

# public affairs update

## Roe v. Wade Anniversary

January 22, 2007 marks the 34th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark 1973 decision that established the constitutional right of women to choose to have a safe and legal abortion.

Thirty-four years later, the struggle to protect women's health and safety continues. January 22nd also marks the 6th anniversary of President Bush's reinstatement of the global gag rule, a set of onerous restrictions placed on foreign organizations receiving U.S. funding. The global gag rule forces established family planning organizations to choose between accepting U.S. funds that ultimately compromise women's health and rejecting much-needed resources, a move which also jeopardizes women's health by contributing to closures of clinics, elimination of services and exacerbating the unmet need for contraceptive supplies.

When it comes to women's health and safety, the Bush administration is on the wrong track. Bush's recent appointment of anti-birth control extremist Eric Keroack to oversee Title X, the nation's family planning program, shows the depth of their misunderstanding of women's health needs. The battle to protect women's health and safety is not over.

January 22nd comes on the heels of the 2006 elections, when voters nationwide rejected extremist policies and politicians and defeated dangerous abortion bans and restrictions that threaten women's health. *Roe v. Wade* is a powerful reminder that politicians should stay out of families' personal, moral and medical decisions.

## Take Action: This Man Doesn't Believe in Birth Control

The appointment of anti-birth control, anti-sex education advocate Eric Keroack to oversee Title X, the nation's family planning program is striking proof that the Bush administration remains dramatically out of step with the nation's priorities.

Planned Parenthood is sponsoring an online petition urging the replacement of Dr. Keroack with an administrator who is committed to protecting women's health. To date, more than 111,000 people have signed the petition calling for Keroack's withdrawal.

Tell Secretary Leavitt to appoint an administrator who is committed to prevention and full funding of Title X, America's family planning program by signing the online petition at [www.ppaction.org/campaign/keroackpetition2/](http://www.ppaction.org/campaign/keroackpetition2/).

call 215.351.5510  
visit [www.ppsp.org](http://www.ppsp.org)

 **Planned Parenthood**<sup>®</sup>  
Southeastern Pennsylvania

## public affairs update, cont.

### U.S. House Defeats Biased Counseling Legislation

In their final hours in control of the U.S. House, Republicans scheduled a vote on the so-called "Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act". This final attempt at extremism by the departing House leadership failed because Planned Parenthood and others STOOD UP FOR CHOICE.

Nearly all of the national women's organizations and relevant medical organizations opposed the "Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act" as an attempt to scare women and infantilize a fetus by mandating that providers offer patients biased counseling. If passed, this anti-choice legislation would have forced a woman (with a pregnancy at 22 weeks gestation or more) to read and sign an inflammatory statement asserting that a fetus aborted may experience pain - a claim that is not scientifically validated. The legislation also would have required that physicians offer to administer anesthesia directly to the fetus.

To pass, the anti-choice leadership needed 2/3 of the House to vote for the bill or 275 votes. Planned Parenthood activists responded in record numbers and affiliates lobbied targeted representatives to vote against inserting politics into doctors' offices. On December 6th the bill was defeated by a final vote of 250-162 with 20 members not voting. The leadership fell 25 votes shy of the votes needed for passage.

This is a sign of good things to come as we move forward in the new Congress. Thanks to the 2006 mid-term elections, the U.S. House leadership is now pro-choice!

### Senate Confirms FDA Commissioner

On December 8th, the US Senate confirmed Andrew C. von Eschenbach, M.D., as Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) by a vote of 80-11. Senators Clinton (D-NY) and Murray (D-WA) lifted their hold on von Eschenbach's confirmation after the FDA granted Plan B emergency contraception (EC) over-the-counter status for women aged 18 and older in August.

Planned Parenthood's earlier opposition to Dr. von Eschenbach's confirmation was also tied to the FDA's delay on an EC OTC announcement. Dr. von Eschenbach has served as Acting Commissioner since September 2005. Prior to that, he served as Director of the National Cancer Institute (NCI).

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### Upcoming Events: Mark your Calendars!

- Volunteer Night at PPSP, 1144 Locust Street  
Wednesday, January 17th - 5:00-7:30pm
- Cocktails for a Cause - *Roe v. Wade: Where are we now?*  
Tuesday, January 23rd - 5:00-8:00pm  
Devil's Alley: 1907 Chestnut Street / 2nd floor / Philadelphia

To RSVP or for information about these or other PPSP events, contact the Public Affairs Department at [publicaffairs@ppsp.org](mailto:publicaffairs@ppsp.org) or (215) 351-5585.