

# WOMEN'S NATIONAL ABORTION ACTION COALITION

## Shirley Johnson (Wheeler)

WONAAC was formed to bring thousands of women, from all walks of life, together to repeal



abortion laws. The November 20, 1971 demonstrations made the right to legalized abortion a national political issue. . . . I don't claim to know everything about legalizing abortion, but I am proof of what can happen to you if you have an illegal one. You will be jailed, dragged through and humiliated in court, and labeled a criminal by this "humane society," as the state of Florida did to me. If the rest of the female population that will seek abortions in their lifetimes don't want to be subject to the same type of treatment, then we must unite for greater and stronger struggles for the repeal of all abortion laws.

## R. Morgan Hamilton

The information most poor, Black and Third World women have about contraception is inadequate, often secondhand, and not very accurate . . . Sexual intercourse is a biologically natural, everyday occurrence. Why don't we know how our bodies work? Why don't we know how pregnancy occurs and how to prevent conception from taking place? Education and research into this very basic aspect of human life is imperative . . .

Forced sterilization affects poor Black women as deeply as the lack of safe, adequate, 100% effective, readily accessible contraception. Forced sterilization denies a woman the right to control her own body, and we solidly oppose the sterilization of any woman against her will either by force or by trickery.



## Claytee Artz

This is how I first realized the necessity of being involved in the abortion movement. When I was in college, I gave myself an abortion, because I didn't have an alternative. I didn't even know of an illegal abortionist,



let alone a place like New York. I was lucky because all I had to do was spend a month in bed. . . . Black women are beginning to think for themselves about abortion, to use their own minds, not the state and not the man's. In Detroit some of the Black women there are beginning to organize, through holding forums, meetings, talkins. Many women are beginning to realize for the first time that there are other Black women who feel the same way they do, and because they feel the same way, there must be even more women out there, and they're beginning to unite.



## Sarah Weddington

Texas, like 31 other states, has the law that abortion is lawful only if done to save the life of the mother, and that language has never really been interpreted, and so doctors in Texas refuse to take any chance at all, not knowing what it means.

Since our suit against the constitutionality of the Texas law was filed two years ago, many others have been filed, and I'm sure many of you have been active or involved in those litigations . . . The Texas and Georgia cases are very significant in that they are the first cases ever heard by the Supreme Court which involve the issue of a woman's right to choose whether she will continue or terminate a pregnancy.

## Lana Clarke Phelan

All across the United States, in every city, town and village, large and small groups of women and men of good will ask us



anxiously—"what can we do, right here and right now, to repeal our abortion law?" Over and over, we've all heard it. And then—"what can we do to help you repeal yours?" The presence of laws compelling childbearing by preventing medical remedy for unwanted or accidental pregnancy is surely the most deeply resented, commonly shared sexual discrimination endured by American women, or perhaps all the women in the world.

## Barbara Roberts

We can't slow down and we can't give up, because while we sit here women are being butchered by backalley abortionists, they are being sterilized against their will, and they are being harassed by police and judges for trying to control their own bodies. This is the awful knowledge I live with, this is what haunts my dreams, and this is why I, and all of us, must continue to fight until we win our goals—to secure the right of all women to choose.



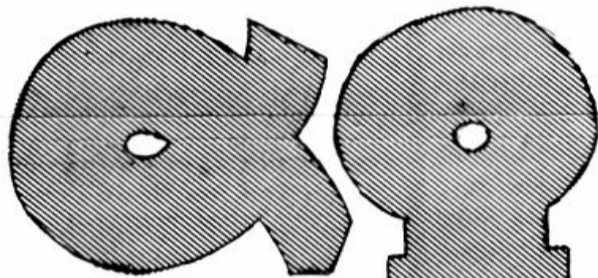
Excerpts from speeches given at the second Women's National Abortion Action Conference, Boston University, February 11-13, 1972

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WONAAC  
♀

Repeal all abortion laws  
Repeal restrictive contraception laws  
End forced sterilization

# WOMEN'S NATIONAL ABORTION ACTION COALITION



**abortion. A WOMAN'S  
Right to Choose.**

A woman's right to control her own body—to choose when and if she will bear children, to have access to safe, effective means of contraception, and not to fear forced or coerced sterilization—is a fundamental right restricted or denied by law and by custom in every state in the United States.

WONAAC fights to make these basic human rights a reality. WONAAC is a coalition of individual women and women's organizations throughout the nation who are dedicated to the struggle for a woman's right to choose, and who are prepared to carry out that campaign actively on many fronts—legislative and judicial actions, peaceful mass demonstrations, educational programs, and more . . . .

**INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL ON  
ABORTION, CONTRACEPTION AND  
FORCED STERILIZATION / NEW  
YORK CITY / MARCH 9-11, 1973 /**



Repeal all abortion laws  
Repeal restrictive contraception laws  
End forced sterilization



## DEMONSTRATIONS

On November 20, 1971, thousands demonstrated in Washington, D. C. and San Francisco supporting a woman's right to abortion. The demonstrations, called by the founding conference of WONAAC in New York City in July, 1971, spurred solidarity demonstrations in France, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. In this country, the national actions and local programs to build them broadened the abortion laws repeal movement and united many who had never before worked together.



## COURT ACTIONS

WONAAC affiliates have initiated class action suits against a number of state abortion laws and have filed supportive amicus curiae briefs in other cases, notably on behalf of the Texas and Georgia challenges before the Supreme Court. The importance of this activity was illustrated by a recent, favorable, New York decision; the justices' opinion explicitly noted a public sentiment and growing body of legal opinion which considers abortion constitutionally guaranteed to be a woman's right to choose.

WONAAC's sole support is from with our goals. We need your t into the power that must be se abortion laws. Clip the coupo your contribution today.

**CONFERENCES**

Decisions about WONAAC's goals and the best ways to achieve them are made at national conferences open to all women. The third WONAAC conference in July 1972 brought over 800 women together in New York to share experiences and ideas, and to vote on a campaign for winning abortion law repeal. Open discussions and workshops focused on particular issues, such as contraception, forced sterilization, legislation, court actions, press, fund raising, and building new coalitions. The conference projected the International Tribunal on Abortion, Contraception, and Forced Sterilization, which will take place March 9-11, 1973, in New York City.



**LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

Every state in the union has laws which restrict a woman's right to abortion. WONAAC demands the repeal of all these laws, all laws restricting access to birth control information and devices, and the abolishment of any and all laws and regulations which force or coerce a woman to be sterilized against her wishes. WONAAC affiliates have supported and testified on behalf of bills to repeal restrictive state statutes. WONAAC supports the Abortion Rights Act of 1972, a federal bill which, if passed, would guarantee any female the right to terminate a pregnancy she does not wish to continue.



**WONAAC**  
FIVE TIMES A YEAR

**NEWSLETTER**

The WONAAC Newsletter contains the latest news of national and international activities in the campaign for abortion law repeal. Developments in legislation and court actions are reported, as are attacks against women's right to abortion. Discussions appear about the incidence of forced sterilization and about current events in efforts to eliminate restrictions on access to 100% safe, effective contraception. Also included are a directory of local coalitions and detailed information about available materials and how to order them. The WONAAC Newsletter is the only regular source of news about abortion law repeal available anywhere. Subscriptions are \$3 a year.



**UNITING AGAINST ATTACKS**

One of WONAAC's most important functions is organizing a united defense against opponents of the right to abortion. Whenever abortion foes try to eliminate existing reforms, as in New York when a "Right-to-life" professor won court appointment as guardian of fetuses, WONAAC attempts to rally all those who support the right to abortion. Abortion Crimes Tribunals have been held in a number of cities to expose the individuals and institutions who perpetuate restrictive abortion laws.



**SPEAKING OUT**

In a subject so shrouded in myth and prejudice as abortion, the role of education assumes critical importance. Speak-outs, radio and TV talk shows, movies about abortion, university forums, high school assembly programs, visual educational displays, and public debates all help women learn about abortion and the repeal campaign. An article about WONAAC in McCall's magazine drew positive response from almost every state, with especially heavy mail from small towns and isolated areas in the South, Midwest, and New England. Publicity, particularly around activities such as the International Abortion Tribunal, is essential in order to reach and unite all women.



**NATIONAL WONAAC**

Through the concept of a coalition, WONAAC strives to maintain nation-wide participation in numerous aspects of the campaign for abortion law repeal. Every method at our disposal is being utilized to win our demands - litigation, legislation, mass actions, education, etc. Successes in one part of the country become examples for others, and the coordination of local activities and the dissemination of information are important functions of WONAAC's national office.

**Affiliates**



**WONAAC AFFILIATES**

Groups of women in almost every major American city and on many college campuses have formed WONAAC chapters in order to participate in the active efforts to repeal all abortion laws and restrictive contraception laws, and to end forced sterilization. Write to National WONAAC for the name of the affiliate nearest you or for suggestions on how to start your own.

C's sole support is from friends who agree goals. We need **your** help, to turn money power that must be secured to repeal all laws. Clip the coupon and send it with **tribution today.**

- I endorse WONAAC
- I want to work for my local WONAAC - Send more information
- Send a button. Here's 50 cents.
- Send the WONAAC newsletter. \$3 enclosed for subscription
- Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_\_. FUNDS URGENTLY NEEDED!

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# Repeal all abortion laws Repeal restrictive contraception laws End forced sterilization

## PARTIAL LISTING OF ENDORSERS OF WONAC:

- |                          |                        |                           |                          |
|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Bella Abzug              | Faye Dunaway           | Shirley Johnson (Wheeler) | Planned Parenthood, SF   |
| Leona M. Boyer, MD       | Mary Dundas            | D. Frank Kalreiter, MD    | and Alameda Counties     |
| Jessie Bernard, PhD      | Vickie Estinger        | Edgar B. Keemer, Jr., MD  | Fran Pollner             |
| Elma Barrera             | Jules Feiffer          | Miriam Keiffer, PhD       | Evelyn Reed              |
| Louisa Biddle            | Dorothy B. Ferebee, MD | A. Frans Koome, MD        | Barbara H. Roberts, MD   |
| Barbette Blackington     | Jane Fonda             | Eleanor C. Lamberisen, RN | Betty Rollin             |
| Renee Blakken            | Betty Friedan          | Zigmond M. Lebensohn, MD  | Alice S. Rossi, PhD      |
| Julian Bond              | Sodja Goldsmith, MD    | John Leonard              | Philip Roth              |
| Margaret Bright, PhD     | Elinor C. Guggenheimer | Vivica Lindfors           | Dorothy Sain             |
| Susan Brownmiller        | Margot Hahn            | Florence Luscomb          | SF Angela Davis          |
| Anne Clay, PhD           | Hon. Grace Hamilton    | Rev. Barbara Mack         | Defense Committee        |
| Thelma Daley             | Dorothy Healy          | MCHR, SF and Phila.       | Diane Schuler            |
| Daughters of Bilitis, SF | Tina Hobson            | Emily Campbell Moore      | Natalie Shainess, MD     |
| Henry P. David, PhD      | Jane Hodgson, MD       | Anais Nin                 | Marge Sloan              |
| Susan Davis              | Dorothy Pitman Hughes  | Louise Ottinger           | Southern California      |
| Emile de Antonio         | Linda Jenness          | Lana Clarke Phelan        | Women's Political Caucus |

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