



# SOUNDING OFF

BY GLORIA FELDT

President, Planned Parenthood Federation of America

## A Call to Action: It's Now or Never

Last November, George W. Bush surrounded himself with smiling men, readied his pen, and signed the abortion ban bill. Why were these men smiling? It's because George W. Bush and the congressional leadership had succeeded—yet again—in restricting women's reproductive freedom of choice. For the first time in our nation's history, a federal law criminalizes abortion procedures.

Any pregnancy can go terribly wrong, and this ban outlaws medically necessary abortions that women need for serious medical conditions, the U.S. Supreme Court has already

said that's unconstitutional, but that didn't stop the President and Congress.

In enacting this law, anti-choice hardliners demonstrated their willingness to sacrifice women's health and legitimate medical science. It represents one more step in the effort to undermine reproductive rights, with the initial goal of overturning *Roe v. Wade* and abolishing safe, legal abortion.

If this ban is ever enforced, it will put doctors in jail for providing the best and safest health care to women. And that is why we asked the court to protect women's health.

Thankfully, we were able to stop the law from taking effect, temporarily. The injunction granted in *PPFA v. Ashcroft* days after the president signed the bill will allow doctors in Planned Parenthood health centers nationally to perform necessary medical procedures without the threat of legal action.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Nurses Association, and the American Medical Women's Association all oppose this dangerous ban. The courts and the medical community agree: this dangerous and unconstitutional law denies women, in consultation with

their doctors and families, the right to make decisions about their own health.

We know the law is on our side because the court has already spoken. And we know the American people are on our side because two-thirds of voters believe that women should have the right to bodily integrity and self-determination. Women have the constitutional, civil, and human right to make decisions about their own health—the right to their own lives.

Given all this, we expect a pro-choice demonstration of historic size in Washington, DC, on April 25, 2004. The March for Women's Lives will begin at 12 noon on the national mall and will be sponsored by Planned Parenthood Federation of America, NARAL Pro-Choice America, NOW, the Feminist Majority, and hundreds of co-sponsoring organizations, including the League of Women Voters.

On April 25, please join us in showing hardline, anti-choice, anti-woman, anti-human rights lawmakers that we are powerful enough to preserve our fundamental human rights now and for generations to come.



MARCH FOR WOMEN'S LIVES

### VOTER LINKS

- For more information about the threats to women's health, [www.protectwomenshealth.org](http://www.protectwomenshealth.org)
- For more information about the March for Women's Lives, [www.marchforwomen.org](http://www.marchforwomen.org)