



## 2010 National NOW Conference Resolutions

passed July 4, 2010

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### REPEAL “DON’T ASK, DON’T TELL” NOW

**WHEREAS**, President Clinton, on Dec. 21, 1993, issued Defense Directive 1304.26, commonly known as “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell (DADT)”, which stated that military applicants were not to be asked about their sexual orientation; and

**WHEREAS**, in conjunction with this presidential directive, Public Law No. 103-160, was signed into law as a portion of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1994; and

**WHEREAS**, this policy prohibited anyone who “demonstrates a propensity or intent to engage in homosexual acts” from serving in the United States Armed Forces because “it would create an unacceptable risk to the high standards of morale, good order and discipline, and unit cohesion,” thereby preventing any homosexual or bisexual person from discussing or disclosing his or her sexual orientation, or speaking about any homosexual relationships, including marriage, while serving in the armed forces; and

**WHEREAS**, on May 27, 2010, the House of Representatives approved the Murphy amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act for the 2011 Fiscal Year by a vote of 234-194 and, on the same day, the Senate Armed Services Committee advanced this same measure, by a vote of 16-12, to be included in the Defense Authorization Act; and

**WHEREAS**, this amendment would repeal the sections of Public Law No. 103-160, which pertain to “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” 60 days after a study by the Pentagon is completed, and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen and President Obama certify that the repeal would not harm military effectiveness; and

**WHEREAS**, the Pentagon study will not be completed until Dec. 1, 2010, forcing the implementation of the repeal of DADT to wait until 2011; and

**WHEREAS**, extensive research has already been conducted on this subject by organizations such as the American Psychological Association, indicating that when openly gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals have been allowed to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces there has been no evidence of disruption or loss of mission effectiveness; and

**WHEREAS**, DADT disproportionately affects women, as 34% of those discharged have been women, while women only represent 15% of military personnel and such treatment leads to “lesbian baiting,” sexual harassment, and assault of women; and

**WHEREAS**, cautious leadership by President Obama, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Defense Secretary and Congress will allow these injustices to continue;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Organization for Women (NOW) call upon President Obama to suspend dismissals of service personal from the military under DADT while this study is being conducted and then certified; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, call upon President Obama, Admiral Mullen and Secretary Gates to certify the repeal of DADT without delay upon completion of the Pentagon study.

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## TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE GULF COAST DISASTER

**WHEREAS**, the Gulf Coast oil spill has already had cataclysmic economic, environmental and public health impacts; and

**WHEREAS**, British Petroleum (BP), by acknowledgement of responsibility for this cataclysm, has pledged to create a fund of \$20 billion to be used to mitigate this disaster; and

**WHEREAS**, insufficient information has been made public detailing the terms and conditions for disbursement of these funds, leaving those affected by the disaster unsure which, if any, public health impacts, economic impacts, or environmental impacts will qualify for financial remuneration or by what criteria eligibility will be determined; and

**WHEREAS**, lawmakers, including Rep. Carolyn Maloney of New York, have called for active surveillance of Gulf Coast recovery workers’ health, and a number of cleanup responders on the Gulf Coast have been reporting vomiting, nausea, headaches and dizziness – complaints that are

eerily reminiscent of illnesses reported by first responders in the weeks and months following the 9/11 attacks; and

**WHEREAS**, many small and woman-owned businesses in the Gulf Coast region may need professional assistance in preparing and presenting claims for compensation from the BP oil spill fund; and

**WHEREAS**, it is essential that the claims process and demographic information about the claimants and awardees of compensation from the fund be made publicly available, particularly as pertains to the health and status of women in the Gulf area;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Organization for Women (NOW) call upon all agencies of the federal government and the administrator of the BP oil spill fund to make publicly available demographic information-including breakdowns by gender, race, ethnicity, geographic location, and all other categories-relevant to the transparency and accountability of the process for remediation and remuneration from the effects of the oil spill; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NOW demand that all appropriate agencies of the federal government and BP undertake active surveillance of the effects of the oil spill; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that in order to ameliorate the harm caused by the oil spill, NOW demand that these agencies and BP make this information available to the public.

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## NOW MUST MAKE WELFARE REFORM A PRIORITY

**WHEREAS**, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, set to expire in September 2010, is intended to be the principal federal safety net for impoverished families; and

**WHEREAS**, the current economic recession has resulted in a greater overall need-up to a 25% increase-for government assistance, with approximately 36 million people requiring some form of help to survive, while paradoxically, TANF benefits have decreased and the need for food stamps has increased, revealing a gap in support that many families desperately need; and

**WHEREAS**, women in poverty perform the bulk of caretaking duties for children, the disabled, and the elderly and are expected to perform these duties with little to no assistance in addition to maintaining and seeking employment as mandated to receive TANF benefits, and many of these women have timed out of the TANF system after a short five-year period yet still cannot find full-time work because of caretaking duties or disabled status; and

**WHEREAS**, women of color are hit disproportionately hard by poverty and difficulties in obtaining employment due to lack of job availability, accessible transportation, and child or dependent care; and

**WHEREAS**, TANF does not respond adequately and sensitively to women who are further burdened by domestic or sexual violence, and, indeed, family violence has the effect of increasing women's poverty; and

**WHEREAS**, state budget pressures are further compromising the public welfare system by reducing funding and therefore hindering the system's responsiveness during times of great economic need; and

**WHEREAS**, the TANF program currently attempts to promote marriage in a manner that disrespects and devalues so-called "nontraditional" families and does so by diverting millions in funds that otherwise would be disbursed to individuals who require them to survive; and

**WHEREAS**, minimum-wage jobs into which TANF recipients are pushed are nowhere near adequate in terms of providing a livable, sustainable wage to lift women and families out of poverty; and

**WHEREAS**, the TANF program has been rendered ineffective by chronic underfunding, severe and disproportionate sanctions for issues such as being late for work, and insufficient support components, such as cash assistance, job-training that prepares recipients for wage-earning work, and education;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that NOW activists will lobby Congress to ensure that fundamental welfare reform happens and that it will include vital components, including, but not limited to, expanded educational opportunities for recipients leading to living-wage jobs, subsidized child and dependent care, funding for and access to adequate transportation, cash assistance, a new definition of "work" that includes full- or part-time care for young children, and protection of immigrant women; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that welfare reform must include the availability of confidential screening and services for women and families impacted by domestic and sexual violence, substance abuse, and physical and/or mental disabilities, and that welfare must respect and value all families regardless of citizenship status and not cater to antiquated and inappropriate ideas of what a family "should" look like or be comprised of; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that NOW will make welfare reform a major priority to ensure impoverished families are not pushed even deeper into despair.

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## A CALL FOR THE UNITED STATES SENATE TO EXPEL DAVID VITTER

**WHEREAS**, Senator David Vitter (R-La.) confessed to violation of the laws of the District of Columbia, including DC Code 22-2723 and Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 28, Appendix A to Part 812, prohibitions against pandering and prostitution; and

**WHEREAS**, prostitution in the District of Columbia is a federal crime, which includes the actions of the person contracting for such activity; and

**WHEREAS**, by this violation of federal law, and by his conduct, David Vitter has not only brought shame on himself and his family and the good people of Louisiana, but undermined the efforts of the law enforcement community to close down the illegal organizations and groups which support prostitution, human trafficking and child sexual abuse; and

**WHEREAS**, female sex workers are routinely arrested in the District of Columbia for engaging in prostitution, while their clients are rarely so affected; and

**WHEREAS**, David Vitter has further demonstrated his disdain and disregard for the rights of women in this country by his hiring and retention of a member of his Senate staff who was found to have assaulted a woman with a knife; and

**WHEREAS**, David Vitter attempted to cover up both his and his staffer's conduct, but was ultimately unsuccessful; and

**WHEREAS**, such a pattern and practice of abuse of women and violation of the law brings shame and disgrace upon the institution of the United States Senate and encourages derision and disrespect of this essential legislative body by the American people; and

**WHEREAS**, U.S. women experience domestic violence, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation at an unacceptable rate, and the trafficking of women for sexual use is an international scourge, which the United States Senate has condemned by resolution; and

**WHEREAS**, by his conduct David Vitter undermines the spirit of the Violence Against Women Act; and

**WHEREAS**, elective office does not confer immunity against prosecution for illegal actions, and no person is above the law, and it is especially important that members of the United States Senate lead by example of their conduct;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the members of the National Organization for Women (NOW), meeting in Convention in Boston, Mass., call upon the United States Senate to censure and expel David Vitter for conduct unbecoming a Senator, engaging the services of a prostitute and violation of the laws of the District of Columbia; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NOW call upon the leadership of the Senate and the Senate Ethics Committee to recognize that the particular challenges facing the people of Louisiana at this time call for a U.S. Senator who is not tainted by illegal conduct and hypocrisy; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that NOW call upon all fair-minded Americans to stand with us against domestic abuse, unequal treatment of sex workers and clients in the enforcement of the law, and enforcement of ethical standards by the Senate in regard to its own members.

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# STOP GUN VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**WHEREAS**, research by the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) indicates that 700 women are murdered with a gun each year; 81% of them were dating or married to the attacker, and another 10% knew the attacker; and

**WHEREAS**, it costs \$67 billion per year to provide for women and children who are victims of domestic violence; and

**WHEREAS**, in response to our serious economic recession, funding for many domestic violence programs has been cut, leaving 9,028 people per day without services and 1,989 staff laid off or positions left unfilled, according to a census survey by the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV); and

**WHEREAS**, the lack of financial support to fund services for women and their children has led to more severe and often fatal situations; and

**WHEREAS**, the American Journal of Public Health found that femicides, or intimate partner homicides, occur at an alarming rate of five times more often when there is access to a firearm; this puts the United States death rate at 19 times higher than that of any other industrialized nation in firearm homicides; and

**WHEREAS**, firearms are the second leading cause of injury and death, with 28,000 Americans dying each year as a result of guns according to the National Center for Health Statistics; and  
**WHEREAS**, the Domestic Violence Misdemeanor Gun Ban, passed in 1996, attempted to prohibit anyone convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence or child abuse from purchasing or possessing a gun; and

**WHEREAS**, this ban was negated when the Supreme Court decided in a June 2010 case that gun bans are unconstitutional at state or local levels, just as they are unconstitutional at federal levels; and

**WHEREAS**, as a result of this decision, limited flexibility will be allowed for different levels of government to place restrictions on gun possession, and even convicted domestic violence perpetrators will be able to purchase guns with limited restrictions;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Organization for Women (NOW) recognize the life threatening dangers women face as a result of disturbingly weak current gun control laws; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NOW support the following solutions related to the prevalence of gun violence in domestic violence situations:

1. The adoption of more stringent measures on the sale of guns and the carrying of concealed weapons by people who are domestic violence perpetrators; and
2. The enactment of more federal legislation that mandates checking for crimes of violence as well as patterns of substance abuse and mental health issues before issuing gun permits; and

3. The requiring of police to be trained to respond to serious threats of domestic violence and kidnapping by putting the safety of all victims of domestic violence, especially women and children, first, so as to avoid future catastrophes; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that NOW vigorously oppose any reduction in legal restrictions on gun possession by perpetrators of domestic violence.

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## **RESTRICT U.S. CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS LOBBYING ON CAPITOL HILL**

**WHEREAS**, Catholic bishops lobbying Congress claim that their unrelenting advocacy throughout the recent health care bill debates, particularly on issues regarding women's reproductive health, were fueled by the Catholic Church's obligation to advocate for moral consciousness; and

**WHEREAS**, because of widespread abuse scandals concerning Catholic priests, bishops and cardinals and cover-ups by the hierarchy, the Catholic Church has lost moral standing after decades of sexual exploitation and subsequent inaction and concealment; and

**WHEREAS**, the Roman Catholic Church is governed exclusively by men, who cannot become pregnant, it is therefore inappropriate for those who have historically placed women in second-class status with regard to making decisions about their bodies to dictate what is politically, socially and economically correct for our reproductive health and that they should keep their rules off our bodies; and

**WHEREAS**, the governance of the Roman Catholic Church could be appropriately considered to be the embodiment of the patriarchy; and

**WHEREAS**, recent health care legislation was altered and diminished due to the work of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and other like-minded groups who claim to maintain their moral authority; and

**WHEREAS**, many abortion rights advocates agree that the health care measures advocated for by the Catholic bishop lobbyists in the recent passage of health care insurance reform surpassed the restrictions of the Hyde Amendment; and

**WHEREAS**, Catholic bishops lobbying in Washington, D.C., face almost none of the lobbying or disclosure rules that apply to the rest of D.C. lobbyists; and

**WHEREAS**, lobbying laws specifically exempt churches from reporting requirements, while they legally permit churches to do no more than "insubstantial" lobbying; and

**WHEREAS**, “insubstantial” lobbying has evidently been left without a clear definition and therefore allows Catholic bishops to maintain political clout that remains inappropriate to moral and constitutional separation of church and state;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Organization for Women (NOW) condemn the blatant political influence that Catholic bishops lobbying in Washington have exercised throughout the health care reform debate and other legislative matters regarding women’s reproductive rights; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NOW urge Congress and the IRS to reform tax laws to clarify the legal definition and boundaries of the “insubstantial” degree to which the Catholic Church may lobby and invest in lobbying in Washington; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that NOW demand that the federal government require greater disclosure and transparency of lobbying-related expenditures on the part of the Catholic Church and of financial benefits received by the USCCB, the Catholic Church, and other affiliated entities, such as Catholic Charities, in legislation on which they lobby.

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## PROTECT THE REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS OF WOMEN FROM ULTRASOUND MISUSE

**WHEREAS**, ultrasounds are becoming the new front of the battleground over abortions, and legislative ultrasound mandates are receiving significant backing from anti-abortion groups and crisis pregnancy centers, which consistently provide patients with biased information; and

**WHEREAS**, much of the information on mental and physical health that states require abortion providers to present to their patients is scientifically unsupportable or discredited and attempts to dissuade or shame women rather than to outline the details of relevant procedures; and

**WHEREAS**, laws that propose this use of ultrasounds and inaccurate medical information represent an abuse of medical practice; and

**WHEREAS**, the National Institutes of Health and other credible medical and health organizations have strongly advised that ultrasounds should only be performed for a “specific medical indication”; and

**WHEREAS**, these mandated ultrasounds are not medically necessary, and many of the policies concerning the disclosure of medical information run counter to the fundamental ethical principles of medical care and also interfere with the doctor-patient relationship; and

**WHEREAS**, many of the state mandates do little to further the values of the consent process and instead use the issue of “informed consent” to render women who seek abortions incompetent, vulnerable and largely unable to understand the meaning of having reproductive power; and

**WHEREAS**, at least 20 states have enacted laws that encourage or require the use of ultrasounds, and these laws require that the woman patient be responsible for the payment of these mandated ultrasounds; and

**WHEREAS**, many “informed consent” policies push for requirements that would force women to listen to inaccurate descriptions of various abortion procedures that are irrelevant to their own procedure and to other information that is not germane to the individual woman’s pregnancy; and

**WHEREAS**, as intelligent adults, women are able to make decisions without being emotionally coerced;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Organization for Women (NOW) reaffirm that women seeking abortions must have the right to make decisions about their medical care free from coercion; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NOW stand in opposition to those state laws that do not respect a woman’s ability to make informed decisions concerning her reproductive rights; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NOW condemns and urges repeal of laws that encourage or require the use of ultrasounds or related biased and inappropriate information with the intent of dissuading women from exercising their reproductive rights; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that NOW oppose the mandated use of ultrasounds and the issue of “informed consent” as a means of posing obstacles to women exercising their reproductive rights.

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## **HYDE AND SEEK-REPEAL THE HYDE AMENDMENT**

**WHEREAS**, United States Congress has renewed the Hyde Amendment in various forms since 1976, enacted in reaction to the Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*; and

**WHEREAS**, the Hyde Amendment undermines women’s rights by discriminating against low-income women, prohibiting federal funding of abortion for the 12 million women of reproductive age who are served by Medicaid; and

**WHEREAS**, by prohibiting Medicaid funding of reproductive health insurance for low-income women, except in the cases of rape, incest or life-threatening situations, many women face late-term abortions or illegal, dangerous abortions due to the time required to find funds to pay for the abortion; and

**WHEREAS**, at times, the ban has been extended to prohibit funding for groups like Native Americans, federal employees and their dependents, Peace Corps volunteers, low-income residents of Washington, D.C., federal prisoners, military personnel and their dependents, and disabled women who rely on Medicaid; and

**WHEREAS**, the major health care reform bill, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, was used by Democratic leaders to gain votes from abortion opponents by including provisions similar to the Hyde Amendment that further restrict coverage for the millions of women who seek insurance under the new Act; and

**WHEREAS**, other legislation, such as the ban on federal funds for abortions enacted by the Children's Health Initiative Program (CHIP), which serves girls 19 and younger, has gone into effect to discriminate against women; and

**WHEREAS**, the Hyde Amendment has effectively politicized and stigmatized the legal practice of abortion and obstructed women's constitutional right to control their reproductive lives;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Organization for Women (NOW) continue strongly to oppose the Hyde Amendment and any related legislative provisions; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that the Board of NOW is hereby instructed to develop a long-term strategy with other allied organizations for the defeat of the Hyde Amendment and that the grassroots level of NOW be urged to take action in an aggressive campaign to repeal the Hyde Amendment and to restore coverage for abortion care under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

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## HELP NEEDED FOR OBSTETRIC FISTULA SURGERY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

**WHEREAS**, two million women throughout developing nations are facing an obstructed labor injury complex known as obstetric fistula; and

**WHEREAS**, obstetric fistula is a medical condition predominantly caused by prolonged labor in which the mother is left with chronic incontinence; and

**WHEREAS**, obstetric fistula is nearly obsolete in developed nations, which proves the effectiveness of available preventive measures that could stop 50,000 new cases from happening this year alone; and

**WHEREAS**, the underlying causes of obstetric fistula are rooted in the marginalization of women worldwide through poor economic conditions and limited health care availability, as well as the unjust practice of child marriage, which forces young girls into marriages with older men; they are then forced to have sex and deliver children, even though their bodies are not physically developed to do so; and

**WHEREAS**, child marriage is closely related to obstetric fistula, as many of the young girls experience prolonged labor after their families marry them in order to receive a bride price; and

**WHEREAS**, obstetric fistula occurs in regions of armed conflict where women cannot access health care or health care facilities; and

**WHEREAS**, girls and women with obstetric fistula are ostracized by their community and family, left with even less economic support to continue living or social support to seek medical care and instead these victims are further marginalized and blamed; and

**WHEREAS**, many times, doctors will avoid corrective surgery due to the stigma surrounding this condition, which results in women waiting even longer for medical attention; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, there are many prevention plans for obstetric fistula and other conditions caused by pregnancy, yet the maternal mortality rate only declined by 5.4% between 1990 and 2005 because these plans are not being properly funded or implemented; and

**WHEREAS**,

cases are easily treated with a success rate over 90% and a cost of \$300 U.S. dollars, if women are educated about and able to receive the corrective surgery;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Organization for Women (NOW) recognize this degenerative condition as preventable and treatable; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that members recognize the numerous human rights violations and disparities that occur for many of these women; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, NOW encourage members and activists to advocate for speedy passage of HR 5441, The Obstetric Fistula Prevention, Treatment, Hope, and Dignity Restoration Act of 2010, which will authorize funding to prevent and treat obstetric fistula.

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## SUPPORT FOR EQUAL MARRIAGE LEGISLATION

**WHEREAS**, the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) was signed into federal law on Sept. 21, 1996, as Public Law No. 104-199, 11 Stat. 2419; and

**WHEREAS**, DOMA establishes that no state (or other political subdivision within the United States) needs to treat a relationship between individuals of the same sex as a marriage, even if the relationship is considered a marriage in another state; and

**WHEREAS**, DOMA further established that the federal government defines marriage as a legal union exclusively between one man and one woman; and

**WHEREAS**, the restrictions in DOMA prevent the federal government from recognizing same-sex marriages performed in states that allow such ceremonies, leading to the federal government's inability to honor equal obligations to these couples under the law; and

**WHEREAS**, ongoing discrimination in marriage by federal and state governments denies same-sex couples over a thousand benefits, protections and responsibilities that are afforded to married couples, including hospital visitation rights, the ability to file taxes jointly, health care benefits, inheritance benefits, and federal and state tax benefits; and

**WHEREAS**, on Sept. 15, 2009, the Respect for Marriage Act (RMA) was introduced by Rep. Jerrold Nadler of N.Y., Rep. Tammy Baldwin of Wis., and Rep. Jared Polis of Colo., with the support of 91 cosponsors; and

**WHEREAS**, the bill would repeal DOMA and permit the federal government to provide benefits to couples in a same-sex marriage; and

**WHEREAS**, the RMA also contains a “certainty” provision that guarantees that the federal government will recognize the marriage of same-sex couples who were legally married in a state regardless of the laws in the state in which they choose to live; and

**WHEREAS**, the RMA ensures that same-sex couples who have legal marriages and the children of those couples will no longer be denied Social Security survivor benefits, face extra taxes on health benefits, or pay burdensome inheritance taxes, and

**WHEREAS**, the National Organization for Women (NOW) reaffirm our support for equal marriage because full equality for women means ensuring that all persons have the right to marry or not marry the person of their choice;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that NOW reaffirms our support for marriage equality at both the state and federal level; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that NOW encourage Congress to pass the RMA because it will not only ensure that those who are legally married will receive federal benefits but also will ensure that anyone who desires to be married will be able to do so.

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## WORKING IN COALITION TO COMBAT THE SEXUALIZATION OF GIRLS

**WHEREAS**, the National Organization for Women (NOW) has long combated the negative impact of the media on girls’ and women’s self-image and on the public image of women and girls through Love Your Body Day and other endeavors; and

**WHEREAS**, new research addressing the sexualization of girls conducted by the American Psychological Association (APA), the Girl Scouts’ Research Institute, Girls Inc., and others indicates that sexualization has negative consequences for girls in many ways, impacting cognitive functioning, physical and mental health, sexuality, and attitudes and beliefs; and

**WHEREAS**, self-objectification among adolescent girls has been repeatedly shown to detract from the ability to concentrate, thus leading to impaired performance on mental activities such as

mathematics; and WHEREAS, the APA's 2007 Report on the Sexualization of Girls found that three of the most common mental health problems among girls-eating disorders, low self-esteem and depression or depressed mood-are linked to the sexualization of girls and women in the media; and

**WHEREAS**, media images that sexualize girls and women affect how girls conceptualize femininity and sexuality, by endorsing sexual stereotypes that depict women as sexual objects and emphasize appearance; and

**WHEREAS**, the sexualization of girls can also have a negative impact on boys, men and adult women and on society more broadly; and

**WHEREAS**, the Healthy Media for Youth Act (HR 4925) in the 111th Congress would support age-appropriate education on the negative effects of the sexualization of young girls; promote healthy, balanced and positive images of girls and women in the media; and counter messages that sexualize and objectify girls and women;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that NOW continue to disseminate studies and reports on the harm being done by the sexualization of girls, including reports by the Montgomery County NOW (Maryland) Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls and allied organizations; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NOW work in coalition with allied organizations, including the American Psychological Association, Girl Scouts, and Girls Inc., on state and national action strategies to combat the sexualization of girls; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that NOW ask all state and local chapters to contact their elected representatives in Congress to support the Healthy Media for Youth Act (HR 4925) and other similar legislation to promote research, education and action to combat the sexualization of girls in media and more broadly in society.

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## NATIONAL SAFE COSMETICS ACT

**WHEREAS**, the National Organization for Women (NOW) has an uncompromising commitment to ensuring that the health of women-including pregnant women and their families-is protected; and

**WHEREAS**, NOW resolved in 2006 to develop a strategy to educate its members on personal care product safety and its relationship to women's health; and

**WHEREAS**, the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act contains no provision that requires demonstration to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of the safety of ingredients of cosmetic products prior to marketing them; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2010 report from the President's Cancer Panel, entitled "Reducing Environmental Cancer Risk," determined that although the National Institutes of Health

estimates 75%-80% of cancers have environmental causes, there are “nearly 80,000 chemicals on the market in the United States, many of which are used by millions of Americans in their daily lives and are either un- or understudied and are largely unregulated”; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2010 report from the President’s Cancer Panel reports that “tests of umbilical cord blood found traces of nearly 300 pollutants in newborns’ bodies”; and

**WHEREAS**, the cumulative daily exposure that many of us have to a myriad of personal care products that contain carcinogens, mutagens and reproductive toxins has not been assessed, reviewed or tested by the FDA; and

**WHEREAS**, the European Union (EU), has taken a more enlightened approach to protecting its people from toxins in personal care products through a directive requiring companies doing business in Europe to eliminate 450 of the harmful chemicals in personal care products known or strongly suspected of causing “harm to human health,” compared to the nine chemicals that the FDA has banned or restricted; and

**WHEREAS**, chemicals-such as acrylamide (in foundation, face lotion and hand cream), which has been linked to mammary tumors; formaldehyde (found in nail polish and blush), which has been classified as a probable human carcinogen; and dibutyl phthalate (an industrial chemical commonly found in perfume and hair spray), which is known to damage the liver, kidney and reproductive systems, disrupt hormonal processes and increase breast cancer risk-are widely used in personal care products and cosmetics;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that NOW support a national safe cosmetics bill that will eliminate from personal care products chemicals that cause cancer, birth defects or reproductive harm; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that NOW support the national Safe Cosmetics Act of 2010, which will require manufacturers of cosmetics and personal care products to phase out chemicals linked to cancer, birth defects or reproductive harm and to be fully transparent about the ingredients they use.

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## **FUNDING DECREASES, BUT VIOLENCE INCREASES: VAWA IS IMPERATIVE**

**WHEREAS**, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) has continued to make strides in the United States, and its reauthorization set for 2011 is a pressing issue due to the Great Recession; and

**WHEREAS**, the effects of the economic recession have led to an unprecedented danger for women who find themselves more economically dependent and facing more severe violence from their abuser; and

**WHEREAS**, there is increased violence against women, including murder-suicides, domestic violence (DV), child abuse and sexual assault; and

**WHEREAS**, in April 2009, Time magazine wrote that 43 people were killed in murder-suicides (also called familicide) and that there was a 40% increase in homicides connected with domestic violence. Similarly, the Associated Press said the number of abused and neglected children cases in D.C. rose by 23%, and some hospitals reported a two-fold increase in shaken infant fatalities; and

**WHEREAS**, not only has the recession led to an increase in violence, but it has directly affected women by leading to a decrease in federal and state funding for services to women, which sends the message to Americans that abusing and neglecting women to climb out of debt is acceptable; and

**WHEREAS**, budget cuts to domestic and sexual violence programs due to the recession have restricted these programs' abilities to provide services and protections to survivors and their children, and, as a result, 40 percent of programs report insufficient funding for necessary services; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the Mary Kay Ash Foundation, states like California have cut \$20 million from DV shelters and centers despite the triple increase in calls, and in Illinois, the legislature reduced DV funds by 75% in the face of 75% of all DV shelters reporting more women seeking aid; and

**WHEREAS**, the \$325 million provided for VAWA and the Victims of Crime Act programs in the Recovery Act is grossly insufficient to effectively combat violence against women, especially as other funds to supplement this act are denied; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the National Census of Domestic Violence Services, every day that this legislation is not expanded and fully funded, 9,028 people seeking DV aid are not provided with service;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Organization for Women (NOW) urge activists to immediately campaign for local, state and federal policymakers to double funding for VAWA in 2011; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NOW urge members and activists to advocate for more community education and prevention programs in response to the gap in government programs that provide these services; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that NOW urge members and activists to advocate in their chapters, communities and legislatures for the expansion of local, state and federal governmental funding for direct DV and sexual assault services.

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# SHARING NOW RESOURCES ON WWW.NOW.ORG

**WHEREAS**, the publications of chapters, state and regions of the National Organization for Women (NOW) are often useful resources for other subunits;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National NOW Action Center facilitate a process to post electronically submitted resources, including articles and publications, on the chapters-only section or public section of the NOW website as appropriate; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the President of NOW designate a National NOW Action Center staff person to receive and post such resources; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that the National NOW Action Center shall have full discretion as to determining whether posting these resources is in the best interests of the organization and does not violate NOW policy.