

# CHOICES

Feminist Majority Foundation Campus Program E-Zine

January 29, 2007

[www.feministcampus.org](http://www.feministcampus.org)

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that frightens us most. We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and famous?' Actually, who are you not to be? When we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others." - Nelson Mandela

## From the Campus Team...

We recently celebrated the anniversary of *Roe* and this issue is full of events that occurred in the nation's capital. Turnout was awesome, but our work is still not done! Although anti-choice ballot measures were defeated in California, Oregon, and South Dakota, legislation banning abortions has been proposed in Georgia and Oklahoma. Currently there is an abortion procedure ban that is pending in the Supreme Court that, if found constitutional, could prohibit all abortions after 12 weeks. Get your groups involved! Be on the lookout for our new Never Go Back and Standing with our Sisters Global Reproductive Rights Campaign materials!  
[www.nevergoback.org](http://www.nevergoback.org)

On another note, excitement is building for our National Young Women's Leadership Conference. Acclaimed feminist speakers will be involved, and you will have the opportunity to see some of your leaders in action at our newly added Congressional Visit day. Register at [www.feministcampus.org](http://www.feministcampus.org) and get up-to-date listings of who is going to be where and when!  
In Solidarity,  
Kassidy Johnson



Supporters in front of the stairs of the Supreme Court during the *Roe* vigil January 22, 2007

## Title IX Case Settled in CA

Former University of California-Davis wrestling coach Michael Burch will receive a \$725,000 settlement from UC-Davis after alleging that the university failed to renew his contract in retaliation for speaking out after the women's wrestling team was cut. Burch sued the university for violating Title IX, the landmark federal legislation prohibiting sex discrimination in federally funded educational programs, including athletics. The US Supreme Court in 2005 ruled that those who are the victims of retaliation for drawing attention to Title IX violations can sue under Title IX, in the case *Jackson v. Birmingham Board of Education*.

"Mike should be applauded for his courage in standing firm to the very end of this difficult saga," said Lisa Maatz, AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund interim director, which supported Burch in his case. "It's regrettable that the university didn't do right by him - and the female wrestlers - from the very beginning." A class action suit brought by current and former female UC-Davis wrestlers is still pending. Burch is now serving as assistant wrestling coach at Brown University.

## Anniversary of *Roe* Met, Once Again, with Rallies of Support and Protest



In commemorating the anniversary of the historic *Roe v. Wade* decision that made abortion legal in the United States, *Ms.* magazine

delivered the first batch of signed petitions from women who have had abortions. The "We Had Abortions" petition contained thousands of signatures and was delivered to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid.

"Women who have had abortions are speaking out once again to remind everyone of the need for legal abortion for real women, their families, and

their lives," said Eleanor Smeal, publisher of *Ms.* magazine. "*Ms.* has been overwhelmed with the response to the 'We Had Abortions' program. Women thanked *Ms.* for the opportunity to tell their stories and for the knowledge that they are not alone. Behind every decision to terminate a pregnancy stands a woman, or even a young girl, with a unique story."



This is a particularly crucial time in the abortion rights struggle, as a case is pending before the U.S. Supreme Court that could possibly outlaw every abortion procedure performed after the first trimester of pregnancy.

Supporters of reproductive freedom participated in events across the country - from Washington, DC to Wichita, KS - that marked the political climate around abortion rights in the US.

*Roe* events in Washington, DC closed with a vigil organized by the National Organization for Women on the steps of the Supreme Court. The speaker line-up ended with DC Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton (D) who spoke of the inability for women in the military to get an abortion, and the heightened hurdles to reproductive freedom that lower-income and women of color face.

For more news visit [www.feminist.org](http://www.feminist.org)

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**National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health  
Working to Repeal the Hyde Amendment**

The National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health (NLIRH) produced a major postcard campaign in anticipation of the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. Interns and staff members from the Feminist Majority Foundation joined NLIRH and dropped off signed postcards to Senators and Representatives on behalf of their constituents urging them to repeal the Hyde amendment. The executive director of NLIRH, Silvia Henriquez, was a former staff member of the FMF.

The Hyde amendment, first introduced by Representative Henry Hyde and passed by Congress in 1976, prevents the use of federal funds for abortions for poor women. A panel discussion featured Aishia Glasford of NLIRH, Priscilla Huang of National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, Sarah Horsley of National Network of Abortion Funds, Jatrice Martel Gaiter of Planned Parenthood Metro Washington, and Alexis Zepeda of the DC Abortion Fund. The speakers talked about the Hyde amendment's impact on Latina, African American, immigrant, Native American, and Asian Pacific Islander American women. The speakers also touched on the

current 30 Years is Enough! Campaign and what the community is doing. Each speaker explained the major impact of the Hyde amendment on women and communities of color. These events have definitely taught me about the Hyde amendment as well as the importance of fighting for the continued equal reproductive rights of all women.

~Ashley Bennett, FMF Spring Intern 2007



(left) Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas, NLIH (right) Jatrice Gaiter, PPMW and Alexis Zepeda, DCAF



Fellows from the National Women's Law Center

**A Thank You to an Ugly Betty; An Open Letter to America Ferrera**



Dear Ms. Ferrera,

I found myself openly weeping with you as you took the stage to accept your Golden Globe award for "Best Actress" on Monday night. From your acceptance speech, I quote:

"I hear from young girls on a daily basis how Betty makes them feel worthy and loveable and how they have more to offer the world than they thought." As a young Latina feminist, I wanted to shout from the rooftop of my building my congratulations to you and to say thank you – thank you for exemplifying the class, ethnic and body ideals of this woman and of real women the world over.

As I watched you speak about your win, I thought back to a time when I first came to know beauty on my own terms. Perhaps like many young Latinas, before I knew you as Betty Suárez, I knew you as Ana, the young Mexican-American woman from East Los Angeles in Patricia Cardoso's 2002 film,

Real Women Have Curves. Perhaps unlike many young Latinas, however, by summer's end of the same year the film was released, I had just endured a season in the Texas pageant circuit. Before meeting your headstrong and unapologetic feminist character in Cardoso's film, I had met and internalized a vastly different knowledge of beauty – a knowledge mostly having to do with spray-on self-tanner and strappy heels. My transformation from aimless college co-ed in her early 20's to dedicated and fierce feminist activist in her early 20's I owe to fearless characters like Ana and Betty Suárez, and to fearless women like you, Ms. Ferrera.

I offer a warm congratulations and a thank you to you and to fellow feminist and Ugly Betty executive producer, Salma Hayek. Estoy muy agradecida, I am very grateful, for two incredible feminists like you who have taken the risk to remind countless numbers of young women that intelligence



and ambition can defy more than just a Hollywood genre. After all, as race and media expert Yeidy Rivero points out in the latest *Ms.* magazine, "How many working-class, Mexican-American, clumsy, allegedly 'ugly,' intelligent women with an illegal-immigrant father have been portrayed on U.S. television? Until Betty's arrival, none." I take pride in this arrival, feeling confident that I stand with millions of other young Latin women as we all walk a little taller.

I look forward to following your career in film and television and anticipate an exciting new season from my new favorite show, a show where beauty looks less like a dream and a lot more like equality. ! Adelante Ugly Betty;

In solidarity,  
Olivia Ortiz

*Olivia Ortiz is a Mexican American, feminist activist, writer and one of the West Coast campus organizer's for the FMF. This open letter also appeared on the Women in Media and News blog.*

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