

Taking On the Fight

Nina Muckenthaler, President

In the current political climate women are front and center as countless forces seek to silence us and to take away our rights. This fall it is important that we all vote, encourage others to vote, and support progressive candidates. Your vote is your voice! The Michigan NOW PAC list of endorsed candidates and issues supported by Michigan NOW are in this newsletter. Please use this information to educate others and to motivate them to vote. We must work to elect candidates who respect women and will work to protect our rights.

One of the crucial duties of the President and Senators we elect is to nominate individuals to fulfill judicial vacancies. As we see the blatant sexism displayed during the Kavanaugh hearing, it highlights the importance of lifetime appointments to federal judgeships that are made throughout the year. In this newsletter we provide you with information regarding the appointment process and how you can make your voices heard regarding judicial nominees.

In addition to our political engagement, we must constantly advocate for sex and gender in equality in daily society. We are in the “culture wars” and they are directly tied to our political campaigns and our judicial appointments. The extreme right is constantly working in the social, political, and judicial realms to take away our rights. As we work to fight the culture wars with groups working against equality, we must also be vigilant to look within ourselves and our groups to ensure that toxic cultural elements have not seeped in to bias us (implicit bias). We are a product of our environment, and as Loretta Ross aptly says, “we all swim in the sea.” Do we as individuals and groups actively support the struggles of women outside of our immediate social groups? Are we or members in our groups actively undercutting, critiquing or even bullying women around us? Are meetings dominated by a few loud voices, or do we ensure that meetings are safe social space where minority voices are welcomed and supported? These are just a few examples that I thought of, and I am sure that you thought of others. As feminists we must speak out and stand up to the toxic culture of oppression and abuse, and we must stand up and speak out to those who perpetuate it-- be it knowingly or unknowingly.

So, work to get out the vote, support our NOW and MI NOW PAC endorsed candidates and issues, keep an eye on the judges, and do the important work of fighting the culture wars that bombard us on a daily basis.

Legislative VP Update

MI NOW Legislative Vice President Bobbie Walton resigned from the Michigan NOW board. She is running for Genesee County Commissioner. Good luck Bobbie!



MAKE YOUR VOICES HEARD – VOTE!

Voting Basics

This information is taken from michigan.gov/vote.

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| OCTOBER 9 | LAST DAY TO REGISTER TO VOTE |
| NOVEMBER 3 | LAST DAY TO REQUEST AN ABSENTEE BALLOT BY MAIL (BY 2PM) |
| NOVEMBER 5 | LAST DAY TO REQUEST AN ABSENTEE BALLOT IN PERSON (BY 4PM) |
| NOVEMBER 6 | GENERAL ELECTION |

A registered voter may obtain an absent voter ballot if they are:

- age 60 years old or older
- unable to vote without assistance at the polls
- expecting to be out of town on election day (including students away at college)
- in jail awaiting arraignment or trial
- unable to attend the polls due to religious reasons
- Appointed to work as an election inspector in a precinct outside of your precinct of residence.

Check your voter registration status at Michigan Voter Information Center www.mi.gov/vote.

A person who registers to vote by mail must vote in person in the first election in which he or she participates. The restriction does not apply to overseas voters, voters who are disabled or voters who are 60 years of age or older.

If you moved make sure you update your voter registration at your local Secretary of State or city/township clerk's office. The address on your driver's license or state ID must match the address for your voter registration (there is a short grace period for recent moves). If you recently moved, make sure you know where to go to vote. You can view a sample ballot, find your polling place, check your voter registration status, and other things at mi.gov/vote. If you do not have a photo ID you can register to vote or vote by signing a document stating that you do not have an ID.

PROPOSALS ON THE BALLOT

Proposal language is from the state website (Michigan.gov)

18-1 Michigan NOW has no stance on this proposal

A proposed initiated law to authorize and legalize possession, use and cultivation of marijuana products by individuals who are at least 21 years of age and older, and commercial sales of marijuana through state-licensed retailers

This proposal would:

Allow individuals 21 and older to purchase, possess and use marijuana and marijuana-infused edibles, and grow up to 12 marijuana plants for personal consumption.

Impose a 10-ounce limit for marijuana kept at residences and require amounts over 2.5 ounces be secured in locked containers.

Create a state licensing system for marijuana businesses and allow municipalities to ban or restrict them.

Permit retail sales of marijuana and edibles subject to a 10% tax, dedicated to implementation costs, clinical trials, schools, roads, and municipalities where marijuana businesses are located.

Change several current violations from crimes to civil infractions.

18-2 Michigan NOW supports this proposal

A proposed constitutional amendment to establish a commission of citizens with exclusive authority to adopt district boundaries for the Michigan Senate, Michigan House of Representatives and U.S. Congress, every 10 years

This proposed constitutional amendment would:

Create a commission of 13 registered voters randomly selected by the Secretary of State:

- 4 each who self-identify as affiliated with the 2 major political parties; and
- 5 who self-identify as unaffiliated with major political parties

Prohibit partisan officeholders and candidates, their employees, certain relatives, and lobbyists from serving as commissioners

Establish new redistricting criteria including geographically compact and contiguous districts of equal population, reflecting Michigan's diverse population and communities of interest. Districts shall not provide disproportionate advantage to political parties or candidates.

Require an appropriation of funds for commission operations and commissioner compensation.

18-3 Michigan NOW supports this proposal

A proposal to authorize automatic and Election Day voter registration, no-reason absentee voting, and straight ticket voting; and add current legal requirements for military and overseas voting and post-election audits to the Michigan Constitution

This proposed constitutional amendment would allow a United States citizen who is qualified to vote in Michigan to: Become automatically registered to vote when applying for, updating or renewing a driver's license or state-issued personal identification card, unless the person declines.

Simultaneously register to vote with proof of residency and obtain a ballot during the 2-week period prior to an election, up to and including Election Day.

Obtain an absent voter ballot without providing a reason.

Cast a straight-ticket vote for all candidates of a particular political party when voting in a partisan general election.

MI NOW PAC Endorsed Candidates (state and local)

| Candidate | Party Affiliation | Senate/ House District |
|------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Angela Witwer | Democrat | House District 71 |
| Lauren Taylor | Democrat | House District 86 |
| Donna Lasinski | Democratic | House District 52 |
| Nate Shannon | Democrat | House District 25 |
| Rosemary Bayer | Democratic | Senate District 12 |
| Rebekah Warren | Democratic | House District 55 |
| William Sowerby | Democratic | House District 31 |

| | | |
|-----------------|------------|--------------------|
| Paul Wojno | Democrat | Senate District 9 |
| Henry Yanez | Democrat | Senate District 10 |
| Laura Winn | Democrat | House District 24 |
| Stephanie Chang | Democrat | Senate District 1 |
| Erika Geiss | Democratic | Senate District 6 |
| Julia Pulver | Democratic | Senate District 15 |
| Christine Greig | Democrat | House District 37 |

MI NOW Recommended that the national NOW PAC endorse the following candidates. Please check the national website to confirm national endorsements (www.now.org).

| | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Debbie Stabenow | US Senate | Elissa Slotkin | 8 th District – US House |
| Dan Kildee | US House | Brenda Lawrence | 14 th District – US House |
| Debbie Dingell | 12 th District – US House | Gretchen Driskell | 7 th District – US House |
| Rashida Tlaib | 13 th District – US House | | |

UPDATE ON MI NOW SUPPORTED BALLOT INITIATIVES NOT ON THE BALLOT

The following ballot initiatives were supported by Michigan NOW. These 2 initiatives gained enough signatures to be on the ballot this fall, but the state legislature bypassed the public by voting on them and passing them prior to the election. Advocates are concerned that legislators will move to amend and substantially weaken both pieces of legislation immediately after the election, thus circumventing the will of the people. We will be watching, and we will fight to maintain the original integrity of these important initiatives.

ONE FAIR WAGE

Legislation to increase the minimum wage to \$10 per hour on January 1, 2019; to \$10.65 per hour on January 1, 2020; to \$11.35 per hour on January 1, 2021 and \$12 per hour on January 1, 2022; to annually adjust the minimum wage based on the change in the cost of living; to require that gratuities are to be retained by the employee who receives them except as voluntarily shared; and to gradually increase the minimum wage in steps for employees who receive tips or gratuities until it is the same as the minimum wage for other employees.



It's been 25 years since the federal tipped subminimum wage was set to \$2.13/hr. We believe that we deserve better.

The subminimum wage for tipped workers is in effect legislated pay inequity for a predominately female workforce, perpetuating the gender pay gap. These women are in majority working at casual restaurants like IHOP and Applebee's and are among the poorest workers in the country.



The Earned Sick Time Act

The proposal would allow people to earn one hour of sick time for every 30 hours worked. Workers could earn up to nine days of paid sick time per year, depending on the size of the business. In addition to specifying how the time adds up and can be used, the Earned Sick Time Act prohibits employers from punishing their employees for requesting, exercising, or enforcing these rights.

Nearly 2 million Michiganders don't have the right to earn paid time off and risk getting fired or losing income to pay their bills every time they need to see a doctor or stay home with a sick child. Paid sick time isn't only good for workers and families; it's good for the economy, and it boosts employment and income stability.

- There is a federal subminimum wage of \$2.13 per hour for tipped workers (\$3.38 in Michigan)
- Two-thirds of tipped workers are women, disproportionately women of color, and nearly 40% are mothers.

Michigan NOW State Board Elections

The annual state chapter meeting and conference is tentatively set for April 6, 2019. Chapter elections will be held to fill positions on the state board. Members in good standing who have been members for at least a year (as of the meeting date) are eligible to run for office. **All eligible Michigan NOW members are encouraged to run for positions on our board. Will you run?** Board positions are: President, Legislative Vice President, Action Vice President, Membership Vice President, Administrative Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. **Minority members are especially encouraged to run for board positions.** Please send your contact info to minow@danamgt.com if you are interested in running for a board position or have any questions. **Please submit your information by December 1st.**



MI NOW 2018 Conference Highlights

Thanks to Eastern Michigan University's Women's and Gender Studies program for hosting our conference.

We had a great conference this year in spite of the horrible weather. The purpose of our conference was to empower attendees, give them the tools to be advocates, and to provide a safe space where feminists could network and exchange information. Our national VP Gilda Yazzie discussed the important role that she plays at the national level. She answered questions about NOW and encouraged women of color to become actively involved in NOW. Gilda also

visited the Buckham/GVRC Share Art Project exhibit, **Arts in Detention**, while she was in town (This program is a previous MI NOW award winner). Photos show Gilda at the exhibit and with Co-Founder and Project Director Shelley Spivack.



We started the day with **Dr. Alicia Renee Farris, State Director of Restaurant Opportunities Center of Michigan** who discussed the **One Fair Wage** ballot initiative. Then **Jordan Wyer, MSW Development & Outreach Coordinator, Reclaim**

discussed the differences between independent providers and Planned Parenthood, and the stigma surrounding the abortion experience (see her article later in this newsletter). **Genesee County NOW had a fundraiser for their local independent abortion provider. During the conference they presented a check to Peggy Thon of the Women's Health Center of Flint.**

We had a great line up of breakout sessions, and we received many positive comments regarding our presenters.

Break Out Sessions:

- ❖ **Can You Hear Us Now? Making Your Government Work for You**
Bobbie Walton & Brenda Frezell
- ❖ **Get to Know Abortion Providers in Your Communities**
Lara Chelian, JD Northland Family Planning and Reclaim;
Jordan Wyer, MSW Northland Family Planning & Reclaim;
Vicki Moore, Women's Health Centers of Flint & Saginaw;
Peggy Thon – Women's Health Center of Flint & Saginaw
- ❖ **Can You Hear Us Now...From Inside the Prison?**
Kathryn Ziegler, Ph.D.; Jessica Kilbourn, M.A.; Sandra (Simone) Dixon; Montgomery Jones; Jess Mulcahy-Miller; Annie Somerville
- ❖ **Young Feminists Discussion Group**



Grace Houbert, President Young Feminists' Council and Michigan NOW Young Feminist Task Force Co-chair; Indra Phillips, Ferris State NOW President; Ashika Kumar, Skyline High School NOW President and Michigan NOW Young Feminist Task Force Co-chair.

❖ **Feminist Education (EMU Panel)**

Kira Dallaire, M.A.; Colleen Coyle-Levy; Karlie Ebersole; Paige Thompsen (All panelists are EMU graduate students)

❖ **The Intersectional Issues of Sexual Violence**

Nicole Denson, Associate Director of Advocacy Services for Wayne County Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner's Program (WCSafe), Sharron Fincher, Access Coordinator Wayne County Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner's Program

Thank you to our conference sponsors

Annabelle Closson Nancy Duemling Angela Leonard & Matthew Torok
Chris Wettle in memory of Dorothy Larsen

Conference vendors

Eastern Michigan University, ROC, Mothering Justice, Clemency Project, Afrikan Spirit Cards (a NOW member), Reclaim & Northland Family Planning, Promote the Vote, WC Safe, Washtenaw NOW, Planned Parenthood

Thank you to everyone who helped make our conference a success this year!

Young Feminists in Action

Young Feminists' Council

Grace Haubert, President

Although this past year has only been our first one as a running club, it was incredibly successful and exciting, and we are thrilled to have the opportunity to share some of our best memories with you.

In May, we tackled the issue of sexual assault and harassment by holding a **sexual assault workshop**; speaker Fiana Arbab provided **Bystander Intervention and Consent training** to instruct attendees on how to not only prevent



but raise awareness for sexual assault. We strive to be a support system for all young women who may be in such situations, especially with so many of our members soon going off to college, and we are incredibly grateful to have had **the opportunity to present this potentially life-saving information to all members.**

Throughout the year, we consistently **held Small Business Spotlights**, in which we invited council members to join us in supporting women-run businesses throughout the area by focusing on a specific one each month. We held private sessions with owners in which we discussed what it takes to be a successful woman in business, got insight into the specificities of their businesses, and learned about work-related

discrimination.

We held a screening of **Ava DuVernay's award-winning film, 13th**, to raise awareness for the manner in which slavery has been perpetrated since the 13th Amendment was passed and to support DuVernay's work as a political activist and leading African-American woman in cinematography.

We have been working to raise political awareness among youth, to encourage members to get involved with politics, and talk to those who represent them. **The YFC is working to elect NOW PAC endorsed candidate Elissa Slotkin (Michigan's 8th Congressional District).** Photo: YFC members at an event with Elissa Slotkin.

Congratulations to the YFC on a successful first year!

Courts Matter Coalition

Once again have seen blatant sexism on display as the Senate Judiciary Committee pushed to confirm Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court and pushed to demean, disrespect, and dismiss the sexual assault allegation of Christine Blasey Ford. This is a continuation of the sexism and disrespect shown to Anita Hill, and it is a continuation of the sexism of Justice Scalia who believed that the Constitution did not protect women from discrimination. As we work to elect progressives to positions in government we must also work to ensure that fair and qualified candidates get appointed to our federal courts. **Federal court appointments are lifetime appointments. Federal courts include:**

District Courts (686 judgeships)

Circuit Court (12 circuits, 179 seats)

Supreme Court (9 justices)

Senators recommend individuals from their home states to fill vacancies. The President chooses the nominee and submits the nomination to the Senate. The senate Judiciary Committee considers the nomination and, if approved, the nomination is sent to the Senate for a vote. All senators vote on the nomination (Go to <https://www.judiciary.senate.gov> for more information).

Senators are elected by voters in their states. Even if a nominee is not from your state, you can still contact your senators and express your opinions regarding a nominee. Senators count the calls, emails, and letters that they receive regarding nominees. Let our senators know that we want to see qualified and fair candidates nominated and approved to the federal bench. Let them know that we expect to see candidates of diverse backgrounds.

While the Supreme Court makes the headlines, our District and Circuit courts make the final call in over 99.9% of federal cases.

“Certainly the Constitution does not require discrimination on the basis of sex. The only issue is whether it prohibits it. It doesn't.”

-Deceased Supreme Court Justice Scalia, 2011

The Senate Judiciary Committee

Leadership:

Chairman Chuck Grassley (R), Ranking Member Dianne Feinstein (D)

Republican Members: Orrin Hatch, Lindsey Graham, John Cornyn, Michael Lee, Ted Cruz. Ben Sasse, Jeff Flake, Mike Crapo, Thom Tillis, John Kennedy

Democratic Members: Patrick Leahy, Dick Durbin, Sheldon Whitehouse, Amy Klobuchar, Christopher Coons, Richard Blumenthal, Mazie Hirono, Cory Booker, Kamala Harris

The Senate Judiciary Committee can be reached at (202)224-5225. You can also contact senators individually. Also remember to ccontact our Michigan senators. They are not on the Senate Judiciary Committee buy they vote on nominees.

Debbie Stabenow

(202)224-4822

www.stabenow.senate.gov

Gary Peters

(202)224-6221

www.pters.senate.gov

Michigan NOW is a member of the Courts Matter Coalition. We will be posting information regarding the courts on our Facebook page, website, and in emails. **If you would like to learn more about the courts and are interested in a free presentation, please call the coalition at (248)355-3300 extension 8, or contact Michigan NOW at minow@danamgt.com.**

Guest Article

On the Front Lines: an Abortion Provider's Perspective

Jordan Wyer, MSW

Patient Advocate, Northland Family Planning

Northland Family Planning (NFP) is the largest independent abortion provider in Michigan, and has had a stellar reputation in abortion care throughout the state and nationwide. I became a Patient Advocate at NFP after completing my undergraduate degree. As a psychology major, I was interested in what made people tick, and the stigma surrounding a simple medical procedure as well as the patients who seek that care peaked my interest. Once inside the clinics, I quickly learned the care provided was life saving. The clinic was a sanctuary, free of the judgment and stigma that so often follows pregnant people deciding what is best for their futures.

I quickly became immersed in the trials and tribulations that abortion providers faced. Nothing came easy to this small business. Outside the clinics, providers are faced with constant obstacles to providing **this constitutionally protected LEGAL procedure**. These

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difficulties followed me home from work into my personal life. I had to be careful to whom I disclosed my work for fear of backlash. Protesters greeted me with graphic images and harassing language daily. In Lansing, **I saw that the laws created by Michigan's politicians had major impacts on my daily life in the clinics.** These feelings are nothing new for abortion providers and staff. My experience is not unique in this field. Abortion providers constantly face ominous threats, mailings, harassment, stalking, breaches in privacy, and most recently, clinic invasions.

On September 15, 2017, five anti-choice protesters calling themselves "Red Rose Rescuers" invaded Northland Family Planning's Sterling Heights office. These folks walked into our office, harassed our patients, refused to leave, and resisted arrest. Their blatant disregard for law enforcement and the rights of business owners infiltrated the safe space the clinics created. **Invasions like this have not happened in Michigan since the late 1980's;** however, anti-abortion extremists are revisiting old methods of harassment and tweaking their actions to create loopholes to the vague Federal Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) laws that protect abortion providers within the clinics. **Protester behavior is emboldened by the current anti-abortion administration and protester activity and violence outside of clinics is on the rise.**

This political climate and attacks on abortion through **Targeted Regulation of Abortion Provider (TRAP)** laws are nothing new to us. NFP has been a force in abortion and reproductive rights advocacy for over 30 years. Wherever abortion restrictions are introduced, NFP is not far behind. This remained the norm when Michigan's TRAP laws came into effect in 2011. NFP had to make major changes to their clinics, patient care, and protocols, and none of these changes were for the purpose of making procedures any safer or easier to for pregnant people. However, the restrictions caused a huge strain on the clinics. Even in the face of these sham laws, NFP was able to obtain their Freestanding Outpatient Surgical Facility license through the State of Michigan and continue to provide patient care. Other Michigan abortion providers were not as fortunate.

After surviving TRAP laws and successfully obtaining their license, NFP refocused on patient care and opened Reclaim, a 501(c)3 focused on community and political education, to continue the advocacy of NFP. In three short years, Reclaim has successfully advocated for pro-active abortion legislation, opened the Michigan Women in Need (MIWIN) Fund (the only abortion fund in southeast Michigan), hosted assorted community events, and calls to action to bust stigma around the abortion experience. Reclaim understands their work has only just begun, but they do not plan on slowing down anytime soon.

So... Why do I continue to work in abortion advocacy? The simple answer: I cannot do anything else. **Over 300 abortion restrictions have been introduced across the country from 2010 to 2016.** Anti-abortion zealots are slowly (and successfully) chipping away at the privacies awarded to pregnant people since Roe v. Wade was decided 45 years ago, and the right to a safe and legal abortion for my friends, family, community, and women in the United States is at risk. I cannot forget the efforts and gains made by the activists before. I will do my part to keep abortion safe and legal. I know that individuals that can become pregnant must be able to control their reproductive futures in order to achieve their

goals. I have listened to their stories, held their hands, and wiped their tears. I can feel the change that is coming, and I want to be a part of it.

Here are a few ways you can be a part of it too:

1. **Reclaim's Pledge a Picketer Campaign** – In February, Reclaim's positive plan for the presence of protesters started counting protesters outside the clinics. Our followers pledge an amount per picketer and we raised over \$150 in the first two weeks! It's not too late to sign up! You can pledge an amount per picketer and watch as the protester's presence fund abortion. For example: if you pledge \$.20/picketer and 50 protesters show up that month, you would donate \$10 to our abortion fund. They object. We collect!
2. **Get involved in your local elections** – Many abortion restrictions that effect providers begin at the local level. Get to know your independent providers and the views of candidates running in the area.
3. **Donate to abortion advocacy and funds!** You can donate to the MI WIN fund at www.reclaimproject.org or on our Facebook page!
4. **Go to reclaimproject.org** and sign up for our email list to stay up-to-date on our future events and calls to action. Donate to our work!
5. **Become a Clinic Escort** – If you are in the Metro Detroit area and would like to become a clinic escort, contact In This Together Project and help patients access clinics as safe and trauma free as possible!

If Roe v. Wade is overturned, abortion will be illegal in Michigan. See the article by Nancy Kaffer in the Detroit Free Press from July 18, 2018

Please Support Michigan NOW

To make a contribution to support Michigan NOW you can donate online at www.michnow.org or you can complete this form and mail your contribution to Michigan NOW. **PLEASE PRINT!!!**

FIRST & LAST NAME: _____

STREET ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

MI NOW MEMBER NUMBER: _____

CHECK PAYABLE TO MICHIGAN NOW AMOUNT: _____

Mail to:
MICHIGAN NOW
1140 Abbott Rd.
P.O. Box 860
East Lansing, MI 48826

Thank you!!!



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517-485-9687
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Michigan NOW Board

| | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| President | Nina Muckenthaler |
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**VOTE AS IF YOUR LIFE
DEPENDDED ON IT!**

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