

SFV/NELA NOW DEMONSTRATES IN SUPPORT OF THE COMPASSIONATE CHOICES ACT

SFV/NELA NOW launched a counter – demonstration in support of AB 654, the California Compassionate Choices Act (Levine-D, 40th AD) May 18, 2005 in front of 320 W 4th Street, Los Angeles, the office of Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez.

The California Catholic Conference organized a protest there in an attempt to force Nunez to oppose the legislation, which was designed to allow terminally ill people to end their suffering. SFV/NELA NOW contended that the opponents argument that the lack of universal health care for Californians will force inappropriate decisions to end the lives of the terminally ill is misplaced because the lack of universal health care is an argument for us to continue the battle to obtain health care as a right for all people and not an argument for continuing the suffering of people in pain who have no hope of recovery.

SFV/NELA NOW voted unanimously to endorse AB 654 at its annual business meeting in December 2004.

FAMILY LAW TASK FORCE FORCES OUT COMMISSIONER

Hats are off to Yolanda Abella, Jeff Belmont and many others in the SFV/NELA NOW Family Law Task Force who succeeded in running San Fernando Court Commissioner Zakon out of a job.

After months of leafleting women about the pitfalls of stipulating to let Commissioner Zakon in the San Fernando Courthouse hear their cases—which routinely resulted in no child support enforcement, forced custody evaluations which women were required to pay for, and a pattern of taking custody away from women on the grounds that they were “angry” (who wouldn’t be after years of delays in getting justice), Zakon has finally left his position. This occurred shortly after the Task Force announced plans to picket the courthouse and hold a press conference to denounce Zakon’s administration of “justice.”

Investigation Reveals Conflict of Interest for Judge

Superior Court Judge William Pounders heads the judicial committee which creates and supervises a list of private investigators that are eligible for court appointment for indigent defendants. Given the demographics of Los Angeles County, it is almost impossible to create a panel of anything or anybody that is less than 20% minority and less than 7% female, but Judge Pounders’ committee has managed to do just that. Pounders and his committee have also maintained policies in violation of IRS rules that create a legal fiction that the investigators are independent contractors instead of employees, who would have lawful access to DMV and voter registration records to locate defense witnesses. A review of Pounders’ Form 700 Statement of Economic Interests indicates that he has exactly three reportable investments, all data base companies that private investigators are forced to use since they don’t have access to DMV and voter registration records...



WITS FOUNDER HEATHER MARTIN ALIVE AND WELL

Women In Todays Society (WITS) members at Cleveland High School will have an opportunity to meet the founder of the organization, Heather Martin, on her next return trip to California.

Heather, who founded the high school feminist organization to combat racism and sexism on campus, had dropped out of touch with SFV/NELA NOW after she moved away from California for work, but we recently tracked her down and she was delighted to know that the organization she founded many years ago is still going strong. She expects a trip to California in the near future and wants to meet the young feminists who are continuing in her footsteps. We’re sure they’ll be delighted to meet her too!

REAUTHORIZATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, CHILD SUPPORT FUNDING IN JEOPARDY

On Tuesday afternoon, October 4, the Senate passed its version of VAWA 2005, S. 1197, by a unanimous consent agreement, meaning that all of the Senators had no objections (or had withdrawn their objections) to the bill. A less comprehensive version of VAWA 2005 passed the House of Representatives on September 28 as H.R. 3402, the Department of Justice’s yearly authorizing and funding bill.

While the House version included reauthorization of crucial VAWA programs, it does not achieve all that is needed. At the last minute just before the vote, the Republican leadership dropped important provisions dealing with immigrants and women of color.

The Senate bill still includes many of these House-dropped provisions, but faced its own trimming as a key program was dropped that would have extended coverage for unemployment insurance to domestic violence survivors who lose their jobs as they hide or flee from violence. Whenever there are differences between similar bills that are passed in the House and Senate a "conference committee" with representatives from both houses, must meet to work out differences between the two bills and come up with one final bill before the President can sign it.

These meetings must be convened as speedily as possible because the ten-year-old Violence Against Women Act expired on September 30th and we must ensure that programs and services will not be denied, delayed or deferred.

In a related move, the Republican leadership is attempting to gut funding of child support enforcement funds from the federal budget, which will severely impact California. In response, SFV/NELA NOW has formulated a measure that we are seeking a California legislative sponsor for, which would criminalize aiding and abetting child support evasion and provide a private legal cause of action, including attorney and investigative fees when women are forced to seek their own remedies to get back child support that they are owed.

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SFV/NELA CHAPTER, NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR
WOMEN
P.O. BOX 7141 VAN NUYS CA 91409
818.769.2035
EMAIL: 76170.1423@COMPUSERVE.COM

NOW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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SFV/NELA NOW ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY, AWARDS CEREMONY & NOTICE OF ELECTION

SFV/NELA NOW's annual holiday party and election meeting will be held on December 11, 2004 beginning at 12:00 noon at 10336 McCormick Street, North Hollywood CA 91601.

The event will be potluck and featuring Jan Tucker's annual "water smoked turkey" with both regular and vegetarian corn-bread based stuffing. **CALL US FOR POTLUCK SUGGESTIONS.**

We will be making special awards to local legislators and activists to honor their dedication and service to feminism.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SERVE ON THE BOARD of SFV/NELA NOW, please let us know in advance, although nominations will be taken from the floor even if you decide to run at the last minute. For further information, contact us at (818) 769.2035.

Dues: Regular \$40.00 or pay on a sliding scale from \$10-39 at your own discretion as to what you can afford.

Make check payable to SFV NOW, or join on-line

Give holiday gift memberships in NOW for \$10.00 each! 


@ www.now.org

**If joining on-line, make sure to include the correct chapter ID #,
0520 for SFV/NELA, or 0925 for LA South**

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San Fernando Valley NOW
P.O. Box 7141
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