

Reproductive Justice is Every Woman's Right

- Reproductive justice ensures that women are healthy, both physically and emotionally; that they can make decisions about their bodies and sexuality free from government interference; and that they have the economic resources to plan their own families. A woman's well-being requires self-determination, equality, and the respect and support of her society.
- NOW believes in a comprehensive approach to achieving reproductive justice for all women—including winning and preserving legal protections, expanding reproductive health services in every community, and ending the discrimination and inequality that keep women from controlling their own reproductive lives.
- Constitutional protections alone cannot ensure accessible and affordable reproductive health services for all women. In a political environment hostile to reproductive rights, a number of women—especially young women, women of color, poor women, immigrant women and women with disabilities—are unable to access abortion, birth control, pre-natal care, maternity leave, child care and other crucial health and family services.
- Reproductive empowerment and economic status are closely connected. Women living in poverty, even those just getting by, often lack health insurance and face other barriers to reproductive services. Without adequate income and health care, many women find it almost impossible to protect their health and provide for their families. In addition, an unplanned or forced pregnancy can push a woman even further into economic peril.
- A small but influential minority in the U.S. wants to deny basic reproductive care to women. Even the universal right to safe, legal contraception is under attack. With the support of more and more state legislatures, pharmacists are refusing to dispense prescriptions for emergency contraception and birth control pills, which places an undue burden on women exercising the right to practice family planning.
- Women must be trusted to make the best decisions for themselves. NOW is working to stop doctors, hospitals and the government from forcing unwanted and unnecessary reproductive procedures on women, such as sterilization or cesarean sections. At the same time, women must not be denied life- and health-preserving services, including certain abortion procedures as well as screening and treatment for breast cancer, cervical cancer, HIV and other diseases.
- NOW believes that our schools should provide only the most up-to-date, medically-accurate and comprehensive sex education to their students.

Abstinence-only education, a favorite of the right-wing, leaves young women and men uninformed and unprepared to safeguard their own health and well-being.

- In the struggle for reproductive justice, women will not truly be free until they are well-informed, able to access a full range of health services, and empowered economically, socially and politically. Only then can women take full control of their bodies and their lives.

This page has been adapted from NOW's brochure, "We Want Reproductive Justice NOW!"