

The Alan Guttmacher Institute



A Corporation for
Research, Policy Analysis
and Public Education

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Dear Friend,

"Every public reform," wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson, "was once a private opinion."

For years The Alan Guttmacher Institute has helped to transform the private opinions of people like you into enlightened government policies on such issues as public funding for family planning services, freedom of choice for abortion, and the rights of minors to make responsible decisions about their own sexuality. With the help of many friends we have challenged the government and government institutions to respond to the awesome problem of unwanted childbearing in this country (more than half of all pregnancies are unintended).

Now, however, those opinions, and the policies they have fostered, are being attacked by a small minority of Americans. The programs we have all worked so hard to achieve -- which affect the lives of millions of men, women and children -- are seriously threatened. In fact, the entire family planning/reproductive rights movement is in jeopardy. Buoyed by the Supreme Court decision upholding the Hyde Amendment and the results of last November's election, the so-called "moral majority" is now seeking to impose its views on all Americans, to ban not only abortion but free access to effective contraception as well.

Contraceptive services to teens and sex education programs, for example -- already under sharp attack -- can easily be sacrificed to budget cuts in the coming fiscal year. This, despite the fact that adolescent pregnancy rates continue to rise each year and that an estimated 1.2 million teenagers will become pregnant in 1981, some as young as 13 or 14 years old.

Those few state legislatures that have resisted abortion foes and voted (usually by very narrow margins) to use their own funds for Medicaid abortions will come under increasingly intense pressure to repeal their abortion funding legislation and join the roster of 39 states that have bowed to the political strong-arm tactics of the so-called Pro-life forces.

At the same time, the threat of an anti-abortion Constitutional amendment in the near future is very real. Nineteen of the 34 states needed have already called for a Constitutional Convention. And many more states can be expected to enact legislation to further curtail women's reproductive freedom. In Congress, Senator Hatch's subcommittee on the Constitution has begun consideration of an amendment granting Congress

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and the states the right to pass laws regulating and restricting abortion. Because it sounds so innocuous, and because most Congressmen are eager to dispose of the issue, this amendment has a real chance of passing. It is a clever move on the part of anti-abortion strategists that could herald the end of legal abortion in the U.S.

Never in AGI's 12-year history has the need for vigilance -- for continuous monitoring of public policy legislation and court decisions, for educating and persuading lawmakers with balanced, reliable information, for facilitating communication between activist groups -- been more urgent. Our research findings and publications stimulate press and public discussion of the issues; our data is used in fighting legal battles and overturning restrictive statutes. Their continued availability has never been more essential to the movement.

And never in our 12-year history has our need for funds been greater. The competition for support from private foundations is more and more frantic and there is just not enough money to go around. Inflation has sent program costs soaring and we are fearful that vital research, policy analysis and our all-important public information activities may have to be cut back.

This is a time for redoubled efforts, not for cutting back. It is a time for careful analysis and determined action, not for panic or resignation. But most of all, it is a time for each of us to take a stand, to make our opinions felt, to speak out and to support those who do. We must not let ignorance prevail.

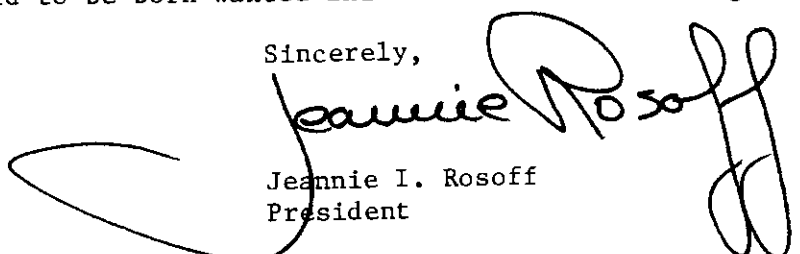
If you care about your private opinions on family planning and abortion -- and the programs and policies they have inspired -- stand behind them now by becoming an Associate of AGI. I urge you to act today.

With your help, AGI can lead the way to the repeal of the Hyde Amendment. We can alert the public and the Congress to the enormity of the welfare drain that results when poor women are forced to have babies they can't provide for. We can argue forcefully for services for teens by proving the effectiveness of existing programs in preventing teenage pregnancy. We can document the awful consequences of a Constitutional amendment banning abortion.

And if you subscribe to AGI publications at the half-price Associates' rate, your own decisions and efforts will be supported by the most up-to-date, reliable information available anywhere on these complex and critical issues.

Please act now. Your membership contribution of \$30, \$50, \$100 or \$1,000 will help us support the whole movement's efforts with facts that mobilize the support we know exists for the right of every child to be born wanted and loved. We are counting on you.

Sincerely,



Jeannie I. Rosoff
President

P.S. If you give \$50 or more we will send you a hardcover copy of Fred Jaffe's last book, Abortion Politics, published by McGraw-Hill. It is a remarkable chronicle of the ten-year struggle for reproductive freedom, a struggle to which AGI's first president dedicated his life.