

NATIONAL NOW BOARD MEETING
Via Nationwide Webinar
Draft Minutes

Saturday, November 7, 2015

President Terry O'Neill called the National NOW Board meeting to order at approximately 12:08 Eastern Time.

Roll Call

Vice-President Bonnie Grabenhofer called the roll. The following were present or arrived shortly thereafter: Aida Zuniga, Amber Kirchhoff, April Emmert-Maguire, Beth Corbin, Carla Josephson, Charlotte Clawson, Gilda Yazzie, Gordy Gustafson, Jerilyn Stapelton, Joanne Tosti-Vasey, Kaye Chapman, Kim Villaneuva, Marian Bradley, Meredith Ockman, Michelle Hamilton Nancy Campbell Mead, Paneota Bradsigvez, Shirley Ranz, Sonia Ossorio, Sue Gibson, Ellie Smeal, Terry O'Neill, Bonnie Grabenhofer.

Absent were: Laurie Roberts, Mary Pollock, Robin Dionne, Sinoun Hem, Janet Canterbury, and Patricia Ireland

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted without amendment.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the Special board meeting (May 2015) and Regular Summer board meeting (June 2015) were approved as corrected.

President's Report

O'Neill reported on the work she has been doing with Kimberly Crenshaw and has followed up with her on some of the work that Crenshaw is doing. Crenshaw had a webinar last week the case of the South Carolina, with the Spring Valley High School in South Carolina, where the school Resource Officer committed a grievous assault on a 16-year-old student who was doing nothing. She had simply declined to turnover her cell phone to the teacher. So her big crime was apparently to send a text to someone in class and then she refused to give up her cell phone and she was viciously attacked. I understand that her arm was broken in the Resource Officer's attack on her. He grabbed her by the hair, pulled her out of her chair, and slammed her onto the ground. This was caught on video tape by a very brave young woman, another 16-year-old student. He threatened her as she was taking the video and indeed did arrest her. These two women are still now being sucked into the juvenile justice system in South Carolina. We are gearing up to work to release them and their school suspension has been reversed by the school district. However, some of us believe that these two students are not safe at Spring Valley High School. The school system needs to accommodate their needs to go to a school that will be safe for them where they can thrive and actually engage in learning -- not simply be punished for being a young woman of color in a classroom.

Another event O'Neill reported on was the rally in Alexandria, Virginia one week ago where Hillary Clinton gave an amazing speech. Hala Ayala is the new president of the Prince William County Virginia Chapter of NOW, and she's been doing amazing work out there.

Action Report

Grabenhofer reported on NOW action alerts related to the following federal legislation:

- Protecting Domestic Violence and Stalking Victims Act, S1520 / HR2216 would close a loophole in the law and keep guns out of the hands of perpetrators of dating violence and stalking.
- Social Security Caregiver Credit Act, HR3377: Because Social Security benefits are based on lifetime earnings, workers (mostly women) who drop out of the paid labor force or go part time to care for children or other family members have lower Social Security benefits when they retire. The caregiver credit would improve benefits through a formula linked to the median wage.
- The Equality Act, HR 3185 / S1858 would prohibit discrimination based on an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity in matters of employment, housing, access to public places, federal funding, credit, education and jury service. In addition, it would prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex in federal funding and access to public places. Because the Equality Act amends the Civil Rights Act of 1964, religious exemptions (which had been included in prior legislation, which NOW was unable to support as a result) are no longer an issue.
- Teach Safe Relationships Act, HR 3141 / S355 would provide funding for teaching school administrators, teachers and staff in safe relationship behavior education and for the development of safe relationship curricula for students.
- A bad bill, the "Stop Sanctuary Policies and Protect Americans Act" authored by Sen. David Vitter, would coerce local police to work as immigration enforcement agents.

NOW has also been working with our allies to support Planned Parenthood against vicious attacks centered on falsified videotapes. NOW and 92 other organizations signed a letter in support of Planned Parenthood. NOW activists around the country participated in supportive rallies and demonstrations, including a press conference and rally outside the Capitol during Cecile Richards' testimony at a Congressional hearing.

We've been recognizing Equal Pay Days for a number of different populations. During the last couple of months, we acknowledged the Equal Pay Days for black women, Native American women, Latinas, and encouraged NOW members to use the Equal Pay Social Media Kit and share, produce end graphics that are there to let people know about this.

Medicaid and Medicare had their 50th Anniversary and there were birthday celebrations in 60 cities to recognize that. We sent out some information about that.

We are also concerned that some pharmacies are not following the law on access to Emergency Contraception (EC). We have encouraged activists to visit local pharmacies to

make sure that they are stocking emergency contraception and making it easily available, which they're required to do.

NOW is part of the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence. Pat Reuss represents NOW on that task force and has worked with us to inform activists about the so-called Safe Campus Act. Despite its misleading name, this bill would worsen rape culture on college campuses. It would restrict colleges from investigating sexual assault cases unless the police are involved, thus requiring schools to use higher standards of proof in determining guilt and taking action. NOW and its allies at NTF got 220 sign-ons to the letter to the House opposing this dangerous bill.

Congratulations to Pat Reuss who recently received the advocacy award from the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Pat was indispensable in helping to pass the Violence Against Women Act in 1994 and has devoted much of her time in recent years to protecting and expanding VAWA's effectiveness. We are all very proud of all the work Pat has done over the years to end violence against women.

NOW participates in the Courts Matter Coalition which works to support the process for nominating and confirming federal judges. There are a number of state-level Courts Matter organizations that have recently been formed or are in the process of formation, and the NOW Action Center has been keeping chapter and state leaders informed about opportunities to work with them.

We have been seeing renewed efforts across the country to end the untested rape kit backlog that's estimated to be in the hundreds of thousands. A number of chapters have been working in their communities to address this issue, including Oakland Macomb (Michigan) NOW. Just a couple of weeks ago, Detroit announced it had processed over 10,000 of the 11,000 rape kits, identified 2,616 suspects, 477 of whom were repeat rapists, and there have already been 21 convictions. Getting these rape kits processed remains an uphill battle. The U.S. Justice Department is considering withholding funds from state and local police / prosecutors' offices unless they have cleared up their backlog. There is already funding to help police departments process the kits, but DOJ has learned that giving them money isn't working well, so they are now considering withholding money until the kits are processed.

NOW has spoken out about the new drug, flibanserin, to treat hypoactive sexual desire disorder. We urged the FDA to make its decision based on the safety and effectiveness of the drug, and not on cultural stereotypes about whether women should be worried about sexual desire, or the lack of it. This particular drug doesn't work for all women who suffer from HSDD, but it does work for some. The side effects are much less than side effects of Viagra, and the amount of testing was much more extensive. The FDA made the flibanserin company jump through so many hoops that we were concerned that cultural assumptions about women's sex drive might be at play. That is what we expressed to the FDA. NOW has consistently said that we do not advocate for any particular medication, but we do want safe and effective medications to be available to women. Consistent with longstanding policy, NOW has not accepted donations from companies or individuals who might stand to gain from our advocacy on any issue, including this one.

Strategic Planning and Board Committees Discussion and Vote

O'Neill presented the Executive Committee's proposal for implementing the new bylaw provision requiring that a strategic action program be developed by the Board and presented to the Conference for debate and vote. A strategic action program would encompass a small number of national action campaigns with short- and long-term goals, metrics such as outputs and outcomes, and an implementation plan including the development of materials and a process for rolling out the program to NOW states and chapters as well as to our allies. The criteria for a strategic action program include whether the issue is salient with NOW states and chapters and with the larger public; whether NOW has existing expertise on the issue and/or is recognized as a leader in the field; and whether NOW already has assets such as white papers, brochures and action / social media kits. **Grabenhofer** walked the board through the elements of NOW's Walmart and Marriage Equality campaigns as examples of successful, multi-year campaigns that had goals and metrics, and that evolved over time in response to changing circumstances.

After discussion, the Board approved the following strategic action program outline:

Goals:

- Full access to abortion care and birth control for every woman
 - Funding for family planning clinics
 - Federal laws – Hyde; EACH Woman Act; Women’s Health Protection Act
 - State laws – TRAP laws, 20-week bans
 - Supreme Court abortion & BC cases
- End the sex-abuse-to-prison-pipeline
 - Include women and girls of color in racial justice programs
 - More social services (less militarized police) in public schools
 - Culturally competent services for student victims of sexual violence
 - Different needs of students of color, LGBTQIA students, students with disabilities, immigrant students, etc.
- ERA: Promote ratification & inclusive interpretation
 - State ratifications of ERA (three state strategy)
 - State-level ERAs
 - Lead the national conversation: If we had ERA ...
 - RFRA could not negate marriage equality or Equality Act
 - *Hobby Lobby* would not have been decided that way
 - Anti-abortion laws would be unconstitutional
 - States / Fed govt would not exclude girls & women of color from racial justice initiatives
 - Immigration laws that disproportionately exclude women (preference for STEM visas) would be unconstitutional

After further discussion, the Board created the following committees:

Budget

Structure & Process

Strategic Action Program – Goal #1, full funding for abortion care and birth control

Strategic Action Program – Goal #2, end the sex abuse to prison pipeline

Strategic Action Program – Goal #3, ERA ratification & interpretation

The meeting recessed at approximately 2 pm and reconvened at approximately 3 pm.

Financial Report

O'Neill presented the financial results for the period January - September, 2015. On a combined basis, NOW, Inc. and NOW Foundation are showing results in line with our overall budget of \$3.3 million. However, as a cautionary note, revenue for 2015 is lagging behind the same period last year. The combined deficit of \$66,000 reflects low Foundation revenues in August and September. However, Foundation's revenue is always highest in the fourth quarter.

NOW, Inc.'s total revenue is running ahead of budget but behind the same period last year, largely due to non-direct mail income. Direct mail revenue is ahead of budget and ahead of last year. Note, however, that acquisition, renewal and reinstatement revenue is less than the same period last year, because we decided to scale back one acquisition mailing. Appeal revenue is significantly ahead of budget and is ahead of last year as well. The new acquisition package continues to do well. Our response rate so far in 2015 is about 1.6%, compared with 1.5% in 2014. This compares extremely well with our 2013 response rate of 0.7%, when we were using the old package. Non-direct mail revenue--sustainers, major gifts & bequests and unsolicited/online revenue, are all lower than budgeted (by 26%) and lower than last year. NOW, Inc. expenses are in line with budget, i.e., lower direct mail and personnel expenses than in 2014.

NOW Foundation's revenue through September 2015 is lower than budgeted, and lower than 2014. Expenses are somewhat higher than budgeted, but significantly lower than 2014. The Foundation's actual deficit exceeds the budgeted deficit, but is significantly smaller than the 2014 deficit. Recall that the bulk of the Foundation's money comes in in the 4th quarter. Meeting the Foundation's 2015 targets for revenue and operating results will depend heavily on our end-of-year appeals.

NOW, Inc. and NOW Foundation continue to pay invoices on a timely basis, usually 30-days terms. On September 30, 2015, our cash reserve (combined cash net of vendor payables) stood at \$296,092, which is less than the ideal of about \$555,000.

2016 Budget

O'Neill presented the Budget Committee's proposed 2016 budgets for NOW and NOW Foundation. The proposal is for a combined break-even budget of \$3.6 million. This is an increase of 9% over the 2015 budget. We believe the increase is warranted because (a) NOW's membership base is stable and growing; (b) 2016 will be NOW's 50th Anniversary, a good opportunity for fundraising; and (c) the 2016 elections give us the opportunity for higher visibility and greater engagement with supporters of feminism, in other words additional opportunities for fundraising. A breakdown of combined expenses is: direct mail - 41%; personnel - 31%; chapters, states, and National Board - 9%; gift processing and regulatory compliance - 9%; overhead - 6%; and National Conference / Gala - 4%.

The 2016 NOW, Inc. budget proposes revenue of \$3,013,000 and expenses of \$2,903,800 for a surplus of \$109,200. We project that this surplus will be donated to the NOW Foundation to make up for its projected deficit of the same amount. Notable in the Inc. budget are the following items: (1) Inc. will cover part of the Political Director's salary in 2016 (instead of the

PAC), because the PAC's 2015 mailing was not as successful as we had hoped. (2) Of the National Board's three meetings in 2016, the Winter/Spring meeting will be via webinar and both the Summer and Fall meetings will be in-person. Normally the Fall meeting would be via webinar but this will be the orientation meeting for the new Board. (3) The 2016 budget includes a modest amount, \$5,000 for travel expenses for volunteers to re-invigorate dormant state organizations. (4) The direct mail program includes a net investment in acquisition of \$175,000 (up from \$150,000 in 2015), and continued investment in cultivation of our existing file.

The NOW Foundation budget proposes total revenue of \$602,000 against expenditures of \$709,000 for a deficit of \$109,000. We project that this deficit will be closed through a gift from NOW, Inc. of the same amount. For 2016, because we will have a Fundraising Manager on board for the whole year, we are projecting major gift revenue of \$85,000, up from \$55,000 budgeted for 2015. The allocation of payroll and overhead expenses between the Foundation and NOW, Inc. for 2016 is 64% Inc / 36% Foundation -- approximately the same as in 2015.

After discussion, the Board approved the proposed budget.

Ms. President NOW Update

Grabenhofer presented the update. NOW PAC has created the Ms. President NOW campaign to implement the resolution passed at the 2015 Conference to "Elect a Feminist Woman President and Celebrate NOW's Golden Jubilee." PAC member (also a Board member) **Jacqueline Kozin** and senior PAC advisors Gay Bruhn, and Pat Reuss are working with **Grabenhofer** on the campaign. Originally the name of the campaign was "NOW 4 Hillary," but it was changed to Ms. President NOW because of a ruling by the Federal Election Commission that use of a candidate's name creates undue confusion about whether it is the candidate's project or an outside group's.

The Ms. President NOW goals are to elect Hillary Clinton and increase NOW's visibility in that victory. The key organizing tool is the MsPresidentNOW Facebook page. The Facebook page is closed because it is used to share confidential information, files, planning documents, etc. The NOW PAC webpage contains a lot of public information, including fact sheets and talking points about NOW's endorsement of Hillary, and urges individuals to sign up to join Ms President NOW. When someone signs up, we contact them directly and invite them to join the Facebook page. We also have a Twitter account which will become more active in 2016.

So far, Ms. President NOW has over 150 volunteers spanning 38 states; 65 of them are members of the Facebook page. Events have already been organized in Tacoma, WA, Prince William County, VA, and at the North Carolina NOW conference. The NOW leaders section of now.org, which is password-protected, also contains organizing resources for Ms. President NOW.

The meeting recessed at approximately 5 pm and reconvened at 6 pm.

NOW PAC Update

Grabenhofer reported that NOW PAC is focusing on federal races in locations where we can have the most impact, for example Senate races in battleground states or where there is an important ballot measure, or additional House races. Senate races with feminist candidates

include California (Kamala Harris), Florida (Pam Keith), Illinois (Tammy Duckworth), Maryland (Donna Edwards and Chris Van Hollen in the Democratic primary), Nevada (Catherine Cortez Masto), New Hampshire (Maggie Hassan), North Carolina (Deborah Ross), Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin (Russ Feingold). So far, NOW PAC has made 13 federal endorsements in 6 states as well as Hillary Clinton for President.

NOW PAC looks for endorsement requests from state leaders because they have knowledge at the grassroots level that we don't have at National. Linda Berg, NOW's Political Director, is available to walk state activists through the process of interviewing federal candidates and gathering information about their policy positions and records. NOW PAC also does its own fact gathering because we often have information at the national level that grassroots activists don't have. For example, NOW PAC participates in the Pack of PACs, an informal group of national women's organization PACs that meets periodically to exchange information and opinions about federal candidates. An important policy the PAC follows is that if there are two endorsable candidates but only one is a woman, we endorse the woman. Ultimately, NOW PAC has the sole responsibility to endorse federal candidates. The state's recommendation is highly influential. However, the PAC also takes into consideration its own information gathering about the candidate. In most cases, the PAC adopts the state recommendation, but that does not always happen.

Membership Report

O'Neill reported that as of the end of October our membership is 60,489. To give you comparisons, the average membership for all of 2013 was 54,302; the average for 2014 was 58,243; and the average through October 2015 is 57,378. In other words, our membership acquisition and retention programs are on solid footing. Membership is not increasing as quickly as we would want. However, we hope that once we have numbers through December of this year, the average membership will be between 60,000 and 65,000.

NOW is partnering with Working America Health Care to encourage our members and supporters to use their online portal to sign up for health care on a state-based exchange under the Affordable Care Act. They help people find the health insurance policy that best meets their needs, and afterwards they will help finding health care providers and will also help their subscribers work through any issues with billing and coverage. Also, as soon as you register for health care through them, the portal takes you directly to a screen where you can register to vote!

Structure Modernization and Bylaws Convention Wrap-up

O'Neill thanked the Board and the Structure Modernization Working Group for their heroic work to bring the structure modernization project to a successful conclusion. In the end, no one got everything they wanted, but everyone got something they wanted. Below is a summary of the key elements of the newly revised bylaws:

Article II. New Statement of Purpose - NOW's statement of purpose was updated to recognize that NOW is a leader of societal change, and that it is dedicated to achieving equality by combating the multiple forms of oppression women experience in different communities. The new statement of purpose is:

NOW's purpose is to take action through intersectional grassroots activism to promote feminist ideals, lead societal change, eliminate discrimination, and achieve and protect the equal rights of all women and girls in all aspects of social, political, and economic life.

Article IV. New flexibility for state and local grassroots advocacy - State NOW organizations have the option of creating and administering local subunits that are not independent chapters, allowing greater flexibility for locally-targeted advocacy.

Article VI. New flexibility in the number of National Officers - The revised bylaws provide for two National Officers - a President and a Vice President. However, the National Board may create additional vice-president positions after taking into account the organization's projected 4-year budget and other factors.

Article VII. Elimination of regions - The revised bylaws eliminate regions. The National Board will be elected from six electoral districts which, unlike the old regions, exist solely for the purpose of electing a geographically diverse National Board. The electoral districts will be redrawn every 10 years to ensure they continue to have roughly the same number of NOW members and roughly similar characteristics such as the number of Congressional districts, urban and rural communities, media markets, etc.

Article VII. New configuration of the National Board - Each electoral district may elect a delegation of two Board members and, if that delegation is racially diverse, may elect a third member. No more than one Board member may be from any one state. National Board elections will take place in even-numbered years at the National conference, unless a district opts to hold an in-district election.

Article VII. New grassroots participation in creation of annual strategic action program - The revised bylaws specify that the National Board must submit its annual strategic action program to the National Conference for approval.

Article VIII. Voting privileges at National Conferences - The bylaws revision eliminated the "delegated voting" system at National NOW conferences. Anyone who has been a member of NOW continuously for 90 days is eligible to vote at the Conference.

2016 Conference Update

O'Neill reported on plans for the 2016 conference. This will be NOW's 50th Anniversary, and we are planning a gala for Thursday evening, June 23, immediately after the Summer Board meeting. The gala will be held at the conference hotel, the Hyatt Regency on Captiol Hill in Washington, DC. We expect the conference and gala expenses will total about \$150,000 and we are projecting total revenue for both events at \$110,000.

The 2016 Conference will feature four plenary sessions, one of which will be a PAC box-lunch (NOW will provide the lunch), and 15 to 20 workshops. We aim for half of the workshops to be skills-building sessions, such as social media training, chapter recruitment, local coalition-building, etc. In addition to the skills-building sessions, each Strategic Action Program committee will conduct a workshop on its proposed issue campaign. We intend to hold nationwide webinars on the issue campaigns, and will encourage activists from around the country to participate in the webinar and the subsequent online dialogue (similar to the process we used in the months leading up to the 2015 Strategy Summit and Bylaws Convention).

The meeting recessed at approximately 7:30 pm Eastern time.

Sunday, November 8, 2015

The meeting reconvened at approximately 12 noon Eastern time. **Grabenhofer** confirmed that a quorum was present.

Board committee assignments

O'Neill appointed the following Board committees:

Strategic Action Program Goal 1: Full Access to Abortion & Contraception:

Meredith Ockman, chair
Carla Josephson
Laurie Bertram-Roberts
Marian Bradley
Sonia Ossorio

Strategic Action Program Goal 2: End the Sex Abuse to Prison Pipeline:

Michele Hamilton, chair
April Emmert-Maguire
Beth Corbin
Elena Carillo
Shirley Ranz

Strategic Action Program Goal 3: ERA Ratification and Interpretation:

Amber Kirchoff, chair
Aida Zuniga
Charlotte Klasson
Jerilyn Stapleton
Nancy Campbell Mead

Structure & Process:

Gilda Yazzie, chair
Kae Chatman
Kim Villanueva
Robin Dionne
Sue Gibson

Budget:

Terry O'Neill, chair
Bonnie Grabenhofer
Gordy Gustafson
Joanne Tosti-Vasey
Mary Pollock
Panayiota Bertzikis
Sinoun Hem

The meeting recessed at approximately 12:15 pm Eastern time, and Board committees met via separate conference calls.

The meeting reconvened at approximately 3 pm Eastern time.

Government Relations Report

NOW Government Relations Director and Director of Foundation Programs, Jan Erickson, presented the report.

On Oct. 6, California Gov. Jerry Brown (D) signed an equal pay bill that is the first of its kind adopted into law in the U.S. It is a true "comparable worth" law, requiring women and men be paid the same for work that is the same *or* "substantially similar." Women's equal pay advocates 40 years ago pushed for a "comparable worth" law only to be greeted by a brick wall of opposition from the business community and male-dominated legislatures. The **California Fair Pay Act** was authored by Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson, a CA NOW-endorsed Democrat from Santa Barbara who has long championed NOW's issues. The bill was supported by the California Chamber of Commerce and most state Republican lawmakers. NOW activists in other states should take a copy of the California Fair Pay Act (S. 358) to their favorite state legislator and ask her/him to introduce it.

Fake equal pay bill: The so-called "Workplace Advancement Act" sponsored by Sen. Deb Fischer (R-NE) would allow employers to retaliate against employees who share their salary information with co-workers. We are concerned that some Democrats may be supporting this outrageous bill, including Sens Warner and Kaine of Virginia, Carper of West Virginia, Donnelly of Indiana and King of Maine, and have called all of them to urge them to oppose it.

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and NOW continues to advocate for full funding for Violence Against Women Act programs -- a very tough slog as funding for so many social programs has been cut or frozen in the past few federal budget cycles. NOW's former staffer and current consultant **Pat Reuss** received an award by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) at its "Take a Stand" event at the National Press Club in October. In the early 1990s Reuss organized a giant national coalition of several thousand member organizations that pressured Congress and ultimately won passage of VAWA.

Stop These Bills - Two deceptively-named bills have been introduced by Republican Rep. Matt Salmon (Ariz.) that would undermine Title IX protections for students who have experienced sexual assault on campus. **The Safe Campus Act** (H.R. 3403) and the **Fair Campus Act** (H.R. 3408), would give offenders and their attorneys unfettered access to question survivors, and

would prevent schools from adequately assisting victims or holding perpetrators accountable unless and until law enforcement proceeded. NOW signed on to a letter opposing these two pieces of legislation

Update on Planned Parenthood, the Fake Scandal and Misleading Videos Republican leaders in the House are still collaborating with the violent fringe of the anti-abortion movement in smearing Planned Parenthood. A series of videos, heavily edited to present a misleading picture about the provision of donated fetal tissue by Planned Parenthood officials was released by the so-called Center for Medical Progress (CMP), followed by outrageously inaccurate floor statements by abortion rights opponents in Congress, capped by ongoing hearings and “investigations” by Republican-led congressional committees and repeated attempts to defund Planned Parenthood. Despite all this, the public continues to value Planned Parenthood, support for the organization went up over the summer and it is more popular than both of the political parties. NOW President Terry O’Neill’s statement of September 24, *Attacks on Women’s Healthcare: Bad Policy and Bad Politics*, observed that “For months, extremists in Congress have promoted a fraudulent smear campaign against the country’s largest provider of excellent, non-judgmental reproductive health services. To be clear, their aim is not just to block the 2.7 million women and men served by Planned Parenthood from accessing essential family planning services. They are also hell-bent on shaming women and ultimately banning abortion.”

Since mid-summer, five Congressional committees have held or announced "investigations" of Planned Parenthood. Investigations are going forward despite several statements by the Chair of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, Rep. Jason Chafetz (R-Utah) that there is no evidence that Planned Parenthood broke the law or did anything wrong. At a Judiciary Committee hearing on October 9, Chafetz said, “Did we find any wrongdoing? The answer was “no”.” Chafetz answered CNN reporter Wolf Blitzer’s question, “Is there any evidence, in your opinion, that Planned Parenthood has broken any law?” by saying, “No, I’m not suggesting that they broke the law.”

Abortion rights opponents in Congress have insisted they would shut down the government unless all federal funding for Planned Parenthood is cut off. Although Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) have rejected shutting down the government over this issue, Rep Boehner used extremist and provocative language saying the thought of Planned Parenthood made him want to throw up. In the wake of extremist language like this, we are already seeing a spike in harassment, vandalism and violent attacks on abortion clinics, providers and their staffs.

Speaker Boehner, who resigned unexpectedly at the end of October, engineered a budget deal that included extension of the debt limit until March 2017, effectively ending right-wing threats to shut down the government. The deal increases spending above the current budget cap, avoids a major benefit cut for people on Social Security Disability, and reduces the increase in Medicare premiums. Unfortunately it reduces the Federal Crime Victims Fund, some of which is used to benefit domestic violence victims.

There are a number of bills to expand Social Security benefits, including a couple of bills for a caregiver credit -- an idea put forward when Ellie Smeal was NOW President.

The Trans Pacific Partnership is opposed by a large coalition of progressive organizations. Our biggest concern is that it would allow multinational corporations to actually sue local jurisdictions to strike down any law the corporation believes might hurt its bottom line -- and the lawsuit would be in a private tribunal with judges beholden to the corporations for their livelihoods.

The meeting recessed at 4:30 pm for the NOW Foundation board meeting, and reconvened at 5:15.

After brief discussion, **Grabenhofer** moved to adjourn at 5:20 pm in light of the fact that all board committees had made their presentations and reports. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 5:20 pm.