

EXPANDING THE POSSIBILITIES
FOR 35 YEARS



NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER

35

EXPANDING

THE POSSIBILITIES

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NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER

Since 1972, the National Women's Law Center has worked to protect and advance the progress of women and girls at work, in school and almost every other aspect of their lives. The Center had its beginnings thirty-five years ago when the female administrative staff at the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), one of the first public interest law firms in the country, presented the male attorneys with four demands: better pay; the hiring of women staff attorneys; a commitment to begin a women's rights project—and no more serving coffee. These women knew, and the men of CLASP agreed, that it was time to put the law on the side of women and their families. This project became the National Women's Law Center.

Over more than three decades, the Center has used the law in all its forms — getting new laws on the books and enforced; litigating ground-breaking cases all the way to the Supreme Court; and educating the public about ways to make the law and public policies work for women and their families — to move closer to its vision of a nation without barriers based on gender. Today, an experienced staff of nearly 60 continue to take on the issues that cut to the core of women's lives in education, employment, family economic security, and health — with special attention given to the needs of low-income women and their families.

The Center is proud to have been at the helm of landmark legal and public policy initiatives to expand the possibilities for women and their families. A look at these accomplishments shows that it's possible to turn the promise of equality into reality — and that it's possible to accomplish so much more.



NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR PARTNERSHIPS IN EQUITY AWARD

for NWLC's significant contribution to national gender equity



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION ELEANOR ROOSEVELT FUND AWARD

for outstanding contributions to equity and education for women and girls



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1972

The Center is established as a project of the Center for Law and Social Policy to secure and advance legal rights and protections for women in the courts, in Congress and in the states.

1973

With *Roe v. Wade* just decided, the Center turns to reproductive rights, and stops the coercive use of an experimental contraceptive on poor and institutionalized women.

1974

The Center files *Relf and NWRO v. Weinberger*, which secures new HEW regulations to protect poor women from involuntary sterilization.

1975

Congress creates the Child Support Enforcement Program to provide new legal remedies, which the Center plays a central role in expanding in 1984, 1988, 1993, 1996, and 1998.

1976

Women Working in Construction v. Marshall is filed, and in 1978 the Center wins a court order requiring government-enforced, nationwide goals for hiring women in federally funded construction.

1977

The Center wins a landmark court decree, *WEAL v. Weinberger*, requiring timely government enforcement of Title IX and Executive Order 11246 prohibiting sex discrimination in schools nationwide.

1978

The Center plays a leadership role in passing the *Pregnancy Discrimination Act*, establishing that Title VII prohibits employment discrimination based on pregnancy.

1979

The Supreme Court adopts the Center's friend-of-the-court arguments in *Califano v. Westcott*, establishing that AFDC must be available for two-parent families with unemployed mothers, not just those with unemployed fathers.

1980

The Center brings the first major Title IX case challenging an entire intercollegiate athletic program, *Haffer v. Temple University*, leading to a precedent-setting, court-ordered settlement expanding the entire women's sports program.



EXPANDING THE
POSSIBILITIES FOR 35 YEARS

1981

The Center becomes the independent National Women's Law Center and helps secure an expansion of the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit that makes it more valuable to low-income families.

1982

With the Equal Rights Amendment extension drive just expired, Justice O'Connor's early opinion in *MUW v. Hogan* adopts arguments advanced by the Center establishing stronger constitutional protection against sex discrimination.

1983

The Center wins *Parents Without Partners v. Massinga*, establishing a right to state child support enforcement services without regard to income.

1984

IRS determines that almost 1.4 million new taxpayers claimed the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit after the Center convinced IRS to add the credit to the 1040A "short form" the year before.

1985

With Congress beginning to debate major tax reform, the Center organizes and co-chairs the first ever Coalition on Women and Taxes, helping to win important benefits for women in the 1986 *Tax Reform Act*.

1986

The Supreme Court establishes that sexual harassment violates Title VII, prohibiting sex discrimination in employment, in a case in which the Center participated, and the Center launches a major effort in the courts, Congress and government agencies to expand its legal protection.

1987

With the nomination of Robert Bork to the Supreme Court, the Center releases the widely quoted report, *Setting the Record Straight: Judge Bork and the Future of Women's Rights*, forming a basis for successful opposition to his confirmation.

1988

With the Center leading the Title IX coalition, Congress passes the *Civil Rights Restoration Act*, establishing that all parts of schools, including athletics, are covered by Title IX if any part receives federal funds.

EDUCATION

IT'S POSSIBLE

*to expand educational horizons for our daughters —
from grade school to graduate school.*

THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER
HAS BEEN ABLE TO...

- Expand and confirm the protections of Title IX by winning such landmark Supreme Court victories as *Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education*, which holds schools accountable for student-to-student sexual harassment, and *Jackson v. Birmingham Board of Education*, which prohibits retaliation by schools against those who protest discrimination
- Level the playing field for female athletes in schools and colleges around the country, starting with winning the first-ever broad Title IX intercollegiate athletics case, *Haffer v. Temple University*, and following with many successive wins that have dramatically increased opportunities for young women
- Broaden opportunities for girls to train for high-wage, high-skilled jobs that are nontraditional for their gender by documenting pervasive and persistent sex segregation — and securing structural reforms — in vocational and technical education programs
- Open the Virginia Military Institute and The Citadel to women and improve constitutional protections against government-sponsored sex discrimination by filing lead friend-of-the-court briefs in the Supreme Court
- Lead powerful coalitions to win passage of legislation strengthening Title IX and other key civil rights laws, including the *Civil Rights Restoration Act*, which extended protection to all parts of educational institutions
- Secure millions of dollars in financial aid for female athletes by establishing new standards for athletic scholarships and filing Title IX charges against dozens of colleges and universities across the country

THE BILLIE JEAN KING
CONTRIBUTION AWARD

*from the Women's Sports Foundation for NWLC's leadership in developing
Title IX law in the courts and work in achieving gender equity in sports*

MYRA SADKER EQUITY AWARD

*for NWLC's outstanding contributions in
legal and legislative work to promote equity in education*

EMPLOYMENT

IT'S POSSIBLE

*to stop employment discrimination — in pay, promotions and benefits —
and to open new job opportunities for women.*

THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER HAS LED THE WAY TO...

- Gain passage of the *Pregnancy Discrimination Act*, prohibiting employment discrimination based on pregnancy
- Secure a new damages remedy for women subjected to sexual harassment and other forms of sex discrimination on the job in the *Civil Rights Act of 1991*
- Establish and apply the legal principle that employers' comprehensive prescription drug plans must include contraceptives, through winning a landmark EEOC ruling and the federal court decision in *Erickson v. Bartell Drug Co.*, and in a settlement for employees at Wal-Mart, the nation's largest private employer, thereby increasing access to contraception for hundreds of thousands of women across the country
- Open 260,000 new jobs for women in the military, improve the Armed Services' sexual harassment policies, and successfully fend off efforts to eliminate gender-integrated training in the Army, Navy and Air Force
- Strengthen interpretations of anti-discrimination laws by filing lead friend-of-the-court briefs in Supreme Court cases such as *Burlington Northern v. White*, which established meaningful protection for women who are penalized by their employers for protesting sexual discrimination in the workplace
- Help win the first increase in the minimum wage in ten years, improving the economic security of minimum wage workers, nearly two-thirds of whom are women

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR EXEMPLARY PUBLIC INTEREST CONTRIBUTION AWARD

*for the Center's years of work in support of affirmative action and equal
employment opportunity for women*



EXPANDING THE POSSIBILITIES FOR 35 YEARS

1989

The Center secures \$14 million for women and minorities, the largest-ever Executive Order 11246 back-pay award, in *Department of Labor v. Harris Trust*, while representing Women Employed.

1990

The Center plays a central role in crafting and pressing a national agenda on child care, resulting in passage of the first comprehensive child care legislation since World War II.

1991

Anita Hill's testimony rivets the country's attention on sexual harassment, aiding the Center and its allies in passing the *Civil Rights Act of 1991*, which adds a damages remedy in sexual harassment and other cases and otherwise strengthens employment discrimination law.

1992

Record numbers of women win public office and the Center helps win the Supreme Court case, *Franklin v. Gwinnett County*, holding that Title IX contains a damages remedy for sexual harassment and other forms of sex discrimination in schools.

1993

The Center's three-year Child Care Tax Credits Outreach Campaign assures that millions of low-income families claim significantly more assistance under the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit.

1994

The Center's analysis of gender-stereotyped limitations helps secure congressional legislation and Defense Department policies that open 260,000 new military positions to women, including combat ships and aircraft.

1995

Women Prisoners of the District of Columbia v. D.C., a case developed and co-counseled by the Center, provides critical relief for women subjected to sexual abuse, inferior educational and vocational programs, and unsafe and unsanitary living conditions in D.C. prisons.

1996

The Supreme Court opens the Virginia Military Institute and The Citadel to women, adopting the strongest-ever standard of constitutional protection against sex discrimination, reflecting the Center's lead friend-of-the-court brief.



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1997

The Center files 25 Title IX charges against colleges and universities across the country alleging sex discrimination in athletic scholarships and ultimately securing millions of dollars more in scholarships for women students each year.

1998

The Center helps pass the *Child Support Performance and Incentive Act*, which holds states accountable for improving their child support enforcement programs by basing federal incentive payments to states on their performance records.

1999

The Center wins the landmark Supreme Court decision in *Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education*, holding schools accountable under Title IX for student-to-student sexual harassment.

2000

The Center expands women's access to prescription contraceptives by securing a landmark EEOC ruling that employers' exclusion of contraceptives from otherwise comprehensive health insurance plans constitutes sex discrimination and serving on the legal team that won the first federal court ruling to the same effect, *Erickson v. Bartell Drug Co.*

2001

The Center seizes the opportunity to improve the Child Tax Credit, the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit and the Earned Income Tax Credit to benefit millions of low- and middle-income families and co-chairs a coalition of over 350 diverse organizations whose educational efforts limit to some extent the size of the 2001 federal tax cut.

2002

During Title IX's 30th anniversary year, the Center brings national attention to the discrimination that women and girls still face in education by conducting a nationwide investigation into high school vocational and technical programs, showing that girls are segregated into traditionally female and lower-paying careers, and by exposing a \$6.5 million scholarship gap for female athletes at just 30 colleges and universities alone.

FAMILY ECONOMIC SECURITY

IT'S POSSIBLE

to combat poverty and improve the economic security of all women and families.

THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER HAS MADE A DIFFERENCE TO...

- Lead powerful coalitions to bring the concerns of women and families to tax debates since 1981, resulting in the removal of 6 million poor families from the tax rolls, improvements in the tax treatment of single heads of households, and increases in the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit
- Increase significantly the number of families actually claiming state and federal tax credits to help make ends meet through intensive outreach campaigns that reached millions of families during the tax filing season
- Pass the *Child Care and Development Block Grant* in 1990, the first comprehensive federal child care legislation since World War II, and secure critical increases in its federal funding in succeeding years
- Build a stronger Child Support Enforcement Program through steady improvements over three decades, including reforms that doubled the collection rate in a single five-year period, and establish through litigation a right to state child support enforcement services for all custodial parents in *Parents Without Partners v. Massinga*
- Secure changes to Social Security to make it more responsive to women and their families, beat back proposals to weaken its protections, and press for additional improvements, especially for low-income older women
- Expand access to public benefits and services for women and their families through participation in successful Supreme Court litigation establishing that families with unemployed mothers, not just unemployed fathers, are entitled to AFDC benefits in *Califano v. Westcott*, and that child support enforcement services' beneficiaries are entitled to sue in federal court to obtain such services in *Blessing v. Freestone*

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN SOCIAL ACTION AWARD

for outstanding leadership in the fight for economic and social justice

HEALTH

IT'S POSSIBLE

to hold the government's feet to the fire when women's health and reproductive rights are at stake.

THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER HAS FOUGHT TO...

- Spur policy makers to strengthen women's health care policies with a first-of-its-kind, comprehensive research and advocacy tool, *Making the Grade on Women's Health: A National and State-by-State Report Card* series
- Stop the coercive use of experimental contraceptives on poor and institutionalized women and secure federal regulations to protect them from involuntary sterilization in *Relf and NWRO v. Weinberger*
- Win court approval for FDA authority to provide millions of women with information on the benefits and risks of prescription estrogens in *PMA v. FDA* and help secure the agency's approval of RU-486 for early medical abortion
- Protect women's access to health care, by helping to beat back proposals to limit health coverage mandates, such as screenings for breast and cervical cancer, and securing improvements in coverage, especially for low-income women
- Expose, prevent, and redress refusals by pharmacists to dispense lawfully prescribed contraception by representing individuals who faced refusals, changing corporate pharmacy policies and practices, securing state policies limiting or prohibiting refusals, and achieving the introduction of federal legislation outlawing such refusals
- Pioneer creative new legal theories to assist communities in successfully fighting hospital and HMO mergers that threaten to eliminate reproductive health services

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND HUMAN SERVICES
HEALTHY MOTHER, HEALTHY BABIES
NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

for the Center's efforts to reduce infant mortality and improve the health of women and their families

WASHINGTON, D.C. MAYOR'S
QUALITY PARTNERSHIP AWARD

for collaboration



EXPANDING THE POSSIBILITIES FOR 35 YEARS

2003

The Center releases the groundbreaking Women and Smoking: A National and State-by-State Report Card, the first comprehensive assessment of women's smoking-related health conditions and tobacco-control policies, urging states and the nation to adopt cost-effective, proven policies to reduce smoking among women and girls.

2004

The Center, building on its pioneering legal theories, partners with the NAACP to inform and activate African American communities to fight threats to reproductive health services by a growing number of hospitals refusing to provide emergency and other forms of contraception, full HIV/AIDS counseling, tubal ligations, and abortions.

2005

The Center achieves a groundbreaking Supreme Court victory in *Jackson v. Birmingham Board of Education*, a critically important Title IX decision that makes clear that the law prohibits retaliation against those who complain about sex discrimination and restores protections essential to the effective enforcement of Title IX and other bedrock civil rights laws.

2006

The Center issues its quadrennial 50-state report card and analysis of state child care tax provisions, *Making Care Less Taxing*, documenting improvements in 23 state tax provisions secured by the Center and its partners, and engages in an intensive outreach campaign with state child care groups that increases the number of families claiming tax credits to help pay for child care and meet other needs.

2007

The Center improves women's economic security by helping to secure the first increase in the federal minimum wage in ten years and gaining House passage of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2007, which reverses a Supreme Court decision making it nearly impossible for women to obtain relief for sex discrimination in compensation.

*A*s a result of the Center's work over the past 35 years, a woman in a downtown Manhattan office, on a middle-school playground, or in an Army tank has protection against sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination. A woman raising her children alone has a better chance of collecting the child support she's due, finding and paying for child care so she can earn a living, and having Social Security income in retirement. But the Center's mission is far from complete. Women still don't get equal pay for equal work. High-quality, affordable child care continues to be beyond the reach of millions of families. Title IX's promise of educational opportunity still has not been realized for all girls. Women at all ages of life are still more likely to be poor. Health policies in the states and in Washington, D.C. still overlook women's particular needs and their reproductive rights are under constant attack.

The challenges continue, and so must the work of the Center. With the support of thousands of individuals and organizations that have made the Center's past victories possible, even greater progress lies ahead. Because with the law on your side, great things are possible.

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*The National Women's Law Center is a 501(c)(3) organization.
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