

Highlights

Get the Lowdown on Health Care | page 3
 Sexism in America: Book Review | page 5
 Members: NOW-NYC Election Info | page 6

President's Desk: **A Call to Action** By Sonia Ossorio



The health-care reform package passed in the House, which in effect strips women of abortion insurance coverage, is one of the cruelest setbacks for women's reproductive health care since abortion was legalized.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi caved to the extreme anti-choice members of the House and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops—who lobbied hard for the restrictions—by letting the Stupak-Pitts Amendment come to the floor for a vote, and, as a result, is laying the groundwork to make abortion coverage unavailable to millions of women.

Now the Senate is up to bat. If this amendment remains in the final version of health-care reform, access to abortion rights will change dramatically.

We have a defining moment ahead of us. We can either storm this issue and rally to make sure our desires and our needs are met, or we can be passive, lose our abortion health insurance coverage, and send the message to our leadership and the anti-choice zealots that they don't have to worry too much about women's rights.

The House made the decision that a handful of American bishops gets to determine the reproductive health policy for all American women. Should we be surprised? Democrats,

continued on page 5



Violence Reaches New Heights: Brutal Gang Rape Calls Attention to Violence Against Women

By Mai Shiozaki
 National NOW Press Secretary

As more suspects are arrested and more information about the savage crime of the gang rape of a 15-year-old California girl surfaces, the media has done follow-up stories on a range of topics, covering community outrage, questions of school safety, lack of parental involvement, the state of American youth and the "bystander effect," investigating why people watched the attack but didn't intervene. Though the media has done a good job following this story and getting people to reflect on their moral consciousness, it has yet to address the violence that plagues and threatens women's lives every day.

continued on page 4

House Dems Sell Women Out: Bill for Health-Care Reform Includes Sweeping Ban on Abortion Coverage By Jean Bucaria

While President Obama, Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and House Democrats celebrated the historic vote on health-care reform, the pro-choice community and women across the country were left to wonder what all the celebration was about. That is because the Affordable Health Care for America Act (HR3962) which passed the House late in the evening on November 7, included a last-minute amendment that would ban any federally subsidized insurance plan from covering abortion. Known as the Stupak-Pitts Amendment, this provision would also prohibit abortion coverage in any "public option" plan.

According to news reports, Pelosi and House Democrats thought that allowing an up-or-down vote on this amendment was necessary to secure passage of the overall bill, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops played a key role in lobbying for the added restrictions. The amendment was passed (240-194) just moments before the final vote on the full bill, and it was added despite the fact that the original bill already included a ban on federal funding for abortion and a requirement that only women's personal funds could pay for an abortion. NOW-NYC President Sonia Ossorio says, "This is a radical departure from our current system where more than 85% of private insurance plans cover abortion services."

This is a potentially huge setback for women: Under this plan, women will lose benefits they now have.

According to National NOW, if incorporated into the final version of health insurance reform legislation, the Stupak-Pitts Amendment will (1) prevent women receiving tax subsidies from using their own money to purchase private insurance that covers abortion; (2) prevent women participating in the public health insurance exchange, administered by private insurance companies, from using 100 percent of their own money to purchase private insurance that covers abortion, and (3) in many cases, prevent low-income women from accessing abortion entirely.

Women who want comprehensive reproductive health-care coverage will be forced to purchase a separate, single-service rider to cover abortion, because the provision makes it virtually impossible for private insurance companies to participate in the new system if they offer abortion coverage. Forcing women to pay extra for abortion coverage that they can not know they will ever need is discriminatory. Furthermore, low- and middle-income women who will need to participate in the federally subsidized health exchange will not have the choice of any plan that covers abortion. Last, the overall impact on abortion access and insurance coverage for abortion services will be devastating:

continued on page 3

Contents

2	Streets In Press	5	Women and Happiness What We're Reading
3	Health-Care Update	6	NOW-NYC Election Proposed Bylaws Changes
4	Convicted State Senator Bias Busters NOW-NYC Bulletin	8	2009 Highlights

Volume 36, Number 3

Tribute to Alice Rossi: A Founder of NOW



Alice Schaerr Rossi, a proponent of women's rights and one of the founding Board Members of the National Organization for Women, died on November 3. She was 87.

An early supporter of abortion rights, Dr. Rossi was a strong feminist voice. Many of her early writings helped to shape the philosophical underpinnings of the women's movement in the late 1960s and 1970s, and her academic research and her teaching challenged commonly held assumptions about the roles of women and men in society. Her legacy lives on in the many books and articles she has published on women's lives, society, and politics; in the National Organization for Women, which has grown substantially since its founding in 1966; and through all women, whose lives she helped to change for the better.

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NOW-NYC Election

Thursday, January 21, 2010
 Candidate speeches 6:00 p.m.

Member voting from 5:30 p.m. - 9:15 p.m.

NOW-NYC office | 150 W. 28th St., Suite 304

Members, please join us to vote for NOW-NYC's new leadership, and do some feminist networking. Learn all about our Chapter or re-connect with your NOW-NYC friends. Refreshments served.

Save the Date

Streets & Happenings

On **September 3**, NOW-NYC organized the forum **Crimes Against Women & the Race for Manhattan DA** to make sure that justice for women and girls remained on the election agenda.

NOW-NYC members met with author and advocate **Martha Burk** from the **National Council of Women's Organizations** on **September 17** to discuss a new project on building equitable workplaces.

NOW-NYC President Sonia Ossorio led a discussion on **September 19** about **human trafficking**, after a showing of the documentary *Fatal Promises*. On **September 11**, she gave a talk at a U.N. program for student leaders on sex trafficking in New York City.

NOW-NYC members joined up with PAVE (Promoting Awareness, Victim Empowerment) to "**Call Rape What It Is**" and protest Polanski supporters at the New York Film Festival on **October 10**.

NOW-NYC hosted its annual **Love Your Body Day** celebration on **October 28**, with the theme of healthy sexuality. The campaign, first launched by the NOW Foundation in 1998, aims to counter the unrealistic beauty standards, gender stereotypes, and sometimes harmful images imposed by media and advertisers with a simple but powerful message to women and girls: **Love Your Body!**

On **November 9**, the Service Fund of NOW-NYC presented **Suddenly Single: Rebuilding Your Financial Life**, a seminar with financial expert Stacy Francis, for women going through or considering divorce.



NOW members from across the country unite at the march for gay rights in Washington D.C. - October 11



NOW-NYC volunteer Laurel Swerdlow protests alongside workers in their fight for lost wages. - August 11



NOW-NYC joins with workers and advocates to protest "sweatshop" conditions at a Long Island City, Queens factory. - August 11

NOW-NYC volunteers David S., Samantha Inesta, and Ebony Edwards-Ellis (l to r) protest Polanski supporters at the New York Film Festival. - October 10



NOW-NYC President Sonia Ossorio calls for the fair treatment of workers in Queens. - August 11

District Attorney Candidates Cyrus Vance Jr. and Leslie Crocker Snyder (l to r) address women's issues at NOW-NYC's pre-election forum. - September 3



NOW-NYC Board Member Maureen Shaw prepares for the Polanski protest. - October 10

Mara Altman reads from her hilarious and straight-forward new book, *Thanks for Coming: One Young Woman's Quest for an Orgasm*.



Health and Sexuality Consultant Judith Steinhart answers questions about sex with her own brand of honesty and humor.

NOW-NYC members and friends celebrate healthy body, mind, sex, and soul at this year's annual Love Your Body Day bash. (photos right) - October 28



Mara Altman and Sonia Ossorio (l to r).

Ladies United for the Preservation of Endangered Cocktails donated their time and bartending skills to the cause. (above)

Everyone gathers for the raffle results.

In Press NOW-NYC in the news on the local and national issues that impact women.



Fighting for Workers' Rights

President Sonia Ossorio and other NOW-NYC members rallied with over 100 local garment workers and advocates in Long Island City, Queens, to call attention to the thousands of dollars in back wages allegedly owed the workers by their employer, Great Wall Corporation and Silver Fashion, a subcontractor which produces for Great Wall. The protest was covered on **NY1** (August 11) and in *Workforce Management* (August 12), a

sister publication of *Crain's New York Business*. The protest was organized by the Chinese Staff & Workers' Association and National Mobilization Against Sweat Shops.

On October 7, Ossorio talked about the Letterman controversy on **Channel 11** news, underscoring the need for creating a fair workplace environment and calling on bosses to take the lead in setting an example.

NOW-NYC even showed up on the **CBS2 Early Show** on October 22 in a story about workplace health.

Getting Women Heard

NOW-NYC organized a forum on September 3 for the Manhattan District Attorney candidates to address violence against women. The event garnered coverage in **Huffingtonpost.com**, the **Manhattan Neighborhood Network** and *The Epoch Times*.

NOW-NYC held a press conference with candidate for Public Advocate Mark Green to discuss

his work for women, including securing better services for rape survivors and expanding workplace protections for survivors of domestic violence. *The Epoch Times* covered the conference on September 1 and *The New York Times* featured it on September 22.

Setting the Record Straight on Violence

NOW-NYC President Sonia Ossorio addressed the epidemic of violence against women from many angles. On October 1, she condemned the actions of Roman Polanski in *AM New York* noting that "There is no circumstance in which an adult male having sex with a 13-year-old girl isn't rape. Clearly Hollywood continues to foster a culture where sexual violence against women and girls is a fact of life, not a crime." Her remarks were also picked up by the *California Chronicle*. NOW-NYC members protested the permissive "rape culture" brewing in Hollywood at the New York Film Festival, whose attendees included program director Richard Pena and filmmakers Pedro Almodovar and Harmony Korine, all signers of a petition in support of Polanski.

The protest caught the attention of **Associated Press**, **ABC**, and **FOX**.

On October 16 Ossorio spoke about the outcome of the domestic violence case against State Senator Hiram Monserrate. She was quoted in the *Queens Courier* as saying, "I think the silver lining in this case is that the Queens District Attorney's office really prioritized a domestic violence case and prosecuted this aggressively, and that should be the standard everywhere." She was also interviewed by **Channel 9 News** and **WNYC** on the topic.

Making Women Happy

In an October 13 interview with the *New York Post*, NOW-NYC President Sonia Ossorio addressed claims that advances for women and their personal happiness are at odds. "Let's take a look at the substantive issues that affect women's quality of life," she said. "We know that women shoulder the bulk of the responsibilities with kids at home, while dealing with workplaces that are often unsupportive." Get the full story on page 5.

NOW-NYC & The Service Fund Programs and Events

All meetings are held at NOW-NYC unless otherwise noted. Please remember to RSVP.

Employment Discrimination Legal Clinic

Monday, Dec. 7, 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 16, 5:30 p.m.

Queer Advocacy Project

Tuesday, Dec. 8, 6:30 p.m.

Reproductive Rights Action Committee

Tuesday, Dec. 8, 6:30 p.m.

Head to Heal: Yoga for Violence Survivors NEW!

Wednesday, Dec. 9, 6:30 p.m.

Holiday Gift Drive Donation Deadline

Thursday, Dec. 10, 5:30 p.m.

See page 4.

Divorce & Separation Legal Clinic

Friday, Dec. 11, 1:15 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 14, 6:30 p.m.

Trafficking Action Network

Tuesday, Dec. 15, 6:30 p.m.

Book Club

Wednesday, Jan. 6, 7:00 p.m.

Women, Race, and Class by Angela Davis

NOW-NYC Election & Bylaws Vote

Thursday, Jan. 21, 5:30 p.m.-9:15 p.m.

150 W. 28th St. @ 7th Ave. Suite 304

Please RSVP. Phone: 212.627.9895 or email contact@nownyc.org

www.nownyc.org

Trains: 1; R, W, or 6 to 28th St. | B, D, F, V; Q, N; A, C; 2, 3 to 34th St.

whatNOW

Newsletter Team

Our newsletter team is made up of a dedicated group of staff and volunteer writers, editors, researchers, and designers.

NOW-NYC thanks our volunteers for making our newsletter possible.

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Do Current Health Reform Proposals Meet Women's Needs?

Do you need help getting to the core of what's happening on health care and how it affects you? Check out these highlights from the fact sheet, "What Women Want, and What We Will Get," produced by Raising Women's Voices to learn how well current versions of health-care reform legislation are meeting our needs and demands. The following information addresses the combined House bill issued on October 29 and the two bills issued by the Senate (one from the Finance Committee and one from the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee) prior to that.

Demand #1: Make it fair. Don't charge women more than men. Don't let insurance companies refuse to cover people because they have diabetes, cancer, asthma or any other "pre-existing condition."

The short answer: All of the health reform bills pending in Congress would prohibit "gender rating," the practice of charging women more than men for the same insurance policy. The bills also would ban insurers from denying you coverage or charging you more because of a "pre-existing" condition, such as asthma, diabetes or breast cancer. This is great news for women, because insurers have denied some of us coverage on the basis of such "pre-existing conditions" as pregnancy, having had a previous c-section delivery and even having been a victim of domestic violence! The new House combined bill also would encourage employers to offer domestic partner coverage by giving employers the same tax benefits they get for offering dependent coverage to married people.

But age discrimination would still be allowed: Insurance companies would continue to be able to charge older people more than younger people, a practice known as "age rating." This is a women's issue, as women are more likely than men to be without insurance when we're over 50, but not yet old enough (65) to qualify for Medicare. Older women experience this problem due to a variety of factors, including divorce, working for small businesses that don't offer insurance, or the retirement of an older spouse and resulting loss of family coverage.

Demand #2: Make it affordable. Use a sliding scale. Offer subsidies for those who can't pay very much.

The short answer: The health reform proposals pending in Congress would take five important steps toward making health insurance more affordable for women and our families. First, Congress would give public health insurance to more low-income families by making them eligible for Medicaid. Second, moderate-

income families would get help buying insurance through a system of public subsidies based on a sliding scale according to family income. Third, health reform legislation would set limits on the annual amounts families are expected to spend on out-of-pocket health care costs, such as co-pays. Fourth, older women would benefit from several provisions for early retirees and for those on Medicare, including closing of the Medicare Part D prescription drug "donut hole." Fifth, there would be a government-sponsored "public option" health plan that could offer consumers cheaper coverage than in private plans.

Demand #3: Keep politics, politicians, and ideology out of the decisions about which benefits should be included. This is health care, people!

The short answer: House Bill HR 3692 was amended at the eleventh hour to include an attack on coverage for reproductive health care. Acting under pressure from anti-choice Democrats and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, House leadership permitted a vote that attached to health reform a sweeping abortion ban on all policies offered through the health insurance exchange that will effectively take coverage away from millions of women who have it now. If enacted, this language will exclude abortion coverage not only from federally-financed Medicaid coverage, but also from the public plan option and from private insurance plans participating in the exchange that accept any public subsidy money. (Plans that do not accept such subsidies would be cutting themselves off from the vast majority of the potential market and may not be economically viable.)

Demand #4: Make it better. Give us the high-quality care that this country is capable of delivering, instead of extra tests and unneeded services that feed the bottom line for drug companies or for-profit hospitals and medical systems at our expense. And fix the system so that poor people, people of color, people with disabilities, and LGBT people get high-quality care too.

The short answer: This is a pretty tall order, and certainly will not be completely solved by any health reform bill. Still, the bills pending in Congress do include some changes that are intended to make our health care better, at the same time as expanding health insurance coverage to many more Americans. Examples include covering use of midwives, funding programs to promote cultural and linguistic competence of health workers and systems, setting standards for accessibility of medical equipment and requiring that LGBT people be included in health status reports.

This fact sheet was last updated on November 9, 2009. To read it in its entirety, and to get breaking news on health-care reform in Congress, visit the RWV blog at www.raisingwomensvoices.net. Reprinted with permission of RWV.

Get the Facts NOW: Affordable Health Care for America Act (H.R. 3962)

Staff Report

As we go to press, the Affordable Health Care for America Act passed the House on November 7. Although the bill includes major restrictions on abortion coverage, it also contains some much needed reforms:

Important Reforms

H.R. 3962 contains many important reforms of the abusive, profit-driven private insurance industry. It would cover 96% of the public and provides subsidies to cover insurance costs for low- and some moderate-income individuals and families. The bill would also prohibit companies from denying coverage for services related to pre-existing conditions, contains the essentials of a public health plan, and provides many other needed repairs to our failing health-care system.

Reproductive Rights Talking Points

When contacting your members of Congress about health-care, use the following pro-choice points:

I urge you to ensure that the final health-care reform bill contains comprehensive reproductive health care for women and that the Stupak-Pitts Amendment be stripped from any final legislation:

- The Affordable Health Care for America Act already includes provisions that bar federal money from covering abortion services (included in the Capps Amendment). This is a more balanced approach that allows women at all income levels to choose whether or not their plan covers abortion.
- Abortion is a legal medical procedure, and it needs to be part of the comprehensive health-care coverage afforded to women. Forcing women to pay for a "rider" or any type of supplemental health insurance to cover this procedure is discriminatory.

Key Benefits to Women

Features that would benefit women include: a prohibition on gender-rating, the practice of charging women more than men for the same coverage in the individual insurance market. Insurers would be required to cover maternity services as part of an essential benefits package, and out-of-pocket payments would be limited for certain preventive care services, among other benefits. The House bill would bar insurance plans from denying coverage in the individual market based on a woman's history as a domestic violence survivor, which would go into effect as soon as the bill is signed into law.

Reproductive Health Care

A final health-care reform bill that includes the radical restrictions on abortion coverage now included in the passed House bill would be a huge setback for women's rights. Millions of women stand to lose coverage they currently have available. Read our lead story, "Bill for Health-Care Reform Includes Sweeping Ban on Abortion Coverage," for the latest (page 1).

Summary excerpted from www.now.org

- Over 85% of private insurance companies currently cover abortion. The Stupak-Pitts Amendment would jeopardize abortion coverage by prohibiting all plans that are part of the public health insurance exchange to cover abortion. It is unclear if any plans would have an incentive to cover abortion under these strict guidelines.
 - Excluding abortion coverage would put millions of women's lives in danger, and would be a huge setback for women's rights. If this provision is included, women would LOSE coverage they currently have. The Stupak-Pitts amendment is purely ideological and political—it does not take the reality of women's lives into consideration.
 - The Stupak-Pitts amendment is particularly dangerous for low- and middle-income women, who will have no other choice than to purchase an insurance plan that does not cover abortion.
- I urge you to stand up for the pro-choice community that supports you and ensure that women will be able to receive comprehensive health-care coverage.

Ban on Abortion Coverage

continued from page 1

there will be no incentive for insurance companies to cover abortion, since most will want or need to participate in the new federal program.

A compromise measure on abortion coverage called the Capps Amendment, which was already included in the House bill took a more balanced approach. The Capps Amendment (1) stated that at least one of the private insurance options in every premium rating level must include, and one must exclude, coverage of abortion beyond rape, incest, or life; (2) ensured that in each region of the country, there is at least one plan in the health exchange that offers abortion services, but also one plan in the health exchange that does not offer abortion coverage; (3) did not interfere with state laws regarding abortion coverage, funding, and referrals; and (4) protected the Hyde Amendment, which prohibits federal funding for abortion services except in cases of rape, incest, or danger to the woman's life. Insurers would guarantee that only non-federal dollars would go toward covering abortion.

More than one million women obtain an abortion in the United States every year. Furthermore, and of no surprise to most people, abortion is LEGAL under current U.S. law. We are left to wonder just how far the pro-choice leadership that we voted for will bend its core principles when a legal medical procedure is banned outright from most health insurance plans in the country. History tells us that the battle over abortion will wage on. However, current law makes it clear that abortion is a legal medical procedure, and therefore, women should have the choice of an insurance plan that covers it. This is not a compromise that we can afford to make. If any version of the Stupak-Pitts Amendment makes it into the final bill, abortion coverage will become unavailable for millions of

women, and one of the largest restriction on women's access to abortion since *Roe* will be enacted at the national level.

The Stupak-Pitts Amendment is purely ideological and political. It does not take the reality of women's lives into consideration. There are so many personal and medical reasons why abortion services are a necessary component of women's health care. To deny women full reproductive health coverage is not only unjust, it is un-American. As NOW-NYC President Sonia Ossorio states, "This vote is a wakeup call. Women are furious. Women will not stand for anti-choice lawmakers who think they can use health reform to attack women's health, women's privacy, and women's rights. This fight is not over. It's just getting started."

TAKE ACTION NOW!

To ensure that the final health-care reform legislation includes comprehensive reproductive health coverage for women, we need to flood the White House and Senate offices with pro-choice voices. This is not a compromise women should be forced to make. Here's what you can do:

- 1) Call or e-mail the White House. (202.456.1111; www.whitehouse.gov) Our pro-choice community helped get Obama elected, and he needs to stand with us. Ask that he refuse to support any health-care reform that denies women insurance coverage for abortion.
- 2) Call or email Senator Schumer (212.486.4430; <http://schumer.senate.gov> and Senator Gillibrand (212.688.6262; <http://gillibrand.senate.gov>). The fight now moves to the Senate, where a single bill is expected to be introduced for debate and a vote. Urge your senators to ensure that the Senate bill will include access to insurance coverage for abortion services.
- 3) Join our Reproductive Rights Action Committee. We meet the second Tuesday of every month at the NOW-NYC office. Call 212.627.9895 or e-mail contact@nownyc.org to RSVP.

TAKE ACTION! Call for the Health-Care Reform We Need

Some of our New York reps have a big role in shaping the health-care reform bill before it goes to a final vote: Senator Chuck Schumer chairs the Senate Rules Committee and sits on the Senate Finance Committee, and Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter is Chair of the House Rules Committee.

Send them each an e-mail to let them know you want health-care reform legislation that contains:

- Subsidies that will ensure coverage is truly affordable for everyone
- Assurance that women will not be charged more than men for the same coverage
- Equity in assessing how much individuals will pay for insurance, regardless of age
- Coverage for pre-existing conditions (in some states other than NY needing treatment as a result of domestic violence can be considered such a "condition")
- The treatment of abortion as any other health service (see our reproductive rights talking points at right)
- Inclusion of a public option

Call Senator Schumer (212.486.4430) or visit www.senate.gov to send an e-mail.

Call Congresswoman Slaughter (202.225.3615) or visit www.house.gov to send an e-mail.

Be sure to reach out to Senator Gillibrand (212.688.6262) and your own Congressperson, too!

Learn more at www.nownyc.org and www.now.org

Jail Cell Not Chamber Seat For Convicted State Senator Monserrate

Staff Report

On December 4, New York State Senator Hiram Monserrate will be handed his sentence for assault in the highly publicized domestic violence case in which he was tried for breaking a glass into his girlfriend's face, cutting her to the skull. The former Marine and ex-cop escaped felony charges in the slashing of his girlfriend during a late-night fight because both maintained the incident was an accident.

The junior senator was not able to get off entirely because of a shocking apartment surveillance video that showed him chasing his frantic girlfriend down the stairs and dragging away the scared, bleeding woman as she tried to ring neighbors' doorbells.

Convicted of assault, Hiram Monserrate is eligible to be sentenced to one year in jail. NOW-NYC is urging Judge William M. Erlbaum to give 42-year-old Monserrate the maximum sentence.

"Domestic violence is a crime that is poisonous to our community and families," said Sonia Ossorio, president of NOW-NYC. "Allowing an elected leader to walk away from the crime of assaulting his intimate partner would be an outrageous travesty of justice and the wrong message to the community."

A 2008 report by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene states that nearly half of fatal violence against women (44%) was confirmed to be the result of intimate partner violence (IPV). In 2005, nearly 4,000 NYC women were

treated in emergency rooms for injuries that they acknowledged were due to IPV. Many more were treated for assault injuries of unknown origin.

"The amount of domestic violence in our city is staggering," Ossorio said. "The problem transcends class, race, and age. It is ravishing our community. We went after crack dealers with harsh sentences during the crack epidemic: We need to go after abusers as vigorously to bring down the rate of domestic violence."

In calling for the Senate leadership to oust the newly convicted criminal in their chamber, Ossorio said, "We cannot hold elected officials to a lesser standard." The National Organization for Women applauds New York State Senator Liz Krueger and other elected officials who have publicly asked Monserrate to step down. Ms. Krueger wasted no time in voicing her concerns about a convicted abuser remaining as a lawmaker.

"Being an elected official is an honor and a privilege, not a right. As a state legislator, the voters give you the power to decide what laws all 19 million of us live under. And as such we are obligated to hold ourselves to the highest standards of our laws. The justice system has determined that Mr. Monserrate has violated our laws and is guilty of a very disturbing and violent crime against a woman," Krueger said in a statement.

TAKE ACTION! Tell Senate Democratic Conference Leader John Sampson to give Monserrate the boot! Call him at 718.649.7653 or visit www.nysenate.gov. Reach out to your own State Senator, too.

Ask Judge Erlbaum to give Monserrate the maximum sentence! Reach Judge William M. Erlbaum, Supreme Court, Queens County, 718.298.1401



Violence Against Women

continued from page 1

Last week, at a rally in front of the school where the crime took place, the local community denounced violence in general, but this was a specific crime targeting a specific gender—this was an act of violence against a woman. Every minute three women are raped in the United States. Teenage girls are especially at risk. According to a 2000 national crime survey, girls ages 16 to 19 are four times more likely to be victims of rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault than the general population.

Could this gang rape be considered a gender-based hate crime? Just last week President Obama signed landmark hate crime legislation that extends existing federal hate crimes laws beyond the narrow scope of protected federal activities to also include, for the first time, violent crimes committed on the basis of actual or perceived gender, sexual orientation, disability, and gender identity. Prosecutors could use the new hate crime legislation to go after the alleged rapists. The vicious nature of the crime and the collaboration and planning potentially involved in gang rape could propel prosecutors to use the new legislation.

The 15-year-old girl in California was preyed upon by a group of men and boys because of her gender. The perpetrators executed a plan to further expose her vulnerability by giving her alcohol. Then she was reportedly

brutally beaten and sexually assaulted for more than two hours by as many as 10 men and teens, while a reported 20 or more bystanders watched, laughed, photographed, videotaped, and cheered on as the attack took place.

Like most violence, violence against women is not accidental: It has a purpose. It is used as a weapon of war and intimidation, a display of power and control intended to break the family and community, and for denying women's status. It is important for the media, the local community where this happened, and the nation, to identify crimes like this gang rape as an act of violence against women, because we need to make better connections on how to respond and prevent crimes like this from happening. The focus on prevention is what gives crimes against women their defining characteristics, and a chance for law enforcement, parents, and communities to respond better.

The victim released a statement. In it she says, "Violence is always the wrong choice. We realize people are angry about this but let the anger cause change, change that is necessary to keep our children, our neighbors and our friends safe." We must change the way we look and think about safety for our girls and what we are doing—or not doing—to protect them.

This article was originally published on November 4, 2009 at Say It, Sister!, National NOW's blog for equality found at www.now.org



Bias Busters

Rape Culture 101

By Yarisbel Rodriguez

The media just won't quit when it comes to perpetuating a rape culture that reinforces double standards and makes the streets, the schools, and the workplace even more potentially dangerous zones of violent physical and sexual confrontation for women.

Take, for example, the buzz around Roman Polanski, the world-renowned director of films such as *The Pianist*. In 1977, under the pretenses of a model photo shoot, Polanski raped a 13-year-old girl after having plied her with alcohol and quaaludes. Initially indicted on six felony counts, including rape by use of drugs, child molesting, and sodomy, he agreed to plead guilty to the lesser charge of unlawful sexual intercourse and then fled the country before sentencing. Polanski was recently apprehended on September 26 at the Zurich Film Festival.

The likes of Martin Scorsese, Woody Allen, and even Whoopi Goldberg allied themselves with Polanski, and a petition circulated around Hollywood in the hopes of exonerating him completely. Goldberg, who is usually on board with the fight for women's rights and pulls few political punches on *The View*, is still digging her foot out of her mouth for saying that while Polanski's actions may have constituted statutory rape, what he did was not really "rape-rape."

The feminist movements since the 1970s have already brought the horrific reality of rape as a violent crime into the public's consciousness, and the general public's revulsion to Polanski's actions is a testament to the growth of this understanding about the realities of rape. The message is clear for feminists, advocates, and survivors of violence: Rape is rape. Sonia Ossorio, president of NOW-NYC, argues that Hollywood's take on the Polanski case "blurs the lines of consent" and makes it that much more difficult for rape victims to bring criminals to justice. Most of America agrees, while Hollywood blazes forth condoning sexual violence as the norm.

Misogyny Unbridled

Very few people can claim to be more sexist and unabashedly misogynist than Tucker Max. Max, an American writer and film producer notorious for his sex-based tell-all Web site, co-wrote the screenplay for the film *I Hope They Serve Beer in Hell*, which was released late September. The film, which is "loosely" based on Max's own "sexual exploits," received justified rage for its disgusting glamorization of rape. The film plot, if it can be called a plot at all, is about what happens at the bachelor party of one of Max's friends—and what happens is indeed the social sanctioning of men sleeping with women who are intoxicated. Max's film portrays the sexual degradation of women as normal and inevitable, and completely trivializes the reality of rape. The film's ads, sprinkled across New York City like a flea infestation, featured deeply misogynist slogans such as "Blind Girls Never See You Coming" and "Sexism Isn't the Same As Misogyny, You Stupid B*tch."

New Yorkers didn't take the film or its disgusting ads lying down. Many protested against Max's misogyny, and NOW's Young Feminist Task Force denounced the film and the ads across the board on its blog and on the street.

Rape Culture 101

The media has been complicit in perpetuating rape as normal and inconsequential, from its release of disgusting movies and ad campaigns to the Hollywood-inspired social sanctioning of the pedophilia of movie producers. Yet, women's rights organizations like NOW-NYC have fought back against the normalizing effects that the media has on rape, and the good news is that things have changed. The Los Angeles District Attorney noted in a recent *New York Times* article that the lenient sentence Polanski was likely to receive if he had stayed put would "never be achievable under today's laws." There has been a cultural shift toward thinking about rape, especially the rape of a child, as the violent and devastating crime that it is. However, the success of the likes of Max Tucker and the reaction of the many running to Polanski's defense demonstrate that advocates must continue to educate and effect change.

You Can Take a Stand!

Join NOW-NYC in the fight against a culture that promotes or condones rape and help us make the streets, the schools, and the workplace safe and empowering places for women and girls everywhere. Visit www.nownyc.org or call the office at 212.627.9895 to find out more.

Contact Darko Entertainment, which produced and financed Tucker Max's film, and give the company a piece of your mind: info@darko-entertainment.com.

Sign an anti-Polanski petition on <http://cripple.livejournal.com/20640.html> to let Hollywood know that rape is rape!

Bulletin NOW-NYC Updates You on Key Issues

By Samantha Fingerhut

Same Sex Marriage Coming to New York?

As we go to press, the New York State Senate has temporarily put Governor Paterson's proposal for a same-sex marriage bill on hold. The proposal was attached to a budget reform bill to be addressed at a November 10 legislative assembly. Gay rights advocates, who waited eagerly in the halls of the Capitol, were met with grave disappointment. The bill's sponsor in the Senate, Thomas K. Duane, attempted to keep up the morale, saying that he is "optimistic" for reform in the future.

A year ago, when Paterson called same-sex marriage a necessary civil right, a bill was denied in the Senate after several Democrats in the majority objected to it for religious reasons. Same-sex marriage is already legal in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Iowa, Vermont, and starting in January, New Hampshire. Voters in Maine acted on November 4 to narrowly repeal a gay marriage bill that had just gone into effect in September.

In New York, the fight for equality has been an ongoing struggle. If a bill is passed, same-sex couples in New York will have access to the more than 1,000 rights and responsibilities afforded by legal marriage in the state, including the ability to gain health insurance coverage through their spouse, the right to visit each other in hospitals, and many other family protections provided under New York State law.

TAKE ACTION! Contact your State Senator (www.nysenate.gov) and tell him or her to vote YES on equal marriage.

Federal Hate Crimes Law Expanded to Include Gender and Sexual Orientation

"We're here to deliver a message of hope. This will never happen again. Enough is enough." Daniel Dromm, long time New York City LGBT rights activist, gave inspiration to the 300 people who marched in College Point, Queens, on October 17 to show solidarity for Jack Price, a 49-year-old gay man and victim of assault.

Just a week prior, on October 9, Price was nearly beaten to death by two men outside of his local bodega. Daniel Aleman, 26, and Daniel Rodriguez, 21, were caught by the Queens police on a surveillance video and are now facing charges for assault. Council Speaker Christine Quinn, who is an out lesbian, said, "It is unacceptable to feel so confident in your hate that you act out violently."

Finally, Quinn's and other LGBT activists' voices may have been heard. On October 22, the proposed Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act was passed in the Senate, 68-29. While under current federal law the definition of hate crimes extends only



to attacks motivated by race, color, religion, or national identity, the Hate Crimes Prevention Act expands that definition to include crimes committed because of gender, gender identity, disability, or sexual orientation.

"This is a true victory, especially for women," said NOW President Terry O'Neill. "NOW's activists have worked tirelessly for years to have gender-based and sexual orientation-based hate crimes included in federal law—hate crimes that warrant federal prosecution and federal punishment."

The measure includes an important provision introduced by New York Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney that will require law enforcement to report and compile statistics on gender-based hate crimes nationwide. In a press release, she said, "In our society, what we measure is important. By adding gender-based hate crimes to data-reporting requirements, law enforcement will have the data to act on, and we'll send the message that we will not tolerate the violence targeted toward women."

The measure was signed into law by President Obama on October 28. New York Senators Kristen Gillibrand and Charles Schumer have shown their support for the measure every step of the way.

TAKE ACTION! Thank Senators Schumer and Gillibrand and Congresswoman Maloney for their support and initiative at www.senate.gov or www.house.gov.

Collecting Donations! The Service Fund of NOW-NYC's Annual Gift Drive for Girls

We are collecting holiday gifts for at-risk girls. Please drop off your donation at our office, by Thursday, Dec. 10!

We need your help to make the holiday season a little brighter for girls and young women (ages 12-17) facing violence in their lives—many living in local shelters or transitional housing.

Donations we're collecting include:

- new hair clips
 - hand soaps, lotions or hair gels
 - costume jewelry
 - journals / notecards / books
 - craft kits or small games
 - scarves, hats, gloves, fuzzy socks
- Please limit your donations to listed items or similar. We are only accepting brand new items. Drop-off hours are from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Thursday. Please call ahead to confirm.
- Thank you for making the holiday season brighter for these young women!

150 W. 28th St. @ 7th Ave. Suite 304
Phone: 212.627.9895

President's Desk

continued from page 1

hungry for a majority, traded their principles in recent years by supporting anti-choice candidates. Now, one such former candidate, Senator Bob Casey, is leading the charge in the Senate to make sure the bishops call to action is sealed.

If you are as worried as I am that a historic health-care reform is taking place at the expense of women's right to comprehensive health care, be part of the movement to stand up and say, "This isn't my America!"

If it makes you livid that President Obama is celebrating this victory, pick up the phone, call the White House, and tell him, "Don't betray me and the women of this country."

If you think Nancy Pelosi should have stuck to her principles and said, "No Abortion, No Reform," call her and tell her we expected more from her.

Abortion is the most common surgical procedure performed on women in the United States. The original bill already included a ban on federal funding for

abortion and a requirement that only women's personal funds could pay for abortion care.

If you are tired of watching birth control costs skyrocket and outraged that abortion could now become hugely expensive, directly impeding low-income women's ability to have an abortion, join me in this fight.

There are several ways to get involved. Sign up for our e-mail action alerts, and join us at our next member night meeting or Reproductive Rights Committee meeting. Call us and join our Reproductive Rights Activist list. We'll call you and invite you when we protest, visit legislators, and make our voices heard. (Email contact@nownyc.org or call 212.627.9895 to get involved!)

This fight is not over. If we take this on, the fight will have only just begun. In 2004, 1.4 million of us descended on Washington D.C. for one of the biggest marches ever. Now it's time to harness that passion, energy, and determination—and mobilize. It's a fight worth fighting, a fight for women's lives.

The Normalcy of Inequality

By K.C. Washington

Sexism in America: Alive, Well, and Ruining Our Future

Barbara Berg, Ph.D

Lawrence Hill Books

412 pages \$24.95



"Have you seen them?"

"Who?"

"You know all the *Sex and the City* chicks. They're everywhere."

"Yeah, running around in gaggles, all dressed up in their wobbly high heels, giggling."

"They look like idiots."

The men's voices dripped with contempt. Contempt that I, as their bartender pouring them beer after beer found outsized, depressing, and directed at all of female kind. Whatever your opinion of the HBO show and subsequent movie, one thing most of us can agree on is the derision it seems to engender in men. I hear it all over the city, during conferences, in grocery stores. But why? Is it because the show focuses on fashion? Women and sex? Female friendships? Female ambition? Barbara Berg, author of the immensely readable *Sexism in America: Alive, Well and Ruining Our Future* argues all of the above.

Harnessing pop culture to the cause of rescuing feminism (you've got to love a book on feminism that includes positive references to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*), Berg delightfully and alarmingly shows how the gains of first- and second-wave feminists have been slowly eroding for decades, almost before their hard work could produce tangible results. Devising an online survey which she sent to women all over the country, who then forwarded it to others, Berg discovered that women and men have slipped back into thinking that each incident of gender discrimination or harassment is an isolated incident, occurring only to the individual woman.

"I discovered renewed sexism in our national politics and our jobs; on college campuses, the Internet, and major television shows; and in our most intimate relations—an unequivocal resurgence of sexism in this country so potent, so complexly and broadly expressed, so much a product of the twenty-first century, it should be called nothing less than the sexism of mass destruction," writes Berg.

Asking the troubling question: When did inequality start to feel normal again?

Berg, a historian, who has taught at Sarah Lawrence and written for *Ms.* and *The New York Times*, gives an overview of the history of feminism before tackling the answer, which is: It began in the Regan era, took off like a "newcultural" missile during Bush II's disastrous tenure, and solidified after September 11.

Citing the curtailing of exemplary Head Start programs, the implementation of global gag rules, the gift of Bush's "family values" programs to the evangelicals who elected him (all of which caused America's gender equality ranking to go from 25th place to 31st out of 128 countries according to the 2007 Global Gender Report), as well as the dearth of female responder rescue narratives during September 11 coverage, Berg argues that America's (read: men's) feelings of emasculation before the world when it had just the day before been cock of the walk, caused a retreat to "traditional" male/female roles.

"For all our efforts and many successes, feminists had made two major miscalculations—we'd underestimated both the resistance of male corporate America to change and the tenacity of idealized, traditional family life in the national psyche," says Berg.

This *need* or what Berg calls "Phallic Politics," has led to a rise in domestic violence, a 74% rise in unemployment for single mothers, an insidious undermining of women of color (who, because they are often members of lower socio-economic communities, are hit first and hit hardest), and a systematic attack against reproductive rights, among other things.

A rallying cry, employing statistic after harrowing well-documented statistic in a surprisingly fun and interesting way, *Sexism in America: Alive, Well and Ruining Our Future* makes the case that although we are now in the "Age of Obama," so much damage has been done it will take all of our (male and female) collective efforts to save ourselves and future generations of girls and boys.

The Happiness Battle Brews

By Sonia Ossorio

I was feeling really happy.

Then I got a call from a reporter who wanted me to comment about the fact that women are really unhappy, more than ever before.

Really?

I looked around my office and took inventory: I saw young women excited about their futures and happy with life. We're on the ready for laughs, adventure and challenges. Are we all secretly unhappy?

Apparently, if you read the most recent survey: we're the unhappiest set of women yet since the women's movement got started! Each year since 1972, the United States General Social Survey has asked men and women: How happy are you on a scale of 1 to 3, with 3 being very happy, and 1 being not so happy.

Apparently, women are unhappier today regardless of whether they have kids, how many kids they have, how much money they make, how healthy they are, what job they hold, whether they are married, single or divorced, how old they are or what race they are.

Hmm.

Oh, and the greater educational, political and employment opportunities women have directly correlates to decreases in life happiness.

How can this possibly be?

Well, don't look to *TIME* or Maureen Dowd to cast a skeptical eye. It seems the media is quick to sensationalize any "finding" that sends the message: You can't have it all. Women are constantly being reminded that, "you asked for too much, and look where it got you."

What We're Reading

Blue-Collar Women Organizing

By Samantha Fingerhut

Sisters in the Brotherhoods

Jane Latour

Palgrave Macmillan

229 pages \$24.95

With the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, women's rights activists knew that they had accomplished something that would go down in history. Now, over 40 years later, journalist and New York City labor rights activist Jane Latour, gives 11 accounts of courageous women who broke the gender boundary in one of New York City's toughest terrains: the blue-collar workforce. In her oral-history-based study, *Sisters in the Brotherhoods: Working Women Organizing for Equality in New York City*, Latour gives a voice to women who, in the mid-20th century, struggled as members of the blue-collar workforce, holding jobs typically reserved for men.

A former blue-collar worker, Latour left the factory where she was working and began interviewing women who, like her, were sick of being told that their hard work could never be as good as a man's. She found solidarity with other working women, and her interviews eventually turned into a 200-plus page book. *Sisters in the Brotherhoods* gives an account of brave women entering treacherous territories, while also exposing the villainy of labor unions, deeply entrenched cultural assumptions rooted in sexism, and the institutionalized discrimination by employers. Some of these barriers still exist today, but Latour focuses on what it is that impels us to persevere, and how we might find inspiration in the most surprising of places. Through her harrowing and uplifting stories, Latour shows that individual struggles and triumphs are the essence of historical vitality, and that they remain very relevant to those of us still fighting for equality in the workplace today.

Ladies...Get Your Groove On

Thanks for Coming: One Young Woman's Quest for an Orgasm

Mara Altman

Harper Perennial

400 Pages \$13.99

A remarkably insightful look into our society's obsession with and anxiety over the female orgasm, Mara Altman's *Thanks for Coming* is entertaining and thought provoking from the first page. The book prompts readers to explore sexuality and the meaning of sex on a personal level and will challenge everyone to be more open in the way they approach sex.

Often hilariously funny but with a lot of very serious and thoughtful points to make, this is not a "sex book," but it's a great book about sex. It's about much more than that, too: self-image and self-consciousness, relationships, intimacy, expectations, and just plain compelling stories.

Like clockwork, there's a survey out aimed at sucking the joy out of a woman's day. They tell us all the women from Yale and Harvard are heading "back home." We've been told we're more likely to get hit by lightning than get married after 40, or some ridiculous and insulting comparison.

Wouldn't it be more helpful to ask substantive questions about what may be frustrating women to lead them to report being a 2 rather than a "very happy" 3 on a survey?

Could it be that women (and men) are working longer hours than ever in our technology-driven 24/7 world? For the first time in history, working women make up half of all U.S. workers, and mothers are the primary breadwinners in nearly two-thirds of American families. And yet, pay parity has moved at a glacial pace. Women still only make 77 cents for every dollar that men earn, and the U.S. is the only industrialized nation that lacks paid maternity leave for working mothers, despite growing numbers.

Women certainly "aren't happy" to shoulder most of the household and childcare responsibilities—but they still do. So what's keeping these responsibilities in place?

American policies, corporations, and too many men have not kept up with women's evolving role. For example, basic labor standards are still based on supporting families where the men work and the women stay at home.

The media just loves to re-invent the story that women's freedom has made us unhappy without ever considering the context of that freedom. What really needs to change is how we think about women and happiness. Instead of wasting time continuously questioning women's advancements, let's work to keep them coming. Then we'll really have a reason to be happy.

Women & Power

By Samantha Fingerhut

Women Lead the Way

Linda Tarr-Whelan

Berret-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

181 pages \$16.47

"Would we be in the same mess if Lehman Brothers was Lehman Brothers and Sisters?" When Nicholas Kristof posed this question in the *New York Times*, Linda Tarr-Whelan, former ambassador to the UN Commission on the Status of Women, already knew the answer. Especially now, in a deepening economic crisis, Tarr-Whelan believes that balanced leadership incorporating the talents, insights, and input of women is necessary in order for our government and economy to meet the challenges of a rapidly evolving world. In her new book, *Women Lead the Way*, Tarr-Whelan shows why women must be an integral part of the political and economic decision-making process, and how to go about doing it.

Women Lead the Way proposes a "30% solution," our commitment to getting women at least a one-third representation in the public sphere. This percentage might seem meek, but Tarr-Whelan believes that in the United States, where we are ranked 69th in the world in women's political representation, the 30% solution is "the tipping point at which women's voices resonate fully to add the affirmative difference of our experiences and values."

Tarr-Whelan's conviction in the transformative power of women's leadership could not have come at a better time: Women, disproportionately affected by the current recession, are ready for a change. Half research-based study, half how-to book, *Women Lead the Way* offers a positive, progressive, and comprehensive plan to achieving success in a fairer and more just future.



Introduction to NOW-NYC Proposed Bylaws Changes

Dear NOW-NYC Member,

The Board of Directors is proud to present to the membership a draft of our proposed updated bylaws for NOW-NYC, the guiding document that sets forth the key principles and rules that govern our organization.

NOW-NYC exists in a very different context today than 40 years ago, when it was founded. So it's critical that our bylaws continue to evolve. In response, our bylaws committee, in partnership with the New York Lawyers Alliance, took on this project to ensure that we establish best practices as an organization. This means avoiding conflicts of interest, establishing transparency, fostering our ability to adapt and grow, ensuring compliance with current New York State non profit law, and modernizing our organization for a new generation of young activists. (The New York Lawyers Alliance [www.lawyersalliance.org] is a non profit established to support other nonprofits with legal issues. Its team of lawyers has worked with the leadership of NOW-NYC in the past two years on a number of projects to improve our infrastructure, organization, and compliance. For example, we have created a conflict-of-interest policy and an employee manual, and we received assistance making a needed update to the incorporation status of the Service Fund of NOW-NYC.)

This draft of proposed bylaws represents critically needed changes that retain the core elements that make our organization—which has a long and proud history—strong, while adapting it to meet 21st century demands and challenges. It is through our commitment to build and evolve that we can best serve our membership and the women and girls of New York City.

To get through the nitty gritty of the proposed changes, we've created a guide that highlights the key changes and the reasons behind them.

1. Annual General Membership Meeting: We are adding to our bylaws a required annual General Membership Meeting, an official membership meeting as required by section 603 (B) of the New York Not-for-Profit Corporation Law (N-PCL). A 10-day written notice to members will be required in the bylaws, as also required by N-PCL. The addition of the General Membership Meeting outlined above does not affect the chapter's tradition of holding regularly scheduled membership programs. Our new bylaws require us to hold six such programs a year, in addition to the one General Membership meeting that meets the legal requirement.

2. Quorum: The minimum quorum requirement under New York law is the lesser of 100 votes or 10% of eligible votes. Our old bylaws call for a minimum quorum of 35 votes. This change is to reflect current law.

3. Compensation: If compensated, the president will no longer have a vote on the board of directors. The New York Lawyers Alliance strongly recommended that we create this structure. This is an important protection for our organization. When a member of the board of directors of a nonprofit organization receives compensation from the organization as either (i) paid staff member; (ii) consultant; or (iii) board member, the director is vulnerable to allegations of conflict of interest. Interest in this topic recently has been heightened by New York City governmental agencies' enforcement of contract provisions barring paid staff members from serving on the boards of the organization that employs them.

We hope that you will review the new bylaws closely and cast your vote to approve them at our election meeting on January 21, 2009, at the NOW-NYC office.

The Board of Directors would like to thank the bylaws committee for undertaking this project:

Gaby Moreno, Elizabeth Mason, Meaghan Carey, Sonia Ossorio, and Judi Polson.

Sincerely,

The NOW-NYC Board of Directors

NOW-NYC Election to be Held on January 21, 2010

Call for Nominations!

The 2010 election for Officers and elected members of the Board of Directors of the National Organization for Women's New York City Chapter will take place from 5:30 p.m. to 9:15 p.m. on January 21, 2010, at the NOW-NYC office, 150 W. 28th Street, Suite 304. Candidate speeches will begin at 6:00 p.m. and conclude by 7:00 p.m. A list of positions and instructions on how to run for office are found below, as well as the bylaws requirements for eligibility to vote in the election. If you have any questions, please contact the Elections Committee by calling 212.627.9895 or e-mailing electioncommittee@nownyc.org.

Candidate Eligibility

A candidate for Officer must be a member of the Chapter for six months prior to the Annual Election Meeting. A candidate for President or Vice President must be a Chapter member for one year and must have been either an active member of a committee or held a position on the Board of Directors for one year. Each candidate shall provide a biographical description to the Elections Committee. The names and resumes of eligible candidates shall be posted on the NOW-NYC Web site as soon as possible, after they are verified. All members can request paper copies of candidate information by calling the office at 212.627.9895. Furthermore, copies of candidate information will be made available to voters at the Annual Election Meeting.

How to Nominate Yourself or a Friend

1) Declaration of Candidacy: Each candidate for office shall submit a Declaration of Candidacy (the "Declaration") accompanied by a feminist resume of no more than 750 words for candidates for President and 500 words for all other candidates. Each Declaration must contain the candidate's name, contact information, and a statement of how the candidate meets the eligibility requirements for that office.

2) Submission of Declaration: The Declaration and resume shall be sent by fax to: (a) the NOW-NYC office to the attention of the Elections Committee at 212.627.9861 and (b) E-mailed to electioncommittee@nownyc.org. Declarations and resumes may also be submitted in person at the NOW-NYC office.

3) The Elections Committee Chair will notify candidates that their Declarations and resumes have been received. The Declarations and resumes shall be maintained by the Elections Committee in a file at the NOW-NYC office and a separate location.

4) Each candidate, in the order listed on the ballot, shall make a verbal presentation of no more than five minutes for presidential candidates and of three minutes for all other candidates at the Annual Elections Meeting.

Deadline for Nominations

The deadline for receipt of Declarations and resumes is 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, December 21, 2009. Candidates may be nominated only in the manner and by the dates specified in these rules. There will be no nominations from the floor at the Annual Elections Meeting. The positions for the NOW-NYC Board of Directors are listed below.

Positions Open for the 2010 Election:

President

The President shall be the Chief Executive Officer and principal spokesperson of the Chapter, shall preside at the meetings of the Executive Committee; shall act as Chapter liaison with the National NOW and New York State NOW Chapter, shall make regular reports to the Board of Directors and the Membership; shall perform such duties as are directed by the Executive Committee; shall be an *ex officio* member of all committees except the Elections Committee. The president shall also preside at each General Membership Meeting, or designate another Board member to preside.

The President may choose to be compensated if serving full time, or if not compensated, must appoint an Executive Director who will serve full time and be compensated. Compensation of the President or Executive Director shall be determined by the Board of Directors at its February meeting. Those nominated for the office of President must specify before the election whether they wish to serve full-time and be compensated or whom they wish to designate as Executive Director.

Action Vice President shall develop and implement a plan to activate members and others on NOW issues. This shall include acting as the chair of an ad-hoc issue committee in the event that there is no other viable committee.

Development Vice President shall develop and implement a plan for the financial growth of the Chapter.

Legislative Vice President shall develop and implement a legislative program for advancing NOW's issues, in cooperation with National NOW and the New York State NOW Chapter.

The **Chair** shall prepare the agenda for and preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors.

The **Secretary** shall keep minutes of Board of Directors meetings and other meetings as necessary; submit approved minutes for Chapter records; and shall assure the maintenance of and access to Chapter archives.

The **Treasurer** shall be responsible for the receipt of funds; shall disburse funds with the approval of the Board; shall make monthly and annual reports to the Board; shall prepare the annual budget; shall prepare and file any necessary governmental tax and information returns; and shall maintain all financial records in the Chapter office. There shall be a review of the accounts by the Finance Committee if there is a change at any time in the office of Treasurer before the Annual Election Meeting.

Director of Membership shall process new memberships and resolve member record problems and shall develop and implement a plan to retain and recruit new members.

Director of Newsletter shall be responsible for the editing, production, and distribution of the Chapter newsletter.

Director of Programs shall organize and schedule appropriate programs for the Chapter.

Director of Volunteers shall assist in operations of the Chapter, by staffing the office with volunteers and interns and matching volunteers to committees and other functions.

Director of Web site shall be in charge of keeping the chapter Web site content current and will update the Web site in a timely manner to ensure a consistent and cohesive message with our members and the public. The director will also serve as the acting information technology liaison for all issues related to the Web site and its content delivery.

Voter Eligibility and Credentialing

In order to vote, one must have been a chapter member for at least 30 days at the time of the annual elections meeting (or joined on or before December 23, 2009). The membership form and dues payment must have been received at the NOW-NYC office or at the National NOW office by that date. The elections committee shall verify the eligibility of voters and check documentation when necessary. A photo identification must be presented at the time of credentialing. Additional proof of membership may be necessary if a member joined after December 1, 2009. In that case, the member should provide a cancelled check or a credit-card billing statement, or a receipt of payment made in cash for membership. Credentialing of voters shall begin at 5:30 p.m. and continue thereafter with no one allowed at the credentialing lines after 9:15 p.m. The close of credentialing shall be 10 minutes after the last person on line at 9:15 p.m. has received a ballot or been declared ineligible to vote.

Membership Meeting & Vote January 21 NOW-NYC Election

We need your vote. If you are a member, please join us to vote. Enjoy some feminist networking, refreshments, and a "meet & greet" with the candidates. Learn all about NOW-NYC!

January 21, 2010 | 5:30 p.m. - 9:15 p.m. | Candidate Speeches 6:00 p.m.
NOW-NYC Office | 150 W. 28th Street, Suite 304.

Amended and Restated By-Laws of

National Organization for Women-New York City, Inc.
(a New York Corporation)

ARTICLE I

NAME

The chapter, a unit of the National Organization for Women ("NOW" or "National"), shall be called the National Organization for Women-New York City, Inc. (the "Chapter").

ARTICLE II

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Chapter shall be to take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society, NOW, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men. This purpose includes, but is not limited to: equal rights and responsibilities in all aspects of citizenship, public service, employment, education, and family life. It includes freedom from discrimination because of age, marital status, sexual or affectional preference, and parenthood.

Our mission is to advocate for the women and girls of New York City by promoting reproductive health, achieving economic empowerment and ending discrimination and violence against women.

ARTICLE III

POLICY

The Chapter shall be bound by the National Bylaws and may not take action which is contrary thereto. Where

there is no established policy, the Chapter may express itself on any subject which is directly related to the purpose of NOW.

ARTICLE IV

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership. The Chapter shall have a minimum of ten members. Any person who subscribes to NOW's purpose shall be eligible to become a member of the Chapter. Upon payment of National and Chapter dues, said person shall be enrolled as a member of the Chapter and National. No person shall be excluded from membership, or otherwise discriminated against within the organization because of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, economic status, or sexual orientation. The ultimate authority for the Chapter shall reside in the Membership.

Section 2. Meetings of Members. There shall be at least one regularly scheduled meeting of the General Membership each year, in accordance with New York State law, to conduct official business of the chapter. This meeting shall occur in January of each year and shall be the Elections Meeting in the year of the election. Special meetings of members may be called at any time by the President or the Board of Directors (the "Board"). A meeting of members shall be held at the time and place set forth in the notice of meeting. In addition, the chapter will hold at least six general membership programs throughout the year.

Section 3. Notice of Meetings. Notice of each meeting of members shall be given to each member by the Secretary by first class mail, telecopy or by hand delivery not less than ten (10) nor more than fifty (50) days before the meeting or if mailed by any other class of mail, it shall be given not less than thirty (30) nor more than sixty (60)

days before such date or by any other manner pursuant to applicable law. Such notice shall set forth the place, date and hour of the meeting, and, in the case of a special meeting, the purpose or purposes, of the meeting.

Section 4. Quorum and Vote. Except as otherwise required by applicable law or these Bylaws, ten percent of the members eligible to vote, or 100 members eligible to vote (whichever is less), present in person, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of all business at meetings of members, and the act of a majority of the members present at any meeting shall be the act of the members. At any meeting of members, each member present, in person, shall be entitled to one vote.

Section 5. Membership Committees. The Board may by resolution adopted by majority of the entire Board designate from among the membership such standing committees as it may deem appropriate from time to time, whose purpose will be to take action to advance NOW's purpose. Committees shall be subject to reauthorization by a majority vote of the Board on a yearly basis. Each committee shall have a Committee Coordinator designated by the Board for a term of one (1) year. No Committee Coordinator shall be eligible for more than four (4) consecutive terms in the same position. Each Committee Coordinator or her designee is required to attend the annual membership meeting.

Section 6. Dues. Chapter members shall be billed for both National and Chapter dues by the appropriate staff member responsible for membership processing, who shall transmit National dues to the National office within 30 days after receipt; shall keep accurate records of the transmission of dues; shall maintain up-to-date membership records; and shall make monthly reports to the Treasurer.

Section 7. Removal or Suspension. Recommendation for suspension or removal of a member must first be brought before the Board. If the Board deems that the action of the member is improper, prejudicial, contrary to the purpose of, and/or injurious to National or the Chapter, said member may be expelled by a majority of the membership.

ARTICLE V

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. Powers and Duties. The Board shall have general power to control and manage the affairs and property of the Chapter subject to applicable law and in accordance with the purposes and limitations set forth in the Certificate of Incorporation and herein. The Board shall set policy; shall manage the funds and property of the Chapter; shall approve the Chapter budget as submitted by the Finance Committee; shall devise measures for Chapter growth and effectiveness; and shall be responsible for raising money for Chapter operating expenses.

Section 2. Number, Election, and Term of Office. The Chapter shall have a minimum of five Board members and a maximum of thirteen with two additional at-large positions to be appointed by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors. Appointed board members can be removed from the board by a two-thirds vote and must run for election at the next election to continue on the Board. Each Officer of the Chapter shall be a member of the Board except that no Officer shall be a Board member as long as she is compensated for professional services rendered to the Chapter. Directors shall be elected by a majority of the votes cast by members at the Elections Meeting, and each shall continue in office until her successor shall have been duly elected and qualified, or

until her death, resignation or removal. If there is no majority for any candidate, there shall be a re-balloting. After the second balloting without achieving a majority, the candidate with the lowest amount of votes shall be eliminated and there will be a third re-balloting. The term of office of Directors shall be two (2) years. No Board member shall be eligible for more than four consecutive terms in the same Board position.

Section 3. Vacancies. Any vacancy in the Board arising at any time and from any cause may be filled by vote of a majority of the directors then in office. Each director so elected shall hold office until the next Elections Meeting and until the election and qualification of her successor.

Section 4. Resignation or Removal of Directors. Any Director may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Secretary of the Chapter. Such resignation shall take effect at any time specified therein and, unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective. Any Director may be removed, with cause, at any time by a majority vote of the members. Cause shall include, but is not limited to, breach of fiduciary duty, committing acts which are injurious to the organization, or missing three consecutive Board meetings or four meetings in any given year. At the third consecutive or fourth total missed Board meeting, the Board may by majority vote retain such Director, or direct the Secretary or a Board designee to send a letter within five days to the Director requesting her resignation. Directors may be removed without cause only by vote of the members.

Section 5. Remuneration. All members of the Board shall serve without remuneration. If a member of the Board secures, from the Chapter, any remuneration for professional services provided to the Chapter, she shall resign from the Board, but may attend Board meetings at the pleasure of the Board.

Section 6. Regular Meetings. Regular meetings of the Board shall be held at such times and places as the Board shall designate. There shall be at least four Board meetings per year.

Section 7. Special or Emergency Meetings. Special meetings of the Board may be held upon the call of the President or other Officer of the Chapter, or as determined by the Board.

Section 8. Notice of Meetings of the Board. Notice of the time and place of regular meetings of the Board shall be given in person at the first Board meeting following the annual elections meeting or shall be given by the Secretary or Chair by mail, facsimile, hand delivery, e-mail, or other means of written communication including electronic transmission, to each Board member at least two weeks before such meeting.

Notice of the time and place of special or emergency meetings of the Board shall be given by the Secretary or Chair by hand delivery with acknowledgement of receipt, to each Board member at least twenty-four (24) hours before such meeting.

Notice of any meeting shall not be required to be given to any Director who attends such meeting without protesting prior thereto the lack of notice to her, or who submits a signed waiver of notice, whether before or after the meeting.

Section 9. Quorum of Directors. At all meetings of the Board, fifty (50) percent, plus one (1) member, of the current members of the Board, present in person, shall constitute a quorum. Except as provided by law or these Bylaws, at any meeting of the Board at which a quorum is present, the vote of a majority of the Directors present at the time of the vote shall be the act of the Board.

Section 10. Organization. The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Board or, in the absence of the Chair, a temporary chairperson as chosen by the Directors present at the meeting shall preside. In the absence of the Secretary, the presiding Officer may appoint any person to act as Secretary of the meeting.

Section 11. Voting. At any meeting of the Board, each Director present in person shall be entitled to one (1) vote.

Section 12. Action Without a Meeting. Any action required or permitted to be taken at any meeting of the Board or by any committee thereof may be taken without a meeting if all members of the Board or committee consent in writing to such action, and such consents are filed with the minutes of the Board or such committee thereof.

Section 13. Conference Calls. Any one or more members of the Board or any committee thereof may participate in a meeting of the Board or such committee by means of a conference telephone or similar communications equipment allowing all persons participating in the meeting to hear each other at the same time. Participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at a meeting.

Section 14. Advisory Council. The Board, by resolution adopted by a majority of the entire Board, may designate from the general membership, an Advisory Council whose purpose shall be: (a) to assist with fund raising and Chapter capacity, (b) to act in a consultative capacity, (c) to lend their good name and influence to Chapter efforts.

Section 15. Chair; Powers and Duties. There shall be a Chair of the Board of Directors. The Chair shall be elected by a majority of those Directors present at the first Board meeting after the Annual Election Membership Meeting. The Chair shall prepare the agenda for, and preside at all meetings of the Board. In an event of an internal dispute, the Chair may perform a conciliatory or mediatory function, or may appoint one or more persons

to act in this capacity with the approval of all parties in the dispute.

ARTICLE VI

OFFICERS

Section 1. Officers. The Officers of the Chapter shall be a President, a Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and such other Officers as the Board may determine appropriate.

Section 2. Election, Term of Office, Removal from Office. Each Officer shall hold office for a term of two years, and until her successor has been elected or appointed and qualified. The President, Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and Vice President shall be elected biennially by the Members at the Elections Meeting. Any Officer may be removed, with or without cause, by majority vote of the members.

Section 3. Vacancies. Any vacancy in any office may be filled for the unexpired term by vote of a majority of directors then in office. Any Officer so elected by the Board shall hold office until the next Elections Meeting and until the election and qualification of her successor.

Section 4. Employees, Other Agents, Etc. The Board may from time to time appoint such other employees and agents (such as an Executive Director) as it shall deem necessary, each of whom shall perform the duties of her position at the pleasure of the Board and receive reasonable compensation, if any, as the Board may from time to time determine. The Board shall have the authority to fix the compensation of Officers for professional services rendered by them to the Chapter.

Section 5. President: Powers and Duties. The President shall be the Chief Executive Officer and principal spokesperson of the Chapter, shall preside at the meetings of the Executive Committee; shall act as Chapter liaison with National and the New York State NOW Chapter, shall make regular reports to the Board and the Membership; shall perform such duties as are directed by the Executive Committee and the Board; shall be an *ex officio* member of all committees except the Elections Committee. The President shall also preside at each General Membership Meeting, or designate another qualified staff member or request a Board member to preside. The President shall be responsible for the general supervision and direction of the other Officers and the agents and employees of the Chapter and shall perform such other duties as from time to time the Board may assign to her. The President shall generally manage and supervise the operations of the Chapter. The President shall not be a Board member so long as she is compensated for professional services provided to the Chapter. However, the President will attend Board meetings, keep the Board fully informed, and shall consult with the Board on the activities of the Chapter. Notwithstanding the above, the Board, by majority vote, may delegate, whenever necessary, the powers and duties of the President to an Executive Director and/or the Vice President in the event the President cannot fulfill any of these powers and duties.

Section 6. Vice President: Powers and Duties. The Vice President shall generally assist the President in the supervision of the activities of the Chapter and its several Officers and shall have such other powers and duties as the Board may prescribe.

Section 7. Secretary: Powers and Duties. The Secretary shall act as secretary of all meetings of the Board, and shall take accurate and detailed minutes of all such meetings and shall timely record, upon Board adoption, said minutes in the Chapter's minute book. The Secretary shall attend to the giving and serving of all notices of the Chapter and shall perform all duties incident to the office of the Secretary, subject, however, to the control of the Board. The Secretary shall perform such other duties as shall from time to time be assigned to her by the Board. The Secretary shall ensure the maintenance of, and access to, Chapter archives.

Section 8. Treasurer: Powers and Duties. The Treasurer shall have the fiscal responsibility over the receipt of all funds and securities of the Chapter and shall disburse funds with the approval of the Board. She shall keep or cause to be kept complete and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements of the Chapter, and shall deposit all monies and other valuable effects of the Chapter in the name and to the credit of the Chapter in such banks or depositories as the Board may designate. She shall render or direct an employee of the chapter to render, a statement of the accounts of the Chapter on a monthly basis. The Treasurer shall prepare the annual budget, prepare and file any necessary governmental tax and information returns, and maintain all financial records in the Chapter office. She shall at all reasonable times exhibit the books and accounts of the Chapter to any Officer or Director of the Chapter, and shall perform all duties incident to the office of Treasurer, subject, however, to the control of the Board, and such other duties as shall from time to time be assigned to the Treasurer by the Board. The Treasurer shall give a bond and/or security for the faithful performance of her duties. The expense of any such bond or security shall be paid by the Chapter. There shall be a review of the accounts by the Finance Committee on a quarterly basis or at such time as deemed necessary by the Board, the Finance Committee, or a majority vote of the membership.

ARTICLE VII

COMMITTEES

Section 1. Standing Committees of the Board. The Board may by resolution adopted by a majority of the entire Board designate from among its members an Executive Committee, a Finance Committee and other

standing committees as it may deem appropriate from time to time. Each standing committee shall have at least three (3) members of the Board and, to the extent provided in a resolution, shall have the authority of the Board, except as limited by the Board or by law. No standing committee shall have the power to (a) alter, amend or add to these Bylaws, (b) make removals from office, (c) fill vacancies in the Board or in any committee of the Board, (d) fix the compensation of the Directors for serving on the Board or on any committee of the Board, (e) amend or repeal any resolution of the Board which by its terms shall not be so amendable or repealable, or (f) submit to the members of the Chapter any action requiring members' approval. Members of such standing committees, all of whom shall be Board members, shall be appointed by the Board. Each standing committee of the Board shall serve at the pleasure of the Board.

(a) Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall consist of the elected Officers of the Chapter and conduct preliminary discussions of matters to be presented to the Board; shall act upon directives from the Board; and shall report its actions to the Board as appropriate. The Executive Committee shall meet upon the call of the President or of at least three Officers.

(b) Finance Committee. The Finance Committee shall include, at a minimum, the President and the Treasurer and two Directors at large. The Treasurer shall not be the chair of the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee shall act in an advisory capacity to the Treasurer and to the Board and shall meet quarterly or more frequently if necessary. All Chapter expenses over \$1,000 shall be paid by a check cosigned by two board members, or a staff member and a board member, as directed by the Board of Directors. Expenses larger than \$3,000 that have not been preapproved by the Board in the approved budget, "extraordinary expenses" or increases in fixed expenses shall be authorized by the Board after consideration by the Finance Committee.

Section 2. Special Committees of the Board. The Board may, by a resolution adopted by a majority of the entire Board, designate from among its members such special committees as it may deem appropriate from time to time. Special committees shall consist of two or more members, all of whom shall be Board members. Members of special committees shall be appointed by the Chair of the Board with the consent of the Board. Special committees shall have only the powers specifically delegated to them by the Board and in no case shall have powers which are not authorized for standing committees.

Section 3. Meetings, Notices and Records. Each committee may provide for the holding of regular meetings, with notice, and may fix the time and place at which such meetings shall be held. Special meetings of each committee shall be held upon call by or at the direction of its chair or, if there be no chair, by or at the direction of any of its members, at the time and place specified in the respective notices or waivers of notice thereof. Notice of each special meeting of a committee shall be given by facsimile, e-mail, or hand delivery to each member of such committee, at least twenty-four (24) hours before the meeting. Notice of any meeting of a committee need not be given to any member thereof who shall attend the meeting in person without objection or who shall waive notice thereof.

Section 4. Quorum and Manner of Acting. At each meeting of any committee the presence of a majority but not less than two of its members then in office shall be necessary and sufficient to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, and the act of a majority of the members present at any meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of such committee; in the absence of a quorum, a majority of the members present at the time and place of any meeting may adjourn the meeting from time to time until a quorum shall be present. Any determination made in writing and signed by all the members of such committee shall be as effective as if made by such committee at a meeting.

Section 5. Removal. Any member of any committee of the Board may be removed, with or without cause, at any time by the affirmative vote of a majority of the Board then in office.

ARTICLE VIII

ELECTIONS

Section 1. Elections Committee. An Elections Committee consisting of five (5) or seven (7) Chapter members shall be elected by voice or by ballot at the October general membership program. The Elections Committee shall elect its own chair. No member of the Elections Committee shall run for office. The Elections Committee shall publish the following information no fewer than thirty (30) days before the election in the Newsletter or by a mailing to all members: a description of the duties of all elected positions, notice of by-law requirements for elections, the date and location of the election, and deadlines for declaring candidacy. The Elections Committee shall solicit candidates for the elected offices from the Membership and shall publish the names of the candidates on the Chapter's Web site.

The Elections Committee shall be responsible for drafting a set of election procedures, presenting the same at a membership program for approval, and printing the final copy of the election rules; shall have ballots and voting cards printed, and shall be responsible for organizing the administrative aspects of the election of the Officers and Directors in January.

Section 2. Candidates. A candidate for Officer must be a member of the Chapter for six (6) months prior to the Election. A candidate for President or Vice President must

be a Chapter member for one (1) year and must have held a position on the Board for six (6) months. In the event no candidate meets this requirement, the Board, by majority vote, may approve interested candidates who do not meet these requirements. Each candidate shall provide a biographical description to the Elections Committee. The Elections Committee shall distribute these biographies to the Membership.

ARTICLE IX

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Whenever a Director or Officer has a financial or personal interest in any matter coming before the Board of Directors, the affected person shall: a) fully disclose the nature of the interest; and b) withdraw from discussion, lobbying, and voting on the matter. Any transaction or vote involving a potential conflict of interest shall be approved only when a majority of disinterested directors determine that it is in the best interests of the Chapter to do so. The minutes of meetings at which such votes are taken shall record such disclosure, abstention and rationale for approval.

ARTICLE X

OFFICE AND BOOKS

Section 1. Office. The office of the Chapter shall be located at such place as the Board may from time to time determine.

Section 2. Books. There shall be kept at the office of the Chapter correct books of account of the activities and transactions of the Chapter, including a minute book, which shall contain a copy of the Certificate of Incorporation, a copy of these Bylaws, and all minutes of meetings of the Board.

ARTICLE XI

FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the Chapter shall end on December 31.

ARTICLE XII

INDEMNIFICATION

The Chapter shall, to the fullest extent authorized by law, indemnify and hold harmless any present or former Officers or Directors of the Chapter or the personal representatives thereof, made or threatened to be made a party in any civil or criminal action or proceeding by reason of the fact that she, her testator, or intestate is or was a Director or Officer of the Chapter, against judgments, fines (including excise taxes assessed on such a person in connection with service to an employee benefit plan), amounts paid in settlement and reasonable expenses, including attorneys' fees, actually and necessarily incurred as a result of such action or proceeding or any appeal therein provided said Director or Officer has not acted in a negligent manner or breached her duties as an Officer or Director. The foregoing right of indemnification shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which any person, her testator, or intestate may be entitled apart from this provision.

ARTICLE XIII

AMENDMENTS

The Bylaws of the Chapter may be adopted, amended, or repealed, in whole or part, by a majority vote of the members of the Chapter at the time the members are entitled to vote in the election of directors; provided that: (a) the amendment has been proposed by the Board or by a petition of five percent of the Membership; and (b) a written notice of the proposed amendment has been mailed to all Chapter members, postmarked at least ten (10) days before the General Membership Meeting.

ARTICLE XIV

PROCEDURE

The rules contained in the current Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised shall govern the proceedings of the Chapter in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these By-laws.

ARTICLE XV

OPERATING RULES

The Chapter shall have operating rules ("Operating Rules") which shall set forth procedures for implementation of the Bylaws. No Operating Rule may conflict with these Bylaws. Any written proposal to adopt, amend, or repeal an operating rule may be brought to the Board, and upon approval of one-third of the members of the Board, the Board shall notify the Membership by mail or via the Chapter newsletter. The proposal will be voted on at the next regular Board meeting following the proposal's introduction, and requires a two-thirds vote of the Board members present for approval.

ARTICLE XVI

DISSOLUTION

The New York City Chapter of the National Organization for Women may be dissolved by a two thirds vote of the total Membership in good standing. Upon dissolution of the Chapter, after provision for payment of all liabilities, the assets shall revert to the National Organization for Women.

