

Power Up!

... A newsletter filled with thoughts for powerful Planned Parenthood people.

First Edition, 1/9/15



Welcome to our world!

By Libby McGaughey, Vice President of Public Advocacy

Hello Team PPAM! Yes, I'm talking to each of you! **Welcome to our first ever statewide supporter newsletter. We are very excited about this because we are very excited about YOU!** As you will read below and as you know because you were a part of the fight, 2014 was an amazing and exhausting year for us. We led efforts to educate and then sign up Michiganders in the Affordable Care Act, we held legislators accountable for their votes on things like the ban on insurance coverage of abortion, and finally we held lots of feet to the fire with our electoral program that targeted communities from Wayne to Muskegon counties. And how were we able to do all of those things? Because of you. Your time and dedication to supporting PPAM is what makes our successes possible.

Something we already know is that 2015 is going to be yet another exciting year! In addition to this super-fun and informative newsletter, we will also be coming to you to engage in conversations in your communities as well as help elevate our voice in Lansing. We know better than anyone that the strength of our voice and the impact of our messages are because of YOU, our top-notch volunteers and supporters. So **Thank You**. Thank you for everything you have done and everything you will do with us in 2015. It is going to be an AMAZING year!

Planned Parenthood Team... Assemble!

Before we launch into election results, the very first thing we need to say is thank you. Thank you to all of our amazing canvassers and volunteers who came out in the cold and rain to advocate for change this election season!

Words simply cannot explain how amazing our canvassing teams were across the state. Numbers can though! In the 6 weeks leading up to November's election, here's what our canvassing teams did –

- They hit over 80,000 doors across the state!
- They talked to over 19,000 voters and told them all about Planned Parenthood's candidates!
- Nearly 5,000 voters made a promise that they would head out to the polls!
- They met over 500 new people wanting to volunteer with Planned Parenthood!

From Oakland to Muskegon, our canvassers and volunteers brought Planned Parenthood directly to voters' doors. We met people who were young and old, women and men, rich and poor who all proved to us that Planned Parenthood is well-loved and needed more than ever in Michigan!

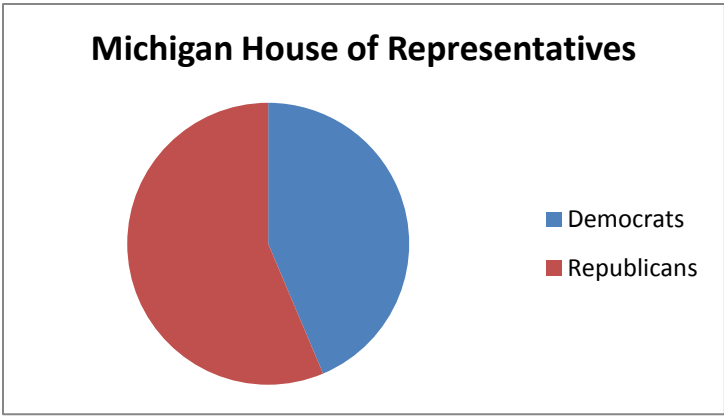


Michigan Election Results

By Jenny Kinne, West Michigan Field Organizer

As community organizers, we believe that knowledge is power. We will not shield you from the catastrophes of November 4th, but rest assured that when we give you reasons to hope, they are real. Yes, this election was disappointing. Yes, we still have a hard battle to fight. Yes, we have a TON of potential to make change moving forward!

The numbers below may make you want to cry, but stick with us. We aren't going to let you give up – there's tons of work to do!

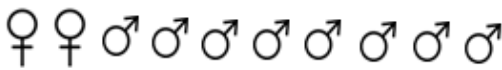


After this election, Republicans maintained a majority in the State House 62 to 48. Republicans gained 3 seats from 2012.

33 Pro-choice out of 110 total representatives.

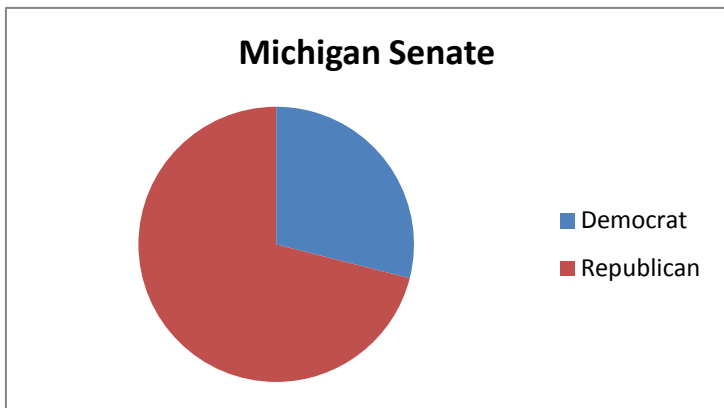


Out of 110 House Representatives, only 33 are pro-choice. This means that for every 3 pro-choice votes, we will face 7 anti-choice votes!

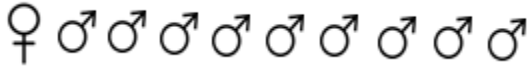


Out of 110 House Representatives, 26 are women, so for every 10 Representatives only 2 are women. If you want something even

crazier, take a look at the Senate!



After this election, Republicans maintained a majority in the State Senate 27-11. Republicans gained 1 seat from 2010.



Out of 38 Michigan Senators, only 4 are women, so for every 10

Senators only 1 is a woman. Need a drink yet?

The Michigan Senate now has 8 pro-choice members, with several others being mixed on the issue. Doing the math leaves us with another bleak percentage – 20% of our state Senate is confidently pro-choice.

We have our work cut out for us, but there is a bright glimmer of hope we can lean on. Incoming Democratic leadership in both caucuses (House and Senate) are not just progressive, but both are choice champions! Senator Jim Ananich (D-Flint) and Representative Tim Greimel (D-Pontiac) are huge supporters of Planned Parenthood’s work, and both will make a great difference for us in the coming years! **This just goes to show how important it is for all of us, as activists and supporters, to build leadership and seek quality candidates to run for office! A couple of great people can make a world of difference.**

Other important races of the year include –

Governor – Rick Snyder (R) re-elected

U.S. Senate – Gary Peters (D) was elected to replace former Senator Carl Levin

Attorney General – Bill Schuette (R) wins re-election

Secretary of State – Ruth Johnson (R) wins re-election



National Election Results

By Christina Soliz, East Michigan Field Organizer

In the U.S. Senate, a party needs 51 out of 100 Senators to have a majority and control of the Senate. In November, Michigan voters elected women's health champion Gary Peters to work alongside of Senator Debbie Stabenow! It's comforting to know that Michigan's Senators will work together to vote on policies that really benefit the people of the state rather than having their votes contradict each other. Unfortunately, the U.S. Senate Democrats lost eight seats, and Republicans gained eight seats meaning Republicans took control of the Senate.

The U.S. House of Representatives has 435 members, and to have a majority, a party needs 218 people. The Democrats lost fifteen seats this election, and gained three, meaning the Republicans picked up fifteen seats and lost three. Long story short, Republicans kept their control of the House. Here's a silver lining though: in Michigan, women in Congress went from one to three this year! Not only do we have Candice Miller (R- MI 10th District), but voters also elected Debbie Dingell (D- MI 12th District) and Brenda Lawrence (D- MI 14th District). This is incredibly exciting! Check out Politico for some informative maps that show the results of the 2014 election: <http://www.politico.com/2014-election/results/map/senate/>

Look at these statistics... **There's lots of work to be done, but the numbers are hopeful!**

- For the 1st time in history, 21 pro-life women were elected to the US Congress.
- Republicans won men 57% to 41%, while Democrats won women 51% to 47%. Both of these divides have increased since the last election. Bottom line – women vote with us!

In 43 states, less than half of eligible voters showed up. No state broke 60% positive voter turnout. This proved dire for Democrats! The overall national turnout rate was 33.9%, the lowest in 72 years. Michigan broke the national average with a dismal 42.7% voter turnout rate. **This is our biggest battle.** Getting these numbers up means more progressive candidates being elected!

Now, onto various ballot initiatives that were voted on across the country- Bad news first: Tennessee voters decided to add an amendment to the Tennessee Constitution that allows the legislature to enact, amend, or repeal state statutes regarding abortion. This amendment also includes policies regarding abortions wanted/needed from pregnancies that resulted from rape or incest, or when it's necessary to protect the woman's life. This is scary because of the power it gives to Tennessee lawmakers to take away a woman's autonomy...

Good news: voters in both Colorado and North Dakota voted no on personhood. They decided that deep and complicated personal beliefs should not be mandated by law, and they stood up to protect personal and private medical decisions regarding birth control, access to fertility treatment, and access to safe and legal abortion. Unfortunately, despite what voters keep saying (this is the third time this initiative has been come up for voters in Colorado), some people are never going to give up: <http://rhrealitycheck.org/article/2014/11/24/personhood-leader-localize-fight-abortion-rights/>



Don't Panic & Get to Work!

By Lauren Bacans, Mid-Michigan Field & Online Organizer

So, what does this mean for all of us here in Michigan? It means that we're only going to work harder to protect access to critical healthcare services in our state.

And we need your help.

Across the state, there are many new opportunities available, and your participation and input is key to their success. We have opportunities to join (and lead!) book clubs, become a part of a legislative action team, or work within our Health Center Advocacy Program.

Book clubs in Ann Arbor, Detroit, Grand Rapids, and Lansing offer the opportunity to read and discuss books, both fiction and nonfiction, about the women's movement and reproductive justice. Take the opportunity to meet with your peers while discovering favorite books, new and old, and discuss today's most pressing issues. You can become a leader in your book club by helping to plan discussions, offering book suggestions, and even hosting!

Legislative action teams give you the opportunity to develop a working relationship with the legislators in your area, and educate elected officials on Planned Parenthood issues and services, legislation pertinent to reproductive justice, and advocacy campaigns happening in their district.

You can even begin building these relationships before someone is elected to office! **Identifying potential candidates** and helping them find the resources they need to run for office is an essential and often underused tool to build support for the issues that are important to you.

We also have **monthly activist nights** – as well as trainings – in Ann Arbor, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, and Lansing are an easy way to help out, meet other supporters in the area, and get your political fix. Activist nights encompass a variety of activities, and include things like office work, discussions, letter writing, and crafts.

Want to join the volunteer list? Simply email volunteer@ppmchoice.org with your name and location!

Christina, Jenny, and I would like to express our deep gratitude for your unwavering support, assistance, and determination. We are privileged to be able to work with our volunteers and supporters across the state. **From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for all that you do every day.** Making strides in Michigan is impossible without you.

For a full list of events and volunteer activities, visit our [Events](#) page!



Why Still Care About Roe?

By Christina Soliz, East Michigan Field Organizer

On January 22, 1973 the United States Supreme Court (SCOTUS) made a landmark decision in the case of Roe v Wade. SCOTUS ruled that a woman has the constitutional right to decide whether or not to have an abortion (up until 20 weeks) with the consultation of her doctor, and states are prohibited from banning abortions.

If it's all said and done and women can have abortions, **why is Roe still so important to remember and celebrate?**

The short answer: **Conservatives are doing their best to limit a woman's ability to choose, and you love women (or a particular woman) and want them to have their own personal autonomy.**

The longer answer: In 1992, the Supreme Court affirmed the ruling of Roe v Wade in the case of Casey v Planned Parenthood, but it also allows the states to regulate abortions in order to protect the health of the mother and the life of the fetus. States have been given room to outlaw abortions of viable fetuses. The states took this to heart. As you have probably heard before (and will hear again), the past couple of years have been hard on women. **Conservatives in the Michigan legislature have been relentless in their attacks on women's health care.** They can't pass laws that directly outlaw abortion, so they have tried almost everything they can think of in order to make it impossible for a woman to access an abortion. In the lame duck session of 2011, the legislature passed the infamous HB 5711 in the middle of the night. This bill included provisions such as requiring abortion clinics be a free standing surgical outpatient facility, changing the way the fetal remains are disposed, updated screenings for coercion, and banning telemedicine. Fast forward to 2013 when Right to Life submitted a petition that could prevent private insurance companies from contracting with companies to provide coverage for abortions. Any abortion coverage would have to be offered through a separate abortion rider. Michigan's legislature at the time had three options: 1. Approve the petition and let it become law; 2. Deny the petition; or 3. Send the question to ballot to let the voters decide. The legislature decided to approve the petition. In March of 2014, it became law that if you want your insurance to cover abortion, you need to plan ahead for your unintended pregnancy and purchase the additional rider.

Nationally, it's just as bad. Conservatives have tried to defund Planned Parenthood, enact personhood laws that define life at conception, 24 hour waiting periods, etc.

We care about Roe because it's still so relevant. A woman has the right to have an abortion, but that right is being taken away with each new piece of anti-choice legislation that passes. I thought history would have taught us that making abortion illegal doesn't prevent them; it just hurts women who are forced to the back alleys. I remember Roe because I've heard stories, from my mom, from close friends about someone they knew and loved who had an unsafe, illegal abortion before Roe and either ended up in a hospital with serious infections, or died. I will not go back to that, I love and respect women too much to go back to that.

2015 will be interesting. When people like Todd Courser come in and say that their first act in the Michigan legislature will be a [personhood amendment](#), I remember Roe and all the women's lives that depend on that one Supreme Court case.



Lame Duck Session in Michigan

By Jenny Kinne, West Michigan Field Organizer

There's nothing more frustrating than your holiday cheer being interrupted by dangerous legislation coming out of Lansing. For those of you who are not familiar with Lame Duck Session, it is the period of time between the election (November 4th) and when our House and Senate break for the holidays. This is when the most intense legislation tends to pass because elected officials are already aware of whether they are returning to office and there is little to no media coverage or public attention. It gets ugly.

This year was no exception. **The Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA)** was introduced to counter an expansion of the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to include protections for gay populations in our state. RFRA would have allowed the government, individuals, and businesses the room to discriminate based on their sincerely-held religious beliefs. For example, an EMT could refuse to care for a gay patient. A pharmacist could refuse to fill birth control prescriptions. This law passed through the House but was never taken up in the Senate. It did not pass, but it would be no surprise if a bill similar to this one were to be re-introduced in the next two years.

Coercion bills were also introduced that would have laid out the consequences if a doctor, partner, etc, were found guilty of "coercing" a woman into having an abortion. Thanks to HB 5711, which was passed in Lame Duck in 2012, coercion is already illegal in Michigan; however, the coercion bills introduced this year would have spelled out the punishment. This is dangerous for a number of reasons – 1) it is not illegal in the state of Michigan to coerce a woman into NOT having an abortion, 2) it opens the door for organizations like Right to Life and Live Action to further harass abortion clinics, 3) it applies only to abortions and no other medical procedures, sending the message (yet again) that women cannot be trusted to make this decision for themselves. These bills did not pass, but again, look out for them in the future!

One law that did pass out of Lame Duck gives **adoption and foster agencies license to discriminate** based on religious belief. For example, a Christian adoption agency could refuse to accept applications from Muslim families. This horrendous law puts the interests of agencies before those of children in desperate need of homes.

Our state government did manage to get something done on their number one priority of **fixing our state's roads**... well, sort of. On the final day of session, lawmakers came up with a "solution" – putting a tax increase to voters on the May ballot. The proposition would eliminate the 6% sales tax on fuel and gradually increase per-gallon fuel taxes. The goal of the plan is to raise \$1.2 billion a year more to improve our roads and bridges. While Snyder is boasting this as an achievement, it is disappointing that our government cannot get even the most basic of services secured for our state. Instead, they put the oneness on voters, so the only way we can increase funding for roads is if voters opt for a tax increase. In the words of Representative Sam Singh (D-East Lansing), it looks like we have become victims of a political "sham."



The Importance of Story Telling in Activism

By Lauren Bacans, Mid Michigan Field & Online Organizer

We share our stories every day. The stories we tell enable us to connect with others over our shared values – values like family, access to healthcare, friendship, and equality. Through our stories, we are able to find common ground with others and build our network of support.

My story starts when I was a little girl, driving in the car with my mom. We stopped at the end of the driveway to get the mail. When she handed me the stack of letters, I started flipping through them and saw one from Planned Parenthood. “Planned Parenthood?” I asked. “Why are they writing to you?” This question stemmed from a bias I had developed in the conservative area in which I’d grown up, and also a fear that my mom was trying to have a baby – I was (and still am) an only child, and I liked it that way!

My mom told me, “When I was younger, I didn’t have health insurance or a lot of money. I had painful periods, and needed to see a doctor. Planned Parenthood was the only place I could go. I still give them money because they took care of me when I really needed it.” That got me thinking about how lucky I was to have insurance, that magical thing that let me just walk into the doctor and get my temperature taken.

I began volunteering with Planned Parenthood in college, and that got my mom and I talking again. She told me that without Planned Parenthood, her endometriosis wouldn’t have been treated, and she likely never would have been able to have me. As it is, she and my dad tried for 5 years before getting pregnant, just once, with me. Without Planned Parenthood, I wouldn’t be here.

The work I do at Planned Parenthood is very personal because of the story that my mom told me about her life and issues with accessing healthcare and pregnancy. I’m here to help limit barriers women face when they try to access all of their options regarding pregnancy.

Will you share your story with us? Your stories are invaluable to the work that we do. They can influence legislators, the public, and encourage others to get involved in the [reproductive justice movement](#). To share your story, please follow the link to our interactive form!