



NAPAWF ~ TOP NEWS

Elections 2011: Celebrate, but Keep Fighting!

States held a number of elections this November, and the results were impressive! Mississippi voters did us proud when they rejected a bill that would make fertilized eggs legal persons. Anti-choice activists had hoped to use it to provoke a lawsuit to challenge the landmark Roe v. Wade Supreme Court ruling on a woman's right to an abortion. Instead, voters rejected the measure with 55% of the vote. Then in Ohio, voters repealed a Republican-backed law that restricted collective bargaining for public workers, in a resounding victory for organized labor. And, the Arizona state senator who championed the anti-immigrant "papers please" law that started it all—Russell Pearce--was removed by voters in a historic recall election. Can I get a hell yeah?!

Still, even as we shift into gear for the 2012 presidential elections, these issues remain crucial. Anti-choicers are preparing to overflow the ballots with "personhood" measures in at least six other states. And, xenophobic policies that take women away from their partners and children are likely to take front and center stage as well. To make sure API women are leading the charge in 2012, NAPAWF joined APIAVote to host a "New Faces of Leadership" event to highlight API women in Congress. This live-streamed event allowed NAPAWF members and folks from around the country to enjoy a candid Q&A conversation with US Representatives Judy Chu, Colleen Hanabusa, and Mazie Hirono. NAPAWF has also joined [HERVotes](#), a coalition of national women's organizations working to raise awareness about just what is at stake for women in the upcoming elections.

Children Speak: Keep Families Together!

[We Belong Together](#) has called upon youth from across the nation to speak up and tell our leaders that families belong together! The [A Wish for the Holidays](#) campaign gained nation-wide visibility as over 4,800 young people began writing letters to President Obama and DC policy-makers to tell them that immigration enforcement policies that tear families apart don't work and that children belong with their parents. Unfortunately, a new report, Shattered Families, was recently released that shows that more than 5,000 children are currently trapped in Child Protective Services because their parents have been detained or deported by ICE and ICE policies impede the ability of parents to reunite with their children or regain their parental rights. What's even more horrifying is that this number is expected to increase to 15,000 children in just 5 years! NAPAWF and the National Domestic Workers Alliance are partnering on the We Belong Together initiative in order to highlight the devastating impact of immigration policies on women and their children. **It's not too late to send in YOUR letters by November 30th!** The letters written by youth will be delivered to members of Congress, officials in the Department of Homeland Security, and White House staff on December 8th, in honor of Human Rights Day. Make a [pledge](#) to write your letter today!

NAPAWF ~ ON THE HILL

Let's Talk About Sex... and Schools

On November 2, Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA) introduced the [Real Education for Healthy Youth Act](#). This legislation would provide young people with the comprehensive sexuality education they need to make informed, responsible, and healthy decisions in order to become sexually healthy adults and have healthy relationships. It provides information on abstinence as well as on prevention measures, and recognizes that "real sex-ed" includes culturally relevant information on healthy relationships, gender and sexual orientation, and decision-making. We applaud these members of Congress for bringing such an important measure to the table! On a related note, the American Association released a sobering report on sexual harassment in schools, called "[Crossing the Line: Sexual Harassment at School](#)." It reveals the shocking prevalence of sexual harassment for students, teachers, and administrators and negative impacts on student's education.

Super Committee Implosion

It's official. The Congressional Super-Committee, that powerful group of 12 bipartisan congressional leaders who were supposed to find \$1.2 trillion to cut the deficit, failed to reach an agreement. Apparently, revenue increases on the wealthiest Americans was too much for conservatives to bear. While many advocates are relieved that what was looking like a very bad

deal fell through, now we're looking at automatic, across-the-board cuts of \$1.2 trillion beginning in 2013. Half of the cuts will come from discretionary programs that we care about (such as health care and education) and half from defense spending. Meanwhile, Social Security tax credits and unemployment benefits are set to expire at the end of the year and the House is expected to consider a Balanced Budget Amendment this week, which intends to force Congress to cut all programs by an average of 17% by 2018.

Although, it's easy to mock DC disconnect with reality, conservatives continues to infuriate with their steadfast and incredibly destructive refusal to end the Bush tax cuts on the richest people in America. This means that cuts to Medicaid, TANF, food stamps/SNAP, and other programs that low-income families depend on, are being made in order to *subsidize tax cuts for the wealthy*. And while they fill the air with "balanced budget" bull, the long-term unemployed, of which APIs have the highest rate, continue to wait for legislation that's not being passed. Conservatives in Congress have now prevented 3 jobs bills from moving forward including the American Jobs Act, the Teachers and First Responders Back to Work Act, and the Rebuild America Act. So what's the good news? The "good" news is that recent data shows that women are starting to make small gains in the Recovery. Women gained roughly 58% of the 80,000 jobs added to the lackluster economy in October, while the unemployment rate hovers at 9%.

Congressional Allies Tackle Immigration

Pro-immigrant legislators are taking action in support of immigration rights. Representative Honda hosted a briefing on immigration laws for same-sex couples earlier this month. Then, last week a delegation of 10 congress members led by Representative Luis Gutierrez, traveled to Alabama to witness and protest the damaging impact of the state's draconian anti-immigrant law on immigrant communities, farms, businesses, and schools. The delegation included members of the Black, Hispanic, Asian Pacific American, and Progressive caucuses. In DC, NAPAWF joined and spoke at a vigil held in solidarity with the congressional delegation to keep the voices and stories of immigrant women front and center.

NAPAWF ~ IN THE ADMINISTRATION

White House Implored to Protect Women

Although one can only wonder why the US Catholic Bishops have decided to make women's reproductive decision-making their Priority #1 offensive, their stringent anti-abortion, anti-contraception, anti-woman agenda is currently threatening a major Affordable Care Act win for women. They are trying to force the Administration to dilute a provision to grant full insurance coverage of birth control for women, by expanding the "conscience" clause exemption to include

an outrageously broad definition of religious institutions, including Catholic-affiliated schools and hospitals. Never mind that an institution cannot actually develop a “conscience” and that women of all religious backgrounds regularly use contraception. Women’s rights groups, including NAPAWF, are urging the Administration to stand strong and allow all women to benefit from full insurance coverage of contraceptives.

Immigration Headaches Continue

The Obama Administration continues to try to find a middle-ground that will placate irate immigrant rights activists and those adamant against any ease in deportations. The Department of Justice (DOJ) just filed a lawsuit against South Carolina to challenge its extreme anti-immigrant law, which makes it the 5th state to get slapped with a federal lawsuit for over-reaching on immigration enforcement. Six weeks ago, when the Alabama law went into effect, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) vowed not to help state officials implement the law... only no one knows exactly what means. Now activists are demanding DHS to immediately suspend deportation programs in Alabama and to enforce its own guidance on limiting enforcement measures. Meanwhile, on November 17th, DHS announced that it would begin reviewing 300,000 pending deportation cases to discontinue proceeding against undocumented immigrants without criminal records and start new efforts to train ICE agents and lawyers on how to implement the new discretionary approach.

HHS Touts New Data Collection Standards

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), has announced the publishing of [final standards for data collection](#) and reporting on race, ethnicity, sex, primary language, and disability status. This is welcome news for health advocates in the API community who have been clamoring for data collection changes that would help government officials, researchers, and advocates identify and reduce health disparities. Without uniform, quality data, it's nearly impossible for the API community to advocate effectively, especially on disparities that impact smaller API sub-populations. NAPAWF’s own advocacy on cervical cancer and teen pregnancy rates in API communities, has been impeded by lack of data, reporting, and awareness by public health officials. With respect to primary language, this announcement also breaks new ground. For the first time, primary language spoken by a person or in a household will be collected in a standardized way. Furthermore, HHS will continue to work on efforts to integrate questions on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) health into national HHS data collection.

Meanwhile, for the first time, the [Women’s Health USA 2011 report](#) features data on the health of lesbian and bisexual women, as well as American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander women. Among its findings, in 2009, almost 20% of women ages 18 to 64 were uninsured and many reported skipping needed care because of cost. The report also found ongoing disparities in Pap tests for API women who still lag behind all other racial groups in having obtained a Pap test within the past three years. American Indians/Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders share health disparities related to substance use and chronic conditions. Finally, both lesbian and bisexual women reported rates of smoking and binge drinking approximately twice as high as heterosexual women.

NAPAWF ~ IN THE STATES

Alabama Continues to Make Headlines

Alabama's draconian anti-immigrant law has made headlines for being the harshest anti-immigrant law in the nation, resulting in mass exodus from the state and stories of water and electricity being cut from people's homes. Now comes news of discrepancies in how Alabaman law enforcement and court officials are interpreting and implementing the poorly crafted law as challenges continue to wind through the courts. And public health officials are warning of a public health crisis as immigrants have stopped seeking medical care from government clinics. The head of the state health agency is warning of contagion from communicable diseases such as chicken pox or tuberculosis and of increased risk of infant mortality for women who don't receive prenatal care. At least the idiots who proposed and voted for this horrendous law are starting to talk about the need to scrap or modify it, since it is so clearly an example of failed governing. NAPAWF continues to lead efforts to oppose anti-immigrant enforcement-only legislation and plans to take another We Belong Together delegation of women leaders to Alabama in early 2012.

NAPAWF ~ IN THE COURTS

Supreme Court in the Spotlight

On November 15, the Supreme Court agreed to decide the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act, President Obama's healthcare law. The high court agreed to hear two major questions: whether the law's called "individual mandate" provision is unconstitutional, and if so, whether the entire law, with its 450 sections, must be scrapped. Oral arguments are likely to be held in late February or March, with a ruling June. The timing will have a resounding impact on the 2012 Presidential elections with a ruling against the ACA likely to give a boost to the Republican challenger. However, some supporters of the law hope that the least popular part of the law is struck down, that the remaining law would be stronger and more popular.

with voters.



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