

Time-Line on Reproductive Rights

- 1839 ●With the vulcanization of rubber by Goodyear, rubber condoms become available for use.
- 1842 ●Oliver Wendell Holmes in "The Contagiousness of Puerperal Fever" calls for obstetricians to wash hands and use sterile procedures, thus radically reducing maternal death rates
- 1847 ● Dr. James Simpson of Edinburgh is the first to use chloroform to relieve the pain of childbirth. Dr. Walter Channing of Boston first uses ether in the next year. The use of these anesthetics was protested by many people who thought of birth pain as a religious curse upon women. It was also thought that such pain induced motherly love.
- 1873 ●Anthony Comstock, secretary of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, starts serious enforcement of laws preventing sending of any "obscene" material through the mail

- 1910's ●Emma Goldman begins to speak out on the necessity of effective birth control
Condoms, douching, and withdrawal only methods available
- 1915 ●Dutch invent diaphragm and begin public health use
- 1917 ●First birth control clinic opened. M. Sanger arrested for operating clinic under Comstock Law; serves 30 days. Clinic re-opened, able to disperse info only to women who were "diseased" ie., for whom pregnancy would be dangerous or fatal. Illegal to import diaphragms.

- 1920 ●M. Sanger's book, *Women and the New Race* published
- 1921 ●The first American Birth Control Conference is held in New York City; Sanger and Mary Winsor are arrested for attempting to address a mass meeting on birth control
- 1924 First precise identification of female fertile period made. (Rhythm method used in 19th and early 20th century worse than useless b/c it assumed mammalian model-- that women were most fertile around the time of menstruation, so counseled intercourse in middle of cycle.)
- 1925 ●The first U.S. manufacture of diaphragms is financed by J. Noah Slee, Margaret Sanger's second husband.

- 1936 ●Ban on importing contraceptive devices lifted by SupCourt: *U.S. v. One Package of Japanese Pessaries*
- 1937 ●Dr.'s can legally provide birth control info to married couples
●The American Medical Association officially recognizes birth control as an integral part of medical practice and education.
●North Carolina becomes the first state to recognize birth control as a public health measure and to provide contraceptive services to indigent mothers through its public health program.

- 1942 ●M. Sanger's Birth Control Federation of America becomes Planned Parenthood, with new agenda to emphasize family stability rather than individual freedom; 218 clinics operating
- 1940-45 ●Millions of servicemen instructed in contraception to prevent STD's.

- 1960 ●Birth Control Pill approved for marketing
- 1962 ●The First International Conference on IUDs began commercial production of ancient devices
- 1965 ●Griswold vs. Conn. struck down by SupCt; rt to privacy assures married couples access to contraception
- 1966 ●Masters and Johnson publish Human Sexual Response; debunk myth of vaginal orgasm
●Lawrence L's book on abortion estimates approximately 1 million illegal abortions with 5,000-10,000 deaths annually in U.S.
- 1967 ●Colorado 1st state to liberalize abortion -- rape, incest, mo's health, or defective child; NC & CA follow
- 1969 ●NARAL founded at 1st national conference on abortion laws
●Canada legalizes abortion and homosexuality
●Death rate from carrying a pregnancy to term is 10X greater than clinical abortion

- 1970 ●Barbara Seaman, The Doctor's Case Against the Pill published
●Mass. law against sale of birth control to unmarried struck down, makes dispensing of contraceptives on campuses possible, though still infrequent
- 1971 ●Boston Women's Health Collective, Our Bodies Ourselves: A Course by & for Women
- 1973 ●Roe V. Wade invalidates state laws agnst abortion in 1st trimester on grounds of right to privacy
- 1975 ●Public Health Service Act funds family planning services to low-income patients
- 1976 ●The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that states cannot require a woman seeking an abortion to get consent from her husband or force all single girls under 18 desiring an abortion to get permission from a parent.

- 1980 ● **Harris V. McRae**: rt. to privacy does not include funding for medically necessary abortions for poor
- 1981 ● President Reagan endorses the Human Life Amendment (HLA), a constitutional amendment which would ban abortion, the IUD, and some forms of the birth control pill.
- 1983 ● Department of Health and Human Services barred from implementing the "squeal rule" requiring government funded clinics to notify parents when teenagers seek prescription contraceptives
- 1985 ● Most manufacturers take IUD's off market b/c use of untested models, especially Dalkon Shield, have caused injuries, infections, and even deaths and so created climate for litigation.
- 1988 ● France became the first Western nation to approve the use of RU-486, the abortion pill.
● "Operation Rescue," organized by Randall E. Terry to blockade access to abortion clinics
- 1989 ● The U.S. Supreme Court, in *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, upheld a Missouri statute that said that human life began at conception, barred the use of public funds for abortion, prohibited abortions at public health facilities and required physicians to test for fetal viability after the 19th week of pregnancy.
● President George Bush vetoed a bill approved by the U.S. House and Senate that would permit the use of Medicaid funds to pay for abortions for poor women who were victims of "promptly reported" rape or incest
● A Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advisory committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of Norplant, a long-acting contraceptive, that protects a woman from pregnancy for up to five years when implanted under the skin.
● Governor Robert Casey of Pennsylvania signed a package of anti-choice legislation, including a 24-hour waiting period for abortions, spousal notification, and a ban on abortions performed after the 24th week of pregnancy.
- 1990 ● In *Hodgson v. Minnesota*, the U.S. Supreme Court in a 5-4 decision ruled that states may require that pregnant teenage girls either notify both biological parents before having an abortion or seek a judicial authorization through "judicial bypass."
● A study by the Institute of Medicine reported that the United States had fallen significantly behind other countries in developing new methods of birth control. Approximately 750,000 of the abortions performed annually in this country resulted from contraceptive failure
- 1991 ● The U.S. Supreme Court in *Rust v. Sullivan* upholds a "gag rule," barring clinics from counseling women on abortion, even if the continued pregnancy threatened a woman's life or health.
● Governor Norm Bangerter of Utah signed into law the nation's most restrictive abortion legislation. The law stated that all abortions were illegal and made exceptions only for the mother's life, grave damage to the mother's medical health, grave fetal defects, and rape or incest during the first 20 weeks.
- 1992 ● In *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey*, the Supreme Court reaffirmed what it called the "essential holdings" of *Roe* that women have a constitutional right to choose abortion prior to fetal viability, but declared that states also have a "compelling" interest in potential human life throughout pregnancy and upheld a series of restrictions.
● Access to legal abortions steadily declining; 84% of U.S. counties have no abortion provider.
- 1993 ● President Clinton issues an executive order instructing the FDA "assess initiatives... [that can] promote the testing, licensing, and manufacturing of RU486." Also lifts gag rule for federally funded clinics.
- 1994 ● Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act passed, protecting reproductive health service facilities and their staff and patients from violent threats, assault, vandalism, and blockade.