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### Take Action!

1. Get involved with a group that supports women's rights.  
[www.thepowerofchoice.net/groups](http://www.thepowerofchoice.net/groups)
2. Urge elected officials to support women's rights.  
[www.congress.org](http://www.congress.org)
3. Give copies of this booklet to five friends.

## Reproductive Rights at Risk

*"For a woman not to be counted as able to make adequate decisions...medical, spiritual, moral, about her family, about herself, is a denial of a woman's basic humanity, basic God-given rights."*

*Pastor James Lawson, Civil Rights Activist*

### Did you know...?

- In 1973, the Supreme Court ruled in "Roe vs. Wade" that American women have the constitutional right to choose a safe, legal abortion until fetal viability.

### It didn't last long...

- In more than 85% of U.S. Counties, there is no abortion provider.<sup>1</sup>
- State legislatures have passed over 400 measures restricting abortion, ranging from outright bans to mandated delays and biased counseling requirements.<sup>1</sup>
- Abortion clinics have suffered more than 90,000 acts of violence and disruption, including 7 murders.<sup>2</sup>
- In more than 30 states, State Medicaid does not fund abortions for poor women, except in cases of life-endangerment, incest and rape.<sup>3</sup>
- Most Catholic hospitals provide neither full reproductive health care nor abortion services.<sup>4</sup> The combined Catholic health system is the largest non-governmental health system in the country <sup>5</sup> and it is growing in strength and size.<sup>4</sup>
- In 18 states women are required by law to delay their abortion up to 24 hours after receiving state-mandated information. Doctors are required to read from a script designed to dissuade women from choosing abortion.<sup>3</sup>
- A bill banning abortions throughout pregnancy passed in the South Dakota Senate and was signed by the Governor. The law contains no exception for rape, incest, or maternal health.

## *It's not just about abortion:*

- Pharmacists can legally refuse to provide birth control in some states.<sup>6</sup>
- In many states, insurance companies cover prescriptions for Viagra, but refuse to cover birth control pills.<sup>7</sup>
- The U.S. Department of Justice guidelines for treating rape victims do not include emergency contraception, the medically approved precaution to prevent pregnancy.<sup>8</sup>
- The FDA, *ignoring the recommendations of its own advisory panel*, has not made emergency contraception (EC) available over-the-counter.<sup>9</sup>
- More than 50% of Catholic hospitals do not provide emergency contraception, even to victims of rape.<sup>10</sup>
- With few exceptions, Catholic hospitals do not provide contraceptives, sterilization, or even condoms for AIDS prevention.<sup>4</sup>

## *It's also about safe and accurate education:*

- Research-based, systematic studies show that Abstinence-Only education:
  - Fails to reduce adolescent sexual activity, despite high rates of “virginity pledges.”<sup>11</sup>
  - May increase the risk of sexually transmitted diseases among adolescent “virginity pledgers.”<sup>11</sup>
  - May increase adolescent pregnancy rates.<sup>12</sup>
- Despite this evidence, federal funding of Abstinence-Only education has more than doubled in the past four years. The current budget is \$167 million; over \$200 million is proposed for 2006.
- When schools accept federal Abstinence-Only funding, contraception cannot be *mentioned*, except to discuss failure rates.

- Abstinence-Only education includes *false information*:<sup>11</sup>
  - About the effectiveness of condoms, exaggerating their failure rates, both as contraception and protection against HIV transmission.
  - About abortion, claiming risks that have been proven incorrect.
  - About transmission of HIV, stating that the virus can be transmitted in sweat and tears.
  - That touching another person’s genitals can cause pregnancy.
- Abstinence-Only education *excludes* information about:<sup>11</sup>
  - Preventing transmission of HIV using condoms.
  - How to select and use birth control.
  - Any method (other than abstinence) to prevent transmission of sexually transmitted infections.
  - Testing for sexually transmitted infections.
  - The importance of annual pap smears for early detection of cervical cancer.
- Abstinence-Only education promotes, as fact, stereotypes that:<sup>11</sup>
  - Girls care less about achievement and their futures than do boys.
  - Girls are weak and need protection.

## *It could get even worse.*

- If a single U.S. Supreme Court justice who supports Roe vs. Wade retires and is replaced by an anti-choice judge, opponents of Roe will have a majority on the U.S. Supreme court.
- Careful legal analysis shows that if Roe vs. Wade is overturned, 18 states are likely to enact abortion bans.<sup>13</sup>
- When abortion was illegal, thousands of women died each year.