

CHOICES

Feminist Majority Foundation Campus Program E-Zine

October 16, 2006

www.feministcampus.org

"Feminism is the single most powerful social movement of our time, one that addresses every aspect of human and social life." Richard Epstein, author of *Bargaining With the State*, 1993

Anti-Affirmative Action Ban on the Ballot in Michigan

Women and ethnic minorities in Michigan have a lot at stake during this mid-term election— most importantly the anti-affirmative action ballot initiative.

Ward Connerly, an African American business man who spearheaded ballot measures in California and Washington state in opposition to affirmative action, has now moved his campaign to Michigan, with an initiative that would end affirmative action for women and minorities in public education, public employment, and public contracting.

Most believe that affirmative action is applied solely based on the race and ethnicity and most often used for academic admissions to prestigious universities and for scholarship money. What most do not realize is that affirmative action actually helps women as well as ethnic minorities - and not just in the academic setting.

When it comes to government contracts, this ballot initiative will roll back advances for both women and ethnic minorities. It would also fail to correct still glaring inequities around the state.

Some suggest that Connerly's underlying motivation for the anti-affirmative action ban is to diminish competition from women- and minority-owned businesses for lucrative government contracts. No wonder his campaigns have had the support of big business contractors.

Supreme Court to Consider Abortion Procedures Ban in Nov.

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear two cases considering the constitutionality of the so-called federal "partial-birth" abortion ban passed by Congress and signed by President Bush in November of 2003. The ban, which is vaguely written, could outlaw 90% of all abortions from the 12th week on with no exceptions for the health of the woman or severe fetal abnormality. Some even worry it could reach all abortions. This abortion procedures ban has been ruled unconstitutional by lower courts in California, Nebraska, and New York because of its lack of a health exception.

A 2000 Supreme Court case found that a similar state law was unconstitutional because of no health exception. This case was decided with former Justice Sandra Day O'Connor providing the fifth vote against the state ban. With O'Connor now replaced by anti-abortion Justice Samuel Alito, pro-choice advocates are fearful the 2000 decision will be reversed. Oral arguments are set for November 8th.



Author bell hooks poses with campus organizer Cassidy Johnson and a copy of the newest issue of Ms. Magazine at her book signing.

bell hooks Rocks the Church in Michigan

Author and feminist bell hooks lectured on the "Positive Power of Feminism" at an event sponsored by the West Michigan Women's Studies Council and the Feminist Majority Foundation at the Fountain Street Church in Grand Rapids, MI.

hooks emphasized the positive impacts of feminism and described how her own experiences growing up in the south shaped her understanding of patriarchy and the radical feminist movement. She also expressed that everyone in the room had benefited from the positive impacts of feminism.

She argued that there are still questions about the relationship between feminism in academia and in the work world. The movement, she contends, remains under siege through the "complete glorification of the white supremacist imperialist capitalist patriarchy" in our culture. hooks views this as a direct attack on feminism.

It is up to us to "reignite the power of feminism" in order to challenge patriarchy. hooks argued that no other social justice movement has been as willing to self-critique itself as feminism, a fact that has contributed to the movement's successes. Despite these successes, there have been some failures—specifically when failing to deal with race early on and not completely understanding the ways in which patriarchy harms people of all genders.

bell hooks's *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* was written to improve feminism. hooks continues to work to help feminism grow and create a culture where sexism will end.

- Cassidy Johnson, Campus Organizer

Photo by Claire O'Neill, Aquinas College

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In the Know...

October 15-October 21, 2006

National Young Women's Week of Action raises awareness about the needs of young women, not only in the U.S., but all over the world.

Register Today for the Mid-Atlantic Young Women's Leadership Conference From Campus to Congress

Come learn how to strengthen your campus group, move from campus leadership to national leadership, plan events, plan for post college pursuits, and much more. You don't want to miss these unique opportunities for leadership development and networking!

**Saturday,
November 11th, 2006**

Goucher College
Baltimore, Maryland

Register at
www.feministcampus.org/leadership

Hosted by: Goucher College FMLA
and Women's Studies
Department

**Saturday, March 24 and
Sunday, March 25, 2007**

**Feminist Majority Foundation
hosts
The National Young
Women's Leadership
Conference**

Washington, DC.

Tips for Growing Your FMLA

Whether you attend a large university or small college, the task of starting a new group on campus can be daunting. How does one pick out passionate feminists and potential members from a crowd of faceless, stressed college students?

Faced with the possibility of being the budding FMLA's only member, I decided to target students with similar principles and interests. I passed out flyers at a queer women's group, ethnic studies department, contacted the head of the Women's Studies department, and sent emails to students in other progressive groups on campus. Instead of hassling one of the 25,000 undergraduate students just trying to get to their next class on time, I isolated women and men I knew would share FMF's ideals.

Through announcements and word of mouth, soon the women from the queer support group were telling their friends in their women's studies classes, and those women passed on our information to other students looking to get involved. Soon we had a functioning group and were affiliated with specific issue-based feminist groups on campus. Although we have a core of dedicated women and men in the new FMLA, we still flier about our events at affiliate group events hoping to get more visibility on campus.

At my large, public university, it seemed nearly impossible to filter out students already fully committed to other organizations and students who were simply uninterested. However, remember that it only takes a small group to get recognized by your school, and your presence will grow throughout the year.

-Hillary Warren, U of Michigan FMLA

Share ideas about your campus group with us at campusteam@feminist.org for future ezines

FEM-worthy sites
www.feministcampus.org
www.feminist.org
www.msmagazine.com
www.Feministing.com

Indonesia Bans Doctors from Practicing Female Genital Mutilation

The Indonesian government announced this week that it is prohibiting doctors and nurses from performing female genital cutting. According to *Reuters*, some Indonesian groups encourage families to perform female genital mutilation, allegedly to maintain chastity and virginity before marriage and to ensure faithfulness in the women's marriage.

Sri Hermiyanti, head of the Indonesian health ministry's family health directorate, said, "Hurting, damaging, incising and cutting of the clitoris are not permitted under the ban, because these acts violate the reproductive rights of these girls and harm their organs," reports Kaiser.

However, there are no punishments in place for those who violate the ban.

*For daily news on global affairs
www.feministcampus.org*

What is your campus group doing for EC Week of Action? Nov. 6-10

Let us know how you plan to educate your campus for EC week of action and receive free grab bags, while supplies last. Contact your campus organizer for more information.



What **DOES** a feminist look like? Send us your photos in a feminist tee and you can be in the next issue of **CHOICES!**

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