



## Standing up against Michigan's War on Women

In June, Michigan fledged a full out assault on women's health. Never in our state's history has women's reproductive health seen such a dangerous attack. Day after day, proponents of women's health were ignored, disregarded, or forcibly silenced.

It began in the House Health Policy Committee when NO women were allowed to speak against House Bills 5711, 5712, and 5713 that would virtually eliminate access to safe and legal abortion in the state of Michigan. Nearly 100 women from across the state came to the capitol to testify against these bills, but NONE were given the opportunity to voice their objections, including the CEOs of Planned Parenthood and other women's health experts.

However, the affront to democracy demonstrated in committee only served as a catalyst for action. On Tuesday, June 12, more than 500 Planned Parenthood and women's rights activists gathered at the capitol to make their voices heard. Decked out in pink, we filled the capitol rotunda and made it known to politicians that women are paying attention and there will be consequences if they vote the wrong way.

On Wednesday, June 13, 2012, the House took up HB 5711. Several lawmakers gave passionate speeches against HB 5711. As a gesture to recognize the many voices that were silenced in committee, Representative Lisa Brown had over 10,000 "I Stand With Planned Parenthood" cards to present to House leadership, but Majority Floor

Leader Jim Stamas had the sergeants remove the cards before the boxes could be opened. The bill passed the House, 70-39.

Thursday, June 14, 2012, will go down in history as the day anti-choice politicians wish they could take back. Once again, several hundred Planned Parenthood supporters came to the capitol in protest against the passage of the bill. That is when we found out that Representative Lisa Brown and Representative Barb Byrum were BANNED from speaking on the House floor! From that moment, Michigan's war on women became a front-page story.

Women have the right to make their voice heard, and on Monday, June 18, 2012, they did just that. Eve Ensler, the Tony-award winning writer of *The Vagina Monologues*, flew to Michigan to perform her hit play with female pro-choice legislators on the steps of the Michigan State Capitol Building. Over 3,000 women, men, and children came to Lansing in support of women's health.

Despite the attacks, our supporters didn't back down! Advocates from across the state showed up to protest the most sweeping overhaul of women's health regulations across the country, and we made sure our legislators knew that women are watching. Due to their commitment, over 25,000 emails were sent into legislative offices along with thousands of phone calls to tell politicians to stop playing games with women's health. Together, we will win this fight! ■



*On the steps of the Michigan Capitol (front, l to r): Rep. Maureen Stapleton, Rep. Barb Byrum, Rep. Rashida Tlaib, Sen. Gretchen Whitmer, Rep. Lisa Brown, Eve Ensler, and Rep. Vicki Barnett.*

SNAPSHOTS