



NYC's Anti-Choice Congressman: EXPOSING MICHAEL GRIMM by Brielle Nalence

Our rather progressive little corner of the world has its freedoms and its liberties; it's difficult to imagine life any other way. New York State just made marriage equality real, the Reproductive Health Act is finally gathering steam, and our state has some of the strongest laws in the nation against domestic violence. Yes, it would appear that life is great in the Empire state.

But wait, who is that former FBI and military man, the freshman Congressman who, fresh out of the gate, has risen to the top of the national dialogue on women's health care and access to abortion? A man just over the Verrazano Bridge, Republican Representative Michael Grimm, representing Staten Island and parts of Brooklyn, has made a name for himself by selling out women. Nothing would warm our hearts more than to see him ousted in 12 months. Here are some highlights from his short, yet destructive, time in Congress. We'll keep you posted daily on his every anti-woman move on NOW-NYC's blog, theGrimmReality.tumblr.com.

- The government can't control what food you buy at the grocery store, so why should lawmakers get a say in how you use your health insurance? Grimm thinks they should. He co-sponsored the deceptively named "No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act," which aims to penalize individuals or employers who purchase health insurance that covers abortion. The bill has the ultimate

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FIGHTING FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVORS

by Sonia Ossorio



NOW-NYC's Sonia Ossorio speaks out against the shocking acquittal of NYPD officers Moreno and Mata at City Hall. Both were convicted only of official misconduct. - May 27

Women here and across the country have been rattled to the core by high-profile rape cases that have illustrated the well-worn pattern of bias in rape cases. These are just the cases we've all heard about because they involve rich men, famous men, and men who are supposed to protect us from predators.

- In July, two cops were acquitted of raping a woman who was intoxicated, despite damning visual and audio evidence, a faked 911 call, and compelling witness testimony.
- Charged with rape, former sportscaster Marvell Scott was given the opportunity in August to plead to a lesser crime in a sickening child prostitution case in which a 14-year-old runaway cried during sex with Marvell. He's being held accountable with 20 days of community service.
- All summer long, slander and lies were used to discredit the hotel worker at the center of the Dominique Strauss-Kahn (DSK) sexual assault case.

PRIVACY FOR RAPE VICTIMS

The societal stigma of rape often puts victims on trial more than their rapists and shames women into silence. Women's advocates fought for years to ensure victims could come forward in court and be afforded privacy, giving each victim the power to choose whether or not to be publicly identified. Recent rumbles have hit the 24-hour cable news shows and classrooms around the country, reviving the old and dangerous idea that rape victims should have to stand behind their "claims" in public. The technological age we live in today, where so much is live, videotaped and broadcast in real time, has helped spur this new debate. We promise we will do everything in our power to make sure rights for rape victims aren't rolled back.

Her attacker will never have to answer for his crimes against her. For a number of reasons, the Manhattan District Attorney's Office dropped all charges.

High profile cases only represent a fraction of sex crimes that actually happen. The weekend DSK was arrested in May, the NYPD Special Victims Unit handled 30 reports of sex crimes. Nationwide, it's estimated that more than 500 women are raped every day. In Manhattan alone, there have been 150 rape indictments so far this year.

Despite popular misconceptions, false reporting of rape is no higher than in any other crime category, about 2%, according to the FBI. The truth is that most women never go to law enforcement and those that do face slim chances of ever seeing their rapist held accountable, endure having their entire lives scrutinized and, in the case of DSK's accuser, risk being demonized by the defense team and the press as a "hooker," "liar," or "gold digger."

The societal "crimes" committed by the women in this summer's headlining rape cases were being intoxicated and helpless, being an immigrant woman of color, and being a child runaway in the hands of a pimp who sold her on the streets of Times Square.

These cases illustrate how the rape myths that permeate our culture like being drunk, wearing revealing clothes, or being in the "wrong" place, makes a victim somehow own some of the responsibility for being assaulted. It is exactly such stereotypes that lead to juries acquitting rapists, prosecutors offering sweetheart plea deals, and rape cases simply never being indicted. Indeed, these well-worn patterns of bias in rape cases contribute to sexual violence being one of the most consistently mishandled crimes.

In the rape case of now ex-cops Kenneth Moreno and Franklin Mata, jurors quoted in the media said the victim "acted irresponsibly." Rapists look to take advantage of helpless and vulnerable women. That's precisely why an estimated 50% of the rapes reported on the Lower East Side involve alcohol, according to hospital advocates there. This victim's state of intoxication was both these

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NEW RULES MANDATE PREVENTIVE CARE FOR WOMEN WITHOUT COPAYS

by Katharine Davis

In August, the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) brought access to preventive care one step closer to reality for low- and middle-income women. New guidelines from the agency mandate that as of August 1, 2012, all new health insurance plans must cover certain preventive services, including contraception, without requiring copayments, coinsurance, or deductibles.

To lower the burden of chronic diseases, which are currently responsible for 7 in 10 deaths among Americans, one of the goals of the Affordable Care and Patient Protection Act of 2010 was to make preventive care more accessible. When the Act was passed last year, it stipulated that recommended preventive screenings be covered by new health insurance plans at no additional cost to the plan holder. The list of covered services, based on recommendations from the US Preventive Services Task Force and the Centers for Disease Control, included mammograms and Pap smears but did not cover many of women's other unique health-care needs. Recognizing this, lawmakers included in the Act a provision that empowered the HHS to approve additional covered services. The agency commissioned the Institute of Medicine (IOM), an independent panel of medical experts, to advise it on what should be covered.

After reviewing the scientific evidence for a variety of preventive services, the IOM released its report in July of this year. On August 1, the HHS announced its approval of the recommendations.

As of August 2012, health insurance plans must cover the following services without cost sharing:

- All Food and Drug Administration-approved contraceptive methods and counseling, including birth control pills, intrauterine devices (IUDs), and diaphragms
- Annual well-woman visits, including recommended screenings and preconception and prenatal care
- Screening for gestational diabetes in pregnant women
- Breast-feeding counseling and equipment
- High-risk DNA testing for human

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SAVE THE DATE
SHE ASKED FOR IT How Rape Myths Hurt Us All

Two cops are acquitted of rape. The DSK case falls apart. A man buys a 14-year old girl for sex and gets community service. How do stereotypes about rape impact a survivor's ability to get justice? How do they impact our understanding of sexual assault and what can be done about it? Join our discussion and ignite change.

Nancy Schwartzman, filmmaker, activist and survivor, and creator of The Line Campaign
Helen Benedict, novelist and journalist, author of *Virgin or Vamp...How the Press Covers Sex Crimes*
John Stoltenberg, activist, author, and DC Rape Crisis Center communications consultant
Karen Carroll, survivor, forensic specialist, Assoc. Director Bronx Sexual Assault Response Team

Wednesday, September 14, 6:00 PM | RSVP: 212.627.9895 | contact@nownyc.org

FEMINIST NEWS

UPDATE LEARN HOW YOU CAN TAKE ACTION

by Analena Alcabes

false advertising. Judge William H. Pauley III found that the new law might create discriminatory enforcement, calling abortion “among the most controversial issues in our public discourse.” In doing so, he responded to the concerns of the plaintiffs, and suggested that the city run an advertising campaign to spread their message about the centers.

Representative Carolyn Maloney and Senator Robert Menendez are addressing the issue on a federal level. They have proposed a bill called the Stop Deceptive Advertising in Women’s Services Act (SDAWS, H.R. 2543), which would prevent crisis pregnancy centers from distributing false advertisements for their services and have their services evaluated by the Federal Trade Commission.

TAKE ACTION

Urge your Congressional representative to support SDAWS by visiting <http://1.usa.gov/supportSDAWS> or call the Congressional switchboard at 866.220.0044 to be connected to your member of Congress.

New York City mandates sex education in public schools. In a win for advocates of comprehensive sex education, Mayor Bloomberg has mandated that New York City public middle and high schools teach two semesters of evidence-based sex education—one in 6th or 7th grade and another in 9th or 10th grade. It’s about time. New York ranks number one in cases of HIV/AIDS diagnosed among youth aged 13–19, accord-

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30% of women who were financially worse off because of the recession had put off a family planning visit to save money. By removing cost barriers, the changes have the potential to significantly improve women’s health.

NOW-NYC, alongside other women’s advocacy organizations, had been focused on securing expanded coverage for contraception. NOW-NYC Executive Director Sonia Osorio said, “You’d think that expanding coverage for birth control would be straightforward, but it wasn’t. We needed more studies, more experts, more comment periods, more voices—all to support what has been obvious to women and the medical community for years.”

The new rules have two important caveats. First, they allow the HHS to grant religious employers an exemption to the requirement about contraception coverage. Because such

FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHTS.

Join NOW-NYC’s Activist Nights:
Held the 3rd Tuesday of every month.

Call 212.627.9895 or
visit www.nownyc.org

Next Dates:

September 20th

October 18th

November 15th

FIGHTING FIRE WITH FACTS

When the IOM released its report about necessary preventive services for women in July, the recommendation to eliminate cost sharing for contraception ignited a firestorm among conservatives and the religious right. Opponents of birth control sounded vehemently sexist and nonsensical arguments against expanded access, including that it will turn nice girls into loose women, encourage abortion, and amount to racial and lower-class “genocide.” If you find yourself going toe-to-toe with an opponent of contraception access, consider pointing out the following facts.

- The new rules do not amount to “free” birth control. Although copays are eliminated, women must still pay health insurance premiums.
- Contraception coverage is not new. Most group health insurance plans already cover it. In fact, New York State is one of 27 states requiring health insurance plans that cover prescription drugs to include contraception.
- 99% of women who have had sex have used contraceptives at some point. It’s already a near-universal practice.
- Half of pregnancies among American women are unplanned. Of unplanned pregnancies, 4 in 10 end in abortion. Preventing unplanned pregnancy prevents abortions.
- Contraception is estimated to save \$19 billion a year in costs related to unplanned pregnancies. Increasing access will increase savings.
- Contraception supports and improves women and children’s health outcomes by enabling women to plan the spacing and timing of their pregnancies. It is also used to address health issues such as preventing ovarian cysts or endometrial and ovarian cancers.
- Opponents of contraceptive coverage are in the minority. In a recent NPR–Thompson Reuters poll, 77% of respondents said that private insurance plans should cover some or all of the cost of birth control pills. If the plan is subsidized by the government, 74% of respondents thought it should cover some or all of the cost.

“New Rules” Continued from page 1

papillomavirus (HPV), a common cause of cervical cancer, every three years

- Annual counseling for sexually transmitted infections
- Annual screening and counseling for interpersonal and domestic violence

Calling the new guidelines “a historic step toward addressing women’s unique health care needs,” NOW-NYC Deputy Director Jean Bucaria said they are a win for women because they “expand women’s access to preventive care, make contraception affordable with insurance, and recognize antiviolence measures as a critical part of women’s health.”

Research has shown that even modest cost sharing deters many women from receiving the preventive services they need. In a 2009 survey, the Guttmacher Institute found that

exemptions would be at the department’s discretion, it is unclear how many women would remain without access as a result.

Second, the rules do not apply to plans that are considered “grandfathered” under the Affordable Care Act. A grandfathered plan is one that existed before March 23, 2010, and that has not made significant cuts to existing benefits or increased beneficiaries’ out-of-pocket spending. You can ask your employer whether your plan has grandfathered status.

The new rules issued by the HHS are so-called “interim final rules,” meaning the agency is putting them into effect but simultaneously leaving them open for comment. They have the po-

tential to be revised in the future. NOW-NYC is calling on individuals to submit comments in support of the rules.

TAKE ACTION

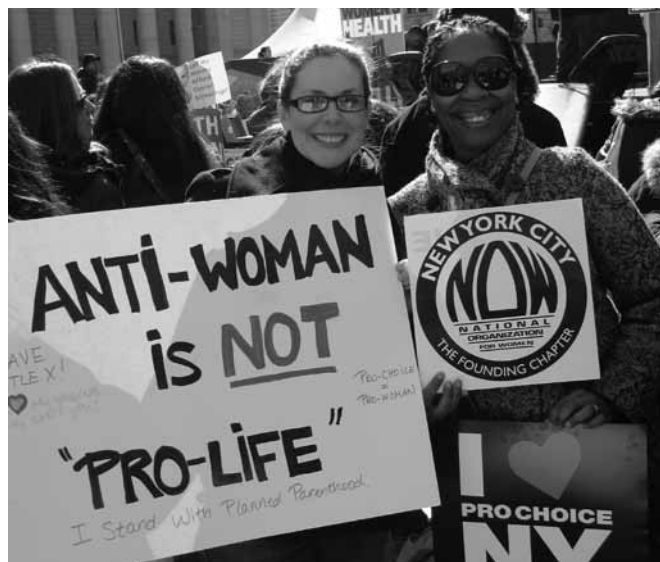


If you would like to submit a comment on the rules, go to www.regulations.gov by September 30, and search for document ID HHS-OS-2011-0023, and click “Submit a Comment” on the right hand side of the search results page. For more background information and sample comments to get you started, visit www.nownyc.org and click on “Take Action to Support HHS Rules!” in the center of the home page.

STREETS & HAPPENINGS

by Allison Grossman

DECLARING “MY HEALTH MATTERS!”



NOW-NYC co-sponsored a rally to stop obnoxious lawmakers and save Planned Parenthood. Thousands spilled out of Foley square to protest the de-funding of the Title X family planning program and women’s health clinics. The outpouring of support pushed the administration to preserve Title X and other crucial family planning funds in the 2011 budget. – February 24

NOW’S MERCHANT OF SHAME WINS, WOMEN LOSE



The Supreme Court killed the class action suit, *Dukes v. Walmart*, by ruling that the situations of the 1.6 million women suing for discrimination were too different to constitute one class. “This ruling says that a woman has to stand alone, instead of letting women stand together against sex discrimination by Wal-Mart,” said Jane Manning, President of NOW-NYC. – June 21

TAKE RAPE SERIOUSLY



Anti-violence advocates protest DSK outside the court house on the day the charges against him were dismissed. – August 23



Jean Bucaria of NOW-NYC calls on the NYPD to enforce a zero tolerance policy for sexual harassment and to prioritize fighting violence against women. – June 28
Photo credit: Kobi Carter



NOW-NYC rallied in Foley Square as a leading member of ConnecttheDots, a coalition of anti-violence advocates. – June 28
Photo credit: Kobi Carter

EQUAL MARRIAGE VICTORY FOR NEW YORK STATE

by Keira Hare

Congratulations New York! Thank you to all our NOW-NYC members who reached out to their state reps, urging them to help pass the equal marriage bill.

Becoming the sixth and largest state to legalize same-sex marriage, New York's passage of the historic Marriage Equality Act marks a major advance in the march towards full equality for LG-BTQ people. The Act was passed by a vote of 33-29, giving the bill one more vote than needed to pass. Leading up to the bill's passage, NOW-NYC members were on the phones calling on-the-fence State Senators and urging their support. Governor Cuomo, who made equal marriage a cornerstone of his agenda, signed the bill into law on June 24.



NOW-NYC volunteers Rebecca Rafelson, Allison Grossman and Marta Gonzalez (L to R) kick-off the PRIDE. — June 26

Immediately after the law was passed, marriage proposals were made and accepted and weddings excitedly planned. The first couples said "I do"—from Niagara Falls to NYC—at the stroke of midnight on July 24, and weddings continue across the state. After a long wait, Phyllis Siegel, 77 and Connie Kopelov, 85, who have been together for 23 years, became the first same-sex couple to wed in New York City. "This is the first day of the rest of our lives," said Siegel.

The new law entitles same-sex couples to all of New York State's rights and protections of marriage, including inheritance and taxation rights. Same-sex couples gain access to the hundreds of other state benefits granted to married couples, including access to employer provided health and retirement benefits for spouses and inheritance rights in the absence of a will.

Lesbian and gay couples still won't be eligible to claim federal benefits, because the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) defines marriage as between a man and a woman. New York Attorney General Eric Schneider-

man has just taken legal action to challenge the constitutionality of DOMA. Still, this is a hugely proud moment for New Yorkers, a majority of whom support same-sex marriage, and an important message of acceptance from the state.

The passage of the Act followed an intense campaign for equal rights spearheaded by gay rights groups and the Governor's office. Five groups who had been campaigning for same-sex marriage for years formed a coalition, New Yorkers United for Marriage, in a renewed push to get over the last hurdle of passage in the State Senate. (The bill first passed in the Assembly in 2007.)

NOW-NYC joined with major LGBTQ community groups in heralding the law's passage at this year's PRIDE parade, which turned into a celebration of same-sex marriage as hundreds of thousands of supporters rejoiced at the victory. NOW-NYC Board Member Rebecca Rafelson, who helps organize the chapter's contingent in the parade every year said, "It was very moving. You could really feel an atmosphere of love."

GRIMM'S PRIORITIES

VOTE

Prohibit use of federal money to fund Planned Parenthood (a pro-choice organization that provides health-care services, including reproductive services, cancer screenings, STI testing, and contraceptives)	YES
Prohibit use of federal funds for NASCAR sponsorships (the bill's proponents claimed its value as entertainment for our troops)	NO
Reduce Navy and Air Force appropriations	NO
Reduce funds for Navy and Air Force aircraft procurement	NO
Eliminate federal funding for public health-care clinics by \$1.3 billion (part of \$60 billion spending cut passed by the House in mid-February)	YES
Eliminate \$450 million in federal funds for a second engine for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter jet (That's just one engine of one aircraft)	NO
Permanently prohibit federal funding of National Public Radio (NPR) (a widely listened-to news station with 764 affiliate stations across the country)	YES

"Exposing" Contined from page 1

goal of denying all women access to insurance coverage for abortion—even insurance that women use their own money to buy.

- Grimm has the distinction of being the *only* member of Congress from New York City to vote in favor of defunding Planned Parenthood—even though more than 90% of Planned Parenthood's services are for preventive care such as cancer screenings and STI testing, and not one federal taxpayer dollar actually funds abortion.

- Grimm gets hostile with his constituents. Grimm was quoted at an April Town Hall meeting in his district, stating, "I don't think we should be funding abortions and I don't apologize. So hate me, don't vote for me, scream, jump up and down. I don't care. I will not support abortion period, that's it." Grimm's combative attitude at his Town Hall meetings showcases his lack of understanding of the real-world issues his constituents face.

- Grimm voted to cut \$1.3 billion from health centers nationwide. The National Association of Community Health Centers estimated that a cut of this magnitude would force Staten Island's Community Health Center of Richmond and 126 other clinics across the country to close. This is especially irresponsible when your district has the highest rate of breast cancer in New York State (which Staten Island does). In a meeting with hospital officials shortly after this vote, Grimm rather hypocritically claimed, "Quality care is something everyone on Staten Island should have access to."

How did someone with such strong views against women and health care make it to such a high-powered position in New York City? Grimm's narrow special election win in November 2010, where he squeaked by with 51% of the vote, was fueled by out-of-



NOW-NYC members talk about Grimm's record with Bay Ridge voters.

state campaign funding and ads that misled the public about their property taxes. According to his July 2010 Federal Election Commission filing, a whopping 76% of Grimm's campaign funds were from donors outside his district, in areas such as Texas, South Dakota, Virginia, and Florida. Considering only 24% of his campaign funding came from his own district, in addition to his narrow-minded voting record, can Grimm seriously consider himself to be "the people's candidate"?

TAKE ACTION

Visit TheGrimmReality.tumblr.com, then join NOW-NYC's efforts to ensure that Grimm is not re-elected in 2012.

Call 212.627.9895 or e-mail bruelle@nownyc.org to join our District 13 campaign! Can we let a Congressman from NYC—a city that is a leader on choice and reproductive rights—get away with a record like this?

Simply put, the answer is No.

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Our newsletter team is made up of a dedicated group of staff and volunteer writers, editors, photographers, and designers. NOW-NYC thanks our volunteers for making our newsletter possible.

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Layout by Cori Carl



Advocates wore red and stood outside the court house in support of the victim in cop rape case. Prior to sentencing day, NOW-NYC delivered 2,500 signatures to Judge Carro calling for the maximum sentence under the law. After the Judge railed against Moreno for lying on the stand and abusing his authority as a police officer, he sentenced him to the maximum on each count, giving him 1 year in prison. — August 8

PROUD AT PRIDE



NOW-NYC was joined at this year's PRIDE march by record numbers of New Yorkers and visitors who flocked to the event in celebration of the legalization of same sex marriage in New York only two days before the march. New York became the largest state in the country to legalize equal marriage. — June 26



NOW-NYC activists Noli Ann Vega and Yarisbel Rodriguez celebrate equality. — June 26 Photo credit Marta Gonzalez



NOW-NYC gives a spirited cheer for gay rights. — June 26 Photo credit Marta Gonzalez

CALENDAR

All meetings are held at the NOW-NYC office unless otherwise noted.

150 West 28th Street, at 7th Ave, Suite 304

Please RSVP by calling 212-627-9895

or email contact@nownyc.org.

Visit www.nownyc.org for updates.

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

ACTIVIST NIGHT: VOLUNTEER WITH NOW-NYC

Learn about our campaigns, our programs, and how to get involved!

Tuesday, September 20, 6:00 PM

Tuesday, October 18, 6:00 PM

Tuesday, November 15, 6:00 PM

HEAD TO HEAL: YOGA FOR VIOLENCE SURVIVORS & ADVOCATES

Held every Wednesday at 6:30 PM. Call or check Web site for cancellations.

DIVORCE & SEPARATION LEGAL CLINIC

This clinic is the first step for women as they begin the divorce or separation process. The clinic is set in a small group and is led by a practicing attorney experienced in matrimonial law.

Friday, September 9, 12:00 PM

Monday, September 19, 6:30 PM

Friday, October 7, 12:00 PM

Monday, October 17, 6:30 PM

Please call to register.

EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION LEGAL CLINIC*

This clinic addresses employee rights and workplace discrimination issues that women may face. Led by an experienced attorney, the session consists of a seminar followed by a question and answer period.

Monday, September 12, 5:30 PM

Wednesday, September 21, 5:30 PM

Monday, October 3, 5:30 PM

Wednesday, October 19, 5:30 PM

*Not held at NOW-NYC's office.

Please call to register.

SAVE THE DATE!

SHE ASKED FOR IT:

HOW RAPE MYTHS HURT US ALL

Wednesday, September 14, 6:00 PM

NOW-NYC examines rape myths in our communities and our criminal justice system and discusses how these stereotypes are portrayed in the press. Join us for this candid discussion with a panel of experts.

COMING SOON!

OCTOBER 2011: LOVE YOUR BODY DAY!

Celebrate a healthy mind, body and soul with this fun body-positive bash. Join us in our countdown by following sex and body buzz in the media in our new blog about women's health, bodies and sexuality at: www.NOWFigureativelySpeaking.tumblr.com

DECEMBER 2011: HOLIDAY GIFT DRIVE FOR GIRLS IN NEED - PLEASE DONATE!

Help young NYC women (ages 12-17) facing violence or hardship in their lives.

Hair clips | Hand soaps | Toiletries | Baby clothes or supplies (newborn - 6 mo) | Lotions or hair gels | Costume jewelry | Journals/notecards/books | Craft kits or small games | Scarves, hats, gloves, fuzzy socks | Gift cards in \$10 increments to stores such as Starbucks, Borders, H&M, Forever21, etc.

Items should be new or like-new.

No used clothing or make-up please.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP MATTERS.

Become a member of NOW-NYC today and ensure that our numbers are strong and our voices powerful. By joining, you are helping to advance equality and improve women's lives.

Visit www.nownyc.org (Click JOIN) or call 212.627.9895

HONORING WOMEN OF POWER & INFLUENCE



NOW-NYC celebrates the achievements of six extraordinary women at our annual Women of Power & Influence awards. Our 2011 honorees (L to R): Debra Coughlin, Binta Niambi Brown, Melissa Cohn, Susan Blount, Lesley Rosenthal, and Sung-Hee Suh.

"Feminist News Update" Continued from page 2

ing to a report by the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, and New York City teen pregnancy rates far exceed the national average. According to a study by New York's Planned Parenthood, 85% of New York State voters want sex education to be taught in school. In fact, 77% of voters mistakenly thought it was already a required part of the curriculum.

Judge Loretta A. Preska of U.S. District Court in Manhattan rejected the class action lawsuit brought against Bloomberg L.P. for pregnancy discrimination. The federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission filed the case in 2007, claiming that the company systematically engaged in a pattern of discrimination, including demotions and pay cuts, against women who took maternity leave. The Judge unleashed harsh words for women and families, writing, "In a company like Bloomberg, which explicitly makes all-out dedication its expectation, making a decision that preferences family over work comes with consequences." NOW-NYC quickly responded to the Judge's statements saying, "This ruling shows a fundamental lack of understanding of how discrimination against women with kids plays out in American business. Her words are a rubber stamp for discrimination." The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 protects women from being passed over for promotions, or fired or reassigned due to pregnancy and ensures that a woman taking maternity leave is treated the same as any other employee taking leave for a temporary disability.

STATE

Our state secured a great win for women in New York with Kathy Hochul's election to the House of Represent-

tatives' 26th Congressional District seat.

Representative Hochul, a NOW-endorsed candidate in May's special election to fill the vacancy left by Rep. Chris Lee's resignation, has been a powerful voice in opposing cuts to Planned Parenthood and other organizations that aid women. Recently, New York Democrats missed a choice opportunity to advance a great woman in politics when they chose a nominee for the September special election of Anthony Weiner's vacated seat in Congress. There was some speculation that former NYC Councilwoman Melinda Katz or former Congresswoman Elizabeth Holtzman—who was also the first woman to be elected as the Brooklyn District Attorney and NYC Comptroller—were being considered as nominees for Weiner's seat. Instead of choosing one of these seasoned candidates, New York State Assemblyman David Weprin was announced as the Democratic nominee. Weprin has a strong pro-choice record and is a solid supporter of women's issues. Another strong women's advocate in Congress, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-New York), has launched a campaign called "Off the Sidelines" to encourage more women to get involved in politics. Gillibrand is working to educate women on the impact that more female politicians would have on American policy and society.

TAKE ACTION

Get Involved in Senator Kirsten Gillibrand's Off the Sidelines Campaign at <http://bit.ly/offthesidelines>

NATIONAL

The 2001 class action suit brought against the Wal-Mart company for discrimination against women was dismissed by the Supreme Court on June 20, 2011. The court found that the 1.6 million women who were

"Rape Survivors" Continued from page 1

cops' opportunity and their savior in court.

The DSK case was compromised by a series of missteps by many people involved. However, the issues facing a woman who cannot read, who has sought asylum in the U.S. and is trying to make a new life for herself and her daughter are complex. Yet somehow, her behavior pattern was more of an issue than DSK's pattern of behavior, which speaks directly to the crime he was charged with. Nafissatou Diallo, the hotel housekeeper who has gone public with her story, is by no means the only woman to accuse DSK of sexual assault.

The shocking outcome in the recent Marvell Scott case is all too familiar. Late last year, court-appointed guard Tony Simmons was set to get probation for sexually abusing several girls in his custody. NOW-NYC took to the streets, launching our take rape seriously

the victims of this discrimination were too diverse a group to qualify as a nationwide class. The only recourse for the women now is to file suits individually, bringing much less attention to their cause and diminishing their collective power to fight this powerful corporation. The decision was a step back for the women's movement, as the Court showed support for a company whose policies have been shown to be blatantly discriminatory. The Court also made it more difficult to bring class-action lawsuits to fight employment discrimination.

TAKE ACTION

Visit NOW National's Wal-Mart Merchant of Shame page for protest materials at www.now.org/issues/wfw/wal-mart.html

INTERNATIONAL

"SlutWalk" protests have spread across the world this spring and summer, uniting women making a statement against rape myths. The SlutWalks movement was sparked by an ignorant comment made by a Toronto cop that callously reduced sexual assault prevention advice to "don't dress like a slut." The protests have generated controversy among men and women alike, some of whom do not believe the word slut could or should be reclaimed by women. Proponents of the walks, however, note that their purpose is to proclaim that women should be free to be sexual, free from victim-blaming, and free from harm regardless of what they choose to wear.

TAKE ACTION

SlutWalk NYC takes place on October 1. Visit the Facebook page: <http://on.fb.me/slutwalknyc>

campaign. He is now in jail after receiving the maximum sentence.

Despite this string of disappointing—and even outrageous—outcomes, women seeking justice for rape today have much better emergency, counseling, and advocacy services available to them and are more likely to be taken seriously by the criminal justice system than in the past. For the past 30 years, women's rights advocates have fought and won major legal victories to strengthen the legal system, from rape shield laws to repealing the statute of limitations on rape. Rape charges brought by prostituted women, by women against their husbands, women with criminal records or addicted to drugs have been successfully prosecuted.

No doubt the victim in the cop case is courageous, and she has inspired the women of New York to unite and demand that our criminal justice system do more to take rape seriously. Nafissatou Diallo will bravely push forward in civil court despite everything she has been through. We will stand with these victims and do everything we can to expose the racism and sexism that pervade society's accounting of rape cases, and every day, we will fight to make the criminal justice system more responsive and accountable to the women of New York City.

GET HELP

If you or someone you know is a survivor of sexual assault, call the Safe Horizon Rape Crisis/Sexual Abuse Hotline at 212-227-3000.



Emily Dake of Service Women's Action Network rallies outside the court house on day of DSK's hearing. - August 23

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