



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Rebecca Raible
212.627.9895

NOW-NYC Celebrates 36th Anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* Advocacy Group Cautiously Optimistic for Positive Changes

New York, NY-Today we commemorate the 36th Anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* decision to legalize abortion. We are proud to have a pro-choice President in the White House. But we will need to make sure that the public majority that supports choice continues to be heard. Broad public support will be necessary for President Obama to move forward on protecting and advancing our reproductive rights. We hope that he'll set the stage by advancing comprehensive sexual education, funding the U.N. Population Fund, and reversing the Global Gag Rule and the recently issued Health and Human Services regulations that both put women at-risk.

NOW-NYC President Sonia Ossorio says, "I cannot think of a more exciting time to commemorate the anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* decision to make abortion legal. The arrival of a pro-choice President in the White House has great potential." However, she warns that instead of this being the time to sit back, it's actually the time to work harder than ever before: "We must seize this opportunity to implement policies that will put women's access to comprehensive reproductive healthcare squarely and unquestionably into our laws."

There is certainly reason for concern. State legislatures across the country have put forth hundreds of anti-choice regulations that restrict access to abortion. And the Supreme Court has demonstrated that it is willing to cast the health of women aside, even in opposition to medical experts. In the April 2007 decision of *Gonzales v. Carhart*, the Supreme Court upheld a ban on an abortion procedure without including any exception for the health of the woman. This was a significant deviation from previous decisions that always upheld one of the central tenets of *Roe*: that women's health remain paramount.

Even here in New York City, women are putting their lives in peril to obtain abortions at home. Two recent studies by reproductive health providers revealed that Latina women are using an over-the-counter drug used to treat ulcers for the purposes of inducing abortion at-home and without the care of an experienced and licensed healthcare practitioner. These young women are endangering their lives and health, rather than face angry clinic protesters or questions from other community members.

NOW-NYC is working hard to secure protections for access to abortion for women in New York. Ossorio says, "The time is now for us to act decisively to protect choice in New York State. We must pass the Reproductive Health Act to ensure that women are protected in the dire case that *Roe* is overturned."

The National Organization for Women is the nation's largest organization working to advance women's rights and improve women's lives. The New York City Chapter of NOW, founded in 1966, is one of the largest chapters in the country with over 5,000 members locally and 35,000 statewide. NOW-NYC works to protect women's reproductive choices, end violence against women and eliminate sex discrimination in our schools, workplaces, and the justice system in New York.

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