

The POWER Source

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Fresno State students participating in *The Vagina Monologues*, 2010

Take Your Laws Off My Body!

By Celestine Bidaure, POWER President

On October 13, 2011, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 358, a bill known as the "Protect Life Act." This bill was introduced on January 20, 2011, by Rep. Joseph Pitts as an amendment to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Under the "Protect Life Act," federal funding will be prohibited from paying for abortions or cover the costs of any health plan that includes coverage of abortion, regardless of whether or not the pregnancy was the result of rape or incest, or if a pregnant woman's life was in danger.

The question that lingers is whose life is in more need of protection, the unborn child or the pregnant woman? The language commonly used by anti-abortion proponents can be misleading by veiling itself underneath the premise of life: "Pro-Life, Protect Life." However, the life they are trying to protect, the life of the unborn child, is prioritized over the life of the woman carrying the child.

Coupling the "Pro-Life, Protect Life" ideology is the misconception that all Pro-Choicers will always choose abortion. What is missing from the equation is that being Pro-Choice simply means that you

defend the notion that a woman has the right to *choose*.

I am Pro-Choice, and my *choice* is life, but I also defend the right to *choose*. If the so-called "Protect Life Act" were to be written into law, then the choice will never be mine to make when the time comes.

Although President Obama said that he would veto the bill if it were to pass the Senate, the chances of a similar bill being drafted are highly likely. The "Protect Life Act" is not the first bill that has been proposed to challenge women's reproductive rights, and it certainly will not be the last.

Stripping women of their rights to make their own decisions regarding reproduction is demeaning and unjust.

Furthermore, although access to legal, safe abortions generates the most discussion, it is not the only issue at hand. Other issues that are critical to women's reproductive rights that are currently and have continuously been under siege are Title X and other family planning funds, access to comprehensive, fact-based sex education programs, and access to reproductive health services, including contraceptives.

I end by stating that women should be entitled to control over their bodies. I urge all of us to begin to argue the following: "Please take your laws off my body!"

Source: *RH Reality Check*
www.rhrealitycheck.org

Welcome!

Welcome to the first edition of *The Power Source*, a newsletter produced by members of People Organized for Women's Empowerment and Representation (POWER). POWER is a student-run organization representing the Women's Studies Program at California State University, Fresno.

If you are interested in sending comments regarding the newsletter or inquiries regarding POWER, please contact POWER President Celestine Bidaure at celestineab@mail.fresnostate.edu

What is Women’s Studies?

Women’s Studies is an approach that places women in the center of inquiry. The primary mission of Women’s Studies is to analyze how gender is constructed through a variety of social institutions and cultural processes so that gender inequality can be dismantled.

Students acquire both a local and global perspective on gender. The program is interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary in its approach and thereby draws on a range of feminist theories, methodologies, and practices. Attentiveness to diversity, privilege and power, and women’s unique, creative contributions to human experience are central aspects of this training.

More than simply a body of knowledge, Women’s Studies encourages students to apply their learning to transform their lives and their communities. Women’s Studies offers a vital perspective to how gender impacts our world.

Explore Career Opportunities with a Degree in WS

Women’s Studies provides you with the benefits of a liberal arts degree. Liberal arts education emphasizes critical thinking, which can be applied to a multitude of careers. It demonstrates to potential employers that you are confident, well-rounded, and likely to think more globally than other job applicants.

Women’s Studies graduates have pursued a wide range of professions upon completion of their undergraduate degree, including careers in human and health services, education, law, government, and criminology.

Many Women’s Studies graduates also pursue graduate education in fields such as administration, counseling, history, law, philosophy, psychology, public health, public policy, social work, and sociology.

“Feminism requires an expansion of the self—an expansion of empathy, interest, intelligence, and responsibility across differences, histories, cultures, ethnicities, sexual identities, othernesses.”

Lisa Hogeland, *Fear of Feminism*

WS Courses Offered in Spring 2012

WS10	Intro to Women’s Studies	WS135	Women in Cross-Cultural Perspective
WS12	Critical Thinking: Gender Issues	WS 137	African American Women
WS101	Women in History	WS162	Community Service in Women’s Studies
WS103	History of Feminism	WS175	Seminar in Women’s Studies
WS110	Representations of Women	WS 176T	Latinas in U.S. Film
WS120	Women of Color in the U.S.	WS190	Independent Study
WS 126	Women and Violence: Public Policy and the Law	WS 194T	Women Writers of Latin America

You don’t have to be a Women’s Studies major to take Women’s Studies classes!

Women’s Studies Program

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