

## Overview of the Feminist Majority Foundation

As an organizer for the Feminist Majority Foundation, you are a part of history in the making. In our reproductive rights work alone, our National Clinic Access Project developed the strategy and tactics for defending and securing abortion clinics. In 1994, the Feminist Majority Foundation initiated, pursued, and won a Supreme Court case establishing the constitutionality of safety buffer zones around clinics.

The Feminist Majority Foundation worked for 11 years to win approval of the early abortion pill, mifepristone (formerly known as RU 486). And we won approval for mifepristone as an early abortion option in 2000. Finally, in 2007, the Feminist Majority Foundation sponsored and began mifepristone clinical trials as a possible treatment for progesterone-dependent ovarian cancer. In 2009, we will launch uterine clinical trials.

In 2002, the Feminist Majority Foundation was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize because of its work on behalf of Afghan women and girls. With the support of literally tens of thousands, our work was key in stopping U.S. and U.N. recognition of the Taliban and, in 2003 and 2005, in winning extensive funding for Afghan women's programs, for the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) and the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA). In 1996, the Feminist Majority Foundation (FMF) launched its Choices Campus Leadership Program. FMF was the first reproductive rights and first women's rights organization to invest a substantive budget in campus activist organizing. Today, the FMF campus program is the largest of its kind and the largest pro-choice network on campus.

The Feminist Majority Foundation was founded in 1987 as a 501(c)(3) tax exempt, non-profit organization. FMF is the nation's largest feminist research and action organization dedicated to women's equality, reproductive rights and health, and non-violence. To carry out these aims, FMF engages in research and public policy development, public education programs, grassroots organizing projects, leadership training and development programs. Its sister 501(c)(4) organization, the Feminist Majority, focuses on empowering women in public policy-making as well as gender balance in elective and appointative offices.

FMF is organized on a project basis. Currently, FMF has 12 active projects, or programs, each trailblazing and making history in their own right.

- Choices Campus Leadership Program
- Women's Health and Research
- Campaign to Help Afghan Women and Girls
- National Clinic Access Project
- National Center for Women and Policing
- Education Equity Project
- Media Archival Program
- Women and the Media/Communications Program
  - Liberty Media for Women/*Ms.* Magazine
  - Documentaries
  - Publications
- Global Reproductive Health Program
- Global Women's Empowerment Program
- Feminist Leadership and Empowerment Program
- Online Organizing and Education Program

FMF hosts three major websites: [Feminist.org](http://Feminist.org); [Feministcampus.org](http://Feministcampus.org); [Msmagazine.com](http://Msmagazine.com). FMF also hosts [HelpAfghanWomen.com](http://HelpAfghanWomen.com) and [WomenandPolicing.com](http://WomenandPolicing.com).

The Feminist Majority Foundation has organized campaigns around ballot initiatives for many years. FMF organized massive support among college students to defeat two anti-choice ballot initiatives in Oregon in 1990, including a parental consent initiative; to secure support for the state Equal Rights Amendment in Iowa in 1992; and to counter an anti-affirmative action ballot measure in California in 1996. FMF worked wuccessfully to defeat a parental notification state ballot initiative in California in 2005 and 2006. In 2006, FMF organized successfully on all state college campuses in South Dakota to defeat a ballot measure to ban abortion. This measure, minimally modified, will again be on the 2008 South Dakota ballot in November, and again we will organize college campuses to get out the student vote. In 2006, FMF organized to defeat the anti-affirmative action ballot measure in Michigan. Unfortunately, it passed. Very extreme, anti-abortion proposals and measures will be placed on November, 2008 state ballots also in Colorado and South Dakota. In California, the parental notification ballot measure will again be placed on the 2008 November ballot.

The Feminist Majority Foundation's reproductive health and rights programs are extensive. Our programs involve public education; media outreach and advocacy work; direct services, including legal, security, and direct financial support to beseiged women's health clinics that perform abortions. Our reproductive health programs are organized into three main projects:

- **Choices Campus Leadership Program**: The largest pro-choice network on college campuses includes 220 campus groups in 43 states and the District of Columbia on a wide range of public and private, two- and four-year colleges and universities. In addition, we have 145 cmapuses with active working/outreach groups. The program provides young women and men with organizing tools and skills to counter threats to reproductive rights and increase access to reproductive health services. In total by field and online organizing the program reaches some 1,954 campuses. After a successful fight to win FDA approval of over-the-counter Emergency Contraception, our campus campaign is advancing two new campaigns: (1) to expose fake clinics and (2) to increase access to birth control.
- **National Clinic Access Project** – Our project, now nearly 20 years old, conducts nationwide clinic defense, direct service, and organizing efforts to keep women's health clinics open in the face of violence and intimidation, and works to brign anti-abortion terrorists to justice.
- **Campaign for Mifepristone and Women's Health** – After a successful twelve-year fight to make mifepristone available to American women, our *Campaign for Mifepristone and Women's Helath* is now working to keep mifepristone on the market; to expand public awareness of and research funding for mifepristone's potential uses for serious illnesses affecting primarily women; to provide Mifepristone for compassionate use to seriously ill patients and to sponsor clinical trails for mifepristone's potential use as a treatment for progesterone-dependent ovarian and uterine cancers.

Each of the Feminist Majority Foundation's reproductive rights and health programs builds upon the knowledge, research, and action of one another as well a sthe work of other reproductive rights organizations. Together the programs work as a whole – each made stronger because of the others. Our programs have been able to identify and respond to critically needed unmet services, mobilize direct action on behalf of reproductive rights, counter attacks from the anti-abortion movement to restrict reproductive rights and services, and train the next generation of pro-choice leaders.

Reproductive rights are under attack not only by the U.S. Supreme Court but also by many state legislatures. Although the leadership of the Congress is more favorable than in the past decade, neither house has a pro-choice majority. With the appointments during the past 18 months of two justices to the Supreme Court hostile to abortion, reproductive rights are being narrowed. In its first major decision on reproductive rights, the Roberts Court upheld in 2007 a federal abortion procedure ban, despite the fact that it lacked an exception to protect women's health. The Court decision is an invitation to the states to pass more restrictive legislation.

Access to birth control itself is being threatened and dramatically restricted. At the expense of proven and effective comprehensive sex education programs, the federal government has increasingly directed federal funding to abstinence-only programs. In addition, million of federal family planning program dollars have been diverted to

fund so-called “Crisis Pregnancy Centers” that use free pregnancy tests, misleading ads, and other gimmicks to draw in young women, frequently providing false information. At the same time, the price of birth control on college campuses has increased dramatically – in some cases doubling, tripling, or even quintupling – since January 1, 2007 because of changes in Medicaid pricing rules under the federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2005.

In 1996 and 2000, the Feminist Majority Foundation held national Feminist Expos, drawing thousands of feminists to Washington, DC (1996) and Baltimore (2000) to learn from and speak with feminist leaders from all sectors of society. Feminist Expo '96 was attended by some 3,000 feminists, despite a blizzard. In 2000, over 6,000 feminists of all ages from throughout the United States and the world took part in Feminist Expo 2000 for Women's Empowerment, to ignite the feminist movement for the 21st century, including delegations from 45 countries and 170 colleges and universities. Both Expos featured major leaders in the feminist movement, such as FMF President Eleanor Smeal, *Ms.* co-founder Gloria Steinem, author bell hooks, *Roe v. Wade* Attorney Sarah Weddington, author Betty Friedan, FMF Board Member and United Farm Workers co-founder Dolores Huerta, former Congresswoman Bella Abzug (1920-1998), and former Senator and Ambassador Carol Moseley Braun.

The Feminist Majority Foundation has produced award-winning educational videos on topics ranging from gender apartheid under the Taliban in Afghanistan to reproductive rights, both domestic and global. “Abortion for Survival,” which featured an actual abortion at 6 weeks, was awarded the prestigious Cine Golden Eagle award in 1989. “Abortion Denied: Shattering Young Lives” also won the Cine Golden Eagle Award in 1990. The video showed the impact of parental consent and notification laws on young women, featuring the story of Becky Bell, a 17-year-old victim of an Indiana parental notification law. Becky died in 1988 after undergoing an illegal abortion rather than tell her parents and risk disappointing them. Other videos produced by FMF Board Member Lorraine Sheinberg include “Shroud of Silence” on Gender Apartheid in Afghanistan, “Killing in the Name of Life” on anti-abortion violence, “Never Go Back: The Threat to Legalized Abortion,” “Revelation: Exposing the Radical Right,” and “the global majority... again,” on the intersection of global abortion restrictions, environmental degradation, sweatshops, and human rights abuses.

The Feminist Majority joined with the music group L7 to launch Rock for Choice in 1991, a series of concerts organized in dozens of cities over the past 15 years across the United States and Canada featuring popular artists such as Pearl Jam, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Salt-N-Pepa, No Doubt, the Offspring, Fugazi, Liz Phair, Bikini Kill, Joan Osborne, Rage Against the Machine, the Foo Fighters, Sarah McLachlan, Rancid, Melissa Etheridge, the Bangles, Joan Jett, Stone Temple Pilots, Paula Cole, Iggy Pop and many others. Rock for Choice raises critical resources to help fund the Feminist Majority's vigilant Campaign to Save *Roe* and to raise public awareness about the threats to abortion rights in the United States.

FMF maintains a close working relationship with other feminist organizations and the progressive community. FMF President Eleanor Smeal is on the steering committee of the National Council of Women's Organizations (NCWO), which brings together over 200 of the major groups in the U.S. working for the rights of women and girls, representing over ten million women; and on the executive committee of the National Council on Research on Women, a consortium of the leading academic and independent feminist research centers in the U.S. FMF is represented on national coalitions working on issues ranging from international family planning, to emergency contraception, to grassroots organizing, to judicial nominations.

## **Innovative FMF Programs for Women and Girls**

### ***Choices* Campus Leadership Program**

Launched in 1997 to train the next generation of feminist leaders, our *Choices* Campus Leadership Program has reached more than 1,954 two- and four-year colleges and universities in 43 states and the District of Columbia and an additional 409 campuses in 149 countries worldwide. Our program provides feminist, pro-choice students with the opportunity to learn about cutting-edge feminist issues, to develop their leadership and organizing skills, and to be connected with the larger pro-choice and feminist movements. Our national network of some 220 Feminist Majority Leadership Alliances and affiliates participate in FMF's *Choices* Campus Program, which broadly defines "choices" to include reproductive choices, leadership choices, career choices, as well as saving these choices - fighting the backlash. Through the *Choices* Campus Campaign, FMLAs educate their campuses and organize to effect change at both local and national levels. Current *Choices* campaigns include the *Global Reproductive Rights Campus Campaign* and *Get Out Her Vote 2008*.

### **Campaign for Women's Health and Mifepristone**

Following a 12-year nationwide public education campaign led by the Feminist Majority Foundation, in September 2000 the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) finally approved mifepristone (formerly known as RU 486) for early abortion. The FMF is currently working to ensure that anti-choice forces do not succeed in having mifepristone removed from the market as a safe early abortion option.

Our campaign has also worked to expand public awareness of and research funding for mifepristone's potential use as a treatment for serious, life-threatening illnesses that predominantly affect women. In an historic breakthrough, the Feminist Majority Foundation is sponsoring clinical trials for patients with progesterone-receptor positive ovarian since 2008 and uterine cancer beginning in 2009. This type of cancer makes up some 77-85% of uterine cancer and 26-45% of ovarian cancer! We have assembled a team of prestigious clinical researchers, attorneys, and FDA specialists who are moving ahead with Phase II clinical trials.

Since December 1998, FMF has had the sole responsibility of providing mifepristone for compassionate use. To date, we have provided mifepristone to 130 patients with serious illnesses.

### ***Ms.* Magazine**

On December 31, 2001, the Feminist Majority Foundation became the sole owner of Liberty Media for Women, LLC, the publisher of *Ms.* magazine. Founded by Gloria Steinem and other feminist thought leaders in 1972, *Ms.* is the voice of the movement for women's rights, nationally and globally. By promoting feminist viewpoints and organizations as well as fearlessly investigating and reporting on critical issues in the struggle for equal rights, *Ms.* aims to inform, inspire and empower feminists to take action to achieve justice and equality.

For more information visit: <http://www.ms magazine.com/>

### **Global Feminism**

The FMF global programs are dedicated to the principle that women's rights are human rights, and the FMF has participated in numerous United Nations conferences and meetings for the empowerment of women and girls. The Feminist Majority Foundation supports the International Criminal Court, the

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and ending trafficking of women and girls. FMF has consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, which includes Committees on the Status of Women and Population and Development. For more information visit: <http://www.feministcampus.org/know/global/>

### **Campaign for Afghan Women and Girls**

FMF's Campaign for Afghan Women and Girls (formerly the Campaign to Stop Gender Apartheid in Afghanistan), and its chair, FMF Board Member Mavis Leno, were nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in 2002. Our campaign, the first of its kind to build a U.S. women's grassroots foreign policy constituency around an issue of the rights of women and girls, successfully brought the Taliban's violence against women and girls in Afghanistan to the attention of the United States and the world. We built a co-sponsoring network of some 250 organizations for the Campaign, and over 100 film, television, and musical artists and celebrities endorsed the Campaign. Our work was key in stopping U.S. and U.N. formal recognition of the Taliban and, in 2003, in winning \$60 million for Afghan women's programs and \$5 million earmarked for the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission. Our Afghan Women's Scholarship Program has helped 45 Afghan women pursue their educational goals in the United States, helping them secure more than \$1 million in scholarships, room and board, and fee waivers since the program began in 2000.

The Campaign is continuing its work to urge the U.S. to do everything in its power to restore the rights of Afghan women and girls, to provide sufficient funding for the reconstruction of Afghanistan, especially for the Ministry of Women's Affairs; to expand peacekeeping forces throughout Afghanistan; to ensure leadership of Afghan women and women's organizations in rebuilding Afghanistan; and to provide humanitarian assistance to Afghan women and children who are internally displaced or are refugees. For more information visit:

<http://www.feministcampus.org/know/global/featured-country.asp>

### **National Clinic Access Project**

The FMF National Clinic Access Project engages in public education, advocacy work, and grassroots organizing to increase public awareness of anti-choice extremist violence, such as the murders of several abortion providers in the 1990s. As the oldest and largest clinic defense project in the nation, the FMF provides assistance to some 587, independent or non-affiliated clinics that provide the majority of abortions in the U.S. Our project team researches and monitors anti-abortion extremists and works with law enforcement to improve responsiveness to clinic violence. When necessary, we provide direct assistance to abortion and family planning clinics in the form of legal, security, and support services as well as financial aid to independent abortion providers. Since the inception of NCAP in 1989, we have provided community-organizing support to clinics besieged by anti-abortion violence, training over 46,000 clinic defenders in 26 states in non-violent clinic defense techniques.

For more information visit: <http://www.feminist.org/rrights/ncapabout.asp>

### **Education Equity Program**

FMF's Education Equity Program works to protect Title IX, the landmark federal law prohibiting sex discrimination in federally funded educational programs, including athletic programs. In addition, the Program is completing a *Handbook for Achieving Gender Equity in Education*, bringing together some of the leading experts in education across the country as contributors.

For more information visit: <http://www.feminist.org/education>

### **Internship in Feminism and Public Policy**

The Feminist Majority Foundation internship is listed as one of the nation's leading internship programs by the Princeton Review's *America's Top 100 Internships*. Interns benefit from a challenging atmosphere and substantive projects, and gain experience working on the most pressing women's rights issues of our time. Internships are available at both national offices in Washington, DC and Los Angeles, CA. For more information visit: <http://www.feminist.org/intern/>

### **Feminist Majority Foundation Online**

In 1995, we launched our award winning Feminist Majority Foundation On-Line (or the Women's Worldwide Web), [www.feminist.org](http://www.feminist.org). Our website features domestic and global feminist news and a take action center. Feminist.org also offers a Feminist Career Center, a Feminist Research Center, a Breast Cancer Center, 911 for Women, and much more. The site is the single largest feminist website on the Internet and serves as a gateway to women's rights organizations online. The feminist.org website works in tandem with the Feminist Majority Foundation's other major websites. The FMF runs several websites with more than 300,000 sign-ups on our Action Alert and Update networks, which in combination generate hundreds of thousands of emails last year to opinion makers in support of women's rights. Each website enhances and feeds traffic to the others.