Judiciary Committee; hearings have not yet been held on this bill.

Pennsylvania NOW Celebrates 35 Years

Pennsylvania NOW held their 35th Anniversary celebration convention on October 12-14, 2007. Over 100 people attended the three-day convention. Peg Pennepacker, a consultant & expert on Title IX access for girls in middle and high schools in Pennsylvania, spoke about Title IX's history in Pennsylvania and the need for data collection on athletic programs in the junior & senior high schools. Eleanor Smeal, Executive Director of the Feminist Majority & the first President of PA NOW spoke on the history of NOW's founding in Pennsylvania & where we go from here.

Several awards were presented to honor women who have made Pennsylvania a more

equalitarian state. Certificates of Appreciation were presented to the 12 Slippery Rock University women who successfully challenged their University's closure of the women's water polo, swimming, & field hockey programs. Alma Speed Fox & Jo Ann Evansgardner were presented with the Wilma Scott Heide Pioneer Feminist Award. Susan Frietsche & the late Patricia Jardine were honored with the Molly Yard Woman of Courage Award. In the afternoon, former PA NOW Presidents & founders of local chapters who attended the convention were recognized with Certificates of Appreciation.

State College Passes Anti-Discrimination Ordinance

After nearly a year of collaborative work with Pennsylvania NOW, Ni-Ta-Nee NOW, and the Centre County Advisory Council to the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, State College Borough unanimously passed an inclusive anti-discrimination employment ordinance on December 17, 2007.

Here's what was achieved.
 ⇒ This ordinance includes all of the state-protected anti-discrimination classes of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, non-job related disability, sex, and having a GED diploma.
 ⇒ This is the 15th local ordinance in Pennsylvania that adds sexual orientation,

gender identity, and marital status to employment discrimination.
 ⇒ It is the first ordinance in the state to provide broad familial status protections in employment. It is probably one of the first, if not the first, local ordinance in the nation that redefines family status to include family responsibilities **across the entire lifespan**. Family status is typically defined only as having children 18 and under domiciled in the home.
 State College passed a Fair Housing Ordinance over a decade ago that
 (Continued on page 8)



PAC Endorsements

The Pennsylvania Primary Election Day is Tuesday, April 22, 2008. The following recommendations by the state and national NOW political action committees are presented here for your information. These endorsements are current as of March 31. Any additional endorsements made between now and the April 22 Primary Election Day will be posted on our PAC Endorsement page at <http://www.panow.org>. Click on "PA NOW PAC" and then on "PAC Endorsements."

National NOW PAC Endorsements

The National NOW PAC makes endorsements in all Federal races. This year, we have Federal races for the U.S President (remember to also vote for the delegate slate) and all of the seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. There is no US Senate race in Pennsylvania this year. As of March 31, the national NOW PAC has made the following endorsements for Federal races:

U.S. President: Hillary Clinton (D), <http://hillaryclinton.com>

The NOW PAC endorsed **Hillary Clinton** in March 2007 as the best qualified candidate for president. Starting April 16, NOW President Kim Gandy and other national and state NOW leaders will be in cities throughout Pennsylvania to meet with NOW members and feminist voters to underscore their first-hand knowledge of her commitment to women and families and a better – more equal – world. For information about the NOW schedule, call 412-241-8329 or on the web, go to members.aol.com/pwetherby/party.html

U.S. House of Representatives

- Mike Waltner (D)** CD3, <http://www.waltnerforcongress.com>
- Sam Bennett (D)** CD15, <http://www.bennett2008.com>
- Beth Hafer (D)** CD18, <http://www.haferforcongress.com>

Pennsylvania NOW PAC Endorsements

The Pennsylvania NOW PAC makes endorsements for all statewide and local races. This year, there are races for State Attorney General, State Auditor General, State Treasurer, half of the Pennsylvania Senate seats, and all of the Pennsylvania House of Representative seats. The PA NOW PAC Endorsement is given only to those candidates who support all of our issues and will take a leadership position on those issues if elected. As of March 31, the following people have been endorsed by Pennsylvania NOW PAC for the April 22 Primary Election.

Pennsylvania Senate

- Anne Dicker (D)** 1st <http://annedicker.com>
- Cindy Purvis (D)** 49th <http://cindypurvis.com>

Pennsylvania House of Representatives

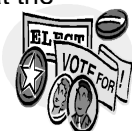
- Joanne Tosti-Vasey (D)** 171st <http://tosti-vasey.com>
- Babette Josephs (D)** 182nd
- Vanessa Brown (D)** 190th <http://vanessabrow2008.com>

Voters' Guide paid for by NOW PAC and PA NOW PAC

The PA NOW PAC needs your help.

In order to put out a voter's guide and to assist NOW endorsed candidates for statewide and local office, we need funds donated directly to the PA NOW PAC. If you are interested in electing public officials who fully support the full equality of women, then please consider donating to the PA NOW PAC. You can either make a PAC donation online at

<http://panow.org/panowpac.htm> or fill in the form at the right and mail to
PA NOW PAC
P.O. Box 8614



PAC Donations

Yes, I want to help support the PA NOW PAC.

Yes, I wish to make a nondeductible donation to help the PAC:
 \$25___ \$50___ \$100___ \$250___ Other \$____.

If you are donating over \$250.00, we need the following additional information:

Occupation: _____

Employer: _____

Method of Payment	Name
<input type="checkbox"/> Check (PA NOW PAC)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Discover	Address
<input type="checkbox"/> Visa	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> American Express	Phone
_____	_____

Credit Card # _____ Exp. date _____

Signature _____



Resolution on Pittsburgh Police and Domestic Violence

WHEREAS, in June, the mayor of the city of Pittsburgh promoted four male officers within the ranks of the police force; and

WHEREAS, journalists then discovered and reported that three of the four had histories of domestic violence requiring legal intervention; and

WHEREAS, the mayor of the city of Pittsburgh then announced that he was creating an immediate zero tolerance policy on domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, since the promotions, Pittsburgh city council has held two public hearings on the subject and is considering legislation to require the police to adopt specific policies and actions on the issues of officer-involved family violence and hiring, promotion, training and disciplinary actions, yet there has been no concrete action by either the mayor or the chief of police to address the issue, nor have they revealed what specific policies are in place on the issue that allowed the three officers to be promoted; and

WHEREAS, current hiring for the Pittsburgh police force has reverted to virtually no recruitment or hiring of women, after 15 years of court-ordered hiring which required that equal numbers of women and men and equal numbers of African-American and white officers be hired;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Pennsylvania NOW (National Organization for Women) condemns the inaction of the mayor and his appointed police chief and demands that the mayor match his words with actions, by immediately instituting a zero tolerance policy for all police officers involved in domestic violence situation, including developing policies that exclude abusive officers and potential officers from hiring, promotion and retention; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Pennsylvania NOW calls on the mayor to immediately reinstitute gender- and racially-balanced hiring of Pittsburgh police.

Passed unanimously, October 13, 2007, Pennsylvania NOW State Convention

Resolution Regarding WDUQ-FM

WHEREAS, Duquesne University has ordered WDUQ-FM to stop airing underwritten messages from the reproductive rights and healthcare education group Planned Parenthood; and

WHEREAS, WDUQ is the primary National Public Radio affiliate station in the Pittsburgh broadcast area and, as an affiliate, has an obligation to serve the public as a whole; and

WHEREAS, Planned Parenthood provides critically important health care and reproductive counseling to women and men in Pittsburgh; and

WHEREAS, Planned Parenthood's messages emphasize self-esteem, sexual health, and responsible decision-making; and

WHEREAS, silencing Planned Parenthood's messages does a disservice to the people of Pittsburgh;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Pennsylvania NOW, Inc. (National Organization for Women) urge our members to NOT donate money to WDUQ and to request refunds of current donations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that PA NOW inform Duquesne University and WDUQ that the members will be withholding their donations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that PA NOW research the regulations for public radio to ensure that WDUQ is in compliance with the Federal Communications Commission; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that PA NOW initiate an action at the time of license renewal if this is not favorably resolved.

Passed October 13, 2007, Pennsylvania NOW State Convention



Pennsylvania NOW Inc.

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**See the PA NOW
PAC Voter's
Guide on page 6.**

State College Ordinance (con't)

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included sexual orientation and the narrow definition of family status. The new council has agreed to reopen this ordinance in 2008 to add gender identity and the revised family status definition. They will also expand the fair housing ordinance to include public accommodations—protecting people from discrimination when they interact with businesses, parks, banks, stores, restaurants, etc.

Women and Parents Deserve Equal Rights

Pennsylvania NOW, the Pennsylvania Commission for Women, and Mom's Rising organized a rally and lobby day in Harrisburg on Tuesday, October 2, 2008 in support of adding marital and familial status to the PA Human Relations Act (SB 280 and HB 280).

Justine Andronici, Co-President of Ni-Ta-Nee NOW and a member of the Pennsylvania NOW State Board emceed the rally (at the podium below). Speakers included Rep.

Craig Dally, primary sponsor of HB 280, Senator Jane Orie, primary sponsor of SB 280; Rep. Babette Josephs, Chair of the House Government Committee where the house bill will first be reviewed; Leslie Stiles, Executive Director of the PA Commission for Women; Homer Floyd, Executive Director of the PA Human Relations Commission; Kiki Peppard from 9 to 5 and Mom's Rising; and Joanne Tosti-Vasey, President of Pennsylvania NOW.

See page 4 for further details on the status of these two bills.

