

Eleanor Smeal

President of the Feminist Majority Foundation

Recognized throughout the nation as a women's rights leader, Eleanor Smeal appears frequently on television and radio, testifies before Congress on a wide variety of women's issues, and speaks to diverse audiences nationwide on a broad range of feminist topics. For over three decades, she has played a leading role in both national and state campaigns to win women's rights legislation and in a number of landmark state and federal court cases for women's rights.

One of the architects of the modern drive for women's equality, Smeal is known as a political analyst, strategist, and grassroots organizer. Smeal was the first to identify the "gender gap" -- the difference in the way women and men vote -- and popularized its usage in election and polling analyses to enhance women's voting clout.

For over 30 years, Smeal has been on the frontlines fighting for women's equality. She has been at the forefront of almost every major women's rights victory -- from the integration of Little League, interscholastic athletics, and police departments to the passage of landmark legislation, such as the Pregnancy Discrimination Act (1978), Civil Rights Restoration Act (1987), Civil Rights Act (1991), Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act (1994), Violence Against Women Act (1998), and Afghan Freedom Support Act (2002). She has campaigned to close the wage gap and to achieve pay equity for the vast majority of women who are segregated in low-paying jobs.

As President of the National Organization for Women, Eleanor Smeal led the drive to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), the largest nationwide grassroots and lobbying campaign in the history of the modern women's movement. The ERA campaign reshaped the contours of women's political participation in the U.S. and demonstrated the strength and breadth of public support for women's rights. Ultimately, the ERA's defeat exposed the entrenched interests opposed to women's equality.

Emboldened by the ERA campaign, Smeal called for the women's movement, despite much controversy in both the media and the movement itself, to return to the streets in the mid-1980s to dramatize popular support for abortion rights. When many said it could not be done, she led the first national abortion rights march in 1986, drawing more than 100,000 participants to Washington, D.C.

Eighteen years later, Smeal and other feminist leaders organized the phenomenally successful March for Women's Lives. On April 25, 2004, over one million people gathered on the National Mall in Washington, DC to demand that women's health, access to contraception and abortion, global family planning, and sex education receive the funding and support that they deserve. With Smeal's experience as a grassroots mobilizer in every reproductive rights march since 1975, her leadership was integral to the march's success.

When violence threatened to close the nation's women's health care clinics, Smeal developed FMF's National Clinic Access Project, which is the largest program of its kind in the nation. The Feminist Majority Foundation has trained over 45,000 clinic defenders in some 26 states in non-violent clinic defense techniques. Smeal was also the chief architect of the Feminist Majority Foundation's landmark 1994 U.S. Supreme Court case upholding the use of buffer zones to protect clinics, *Madsen v. Women's Health Center*.

Throughout her career, Smeal has promoted the involvement of young women in the feminist movement. Smeal initiated the *Choices* Campus Leadership Program, a groundbreaking organizing effort on college campuses throughout the country. This program is comprised of a nationwide network of campus-based feminist activist groups called Feminist Majority Leadership Alliances. Leadership Alliances are based on the Feminist Majority Foundation's innovative study and action model which focuses on four critical "choice" issues: Reproductive Choices, Career Choices, Leadership Choices, and Saving Choices: Fighting the Backlash.

Smeal was one of the first women's leaders to bring to the attention of women in the U.S. and worldwide the significance of mifepristone (formerly known as RU 486) as a medical breakthrough for women. Decrying what she termed the "medical McCarthyism" of withholding the drug from U.S. women, Smeal led a successful 12-year fight to bring mifepristone to American women. On September 28, 2000, the Food and Drug Administration approved the use of the drug for early abortions. Now, Smeal is leading efforts to increase research on mifepristone's other potential uses. In 1998, the Feminist Majority Foundation took on the unique responsibility of conducting the Mifepristone Compassionate Use Program and, in 2006, is prepared to begin clinical trials on the benefits of mifepristone for serious conditions and diseases primarily afflicting women.

Expanding feminist activism to a global level, Smeal in 1997 launched the international Campaign to Stop Gender Apartheid in Afghanistan to counter the Taliban's abuse of women, which included edicts that banished women from the work force, closed schools to girls, prohibited women from leaving their homes unless accompanied by a close male relative, and forced women to wear the burqa. Smeal and the Feminist Majority were the first to draw world attention to the Taliban's brutal treatment of women in Afghanistan. The Campaign helped stop the U.S. and United Nations from officially recognizing the Taliban. Since the fall of the Taliban, Smeal has been leading efforts to increase reconstruction and humanitarian aid to Afghanistan and expand peacekeeping troops outside the capital of Kabul to ensure stability and progress in women's rights.

In December 2001, Smeal, feminist author and activist, Gloria Steinem, and Ms. magazine joined forces and FMF became the sole publisher of Ms. magazine. Smeal's commitment to achieving equality for women and her vision for Ms. as the voice of the feminist movement brings new life into the 30-year trailblazing history of the magazine. Through this combination, Ms. will continue to be a forum for challenging conventional ideas and a springboard for the development and dissemination of feminist ideas throughout the world. Under Smeal's oversight, Ms. magazine has launched an annual cruise in which feminists can share ideas, experience unique programming, and vacation together.

Smeal is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Duke University and holds an M.A. degree from the University of Florida. She received an honorary Doctor of Law from Duke University in 1991 and an honorary Doctor of Science from the University of Florida in 2003.

Katherine Spillar

Executive Vice President of the Feminist Majority Foundation

Katherine Spillar is the Executive Vice President of the Feminist Majority Foundation and the Feminist Majority, national organizations working for women's equality, empowerment, and non-violence. One of the founders, Spillar has been a driving force in executing the organization's diverse programs securing women's rights since its inception. A specialist in community organizing, Spillar is also a trained economist and researcher, and speaks to diverse audiences on a broad range of feminist topics and on television and radio.

In 2005, Spillar was named Executive Editor of *Ms.* magazine. Under her oversight, *Ms.* has increased its investigative reporting, with cover stories exposing sweatshops, forced prostitution, and forced abortions in the U.S. territory of the Northern Mariana Islands, and how big oil wins over women's rights in U.S. foreign policy. *Ms.*, the oldest national feminist publication, reaches activists and opinion leaders in the media, politics, and civic and academic circles.

Spillar has been a national leader in the struggle to counter the effects of extremist anti-abortion groups that target women's reproductive health clinics. She has directed the Feminist Majority Foundation's research and public education activities as well as grassroots organizing to keep clinics open in the face of extremist violence, and works to secure more law enforcement resources to reduce this domestic terrorism. Altogether, Spillar has been responsible for a project that has recruited some 45,000 volunteers in 43 cities in more than 25 states. She played an instrumental role in the Feminist Majority Foundation's landmark 1994 Supreme Court case upholding the use of buffer zones to protect clinics, *Madsen v. Women's Health Center*, and continues to oversee the Foundation's litigation efforts to stop violent extremists.

Spillar plays a key role in directing the West Coast activities of the Foundation's *Choices* Campus Leadership Program.

Spillar is experienced in referendum and initiative campaigns, coordinating the Feminist Majority Foundation's field operations in three statewide campaigns for women's rights. In 1990, she managed the field component and election day visibility activities statewide to defeat two anti-abortion referendums on the ballot in Oregon. In 1992, Spillar led a statewide college campus and community organizing campaign in Iowa in a narrowly defeated effort to pass a state Equal Rights Amendment. In 1996, Spillar spearheaded the Feminist Majority Foundation's efforts against Prop. 209 in California, the anti-affirmative action measure. She oversaw the organization's Freedom Summer and Freedom Fall college student campaigns, a statewide Freedom Bus Tour featuring Eleanor Smeal, Jesse Jackson, Dolores Huerta, and local women's and civil rights leaders, rallies, and a statewide election day project which mobilized 4,500 volunteers.

Prior to her tenure with the Feminist Majority Foundation, Spillar served four terms as President of the Los Angeles Chapter of the National Organization for Women, the largest chapter of NOW at the time. During her presidency, she led the organizing of the largest West Coast march in the history of women's rights for keeping abortion safe and legal on March 16, 1986. Spillar led the Chapter's activities in local and statewide public education campaigns and spearheaded West Coast fundraising for National NOW in numerous events.

Spillar speaks to diverse audiences on a broad range of feminist topics and on television and radio. She is a magna cum laude graduate of Texas Christian University and holds a Master of Science interdisciplinary degree in Economics and Urban Studies from Trinity University. Before becoming active in women's rights, Spillar was Director of Public Policy Research and Economics for a statewide trade association in California.