

Arab-American and Muslim Women: Dispelling Myths, Building Bridges

May's meeting features discussion on social and political issues of concern and political participation by Arab-American and Muslim women. The recent House Homeland Security hearings chaired by Representative Peter King (R-NY) on the so-called "radicalization of Muslims" shed light on some of the bigotry and hate that exists in American society; however, it also provided an opportunity for like-minded individuals and organizations to stand together in support of true American ideals and values grounded in our Constitution and laws. We hope our meeting will encourage positive dialogue.

Our speakers will be **Aseel Elborn**, National Outreach and Fundraising Coordinator, Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and **Lobna Ismail**, Founder and President of Connecting Cultures, Inc.

Date/Time: Tuesday, May 24, 2011 / 12 noon sharp to 1:30 pm

Open to the public, no reservation necessary.

Place: One Dupont Circle, 8th Floor Kellogg Room, Washington DC

Bring brown bag lunch, soft drinks available from a machine.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

A photo ID must be shown at the security desk of One Dupont Circle.

Please allow time to go through the sign-in system.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, June 28, 2011

Religious and Moral Issues Affecting Women's Health Care

CWI's April speakers were **Marissa Valeri**, Senior Associate for Domestic Programs at Catholics for Choice, and **Amy Taylor**, Interim Vice President of Public Policy and Advocacy, Planned Parenthood Federation of America. The meeting began by thanking Clearinghouse member Linda Mahoney, president of Maryland NOW, for suggesting this discussion on Religious and Moral Issues Affecting Women's Health Care. Mahoney spoke briefly about her work on the topic in Montgomery County, Maryland.

Marissa Valeri gave a brief background of her organization, Catholics for Choice, founded in 1973. The organization supports a national network of advocates who work on reproductive health and justice issues from a Catholic or interfaith perspective and helps pro-choice Catholics around the country be heard in the public sphere. Catholics for Choice also has many free materials on its web site

www.CatholicsForChoice.org. Valeri continued to give the Clearinghouse the "nuts and bolts" of Catholic health services in the United States.

In the 1980s, Catholics for Choice began to look specifically at the rise of Catholic health-care in the United States and its effects. Valeri discussed how the increased involvement of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in Catholic-owned healthcare facilities might be due to the failure of the church "to convince Catholics to follow its lead in opposing abortion and modern method of family planning." This failure led the USCCB to impose their position on reproductive health by other means: primarily through the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Services, commonly referred to simply as the "Directives." The directives were first established in 1971 and are now 72 in number. Created by Bishops with



Marissa Valeri



Amy Taylor

absolutely no medical background, these directives restrict health practitioners in Catholic hospitals from providing basic, and often lifesaving, care relating to reproductive health. For instance, the directives forbid care for women experiencing an ectopic pregnancy. The directives also prohibit Catholic hospitals from providing in-vitro fertilization (IVF) services, access to contraception, tubal ligation or other sterilization services, education about any other contraceptive methods except for "natural family planning," and access to abortion — even in cases of rape and incest. The directives apply to all patients in Catholic hospitals, irrespective of their religious affiliation.

Valeri continued by providing several examples of the directives at work, such as in St. Joseph's Hospital in Phoenix, Arizona. Bishop Thomas Olmsted revoked their Catholic status after the hospital's ethics committee voted to provide a lifesaving abortion to a young mother of four children who was suffering from pulmonary hypertension. By removing the Catholic status of the hospital, Bishop Olmsted has made it impossible for anyone in the hospital to attend mass on the premises and Sister Margaret McBride, the only nun on the ethics committee, was excommunicated.

One of the most problematic aspects of the directives is that it is "a group of people with a background in theology is setting policies on biology, which is never a good thing." As in the case of St. Joseph's, the directives inevitably pit Bishops against the medical professionals attempting to follow their Hippocratic oath. Essentially this means that Catholic hospitals are providing a lower standard of healthcare while still using, "significant amounts of public funding, including state and federal grants."

Program Summary, continued

Valeri pointed out that this is especially worrisome when one considers the size of Catholic healthcare in the United States. Catholic hospitals provide 122,000 hospital beds across the country. One in six patient hospitalizations occur in Catholic hospitals. For many women, especially in rural areas, Catholic hospitals are the only medical center options, thus denying many women their basic right to reproductive care. An article on this subject was published in the Spring 2011 issue of *Ms. Magazine* entitled *Treatment Denied: The opinions that count most at Catholic hospitals are those of bishops, not doctors. Are they whom women want to entrust with their reproductive health care?*

Amy Taylor spoke on two topics: the reasons why Planned Parenthood's campaign against de-funding was successful and what Planned Parenthood can see on the horizon in terms of threats to reproductive health, especially on the state level. Taylor described the events that led to Planned Parenthood fighting for its survival as "a confluence of a perfect storm." This perfect storm began, Taylor explained, in the last election when 188 pro-choice members of the House were reduced to 160. Not only were the new members of Congress anti-choice, but they had run specifically on this platform. This meant that many of the members who are needed for an effective congress, such as the moderate republicans and democrats, were removed from the political environment. Taylor also noted the delay of congress to pass a budget until the very last minute as another contributing factor to this maelstrom. Taylor also discussed how the sting operations conducted by Lila Rose and her organization "Live Action" created an anti-Planned Parenthood sentiment that echoed into the Representative Mike Pence (R-IN) amendment to defund Planned Parenthood.

Pence, possibly a future presidential candidate, and his amendment gained a great deal of support because of the false claim that public money may contribute to abortion services in Planned Parenthood facilities. Taylor emphasized the controls that go into the funding of abortion services make this impossible. Though there were defenders of Planned Parenthood on the

floor of the house such as Rep. Frank Pallone, Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Rep. Stephen Lynch, Rep. Rosa DeLauro, Rep. Jackie Speier, and Rep. Gwen Moore, Planned Parenthood lost the house vote on this amendment 240-185. Planned Parenthood was disappointed at the margin of this loss, but the result was not a surprise. "We knew we would lose the vote," Taylor said, "but we didn't want to lose the debate." Planned Parenthood used the points brought up in the debate in the House to inform their strategy in the Senate.

Taylor outlined the major campaign strategies used by Planned Parenthood to sway the Senate. One of the first measures employed by Planned Parenthood was to buy a large pink "truth bus" to tour 90 cities across the country to talk to people about Planned Parenthood's true activities, dispelling politicized myths filtering through the public sphere. They also ran an Action Fund advertisement emphasizing Planned Parenthood's cancer testing facilities on television in Washington D.C. as well as other ads in the Southern states with crucial political supporters. Planned Parenthood ran over 80 events, attracting 10,000 participants during this period of time. Similarly the organization collected signatures for a petition. This *I Stand with Planned Parenthood* petition attracted 825,268 signatures and revealed a whole new demographic of supporters that was both young (under 35) and diverse, with 52 percent of the total number representing diverse supporters. Taylor went on to detail the response of this demographic to the plight of Planned Parenthood. She highlighted some of the grassroots campaigns, such as the *I Have Sex* viral video and Facebook campaign developed by students at Wesleyan University, and their importance in the movement to block the de-funding of Planned Parenthood.

Taylor also discussed how crucial support from anti-choice, Democratic Senator Harry Reid and his avowal of "hell no" to the de-funding of Planned Parenthood was to Planned Parenthood's success. This kind of support made room in the public sphere for other conservatives and anti-choice members of the government to discuss their support of Planned

Program Summary, continued

Parenthood's work. This allowed the discourse surrounding the issue of de-funding of Planned Parenthood to become a bi-partisan discussion about the crucial women's health services that Planned Parenthood provides — and that members of the government on both sides of the aisle were willing to shut down the government for — rather than a shallow and crude debate of abortion. Taylor also praised President Obama's strong, private support of Planned Parenthood, refusing to even entertain discussions about the defunding of Planned Parenthood in negotiations with the Speaker of the House, John Boehner.

Taylor ended by summarizing what Planned Parenthood expects to encounter in the near future. She emphasized that Planned Parenthood's fight for funds is not over and that it will likely appear again on the appropriations bills this

summer. She also spoke about an upcoming bill that could totally block public funds for abortion services, as well as private healthcare coverage for the procedure, which should be in the news in the next few weeks. Taylor also cited the continued fight against Title X cuts and Medicaid block grants, as well as the potential impact of health care reform on Planned Parenthood as issues on the horizon. Taylor ended by bringing the Clearinghouse's attention to the relatively unopposed state bills restricting abortions, either by imposing greater restrictions on the length of time that women can procure abortions or by implementing measures where women have to wait three days for their abortion or have to watch an ultrasound before obtaining an abortion. The Planned Parenthood web page is www.plannedparenthood.org.

The CWI Nominating Committee presents the 2011-12 slate:

<i>President</i>	<i>VP Membership</i>	<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Directors</i>	<i>Lifetime Directors</i>
Barbara Ratner	Kellye McIntosh / D. Anne Martin	Carolyn Cook	Elaine Newman Harriett Stonehill	<i>Emerita</i> Roslyn Kaiser Ruth Nadel

Women and Girls with Disabilities

The Center for Women Policy Studies has announced the publication of four new 2011 Barbara Faye Waxman Fiduccia Papers on Women and Girls with Disabilities.”

www.centerwomenpolicy.org/

Cyberstalking, a new crime

Cyberstalking is a growing problem for women as rapid technological advances make online intrusion ever more possible. There is a standard set of safety precautions, but as one safety advocate says, “This crime can be hard to stop.”

“Each year, 3.4 million adults are victims of stalking, and 1-in-4 has become the target of cyberstalking — threatening behavior or unwanted advances that use computer communications. A February 2011 DontDateHimGirl.com

poll of 700 respondents found that 40 percent of women have faced dating violence via social media: dates had sent them harassing text messages, posted disturbing status updates about them on Facebook and fired off angry ‘tweets’ on Twitter ... There are laws in all 50 states that address the use of technology in stalking and Congress is considering a bill (called Simplifying the Ambiguous Law, Keeping Everyone Reliably Safe Act or the STALKERS Act) that would extend the definition of stalking to include cyberstalking.

Sewall-Belmont Reopens

Starting May 18 the renovated Sewall-Belmont House & Museum will be open to the public for tours, which will take place Wednesday through Sunday from noon to 5:00 pm. For group tours, contact education@sewallbelmont.org.

Susan B. Anthony and Fashion

The New York Times

It is said that Susan B. Anthony usually wore a red shawl and carried an alligator handbag. Rarely known for style “to her, a bag was not a fashion statement but a symbol of independence at a time when women were not allowed to enter into a contract or even open a bank account. And yet, Ms. Anthony is now the namesake of what appears to be an ‘it’ bag.

“The Susan B. Anthony House is a museum that operates in her former residence in Rochester. Recently the museum has been selling these handbags (\$250) made of fake alligator; its design was inspired by one of Anthony’s bags in the shape of a doctor’s bag. More than 500 have been sold already, with some famous people ordering them. The 17-inch-long crescent shaped purse ... is inscribed with two of Anthony’s mottos: ‘Failure is impossible’ and ‘Every woman needs a purse of her own.’ In her purse, Anthony kept copies of her speeches and the transcript of her trial after she was arrested in 1827 for voting in the presidential election. The new version is large enough to accommodate a mini-laptop. Anthony herself was a brilliant fundraiser; she said, “Any advertising is good. Get praise if possible, blame if you have to. But never stop being talked about.”

Gender Disparity

The Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media

Movies: “A new report from the University of Southern California’s Annenberg School for Communications and Journalism says films oversexualize teen girls much more than teen boys, with 40 percent of female teens dressed in sexually revealing clothing compared to 6.7 percent of teen males in films. The girl’s statistic even beats out the young adult female figure of 32.4 percent.”

Women’s Sports: “While women’s sports, specifically basketball, have made great strides in gaining audience attention, media coverage isn’t staying on the same pace. While Internet technologies are helping, there are still big hurdles in getting mainstream outlets to give female sports games equal footing in programming. And surprisingly, the increasing numbers of female journalists isn’t a factor in changing the landscape.”

Recession, “Mancession”

WomenseNews.org

Recent spotlight on men and the recession masks women’s real losses, according to www.WomenseNews.org, which calls it “mancession” ... “the burning question is what explains the idea that men’s job-loss woes exceed those of women?”

“More men may have lost their jobs ... because they had higher-paying jobs in the first place. Outsourcing and cuts in the manufacturing sector, especially well-paid union jobs, hit men hard. ... More women may have survived, but it was because they were in much more poorly paid jobs in health care and service industries that are hard to send to Bangladesh. But these jobs often can’t support a family.”

Joan Entmacher, vice president for family economic security at the National Women’s Law Center said, “The recovery is really not happening for women at all. It’s a slow recovery over all, but it’s really leaving women behind.”

Title IX: Engaging Men to Help End Violence Against Women

Vice President Joe Biden and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced new guidance on Title IX to address sexual assault on college campuses. Earlier this month at the University of New Hampshire. Speaking directly to male students, Biden emphasized what he has said often — that everyone must play a part to end violence against women. He said, “You guys have an absolute obligation as men to speak up ... If you see a man in any way threatening on this campus, if a friend even hints at potential abuse, you have an obligation to speak up. Peer to peer, friend to friend, — we know what works best and that’s how real change happens.”

Biden announced that the Department of Justice, through its Office on Violence Against Women, awarded \$6.9 million to 23 projects aimed to empower men to speak out on violence against women. Called the Engaging Men Grant Program, it encourages men to work as allies with women and girls to prevent violence.



Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

10401 Grosvenor Place #917

Rockville, MD 20852

FIRST CLASS MAIL

COMING EVENTS

- Thursday, June 9** Lissa Muscatine and her husband, Bradley Graham on **The Future of the Bookstore Business and the Future of Politics and Prose.**
Luncheon 12:15-2:00pm; Members \$25, Nonmembers \$30; Lecture only \$10.
Woman's National Democratic Club, 1526 New Hampshire Avenue NW
Reservations: 202-232-7363, ext 3003 or pfitzgerald@democraticwoman.org
- Tuesday, June 28** **CWI's Annual Meeting.** Voting in the 2011-12 board. Featuring our organizational members focusing on their activist priorities.

Photos: D.Anne Martin; Editor: Roslyn Kaiser; April summary draft by Liberty Slater, FMF Intern; Production: Letterforms Typography & Graphic Design.

CWI Board of Directors, July 2010 - June 2011

OFFICERS: *President*, Barbara J. Ratner; *VP Program*, Sue Klein; *VP Membership Co-chairs*, Kellye McIntosh, D.Anne Martin; *Treasurer*, Holly Taggart Joseph; *Secretary*, Harriett Stonehill

DIRECTORS: Sarah Albert, Alvin Golub, Linda Fihelly, Roslyn Kaiser, Ruth G. Nadel, Bernice Sandler, Ellen S. Overton, *ex officio*