

WHO OHIO

Women Have Options supports the right of every woman to make her own reproductive decisions

Winter 2009



WHO/O volunteers distributed information about the group and its mission during the Holiday Hop in Columbus on Dec. 5.

I am deeply humbled to have the opportunity to serve as Co-Chair of Women Have Options (WHO/O). As the political landscape continues to unfold, undoubtedly these are exciting times; we must ready ourselves for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. As a new chapter begins with WHO/O, we will tenaciously uphold the values of our founding members, while we look to the future with great anticipation. We must deepen the bonds of our current alliances, foster new collaborations, broaden our outreach to women across the state, and continue to secure funding streams that will enable us to assist the women of Ohio in utilizing a complete range of reproductive healthcare options. It is my fundamental belief that women empowered to control their bodies can in turn control their destinies. I look forward to WHO/O's continued participation as an agent in that empowerment.

-Linda FreemanWalker

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WHO/O BOARD MEMBERS

- Linda FreemanWalker, Co-Chair
- Nancy Pitts, Co-Chair
- Jane Wilken, Treasurer
- Andrea Martinez, Secretary
- Julia Brodie
- Jillian Evans
- Patricia Finkelman
- Valerie Fronczak
- Flo Gibson
- Susan Karian
- Sarah Leavell
- Birgit Liebl
- Molly Rampe
- Emily Rutherford
- Angela Shyrigh
- Judy Stansbury
- Judith Thomas

A MESSAGE FROM OUR FORMER CHAIR

I am delighted to welcome the new leadership of Women Have Options: Board Co-Chairs Linda FreemanWalker and Nancy Pitts. These two young women bring new energy, strong commitment, and a fresh perspective to our organization. Together with other new board members, and with the support of all of the original founders who are still serving on the board, they will make WHO/O stronger, improve connections with the next generation of reproductive rights advocates and begin to reach beyond our traditional geographic areas of support.

Women Have Options has given me the opportunity to do important work for the past 17 years, and I intend to continue to be active. But it is with great happiness that I pass on the primary responsibilities to these capable young women. It is an exciting time for Women Have Options. I hope all of our friends and supporters will join me in welcoming Linda and Nancy.

-Emily Rutherford

WHO/O supporters believe every woman:

...has the right to make her own decision about an unwanted pregnancy.

...has the ability to make a responsible choice based on her own circumstances and values.

...has the right to receive safe, legal, professional health care.



Meet the New Co-Chairs

Linda FreemanWalker, MS, is a grassroots organizer and advocate for reproductive health and rights. She has been a member of several collaborative organizations and worked with community and agency leaders, elected officials, key stakeholders and other activists in Ohio and around the country on reproductive rights and other social justice issues.

Ms. FreemanWalker testified before the FDA concerning emergency contraception and lobbied other decision-making entities concerning reproductive healthcare. In 2002, she became the first African American woman to chair the Reproductive Rights Committee for the New York City Chapter of the National Organization for Women, the Founding Chapter of NOW. She has also served on the board of directors for the New York Abortion Access Fund.

As a media and communications professional and former radio broadcaster with the Joy of Resistance, a multicultural feminist radio collective in New York City, Ms. FreemanWalker worked with members of the collective to report on feminist issues affecting women around the country and around the world. She also assisted in coordinating conferences and other events that addressed the reproductive rights and justice movement. Currently, she serves as Co-Chair for Women Have Options.

In 2002, Ms. FreemanWalker earned her M.S. degree with honors in Health Services Management and Policy from Milano The New School for Management and Urban Policy, a division of the New School University, and in 1999, she earned a B.A. degree in Criminology with a minor in Women's Studies from The Ohio State University. She resides in Columbus, Ohio, with her family.

Nancy R. Pitts is a professional editor and researcher with the McGraw-Hill School Education Group of Columbus, Ohio. As an associate editor for one of the world's largest textbook publishers, she is involved with planning, researching, and developing instructional materials for high school social studies. Before joining McGraw-Hill, she was the Director of Professional Education at Tulane University in New Orleans, where she managed the part-time MBA program and other adult education programs.

Ms. Pitts is an energetic, enthusiastic leader and team builder who combines big-picture vision with attention to detail. A dynamic communicator, she has extensive experience in both the public and private sectors and has worked as a management consultant, marketing assistant, and administrator at the university level. She has also been involved in volunteer activities, including Junior League of Columbus, Women Have Options, New Orleans Young Leadership Council, and New Orleans NO/AIDS Task Force HIV Counseling Group.

Ms. Pitts earned a master's degree in business administration, specializing in policy and strategy, from Tulane University in New Orleans. She has a bachelor's degree in political economy, also from Tulane, and completed graduate coursework in epidemiology.

Ms. Pitts is most passionate about education, social justice, and women's rights.

The Dangers of the Stupak Amendment

The action on healthcare reform recently shifted from the U.S. House to the Senate, where members are currently debating their version of the legislation. Unfortunately, it is quite possible that the House bill's Stupak amendment, which imposes harsh new restrictions on abortion coverage, could also become part of the Senate's bill.

Under this amendment, the public option would not be allowed to cover abortions, and furthermore, the amendment would ban individuals receiving any government subsidies for their insurance from buying a plan that includes abortion coverage. It is more restrictive than the Hyde Amendment, which has banned federal funding for abortions since 1976.

Presently, in the Senate bill, both public and private insurance plans would be allowed to offer abortion coverage, and people could use government subsidies to purchase plans that cover abortion. Insurers would have to keep public and private money separate to ensure that no federal funds are used to pay for the actual procedure. However, Senator Ben Nelson has now filed an amendment identical to Stupak's.

If the restrictive provisions of the Stupak (or Nelson) amendment end up in the final legislation, it will have serious consequences: millions of women whose insurance plans currently cover abortion would lose that coverage. The burden of paying for an abortion would increase for low- and middle-income women.

Furthermore, according to a George Washington University study, the amendment would eventually affect most (if not all) insurance plans, including employer-based ones. As more insurance companies exclude abortion coverage so that individuals receiving federal subsidies are eligible to buy their plans, the industry as a whole will restrict its coverage over time to adapt to the changed market. If it becomes law, this amendment will have far-reaching and extremely harmful effects.

Where to Find Us on the Web

- Check out our website at www.womenhaveoptions.org. We're updating the news page regularly, and other changes are coming soon. You can also make a donation using the link on the website.
- Go to twitter.com/WHOohio to follow us on Twitter.
- Connect with us on **Facebook**: Users can become fans of WHO/O, join our group, and donate using our cause page. Simply log in to Facebook and search for Women Have Options.
- Donate while you shop online using **iGive.com**: Many merchants will give a percentage of your purchase price to WHO/O. And if you shop within 45 days of registering, iGive will donate an extra \$5.

Upcoming Events

- **Roe Day, Jan. 27, 2010**: Yearly event sponsored by Freedom of Choice Ohio (FOCO) to mark the anniversary of Roe v. Wade. It will be held at OSU's Fawcett Center; the expected speaker is Christina Page.
- **Lobby Day, Apr. 21, 2010**: Also sponsored by FOCCO, this event is an opportunity for people to lobby their representatives on behalf of prochoice and women's health issues. The theme is "Prevention First."

Treasurer's Report

Through the generosity of its donors, Women Have Options has been able to maintain its support of reproductive health clinics throughout the state of Ohio. As of the end of the third quarter these clinics, using \$15,850 in WHO/O funds, have helped over 240 women with both contraception services and abortion procedures.

Despite economic conditions WHO/O's 2009 Spring Campaign exceeded its goal of \$10,000. WHO/O attracted 23 new donors, including 13 who had given in the past but had ceased giving for a period of time. WHO/O also received increased support from 13 donors. We are very pleased with the results of the Spring Campaign as it allowed WHO/O to maintain its level of contributions to individual clinics. WHO/O has also received over \$3,000 in donations that are not attributable to the Spring Campaign and has been the recipient of a foundation grant to be used in support of its work with reproductive health clinics.

Clinics are immensely grateful for our support (we continually receive thank you letters from both clinics and women served), and this year have frequently asked for additional support as other sources of funding have ended. To continue, and to increase, our level of support we look to our donors who have been so generous in the past and who are committed to the women of Ohio as they struggle with reproductive decisions in a recessionary economy.

Women Have Options

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Website:
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Member of the National Network of Abortion Funds (NNAF)

The mission of Women Have Options is to support the right of every woman to make her own reproductive decisions.

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W O M E N H A V E O P T I O N S

Justice requires that all women be able to make personal decisions about childbearing.

Please join us in our commitment to women's lives and futures. Your tax-deductible contribution enables women in our community to get help when they need it. Any amount is appreciated! Please send your contribution to:

Women Have Options, PO Box 5, Granville, OH 43023

Enclosed is my donation of \$ _____

- I would like more information about WHO/O.
- I would like to help with special events.
- I would like to help with the newsletter.
- Add my friend's name and address to your mailing list: _____

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

E-mail _____

*Contributions to WHO/O can be made through **United Way** by choosing the Donor Option and naming Women Have Options to receive your dollars. You can also make donations directly on our website (www.womenhaveoptions.org) or by joining our cause on Facebook.*