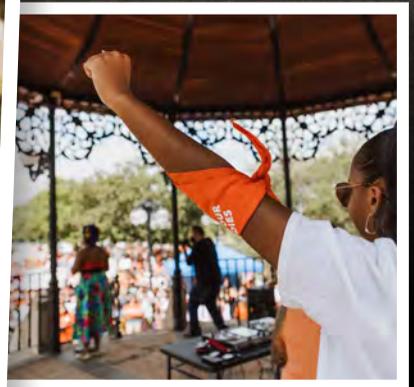


HORIZONS

A Publication of Planned Parenthood South Texas



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We provide and protect the health care and information people need to plan their families and their futures.

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2021 WINTER HORIZONS

A Publication of Planned Parenthood South Texas

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Letter from the Board Chair



I have begun to mark the passage of time without reference to a calendar.

When my children were younger, I lived and died by the familiar march of days, weeks and months, knowing what was about to happen like I knew the back of my hand.

But the emptying of my nest, the loss of my mother, the global pandemic, and the murder of George Floyd changed everything.

Now, time is divided into the Before and the After.

At the tail end of the Before, in January of 2020, I became the Chair of the Board of Planned Parenthood South Texas (PPST). There's never a "dull moment" at PPST, but with the Texas Legislative session a year away, and Governor Abbott's Medicaid case languishing in the courts, I took the PPST baton from my predecessor, Kathy Armstrong, with a sense of calm.

Within months, however, the After began.

While much about PPST's operation stayed the same – we did NOT close clinics, staff stayed at their posts, and patient volume, after a brief dip, continued to be quite strong – the virus applied horrific economic and emotional pressures to our patients, staff and their families. Inside our clinics, control and safety were re-defined to

include beating back a global, deadly disease. Outside our doors, very little felt under control or safe.

And while, for its patients, PPST flexed its family planning muscle mightily, in old and new ways, the After delivered the greatest threat in my lifetime to women's autonomy and health in the form of S B 8. So, while, PPST made contraception readily and inexpensively available, and stood up a new telehealth service, elected leadership in Texas willfully and hostilely

cherry-picked which Texans they would represent and champion and which they would chase outside the state for constitutionally protected health care.

All the work I calmly planned for the board in the Before necessarily took a back seat to the events of the After.

Which brings me to Jeffrey Hons and his upcoming retirement.

Jeffrey and I live fewer than two miles apart and we both walk for exercise. Even before we had to forsake meeting in offices and conference rooms, Jeffrey and I took our CEO/Board Chair meetings to our neighborhood streets and parks.

Our peripatetic meetings confirmed three incontrovertible truths. First, Jeffrey walks quickly. Second, Jeffrey is a once-in-a-generation leader whose stewardship of PPST, over 22 years, is



Letter from the Board Chair (cont.)

the stuff of both sturdy and unwavering pragmatism and extraordinary dreams. And third, though Jeffrey, by virtue of his intellect, experience, talent and job description, has been the face and voice of PPST for decades, the beating heart of PPST is, and always has been, **ALL the people who, today and for close to 100 years, precious hold and fiercely protect PPST's mission.**



Elise and Jeffrey in an off-site meeting

So, though I accepted Jeffrey's notice of retirement with a heavy heart, it had far less to do with the futures of PPST and its patients than it did with my wanting to hold on to the familiar Before.

As of January 1, 2022, I will no longer be PPST's Board Chair. And not long after that, Jeffrey will no longer be PPST's CEO and President. Merritt Clements will take the baton from me, and some exceptional person will take the baton from Jeffrey. And the two of them, and

their board and staff, will lead PPST into a new age of robust health care service and equity advocacy.

How can I be so sure? Two things. The first thing is practical. David Oppenheimer and I are Co-Chairs of the PPST CEO Selection Task Force made up of a collection of rock star donors, directors and friends. We will find that exceptional new leader. I look forward to introducing her or him to you.

The second thing is more from the heart. As we approach the two-year anniversary of the beginning of the After, I can say, without qualification, that the concentration and effort I expended in service of PPST and my communities, just like the hard work and love poured into my relationships with my mother and my children, bring me peace and comfort. And they prove a point. How happily and

safely we'll ride out the After is directly correlated to how vigorously and faithfully we applied ourselves during the Before. **The way I see it, the After's forecast for PPST looks good.**

Thank you for your support.

Your friend in mission,

Elise R. Boyau

Elise Ring Boyau



Care under SB 8



In early September, our Ambulatory Surgery Center was eerily silent.

On the first of the month, the nation's cruelest abortion law went into effect: SB 8, which bans the procedure when embryonic cardiac activity can be detected. That's about six weeks, when many people don't even know they're pregnant.

The state's diabolical law allows anyone, from anywhere – even anti-abortion protesters who have no connection to the patient – to sue anyone who performs an abortion or helps someone get an abortion beyond the new limits. As a result of the state's extreme overreach, the majority of Texans can no longer access this essential care within the state.

PPST briefly paused abortion care while we watched the impact of this terrible law. We have since resumed care within the legal limits. But because the law is so restrictive, only a very limited number of patients can be helped – a small fraction of the patients we would typically serve.

While PPST and other reproductive rights champions fight this unconstitutional ban in court, we have had to find ways to help the community access essential abortion care.

"We are providing care to the patients that we can, but most of them need

While PPST and other reproductive rights champions fight this unconstitutional ban in court, we have had to find ways to help the community access essential abortion care.

navigation assistance, because they will need to leave the state,” said Polin Barraza, PPST Senior Vice-President & COO. “People are very upset. They’re desperate for help.”

In response to SB 8, we launched a Contact Center with dedicated, highly trained staff to provide guidance and navigation to patients seeking abortion care. Contact Center agents navigate callers to abortion providers in New Mexico, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and other states, and offer additional information on the logistics of travel and lodging.

We have also hired a Patient Advocate to provide high-touch assistance to clients who need more than a referral.

In September, we helped more than 370 people who called the contact center for abortion care; in October, that rose to more than 440.

For people who need more help, we connect them to financial resources to cover the cost of their procedure and other expenses or provide aid directly. We can provide lodging vouchers so patients can have a place to stay on their journey. There is also financial assistance to help with travel, food, and childcare.

No matter what, we will continue to be and become what our clients need us to be. That has changed many times in the 82 years since we began serving South Texas.

And because it’s more important than ever to prevent unintended pregnancy, we are also offering emergency contraception (the “morning-after pill”) free of charge at all of our health centers. It can prevent pregnancy if taken up to 72 hours after unprotected sex.

No matter what, we will continue to be and become what our clients need us

to be. That has changed many times in the 82 years since we began serving South Texas. Today, our clients need us to be trusted providers of high-quality health care, unstoppable abortion navigators, and relentless advocates. It is our honor to step forward, meet the need – and push forward through the need to the better reality that Texans deserve. **Our movement was born out of a fight for equity and justice. We were made for moments like these.**



Texas patients and providers have their day in court



On November 1, the Supreme Court heard two cases challenging Texas' ban on abortion at the detection of embryonic cardiac activity (Senate Bill 8): *United States v.*

Texas, a lawsuit filed by the U.S. Department of Justice, and *Whole Woman's Health v. Jackson*, a case filed by a broad coalition of plaintiffs, including Texas abortion providers, abortion funds, and doctors. The court declined to rule on a request to block the ban until it heard the cases, meaning Texans were forced to wait, and continue to wait, for access to constitutionally protected health care to be restored.

Prior to the hearing, patients, supporters, and allies advocating for abortion rights gathered outside the Court to tell the stories of the Texas patients, providers, and health center staff directly impacted by this unconstitutional ban.

During oral arguments, justices heard not only why SB 8 should be blocked as soon as possible, but how the law's civil enforcement scheme is a threat not only to abortion access, but every other constitutional right we hold dear. In a statement following oral arguments, **Alexis McGill Johnson, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood of America**, noted:

*"Patients and providers from Texas finally had their day in court, and we are grateful for the brilliant lawyers from the Center of Reproductive Rights and the U.S. Department of Justice who made the case against SB 8 on their behalf. But let me be clear: **It never should have come to this.**"*

*"Despite agreeing to hear the challenges to this unconstitutional law, it's devastating that the court has allowed SB 8 to go into effect and remain in effect for over two months. As Justice Kagan pointed out, the harm of the law is not hypothetical – it's had a chilling effect that has all but eliminated Texans' access to abortions after the earliest stages of pregnancy. . . . **If SB 8 is allowed to stand, access to abortion is not the only freedom at risk.** As Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar made clear, every constitutional right we have could be threatened by similar citizen-enforcement schemes. The Supreme Court must move swiftly to allow this law to be blocked and Texans' constitutional rights restored."*

Notably, last month the *Washington Post* released new data from a *Washington Post* and ABC News poll that demonstrates broad support for abortion rights.

According to the Post, **"Americans say by a roughly 2-to-1 margin that the Supreme Court should uphold its landmark abortion decision in *Roe v. Wade*, and by a similar margin the public opposes Texas' law banning most abortions after six weeks of pregnancy."** The poll reveals, once again, that protecting *Roe* is popular across political ideologies and religious views. The polling notes that "overall, 75 percent say such decisions should be left to the woman and her doctor, including 95 percent of Democrats, 81 percent of independents and 53 percent of Republicans."

At press time, the Court had yet to rule on SB 8.

Fighting back

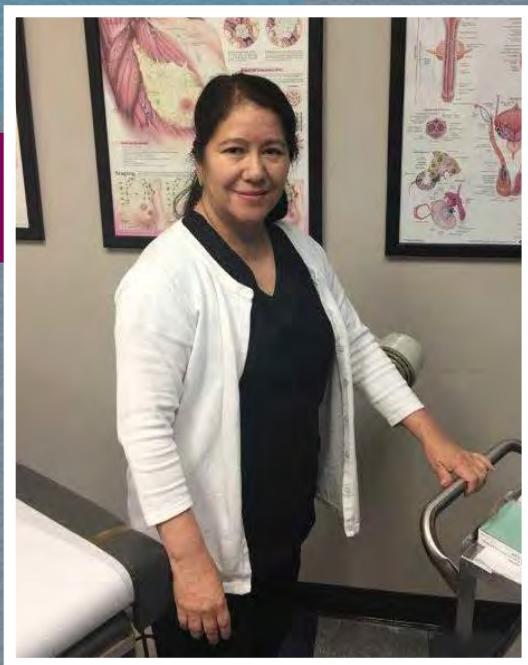
On October 1, reproductive rights advocates in more than 130 cities – including San Antonio and Brownsville – showed up to rally for abortion justice. In Washington, D.C., thousands took to the streets to march to the Supreme Court building, demanding abortion rights as the justices began their session. They sent a clear message to the High Court and elected leaders in their states: **We will not stop fighting for abortion access, no matter what!**



Staff profile: Dedicated to the community for 40 years

Candy Padron

**Center Manager, Marbach
health center in San Antonio**



I have a deep emotional connection with Planned Parenthood. That's what's kept me here all these years since I was hired as a medical assistant in 1981.

I have a great passion for the work I do. Our work has a purpose and a meaning. I love my job. It gives me the opportunity to make a difference in our patients' lives. That's what makes me feel good at the end of the day. Tired, but good.

If it weren't for our supporters we couldn't help the community like we do. I'm so thankful to the people who donate to us. **I love to help the community because I feel like I am the community.**

I have so many memories of my time. I remember there was a young teenager who came in pregnant. Her mother just dropped her off. She knew she didn't want to continue the pregnancy. We felt for her. She had an abortion without charge. One of my coworkers went inside and held her hand. After that, she would come back for birth control. We were all mothers and big sisters to her. That was one that really touched my heart. She has always stayed on my mind.

The laws are so much stricter now, but we manage to help patients who need us. Planned Parenthood stands strong. They're not going to knock us down. **We'll survive whatever they're going to throw at us. We're not going anywhere.**

Reclaiming Title X

The Trump administration struck many blows to reproductive health care in four years, but at least one of those has been reversed.

In October, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) put an end to the harmful Title X gag rule, giving Planned Parenthood health centers reapply for participation in Title X, the nation's only dedicated family planning program.

Title X helps provide affordable birth control, STI testing, cervical cancer screenings, and other reproductive health care to people with low incomes.

**My patients
deserve to
know ALL of
their options.**



#PROTECTX

In 2019, the Trump administration imposed a gag rule designed to cut off Title X patients from the health care providers they trust. The rule banned providers who refer pregnant patients for safe, legal abortion from participating in Title X. This was a laser-focused ideological attack on Planned Parenthoods nationwide, and people with low incomes were the casualties.

To be clear, Title X-funded health centers already were prohibited from performing abortions with those funds. But the gag rule prevented health care staff from even answering patient questions about abortion or telling them where they could safely access this essential health care. The rule excluded all Planned Parenthood health centers from receiving Title X funds – even the ones that do not provide abortion care – **because we refused to compromise our commitment to educating patients about all their options.**

When the gag rule went into effect, Planned Parenthood health centers made up about 13 percent of Title X-funded centers but served 41 percent of all Title X patients. The gag rule slashed access for hundreds of thousands of people nationwide who relied on Planned Parenthood for health care. A shortage of alternate family planning providers meant that many of these patients had no place to go.

The Biden administration reversed the rule, and as of November 8, the Title X gag rule is no longer in effect.

"This policy change will restore access to health care for patients with low incomes who rely on trusted providers like Planned Parenthood," said Valerie Mascorro, PPST's Associate VP for Operations & Growth. "We're working on our application and hope to be selected to return to the Title X network."

Rejoining the Title X network of providers is more important than ever with SB 8, the state's cruel abortion ban that makes the prevention of unintended pregnancies all the more critical.

In addition, recognizing the harm of SB 8, the federal government has set aside an additional pot of funding to address dire need for family planning services in Texas and other states where restrictive laws and policies impact reproductive health access or in states where there is a lack of or limited Title X access.

The benefits of Title X:

- Providers in the Title X network receive federal funding. Before the gag rule, PPST received more than \$800,000 annually in Title X funding.
- Minors (anyone younger than 18) can get birth control without parental consent at a Title X clinic, which is otherwise not allowed under Texas law.
- Providers have access to 340B drug pricing, allowing them to purchase birth control and other pharmaceuticals at a reduced cost. For example, when PPST was forced out of Title X and no longer had access to 340B discount pricing, our cost of a hormonal IUD rose from \$50 to \$480. We want patients to choose the contraceptive method that's best for them – **not just the one they can afford.**

Even with the gag rule reversed, an invitation into Title X funding is not automatic. PPST must apply for this federal funding.

We celebrate this important progress, and redouble our commitment to protect

access to care. We are so grateful to medical providers, grassroots organizers, and the countless supporters like you who spoke out against the Trump administration's gag rule. It's the kind of bold advocacy and courageous action we need to protect access to care.

While this is a step in the right direction, we know there is still much more work to be done – to reverse the harm of the Trump administration, ensure equity in health care, and expand access to sexual and reproductive care.



I should NOT be forced to keep information from my patients.

#PROTECTX

Even with the gag rule reversed, an invitation into Title X funding is not automatic. PPST must apply for this federal funding.

Spotlight on... breast exams



Some patients come in because they felt a lump.

Sometimes it's their partner who noticed something was different.

Other times, the patient didn't notice any symptoms, and it's a routine breast screening that reveals the lump.

Every year, Planned Parenthood South Texas clinicians administer thousands of clinical breast exams to patients at our health centers. Every year, those clinicians refer more than 600 patients for additional screenings, such as mammograms or ultrasounds.

"If there are any abnormalities, the earlier we detect it, the better the outcome is," explained Nikki Johnson, R.N., Quality Manager at Planned Parenthood South Texas.

During a clinical breast exam, a trained health care provider examines the breasts for any possible signs of breast cancer or other breast problems. The provider uses their hands to feel the breasts to detect lumps or other abnormalities, and also checks the armpits.

Besides lumps, other symptoms of breast cancer can include breast pain or swelling, nipple discharge or bleeding, skin thickening or dimpling, and changes in the size or shape of the breast.

Breast exams are an important part of preventative health care. The frequency depends on the patient's age and personal risk factors.

Planned Parenthood also provides referrals for screening mammograms (routine mammograms administered in patients with no apparent symptoms) and diagnostic mammograms (those used after abnormal results on a screening mammogram or

after abnormalities appear during a clinical breast exam). We can connect patients to free or low-cost mammograms when necessary.

While experts used to recommend monthly breast self-exams, research showed these exams were not that helpful. Now experts recommend looking at your breasts and feeling them from time to time so you will notice any changes in how they look or feel. If you do notice a change, make an appointment to be seen as soon as possible.



"We want you to come in and be evaluated, so we can take action if necessary," Johnson said. "I know sometimes people are afraid, but the more proactive you are about your health, the better the outcome."

In the U.S. and in Mexico, abortion access is a constitutional right

By Nubia Reyna, Community Engagement Manager in the Rio Grande Valley

There are a lot of things that come to mind when people ask me what it was like to grow up in Mexico, attend school there and be raised in a traditional Mexican family.

Most people assume that since I am a Mexican feminist who has lived alone since I was 18, my parents must have been very open-minded with me. But that is far from the truth.

Growing up in Mexico, as a woman, with a mother who did not have sex until the day she got married, was like this: *“Ni se te ocurra salir con tu domingo 7 porque te arruinas la vida. Yo no te voy a andar ayudando”* which loosely translated to English means: “Don’t even think about having sex because you will get knocked up and ruin your life. I will not help you.”

All my girlfriends and I grew up with this belief, which was strongly enforced at school, too, where we learned abortion was a sin and we would go to hell for “killing babies.” Once, the school made all the female students watch an anti-abortion video that portrayed a talking fetus asking its mother why a doctor was destroying his house (the womb) and why he was not loved.

Some of the girls in my class cried while watching this video. Since abortion was completely illegal in Mexico, we had no



Nubia at the International Women’s Day rally in Mexico in March 2021

other choice but to think that that video depicted the absolute truth, while also keeping in mind our mothers’ advice. So, at 10 years old, I learned that abortion was out of the question because it could only mean one of three things: jail, death or hell. Or even all three, and in that order.

But a lot of things have changed since I watched that traumatizing and fake video with my female classmates. It has been 15 years since I had that deep conversation with my mom when I had my first period, a conversation that now strikes me as funny.

This year, Mexican women got a new message. In September, the justices of

the Mexican Supreme Court unanimously ruled that it is unconstitutional to criminalize abortion. The court stated that the constitution guarantees the right to choose and no Mexican woman, or person with the ability to become pregnant, should be prosecuted for exercising their constitutional right to choose.

And who do we have to thank for this? Feminist activists. In big and small cities all over Mexico, feminists have taken to the streets for more than 29 years, and even more so during the last two presidential administrations, demanding access to aborto legal, gratuito y seguro (legal, free and safe abortion). This movement has grown all over Latin America, and more and more Mexicans now realize that we need access to sexual education, contraceptives, and safe and legal abortion.

The decriminalization of abortion in Mexico does not mean that we will actually have access to safe and legal abortion. We still have to find a provider who is willing to perform the service and the financial resources to pay. **But the message Mexico sent in September to the world was loud and clear: abortion is not a crime.**

Contrary to Mexico, in Texas, my home for the past ten years, things have taken a U-turn. With Senate Bill 8, which interestingly enough also went into effect in September, millions of women and people with the ability to get pregnant in Texas have lost their right to choose, lost their



Nubia at the Brownsville Bans Off Our Bodies rally in Brownsville in October 2021

bodily autonomy. While Mexico continues to work toward complete access to safe and legal abortion, Texas does the total opposite and takes away our constitutional right to choose. A right that we've had for the past 50 years.

Texas is looking a lot like Mexico did when I was growing up, but there is one big and important difference: the majority of Americans do not want to see *Roe v. Wade* overturned. **The majority of Americans are condemning this ban.**

Just like in Mexico, we are taking to the streets and fighting this ban in court until we restore access to safe and legal abortion for every person in Texas. And like the message of our feminist sisters in Mexico, our message is loud and clear: We are the majority, and we want access to safe and legal abortion. We will not go back.

“You have to tell a story where possibility is more important than peril.”

–Jon Meacham, 2021 Planned Parenthood Annual Luncheon



The stories shared at the 2021 Annual Luncheon were profoundly powerful.

The personal story of Luncheon Co-Chair Joan Wyatt was a bold renunciation of abortion stigma and

shame. It reminded everyone why abortion care is a medical service to be grateful for, why it needs to be talked about honestly, and why it must be protected.

Jon Meacham cautioned us not to let nostalgia rewrite the story of America. Many of the rights we are fighting so hard to protect at this current moment in history, have only been won very recently in our nation’s history. The good old days weren’t good for everyone and the pace of our progress towards equality, justice and freedom is not a predictor of our ultimate success. Persistence – and relentless optimism – are what’s demanded of us now.



Each of our 24,900 clients has a story. And when at some point they reflect on their own story, it is very likely that they will associate a turning point, a resolution or a new beginning to a visit to Planned Parenthood. You, and the more than \$700,000 you contributed in support of the Luncheon, make life-changing, life-saving, health care possible. And because of that generosity, your names are written between the lines of our patients’ personal stories. All of us who work and volunteer at Planned Parenthood South Texas are overwhelmed with gratitude.



Remarks from the stage by Joan Wyatt, Co-Chair of the 2021 Annual Luncheon

Once again, here we are, with friends and colleagues to demonstrate our support of Planned Parenthood South Texas.

Each year (well, except for 2020), we come together to hear about the high quality, affordable and essential healthcare, and sex education that Planned Parenthood provides.

Your support of this luncheon helps Planned Parenthood continue to offer these services, even in trying times. . . . And wouldn't you agree, these ARE trying times? As my Co-Chair Katy Flato would say, these are hair-on-fire trying times – today, in this state and in this political environment. So, while it would be wonderful to talk about the other essential healthcare PP provides, today we need to speak directly about the 3.4% of total services Planned Parenthood offers: abortion.

I am an ardent supporter of PP, for ALL of the services it provides to its clients – primarily patients with low incomes. And also because Planned Parenthood was there for me when I was a teenager and young adult.

It was 1979 and I was in high school in New Jersey. My responsible and good friend and I walked to the Planned Parenthood clinic to learn more about birth control options. I have no idea how we knew Planned Parenthood would be a good resource, but we knew exactly where its closest clinic was located.

It was on a major street we traveled all the time. It was not hidden to avoid threatening protesters or to fly under the radar. PP's clinic was loud and proud at the intersection of Tinton Falls

Road and Broad Street, right next to the Dunkin' Donuts. **I will never forget the non-judgmental care I received and the excellent information I got about my birth control options.**

I turned to Planned Parenthood, because my wonderful, loving and amazing mom, whom I miss terribly, was a product of her generation and religion. We were not able to have conversations about sex and birth control when I was young and in need of information and education. **We were not unique then; regrettably, our story is not unique today.**

PP helped me select the right form of birth control for me, which I used, dutifully, until my mom found it – and took it away from me. We never spoke of it. She couldn't find a way to tell me why, and I couldn't find a way to ask her. In hindsight, as a parent, I understand her legitimate concerns and questions about my choices. But they went unvoiced and unheard – undiscussed. Why was that? Because my sweet mom was restrained by shame and secrecy around sexuality, as was, and is, so often the case. It was taboo.

My mom's unspoken message was clear: Good girls don't have sex before marriage and you're not old enough to have birth control. Your choice is not okay. In other words, you do not have sovereignty over your own body.

A number of years later, in my early 20s, and at a painful and difficult time in my life,

I had an abortion. And while this fact is not easy for me to share with you, not only am I without regret and shame about my choice, I am grateful. Grateful to have had access to



safe and legal abortion care at a time when I was grossly unprepared to nurture a healthy pregnancy or become a parent. **I trusted my decision implicitly.**

And because of my lived experience, by extension, I trust ALL women implicitly to make the best reproductive healthcare choices for themselves, whatever those choices may be. **I believe in their sovereignty over their own bodies.**

Something I cannot say for the – I’m sorry, but this is accurate – the overwhelmingly male Texas officials who authored, voted for and signed SB 8. How many girls and women in Texas have been denied their sovereignty and deprived of their constitutional right to abortion health care since this cruel and dystopian law went into effect September 1st? I shudder to think what is happening to them, their dreams and their futures.

Women like me, and many of you – our friends, sisters, daughters and nieces, who have access to resources – will always be able to obtain safe and legal abortion care. We will take time off from work – if we work, or away from school, and travel to another state or even another country.

Under this new law, right now, as we speak, women in Texas, with unwanted pregnancies – and without resources – have far, far less access to safe abortion care.

Let’s be clear: making abortion illegal does NOT make abortion go away. It only makes it less safe, adding significant risk to a woman’s health and life.

With or without resources, all of our sovereignty is being trampled. And the fact that some of us can afford a work-around is unbearably unfair, sad, and infuriating.

All of which is why I was compelled to share my story with you today. Have you ever heard the expression, “You’re as sick as your secrets?” You’re as sick as your secrets... Shame festers in secrecy and binds us in silence. I believe now is the time to change the abortion narrative. To break the silence... to own our choices and our rights, not just privately, but with others.

While, as a healthcare organization, Planned Parenthood will always protect our right to privacy, it is our job, as supporters of Planned Parenthood, to address the resultant shame, secrecy and stigma surrounding abortion care.

We know that a 59% majority of U.S. adults say abortion should be legal in all or most cases, while 39% think abortion should be illegal in all or most cases. We also know that 1 in 4 American women will have an abortion by the age of 45. Abortion is an integral part of women’s

health care. Yet how many of us who have had abortions have not told our spouses, families, friends or even physicians? Our desire for privacy, in part, masks shame. We are not living out loud in alignment with our values. Many of us don’t want to talk about it. It’s awkward! Complicated. Unpleasant. I get it – it’s private. But I think it’s possible that until that changes, nothing will. **We will continue to be subject to the tyranny of the minority until more of us are willing to make it personal and destigmatize abortion by sharing our experiences.**

My preference? Of course I would prefer not to tell you my story – but I’ve come to the conclusion that my preference for privacy is part of the problem in the national debate about abortion. **My preference for privacy can no longer trump her rights and her sovereignty – so that’s why I’m speaking up.**

Let’s be clear: making abortion illegal does NOT make abortion go away. It only makes it less safe, adding significant risk to a woman’s health and life.

2022 Patron Party with Sarah Schulman

Dear Friends,

I'm writing with a personal invitation to join me on **February 14, 2022 at the McNay Art Museum for our annual Patron Party**. This party feels important to me for several reasons. It will be my last as President & CEO. (Though you can be sure I'll be on the guest list for future Patron events. My support for PPST continues no matter what.) The party is also important because it will feature a special guest who I've come to admire and respect greatly: Sarah Schulman.

Ms. Schulman is an intellectual heavyweight and a prolific writer. Her early activism included action for abortion rights and opposition to sterilization abuse. She was a significant figure in AIDS activism and in the leadership of ACT UP, the AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power. I first fell in love with her when I read her book *Gentrification of the Mind*. Now I've begun to read *Let The Record Show*.

In *Gentrification*, she argues (successfully, in my view) that AIDS eliminated over 500,000 Americans – overwhelmingly artists, activists, progressives, Queer people and others who, had they lived, would have contributed significantly to moving the nation forward on progressive issues. Without their cultural influence and contributions, the nation's zeitgeist shifted to the right (think Ralph Reed, Focus on the Family, and the rise of the Christian Coalition, as examples) because we were missing half a million thought leaders and progressive warriors who would have raised the nation's consciousness in a different direction.

In *Let The Record Show*, Schulman's premise is that a very small group of marginalized people who, at the time, had no guaranteed civil rights, no real power, and who were dying very quickly at alarming numbers, were able to bring the world's most powerful government to shift policy on AIDS. How? Direct action. **She tells us that people who have nothing to lose are willing to risk a great deal.** She makes clear several aspects of their strategies, such as, ACT UP would never provide any medical or social services because providers have to follow rules. ACT UP would not concern itself with whether or not it was "getting along" with those in power, rather, the point would be to NOT follow any of the unwritten rules of the game. Act Up wouldn't worry about their respectability. There would be only one rule: we will force the government to work faster in order to save our people. [\[continued ↪\]](#)



ABOUT SARAH SCHULMAN

Sarah Schulman is a novelist, nonfiction writer, playwright, screenwriter and AIDS historian. She is a Guggenheim Fellow in Playwriting, A Fulbright Fellow in Judaic Studies and has been awarded the Kessler Prize for Sustained Contribution to LGBT Studies and the Whitehead Award for Lifetime Contribution to LGBT Literature. Sarah is also a Distinguished Professor of the Humanities at the City University of New York, College of Staten Island and is on the Advisory Board of Jewish Voice for Peace.

Schulman believes that the lessons from ACT UP have value to other issues and movements. I believe that her observations about direct action (the style of activism employed by Act Up) and how to move the nation (as ACT UP did in the late '80s and early '90s) are spot on – this is the type/style/sort of activism that we need now. I've devoted my career to Planned Parenthood. My work has been grounded in the conviction that sexuality is a wonderful and beautiful part of being human, therefore laws and governments that try to shame people and control their bodies, their decisions, their ability to be themselves – those laws must be challenged and those governments must be taken down. Abortion rights and reproductive self-determination are at an inflection point and we must become ready to stand up and fight like never before. I think Sarah Schulman knows a good deal about this and that is precisely what I intend to discuss with her on February 14, 2022. **It would make me very happy to see you there.**



Jeffrey Hons

The PPST Patrons Party celebrates donors whose support in the prior year reached or exceeded the thousand-dollar mark. Please consider renewing your Patron-level support before the end of the year or becoming a Patron for the very first time. Contact Angela Koester at (210) 736-2244, ext 317 or angela.koester@ppsouthtexas.org.

Upcoming

Events!

Black Quantum Physics: A Professionalism Time-Warp

6:30 p.m.-10:00 p.m.
on Thursday, January 20

Hopscotch, 711 Navarro St., Suite 100,
San Antonio

As part of Dreamweek San Antonio 2022, Black Freedom Factory presents an event exploring the future of professionalism, art, and fashion. Sponsored by Planned Parenthood South Texas, the event includes a Bans Off Our Bodies fashion show, Afrofuturism panel discussion, and Teoaxicatli Activation: a soundscape immersion experience. Tickets cost \$10-\$50 at ppsouthtx.org/dreamweek.

Feminist Read-In

Noon on Saturday, January 29

Carla Hughes Studio and Art Gallery,
305 W. Van Buren Ave, Harlingen

Gather to discover books exploring feminism in all its forms. Participants pick a book from a diverse array, read their selection, then share their thoughts with the rest of the group. Refreshments included. Admission is free, but RSVPs are required. Contact nubia.reyna@ppsouthtexas.org.

International Women's Day Art Exhibit

5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 8

Brownsville Museum of Fine Art,
660 E. Ringgold St., Brownsville

In the exhibit *Marches That Move Us*, curated by Carla Hughes and Josie Del Castillo, Rio Grande Valley artists celebrate protest, activism, and fighting for progress. To RSVP and for more information, email nubia.reyna@ppsouthtexas.org.

