



**SEX EDUCATION, ABORTION & PREGNANCY
CRIMINALIZATION:**

**SHAMING LEGISLATION AND ITS IMPACT ON POOR
WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE
CONSERVATIVE EVANGELICAL SOUTH**

**American Public Health Association
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PRESENTER DISCLOSURES

Cherisse Scott

The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

No relationships to disclose



- Only Reproductive Justice organization in the state of Tennessee
- Our Focus: Women and girls of color, poor women, rural women and our families (includes men & boys)
- Our Work: Reproductive & Sexual Health Education, Policy & Advocacy
 - Youth & Young Adult focused and led education and advocacy
 - Sex Education Programming (Faith Based, School Based, Community Based)
 - Civic Engagement & Outreach
 - National advocacy presence
 - Reproductive Justice Trainings

ABOUT US...

WHAT IS REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE?

Every woman has the human right to:

- 1. Decide if and when she will have a baby and the conditions under which she will give birth**
- 2. Decide if she will not have a baby and her options for preventing or ending a pregnancy**
- 3. Parent the children she already has with the necessary social supports in safe environments and healthy communities, and without fear of violence from individuals or the government**

INTERSECTIONALITY: THE STUDY OF INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN FORMS OR SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION, DOMINATION OR DISCRIMINATION.

- **Model developed by women of color in the 1960s-1970s to address how oppression based on race, class, and gender affect women of color (Audre Lorde) Single Issue Lives/Single Issue Organizing**
- **Expanded in recent years to include age, ability, sexual preference, immigration status, religion, national origin**
- **Contextualized in academia by Kimberle' Crenshaw to include the multiple oppressions of Black women in particular**
- **Challenges single-issue organizing**
- **Integrative – multiple oppressions exist at the same time**
- **Addresses multiple identities everyone has**

POLITICAL CLIMATE OF TN...

1. TN is a Supermajority (Republican)

- **Governor is Republican**
- **Predominate White, Southern Evangelical male legislators**
- **Conservative Democrats/Black Legislators mostly conservative Christians**
- **Shaming/Blaming Context of women or sex targeted legislation from a moral frame**

2. Recent Legislation Impacting Women's Reproductive Autonomy in TN

- **Amendment One – Changed TN Constitution around abortion provisions**
- **Amendment Two – TN Legislature has power to confirm or reject state judicial appointees for the TN Supreme Court**
- **Drug Usage Surveying/Testing Prior to Receiving Public Aide Benefits**
- **Abstinence-Only Sex Education State-wide**
- **No ACA/Medicaid Expansion**

* **Largest Prison Corporation Nationwide is housed in TN (Corrections Corporation of America/CCA)**

CONSERVATIVE TENNESSEE LEGISLATION

Abstinence Only Sex Ed Bill

- Passed in July 2012
- Comprehensive Sex Education is seen as a 'Gateway' to sexual promiscuity
- Out of step with CDC standards

Fetal Assault Law

- Passed July 2014
- Uses drug court mandated detox as rehabilitation with a caveat of incarcerating mothers struggling with drug addiction if they fail to complete the program
- Treatment is at the discretion of the courts and not in consultation of medical experts
- Has now evolved into ANY offense which lawmakers believe will cause/has caused harm to an unborn baby

Anti Abortion Legislation/Privacy Protection

- Passed November 2014
- Other conservative legislation passed: Judicial Selection & Denial of State & Income Tax
- Mandated ultrasound bill introduced by conservatives 10 days after constitutional law passed

MEDICAL MESSAGING STRATEGY...

Open Letter from NAPW to the Media and Policy Makers Regarding Alarmist and Inaccurate Reporting on Prescription Opiate Use by Pregnant Women

- ✓ No Newborn is born “addicted”
- ✓ Long-term implications for offspring misrepresented
- ✓ Neonatal abstinence syndrome, when it occurs, is treatable and has not been associated with long-term adverse consequences
- ✓ Media misinformation and stigmatizing characterizations discourage federally recommended treatment

NAPW sends open letter to the Tennessee Medical Association

- Radical departure from mainstream health care and human rights
- Calls out their collaboration in the development of legislation supporting ‘bodily injury’ of fetuses
- Calls out failure to address the physicians’ role in the increase of opiate usage, disregard to handle patients and families with dignity
- Revealed and called out TMA’s lack of basic medical knowledge about Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome and its treatment

ADVOCACY SUGGESTIONS...

- Intentional attempts to strengthen patient/provider trust
 - Make patients aware of their rights
- Continue to publicly support advocacy efforts of NAPW and state based groups
- Collective push back at political interference regarding pre abortion non-medical legislation
- Collective support of comprehensive reproductive and sexual health education
- Accountability among peers and peer organizations
- Personalization and Compassion: You? Mother? Wife? Sister?

MEDICAL COMMUNITY ALLIES FOR TN...

NATIONAL MEDICAL COMMUNITY ALLIES

American Medical Association
American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Public Health Association
American Nurses Association
American Society of Addiction Medicine
March of Dimes
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
National Perinatal Association
National Association for Perinatal Addiction Research & Education
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs
Coalition of Alcohol and Drug Dependent Women and Their Children
National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
Center for the Future of Children
Southern Legislative Summit on Healthy Infants and Families
Association of Family and Conciliation Courts
National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators



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