



NARAL
Pro-Choice Minnesota

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**come down for choice
debates inside!**

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Pro-Choice Minnesota News

A publication of NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota and NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota Foundation

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

What a difference an election makes.

It was just one short year ago that I asked you to envision a Minnesota where lawmakers - not doctors - make medical decisions for you. I cautioned you about a state where your income would determine the type of health care you receive, and where state funds to licensed reproductive health care providers would be cut and instead applied to anti-choice operations disguised as health care centers.

As a result of the 2010 Election, this is exactly the Minnesota we now inhabit, dominated by anti-choice Legislative majorities. Despite the hard work of our legislative allies and supporters, bills designed to manifest this vision passed both the House and Senate.

Fortunately, common sense prevailed and Governor Mark Dayton vetoed all bills that would have restricted access to abortion and contraceptive care.

As I write this letter we are entering the third week of a state government shutdown, and once again, GOP leadership pushed for abortion restrictions BEFORE settling the budget impasse. That's right - the GOP demanded their extreme anti-woman agenda receive attention before handling business for all of Minnesota.

The GOP of Minnesota has declared a War on Women.

As I said before: *what a difference an election makes.*

As we continue to battle against anti-choice attacks during the upcoming Legislative Sessions, **NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota is laying the groundwork for the 2012 Elections.**

With your support, we can change the tides on the War on Women in Minnesota. Together, we will deliver pro-choice electoral victories to make Minnesota a pro-choice state again. Together, we will be the leaders in this critical time to forge a new direction in the debate over reproductive rights.

NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota has a strategy to change these realities in our state. We have a bold vision for Minnesota; one that is fully achievable with the support of the pro-choice community.

The 2012 election cycle is a vital first step to make these changes. We have the chance to make Minnesota fully pro-choice: Mark Dayton is a fully pro-choice Governor, and he needs allies in the House and Senate. With their pro-choice leadership at the helm, we can influence positive reproductive health policy and make Minnesota a truly pro-choice state.

During the past few months, many people have offered their words of thanks to me for the work of NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota. I am touched by their thoughtfulness but am reminded that I am only here because of you. I am able to speak up for the rights of all Minnesota women because of your investment in our organization and our collective belief that every woman has the right to choose.

I cannot do this work alone - I need all of our members to give early and often. I need your time as volunteers, I need your voices heard in the election booth, and I need your monetary support realize our collective vision.

In Choice,

Linnea House



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Campus Organizing Intern of NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota

Alex Robertson

Alex is a law student at the University of Minnesota School of Law. She was a Campus Representative for NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota at Moorhead State for two years, and regular break out session leader at Pro-Choice Lobby Day. She became the Campus Organizing Intern in the fall of 2010 and continues to serve in that capacity.

“As the Campus Organizing Intern for NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota, I have gotten to see students at Minnesota campuses grow and cultivate their leadership abilities. It is a pleasure spending time with activists who are so compassionate to the world around them and motivated to do great things. The people I work with inspire me to be a better person; it is one of the most rewarding places to work.”



Alex Robertson, 2010-2011 Campus Organizing Intern, right, with Annie Fedorowicz, 2008-2010 Campus Organizing Intern at our inaugural Run for Your Rights 5k.

Building the Future of the Pro-Choice Movement: NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota's Student Organizing Program

For nearly 20 years, student activists across Minnesota have organized their campuses to fight for reproductive rights. In addition to educating their peers about the current threats against their rights, these activists are gaining the skills necessary to become leaders, both on their campuses and in the broader pro-choice movement.

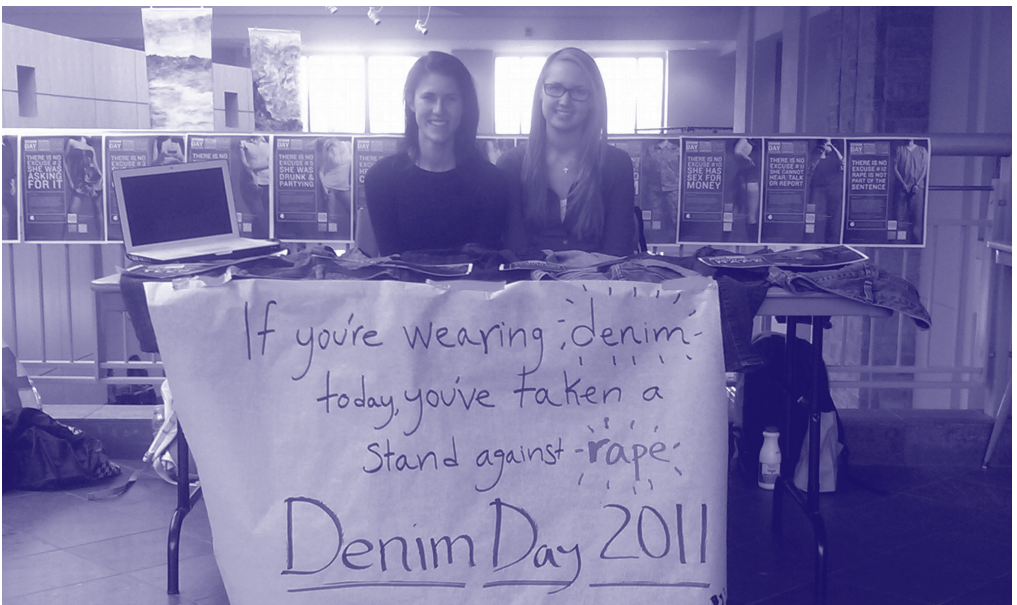
Through their internship with NARAL, our 2010-2011 activists report:

- Growing into stronger leaders, and positively impacting their confidence and organizing skills;
- Deepening their awareness of the importance of political advocacy in protecting reproductive rights, especially through visits to legislators at Pro-Choice Lobby Day;
- Connecting with the reproductive rights community and learning how comprehensive sexual health includes abortion rights;
- Becoming key coalition partners with other groups on their campus, and in the larger community.

This year we had fourteen strong and determined interns working across the State! Our intern Amanda Flispart from Minneapolis Community and Technical College had this to say about her time with us:

"I was intimidated (about becoming a rep) at first, but it was an amazing experience that made me grow in so many ways. I found out I love organizing and I'll definitely be involved in things in the future. I can't NOT be some sort of activist. I get fired up!"

There is much to be proud of when looking at the work of these amazing young activists. We appreciate their dedication, creativity, sense of humor, and fierce determination to never back down when it comes to reproductive rights.



2011 PRO CHOICE LOBBY DAY
 2011 PRO-CHOICE LOBBY

2011 Pro-Choice Lobby Day

On Wednesday, February 23rd, community members and activists from across the state traveled to St. Paul to train with advocates, rally in the Rotunda, and lobby their elected officials. We were honored this year to have Governor Mark Dayton kick off our event - the first time a sitting governor has attended our Lobby Day!

"I assure you that nothing as extreme that violates that basic fundamental right - and it is a constitutional right as established by the United States Supreme Court - will be enacted with my signature," Dayton said. "It will not happen here in Minnesota."

"It's not a place for government, especially politicians who are engaged in their own political ideologies and advantages and ambitions, to be telling individual women what their rights are as a person in a small D democratic society."

As a result of the 2010 election, the 2011 Pro-Choice Lobby Day was our largest Lobby Day to date. With a renewed energy, the pro-choice community stood together at the State Capitol to raise our Voice for Choice! With over 200 citizen activists, we vigorously focused on protecting a woman's right to choose; from battling the multitude of abortion bans and funding cuts to reproductive healthcare.

We had many new faces this year - Minnesotans who were appalled at the renewed anti-choice attacks and decided now was the time to get involved.

Our 2011 Pro-Choice Lobby Day partners were Midwest Health Center for Women, Women's Health Center of Duluth, Planned Parenthood of Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Law Students for Reproductive Justice, Minnesota Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, Nursing Students for Choice, Women's Consortium, and the Women's Student Activist Collective.



2011 Legislative Wrap Up (Until Round 2: 2011 Special Session)

The first round of the 2011 Legislative session has shown the pro-choice community just how much elections matter. Despite a slate of candidates running on a platform of the economy and job creation, we saw a full-on attack to a woman's right to choose in Minnesota, wasting valuable legislative session time that ultimately ended in gridlock.

Attacks on Choice

Banning Abortions after 20 Weeks

One of the central anti-choice bills involved banning abortion procedures after 20 weeks gestation. This bill was a veiled attempt to get an abortion restriction ban in the books to later be challenged by the Minnesota Supreme Court. Labeled as "Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act," this bill was based on pseudoscience, and would actually put women's lives in danger as it provided no health exceptions for women, even survivors of rape and incest or those whose pregnancies have severe fetal anomalies.

NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota has committed to **protect a woman's health and safety while preserving personal decision-making** and will defend the right of physicians to determine the best course of treatment for their own patients, not politicians.

On May 25th, 2011, Governor Mark Dayton vetoed this bill.

Banning the Constitutional Right to Choose

In 1995, the Minnesota State Supreme Court found that the

state constitution provides greater protection for a woman's right to choose than the federal Constitution. This ruling meant that the state's public health coverage for low-income women cannot selectively discriminate as to which pregnancy-related services it will pay for. If the state will pay for childbirth, it must also pay for abortion services.

In 2011, our opponents once again introduced a bill, the deceptively labeled "Taxpayer Protection Act," to repeal this constitutional right.

NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota continues to **defend legislative attempts to challenge this ruling and restrict low-income women's access to abortion.**

On May 25th, 2011, Governor Mark Dayton vetoed this bill.

Preservation of Family Planning Funds

Once again, our pro-choice champions worked to preserve the essential funding for our family planning providers. Unfortunately, the Health and Human Services Omnibus bill included a 50% cut to family planning services, despite the fact that **for every \$1 spent on family planning, the state saves \$4, one of the best investments of state funding.** Family planning prevents unintended pregnancies and provides women and their families with the tools to plan their lives.

On May 24th, 2011, Governor Mark Dayton vetoed this bill.

Run For Your Rights! 5k Run/Walk

The cold, blustery morning of April 15th, 2011 saw over 120 pro-choice runners and walkers take over the path at Como Park in Saint Paul for NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota Foundation's inaugural Run For Your Rights! 5K Run/Walk.

Thanks to the generous support of the friends and family of over 200 pro-choice participants, we surpassed our \$10,000 fundraising goal by \$6,000! We are grateful for the strong support to continue our foundation's efforts to train the upcoming leaders of the pro-choice movement and fight the anti-choice policies being pushed at the Capitol every day.

We would like to, again, thank everyone who donated, volunteered and came out as Pro-Choice and Proud on that chilly Saturday morning - it warmed our hearts! We can't wait to do it again in 2012 - and we'll see YOU there!

One final thank you to our generous sponsors, including race management services from Running Ventures, post-race chocolate from Equal Exchange and prizes from i like you, a local boutique.



The Heat is Here - Along with a Summer of PRO-CHOICE ACTIVISM!

With the summer festival season upon us, we believe no summer is complete without spending a few hours tabling for choice!

We will be tabling at events across Minnesota, supporting our basic rights to privacy and choice. We'll be on hand talking about comprehensive sex education, defending reproductive rights, access to family planning, and naturally, there will be talk about the government shutdown.

To do this work, we need you! **We rely on our cadre of amazing volunteers to work at our NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota booth.** If you are interested in volunteering, please email us at volunteer@ProChoiceMinnesota.org or call 651-602-7655.

Our list of scheduled events:

- Rochester Pride Festival - July 17th
- Moorhead Pride Festival - August 14th
- Family Tree 40th Anniversary Event - August 20th
- Duluth Pride Festival - September 4th
- Mankato Pride Festival - September 11th
- St. Cloud Pride Festival - September 27th





NARAL
Pro-Choice Minnesota presents :
12th Annual
Comedy for Choice

Thursday, July 28, 2011
doors open @ 6 pm
show @ 7 pm

Tickets : \$40
\$160 for a 4 person table
Table Sponsorships available

Performers :
Nate Abshire
Mary Hirsch
Pat Susmilch
Amber Preston

hosted by :
Leslie Ball

Varsity Theater
1308 4th Street SE - Dinkytown Minneapolis
park on 5th Street between 13th + 14th Avenues.
RSVP @ www.ProChoiceMinnesota.org or 651-602-7655

The 12th Annual Comedy for Choice event at the Varsity Theater is just around the corner!

Singer, actor, and writer Leslie Ball, founder and host of BALLS Cabaret, will lend her many talents to the 12th Annual Comedy for Choice. We will showcase the comedic art of Nate Abshire, Mary Hirsch, Pat Susmilch, and Amber Preston.

(There are even rumors of a special singing duet featuring one of NARAL's own that you won't want to miss!)

The best part is that your sponsorships and individual tickets will all go to help defend reproductive rights across Minnesota while you simply sit back and watch a great line up of comedians at the very beautiful Varsity Theater!



So order your tickets now by calling us at 651-602-7655.

We promise this event will be serious fun.