

## CRUSADING AGAINST WOMEN'S RIGHTS

by

Dr. Paul D. Simmons  
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The champions of choice should take special notice of two items in the news. The first is the fact that President Bush is again nominating William Pryor and Janice Rogers Brown for the federal court. Pryor, former Alabama Attorney General, was nominated for the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals and twice blocked by the Democrats who think he holds extreme views on religious liberty. Bush has also had trouble winning confirmation for Brown, former Supreme Court Justice in California. A New York Times editorial against her in 2003 said she had "declared war on values that most Americans hold dear." Both Pryor and Brown believe Roe should be reversed and are not sympathetic with privacy or reproductive rights.

The second item in the news is the effort by the Kansas Attorney General to obtain medical records for nearly 90 women. AG Phil Kline insists that he is just enforcing Kansas law that protects children from rape and forbids late-term abortions. He is an ardent opponent of abortion and has demanded complete, un-edited medical records of women under the age of 15 or who had an abortion after the 22nd week of pregnancy. Kline's fishing expedition makes a mockery of anything like patient confidentiality, and has generated outrage among supporters of choice who are asking the Kansas Supreme Court to block the order.

These stories illustrate the importance of Constitutional protections for women and their reproductive decisions. They also show President Bush's continued efforts to reshape the federal judiciary to accommodate an extremist right-wing agenda. Bush insists he has "no litmus test" for Supreme Court appointments but his actions indicate the contrary. Why are all those nominated for federal appointments people of strong opposition to abortion rights?

The President also insists he does not like Judges who make new legislation. But he is seeking to appoint justices who will constrict civil liberties, not protect them. His nominees are not "conservatives" or "strict

constructionists" but "radicals" or "extremists" by any measure. Their agenda extends from abortion to the privatization of social security. The Republican majority in both houses of Congress gives the President's radical agenda a better than even chance for passage.



Paul Simmons

Strong opposition to these nominees should be voiced by the supporters of choice. Our religious and reproductive rights are being targeted for infringement, by a man who has spoken of the need to protect the liberties of women around the world. His words (from his Inaugural and State of the Union) should be used to point to the intransigence and hypocrisy at the heart of his campaign against women. Unfortunately, Kentucky's Congressional representatives are all in the President's camp.

Our protest and determination will have to be clear and unequivocal. Go on-line to contact the White House and contact Senators Bunning and McConnell and Representative Northup insisting that your religious commitments be respected and defended. At stake is nothing less than the freedom of religion guaranteed by the First Amendment. The time for hearing Madison's admonition to "take alarm at the first threat to our liberties" is far past. We may delay while the enemies of our freedoms destroy a heritage that was centuries in the making.

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"At a moment when the United States should be leading the world on advancing women's equality, the Bush administration chose instead to alienate government ministers and 6,000 other delegates at an important United Nations conference on that issue with a burst of anti-abortion zealotry this week." (New York Times)

# Reflections from a First Time Lobbyist

by Kathy Schroerlucke

I've read about lobbying, have seen it portrayed on television, and read Kate Cunningham's reports in *Voice for Choice*, but I couldn't really picture what takes place. Lobbying is foreign to my experience and I always felt I needed expert knowledge to do it. After all, I didn't want to show-up as an imbecile. I think of lobbyists as persons who know what's going on in the legislature, not just daily but hourly. How could I participate without such knowledge? What role could I play? I really wanted to do this, so I took a deep breath and decided to join the KRCRC group one Tuesday. If nothing else, I would simply observe and learn, and I did!

We met Tuesday morning in Louisville and drove to Frankfort together. This gave us time to get to know each other and hear more about what may be going on that day in Frankfort. Upon arrival, we joined others in the cafeteria for a strategy session. The paid lobbyist for the American Civil Liberties Union Reproductive Freedom Project reviewed with us issues of concern gleaned from the daily legislative bulletin and agenda. Different groups were represented at the table and each group decided who they would try to see.

The KRCRC group consisted of Kate Cunningham, Gilbert Schroerlucke and myself. As a group, we visited our respective senators and representatives. Kate and Gil had warned me that we might spend a lot of time waiting and that we might not get into to see everyone, but it was a good day. We spent very little time waiting and we saw everyone on our list.

It was easy to follow Kate's lead. She introduced us and talked with them about the fetal anesthesia bill that was going to a committee for review. I guess there are simply too many bills for legislators to stay on top of, because this was the first they had heard of this particular bill. So, I learned that one role we play as lobbyists is to inform legislators of bills important to reproductive choice. As a result, the legislator hears our concerns, has the opportunity to develop a greater understanding of the issue, and can take appropriate action.

I was surprised by how comfortable I was with the whole process. I think the morning session in the cafeteria helped set the stage, but primarily I was comfortable because Kate was so competent and graceful. It was so easy to follow her lead. In fact, I didn't have to say anything if I didn't want to, just being there was enough. The more comfortable I became, the more I really wanted to talk with the officials, but time would not allow. I knew I had to be focused on our

immediate mission. We had to do what needed to be done in a matter of 5-10 minutes which was usually all we got. Keep in mind that we were only one of a stream of individuals trying to get into to see them. After visiting with the legislators, we sat in on a legislative committee session which I found most enlightening. I heard various groups advocate for or against bills, seeing first hand how important the lobbyist is to the democratic process. I left this experience with eyes wide open and with new concerns for Kentucky's future.



**Kathy Schroerlucke**

One of the officials with whom we spoke, told us of his recent election experience which I found most disturbing. I saw coverage of these types of situations on the national news but to hear it happening in Kentucky really brought it home for me. He told us of churches in his district whose ministers preached from the pulpit on Sunday morning telling parishioners that a vote for George Bush and the Republican candidates was a vote for Jesus Christ and having a large picture of George Bush stationed in the sanctuary in a very prominent place.. Combine this with federal funding to faith-based initiatives and with bills like the fetal anesthesia bill that tries to have beliefs accepted as science and then turned into law, and I think we have to be concerned with an erosion of the separation of church and state, right here in Kentucky.

I found the entire day to be enlightening but also disconcerting. I was glad that I went. The whole event seemed possible to me because of Kate Cunningham's leadership. Without her leadership, I would not have done this. Seeing her in action was a delight. She volunteers to do this out of her own conviction and commitment. She feels called to this work. She is performing a ministry and all of us should be grateful to her and be thankful that she is called to this important work. We may not be able to pay her but we could stand with her. Please consider giving a day in 2006 and think about how important the lobbying effort is when you write out your donation check to KRCRC. You may want to do what I did and add Kate Cunningham to your own Hall of Fame. She is truly one of my heroes.

In 2006, the Kentucky legislative session lasts 3 months, January-March. Kate goes to Frankfort 2 days a week, usually Tuesday and either Wednesdays or Thursdays. I hope you will consider spending one day during this time to join Kate. This is a ministry of presence. Your presence makes a difference and that's all that is required, your presence. We need people

# General Assembly Wrap-Up

By Kate Cunningham

A disturbing trend is developing in the legislative efforts to thwart women's control over their reproductive lives. During this session, legislators proposed two bills, for example, that ratchet up the punitive measures against women who choose to terminate problem pregnancies. One bill would have required ALL women seeking abortions to be counseled about the possibility of "fetal pain" after 20 weeks gestation, even though more than 90 per cent of women in Kentucky terminate pregnancy much earlier than 20 weeks. Apart from the question of whether and when fetal pain exists or whether the lay legislature should be dictating anesthesia procedures, the bill's mandatory "counseling" was apparently designed to terrorize and intimidate all women seeking abortion. We already have mandatory scripted counseling in this state; this bill would have amended that script for the sole purpose, in more than 90 per cent of cases, to cause additional distress to the woman. (Tho this bill was stopped this year, we can expect to see it again.)

An amendment (later withdrawn) to another bill would have required reporting abortions to "law enforcement agencies." Abortions are already reported to the Division of Vital Statistics (so we know at what stage most abortions occur in this state) and there is no reason, other than harassment and intimidation, to require reporting to law enforcement. The FOP stood up against Right to Life on this bogus "law enforcement" issue, saying abortion is legal, get over it. Even while abortion is legal, our opponents want the public to think that anyone seeking an abortion is a criminal. At the same time, anyone advocating family planning, to reduce unwanted pregnancies and thus the rate of abortion, is branded a "baby-killer" or worse.

Highlight of the session was the public hearing on Emergency Contraception before the House Health and Welfare Committee. Everyone I know is working on his or her own "Plan B" for life, when Plan A just didn't work out (i.e., due to death, divorce, disability), and women faced with date rape, contraceptive failure or sexual assault are certainly entitled to easy access to the "Plan B" or "morning after pill." In the 30 day session, there was not time

to move this bill forward, but we look forward to further advocacy for Emergency Contraception next year.



Kate Cunningham

Special thanks to pharmacist Rachel Chancey who testified in support of regulated access to EC via pharmacy, without need for an individual patient's prescription.

We were fortunate to have more "voices for choice" present at the Capitol Annex this year than ever before: kudos to Gil Schroerlucke, who drove volunteers every Tuesday, to Barb Stephens who drove every Thursday, to the National Council of Jewish Women, the ACLU Reproductive Freedom Project and Pro-Choice Owensboro for their many legislative visits.

Thanks also to our armchair activists who made numerous phone calls about the above bills, when asked to do so! Thanks for protecting women's health and women's options!

### Editor's Note:

**A special thanks to Kate for her steady support and careful guidance in our lobbying efforts. If we dodged the bullet this time, get ready to bob and weave next year because those anti-choice fanatics never give up.**

**And to Amanda Kreps-Long, ACLU Reproductive Freedom Project Director, for her strong leadership in our joint lobbying efforts.**

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Gilbert Schroerlucke ..... Editor  
JoAnn Burch ..... Distribution Coordinator

## Catholics & Choice

According to a brochure published by Catholics for a Free Choice, the following statistics are true:

1. Only 20% of Catholics believe that church leaders should have the final say regarding the morality of a Catholic advocating fee choice regarding abortion.
2. Less than one-fourth (23%) of U. S. Catholics agree with the bishops' position that abortion should be illegal in all circumstances.
3. A majority of Catholic women (52%) polled in a national survey prefer a hospital in their community that offers elective abortions to one that does not.
4. 53% of Catholics believe that you can be a good Catholic without obeying the church hierarchy's teaching on abortion.
5. Only 13 % of the nation's 47,200 Catholic priests belong to Priests for Life.
6. 96% of all Catholic women who have ever had sex have used modern contraceptive methods at some point in their lives.
7. Less than 3% of sexually active Catholic women use church-approved family planning methods.
8. 57% of Catholics say that contraceptives should be available to teens even if their parents don't approve.
9. Only 9% of U. S. Catholics feel so strongly about abortion that they would not vote for a political candidate who disagreed with their opinion.
10. 77% of Catholics say that it is not appropriate for religious leaders to urge people to vote for a candidate because of his or her stand on abortion.
11. 79% of Catholics support U. S. Aid programs for international family planning.

Consult Catholics for a Free Choice, 1436 U Street, NW, Suite 301, Washington, DC 20009 Phone: 202-986-6093; fax: 202-332-7995; e-mail: [cffc@catholicsforchoice.org](mailto:cffc@catholicsforchoice.org)

## Right Wing Religion - An Addition

(Here's an interesting idea and analysis! How might we appropriate this idea into our Pro-Choice movement. Gil)

(Kansas City, MO, February 15, 2005)

In his latest national monthly column, Dr. Robert N. Minor, Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Kansas, charges that much of the religious right wing is addicted to their religion. "Dealing with the right-wing's religious/political lifestyle and its evangelistic agenda," says Minor, "is like dealing with an alcoholic or hard drug user."

"Like all addictions, when right-wing religion dominates one's life obsessively, it tells people how to feel rather than getting in touch with their real problems," says Minor. "It also prevents the addicts from understanding the harm they are doing to those around them."

Minor advises readers in his "Minor Details" column that "no matter how hard this might be to accept, strategies that try to embrace, excuse, or move toward the religious right-wing are the actions of "enablers." Enabling is a common response by family members to addicts that reinforces their addiction.

"While addicts are expected to be in denial about their addiction, creating a mythological view of the world to maintain it and 'protecting their stash,' Minor said in an interview about his column, "enablers" are the ones making excuses, arguing with the addict, covering up for their addiction, and refusing to do the unpopular, confrontational work of intervention."

Addiction specialists have been discussing "process addictions" for a generation and often have listed religion along with sexual addiction, romance addiction, workaholism, and relationship addiction as a cultural problem.

Dr. Minor's widely-read book Scared Straight: Why It's So Hard to Accept Gay People and Why It's So Hard to Be Human, addresses how religious arguments are used against gay people to keep those who are prejudiced from facing their prejudices. "Instead of realizing their attitudes are prejudices rooted in deep-rooted fears they don't want to

**Continued on Page 5**



**Another  
Great  
Event!**  
  
**Roe v Wade  
Awards Dinner  
and  
Town Hall  
Meeting**

Continued from page 4

examine, they blame God and the Bible."

"I wouldn't be against gay people," they are arguing, "but God's against gay people. So I have to be. I'm really a nice guy, God's the rat." That's the irresponsible language of addiction, Minor argues.

"All addictions are progressive and fatal." Minor advises "what we've got to do is treat addictions as addictions, stop enabling, take a clear,

uncompromising stance, and model a non-addictive lifestyle that values personal responsibility, open communication, and all humanity."

Thanks, Carla! Your commitment and generosity is a blessing to us all.

## News From Pro-Choice Owensboro

By Linda Powe

Pro-Choice Owensboro members were delighted to be honored by the Ky. RCRC with this year's Dr. David Gunn award. Our local paper did a piece on Roe v. Wade observations that highlighted information about the award and PCO activities. Three of our members attended the Town Hall Meeting and Awards Banquet, and look forward to the state-wide meeting later this year.

PCO held its' 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Roe v Wade luncheon on Jan. 15. We were honored to have Representative Mary Lou Marzian as our guest speaker. An audience of around 40 listened in amazement as she relayed stories of the incredible legislative struggles regarding the reproductive aspect of women's lives.

Three PCO members witnessed the debate firsthand when we attended the Feb. 24th hearing on HB 346, a welcome and much needed bill relating to increased access to emergency contraception. Right to Life's extremely narrow focus in opposition to increased access defies logic and reason. We applaud Reps. Burch and Palumbo, the bill's co-sponsors, and Reps. Stein and Marzian on their vigorous defense of it. Reproductive Freedom Project director, Amanda Kreps-Long, gave inspiring testimony in support of the bill. Before leaving the Capitol, we met briefly with representatives from our districts, asking them to support the bill. I think we all felt the 3-hr. drive to Frankfort was a very interesting and worthwhile experience.

Thanks to Kate Cunningham's e-mail alert on HB 152, several of us were able to contact the legislative message line to oppose the bill as amended by Rep. Carr, of Hopkinsville (to require facilities to report abortions to law enforcement). Because anti-choice bills are sprung so quickly on us, we're organizing a 'phone tree' to alert members to call the message line in time to hopefully make a difference.



Linda Powe

In other recent activism, PCO members responded to Right to Life's 'Choose Life' banner looming for 2 weeks over one of our town's main thoroughfares during the anniversary of Roe v Wade. We voiced concern and objection to city officials and administrators over the use of a city facility for posting a biased view on reproductive choice. A newspaper report followed, in which officials announced that the display of all banners would be discontinued.

Our outreach and education efforts are enhanced by our website, which is developed and maintained by the Rev. Michael Erwin. We very much appreciate his willingness to devote a lot of his time to this project. The address is <http://prochoice.opwp.org>. We invite you to visit the site and e-mail your comments.

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## Something to Think About

By Editor

Recently, a new idea dawned upon me. Whereas throughout my youth and adult years, I was always working on the assumption that there were two worlds, the religious world and the irreligious world. The function of those of us in the religious world was to bring those persons from the irreligious world into our world. That's what we meant by "saving the lost." We were the saved! They were the unsaved!

Times have changed. The major conflict in religion today in our country is between two religious worlds. One is the fundamentalist, conservative, right wing religious world; the other is the liberal, progressive, and left wing religious world.

What kind of country we have in the future will be decided by which of these two worlds dominate our culture.

We need to change our focus and be ready to engage that other religious world. This will likely be new territory for many of us. Being open to all religious groups is a part of who we are. This religious conflict is now inevitable. Those of us who are pro-choice must understand which side of this conflict we are on.

Spend some time and think about what kind of country you want. Then take sides and be ready to join the fray. Neutrality is not an option.

What do you think?

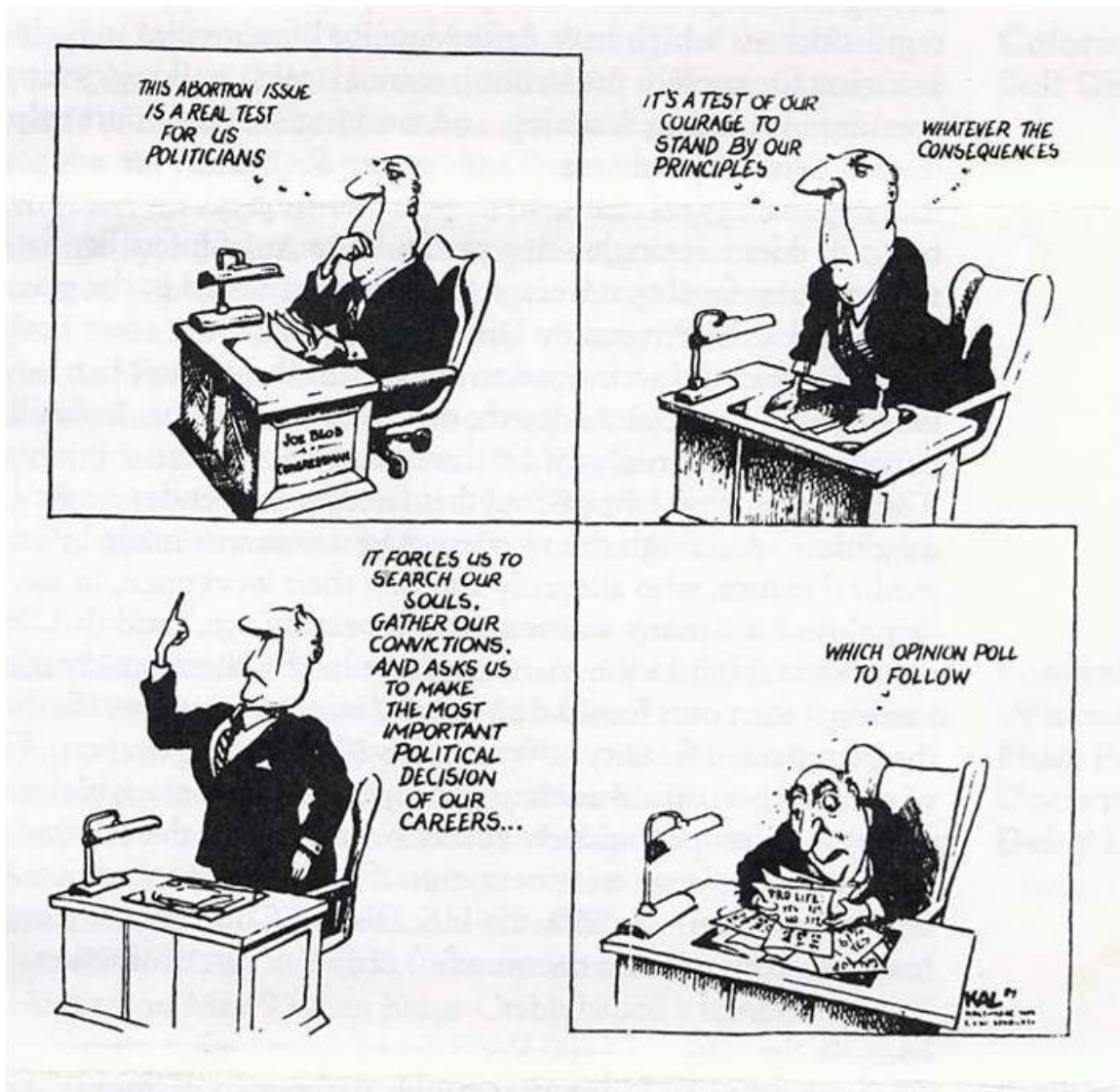
**Reflections. . . Cont'd from Page 2** from other counties to participate so other legislators will know there are pro-choice individuals in their districts.

If you are retired, consider turning your lobbying day into an excursion, perhaps a vacation! Although the actual lobby activities lasts a few hours, by the time you add the travel to and from and the session before and the lunch after, you really have spent the better part of a day. Even if you live on the outer edges of the state, you can do this! First, plan to take the time. If you work full-time, consider taking a personal day from work. If you are a stay-at-home parent, consider letting a relative take the kids for one day. Second, consider taking a couple of days. Plan to do some sightseeing in Frankfort or some shopping in Louisville. There are museums and shows you might want to take in while here. Third, if it

seems doable to you, please let Kate know of your interest.

Consider sending in your name to Kate so she can add it to the pool of persons who are interested in lobbying. Let her know you are interested in lobbying one day in 2006. Tell her what month and what day of the week tends to work for you and she will coordinate a schedule. Perhaps others from your area will also volunteer in which case, Kate can help you connect with kindred spirits in your part of the state. You could car pool!

Either call Kate at (502-339-1381) or e-mail her at ([kate.cunningham@juno.com](mailto:kate.cunningham@juno.com)) or send in the Response Form on page 8 of this newsletter.



## Meet Our New Board Members

**Lauren Kehr**, originally from Cleveland and Columbus, Ohio, came to Kentucky to attend college. She attended both WKU and UK. Lauren lives in Louisville and works as a clinical social worker at Jewish Family and Vocation Service and has a private practice. She is Jewish.



Lauren has been in Louisville for 20 yrs. She is a coach for **Girls on the Run**, a self-esteem and running program for elementary school girls. Her passion is volunteering for Alley Cat Advocates, an organization that traps, neuters and spays, and then returns homeless, feral cats to their colonies. And of course, issues of choice, human and civil rights, and political activities engage her energies.

**Anne Maron**, a recently retired guidance counselor and school librarian, has recently joined the Board of the KY RCRC at the invitation of Lauren Kehr. Lauren and Anne met in April on the Planned Parenthood bus to Washington, D.C. for the Women's March.



Anne Maron

As a long time supporter of Planned Parenthood and NARAL, Anne jumped at the chance to become active locally in the defense of Roe vs. Wade and a woman's right to choose. "The struggle to maintain freedom of choice is closely tied to the struggle to maintain the separation of church and state, Anne says who is a member of a religious minority. This American, democratic, foundational concept is of the highest importance to her.

Anne grew up near New York City but moved to Louisville in 1971 with her husband, Mel, who is a professor at the University of Louisville's Speed School of Engineering. They have two children, son Danny, 32, who runs computer networks in

Baltimore and his new wife, Jennifer, and daughter, Melanie, 31, a lawyer who works for the American Jewish Committee in Chicago.

Anne has had a life-long interest in the defense of civil rights. She is a member of the ACLU, the NAACP, and the Southern Poverty Law Center.

### Video Available

An eight minute video is now available for free loan to any of our supporters throughout the state. It will help the viewer have a fuller view of the work and concern of the Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. We'll be glad to send it to you if you will agree to return in two weeks. It depicts pro-choice Kentuckians involved in the range of activities in which we are involved. It is made by Kim Schroerlucke and was shown at the Roe v Wade Awards Dinner in January.

### DNC Chairperson, Howard Dean, Speaks:

"Throughout my entire professional career, as a doctor, politician, and former Planned Parenthood of Northern New England board member, I have worked hard with allies in the women's community. Together, we have achieved results on issues of critical importance to women, including reproductive rights.

Today, we need to be committed to providing women with the health care and education that they need, like family planning and comprehensive sexuality education. And I support the measures included in Senator Reid's "Putting Prevention First Act."

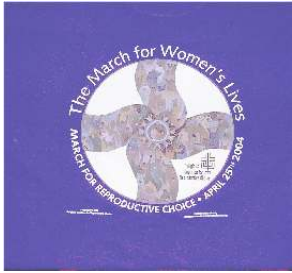
With the right to choose under assault by a hostile U.S. Congress and a White House intent on appointing conservative judges to the Supreme Court, we must frame the issues boldly and mobilize our supporters effectively.

We cannot do these things unless women have a strong voice in the future of the Party and a leadership role."

**“Thank You”  
T-Shirts**



Front



Back

Make a \$30.00 or more contribution to the Ky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice and we will send you, as long as they last and without cost, a March for Women's Lives T-Shirt. These are high quality products, short-sleeved, purple, with a beautiful multi-colored logo on the back. Use the Response Form on back of this newsletter for the particulars.

**Gift Cards Available**

Shop at Krogers? Then you can make a contribution to the Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice without it costing you a penny. Just use a Kroger Gift Card. It works like this.

Purchase a card for \$5.00. Your card will have \$5.00 worth of merchandise already on it. Before purchasing your groceries go to the service desk and put any amount on the card you wish. Then when you check out use the Gift Card. Slide it through the credit card machine and it will deduct the amount of purchases from the card. It will also tell you how much remains on the card.



As you get near zero on your card, replenish it at the service desk. How have you made a contribution? After meeting a minimum amount, Kroger will donate 5% of the purchases to KyRCRC. There is a slight inconvenience when you have to replenish your card but that's all there is to it. Easy way to support KyRCRC! Right?

Would you like a card? Please send \$5.00 and we'll send you one. Remember! It will already have \$5.00 on the card for you to use. KyRCRC purchases the cards for \$5.00. Thus, you are not purchasing the card. You are simply trading your \$5.00 for that same amount of usable value on your card.

**Book Reading Group**

If you live in the Louisville area, would you like to be in a book-reading group, discussing Alexander Sanger's book, *Beyond Choice: Reproductive Freedom in the 21st Century*? (If you live in other regions of the state, you could organize discussion groups where you are!) Contact Lauren Kehr at 502-893-9643 or [LaurenforChoice@bellsouth.net](mailto:LaurenforChoice@bellsouth.net) for further information.

We're still looking for that person or group of persons to donate \$2000.00 and thereby sponsor one edition of Voice for Choice



But, we're not sittin' around doin' nothin' until that happens.

We're movin' on



When it happens We'll party.





**KENTUCKY  
RELIGIOUS COALITION  
FOR REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE**

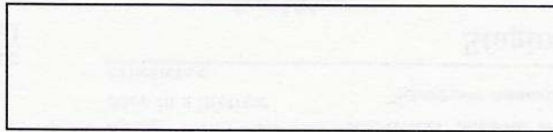
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### Response Form

Membership contribution: \$25.00 \_\_\_ \$50.00 \_\_\_ \$100.00 \_\_\_ Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(A message card will be send to your state senator & representative in your name.)

Am interested in sponsoring an edition of Voice For Choice @ \$2000.00 . . . . . \_\_\_\_\_

Please send # \_\_\_ Kroger Gift Cards @ \$5.00 each . . . . . \_\_\_\_\_

**Total** \_\_\_\_\_

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**(Contributions to Ky RCRC are tax deductible)**

Send T-Shirt (As long as they last) XL \_\_\_ L \_\_\_ M \_\_\_ S \_\_\_ (Select 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> choices)

If choices not available, send any size available Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Am interested in being in the Book Reading Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send video for viewing: \_\_\_\_\_

I would be interested in meeting with other pro-choice people in my area of the state: \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Please sign me up as a volunteer lobbyist for 2006 \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Tel # \_\_\_\_\_

Religious Affiliation (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_