



Advocacy Update

Sent April 10, 2013

Access to Emergency Contraception

In a [2011 WRJ Board of Directors Statement](#) on women's reproductive rights and health, WRJ pledged to encourage its affiliates to "educate their members about the threats to women's health that are being proposed." In this regard we have good news to report: the U.S. Federal District Court ruled that Plan B, the most common form of emergency contraception, must be made available over the counter for women of all ages, including girls 16 and younger who previously needed a prescription. This decision supports the original FDA recommendation to make the morning-after pill available for all ages – a recommendation that was overruled by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Kathleen Sebelius, in 2011 (the first time someone in that position had ever overruled an FDA recommendation).

WRJ has long supported access to birth control – our [first resolution on the topic](#) dates all the way back to 1935. Our [1989 resolution](#) re-emphasizes the "right of every woman, without regard to age or socioeconomic condition, based on her own religious and moral convictions, to make her own choices about her reproductive life." [WRJ policy](#) pays particular attention to the importance of supporting "minors' access to reproductive health services, including contraceptives and abortion, unrestricted by parental notification, parental permission, or court order requirements." We have had both victories and setbacks in our historic quest for women's reproductive health; it's nice to be able to announce the latest victory!

Equal Pay Day

Yesterday, April 9, marked an important milestone for women – the average female wage earner's income for 2012 finally caught up to where her male counterpart was last December. "[Equal Pay Day](#)" marks how far into a current year women must work to earn what men earned in the previous calendar year, meaning that it took women 15½ months for their wages to equal those of their male colleagues after only 12 months. As RAC Associate Director Barbara Weinstein noted, "It seems incredible that there continues to be a need to mark this day, fifty years after passage of the Equal Pay Act. Yet women today still make an average of only 77 cents for every dollar earned by male workers." Lest we think this issue does not affect the women in our sisterhoods or communities, we should note that the pay gap is certainly [existent within the Jewish community](#) as well.

There are many ways to become involved in this important issue. Women in the U.S. can [send a letter](#) to their Member of Congress asking them to co-sponsor and ultimately vote for the Paycheck Fairness Act, a legislative fix to this social injustice. You can also raise awareness about this issue by sharing [fact sheets](#) and even [encouraging local officials](#) to speak out about Equal Pay Day. Finally, you can take matters into your own hands and learn how to [negotiate your salary](#) and start to close the wage gap one woman, one paycheck, at a time. Host a sisterhood event where you talk about the difficulties in such conversations, and help younger women learn tips for having these important discussions with their supervisors and employers.

RAC's Consultation on Conscience

Later this month, the Religious Action Center will host its [Consultation on Conscience](#), Reform Judaism's flagship social justice conference. This event is the most exciting Jewish social justice event in

For more information on WRJ and Social Justice, visit www.wrj.org/social-justice-home

Washington! Featuring high-level briefings with public policy decision makers and social action leaders, the Consultation helps those with a passion for *tikkun olam* bring our Jewish values to the policy arena, and to learn more about important issues such as civil rights, economic and environmental justice, religious persecution and more.

We hope there will be many attendees from sisterhoods and women's groups who can bring their insights and experiences to the conversations that will take place during the Consultation, and can bring the information and inspiration they acquire back home. [Click here](#) to register today!