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SPECIAL ELECTION NEWSLETTER

Dear members,

This may be the most important CARAL newsletter you will receive for several years. The reason is, of course, that this is our federal election mailing - the mailing in which we ask you to do some work on behalf of Freedom of Choice in this country.

First of all, we want you to know what we at the National Office have done. Together with Planned Parenthood, the YWCA, and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, we have produced the coloured brochure "Reproductive Rights - a Statement of Principle". This brochure is going to all the candidates, along with a covering letter from the four organizations. In addition, each organization has included its official position on reproductive rights, for the candidates' information. A copy of the latest Gallup Poll has been included in that mailing, as well as a list of resource material which the candidate can obtain from any of the organizations.

You can count on every candidate of the three major parties in your riding having this information. Make use of the "Pre-election Pointers" and the enclosed material when you approach each candidate for the purpose of expressing your views on Freedom of Choice.

Remember: we will have to live with the consequences of this election for many years to come if abortion is again made illegal in this country. And the fear is a real one. The anti-choice lobby has vowed to make this a single-issue election. It is concentrating on those ridings in which the incumbent had less than a 4,000-vote lead in the last election because it believes that this lead can be broken by the abortion issue. It is polling candidates with the two questions set out for you in the "Reproductive Rights - A Statement of Principle" pamphlet (the yellow one) and will leaflet extensively to tell voters how the candidates answered. It is, as usual, pouring money into media advertising (Campaign Life alone admits to \$50,000 for newspaper advertising.) All this to intimidate candidates into supporting their no-abortion-under-any-circumstances position.

THE GALLUP POLL (See enclosed copy)

Always remember - and always remind your candidates: the pro-choice position is held by the majority of Canadians (57%) and the anti-choice position is held by only a tiny minority (5%). The Gallup Poll of March of this year shows the following:

57% of Canadians believe the decision should be made solely by a woman and her doctor

5% of Canadians believe that abortion should be illegal in all circumstances, even when the mental and physical health of the woman are in danger. (This is the anti-choice position

of Campaign Life, Right to Life, Alliance for Life, Birthright, Coalition for Life, Share Life, etc.).

You will note that the "yes" answers to both questions in the poll totalled 84%. This means that Canadians overwhelmingly support legal abortion.

It is true that the strictly freedom of choice position has declined 5 points in 5 years. But we are still the majority in spite of the fanatical campaign by the anti-choice lobby, whose support, by the way, has dropped 6 points in 5 years. We are still the majority in spite of economic recession, during which there is a tendency for individuals to turn inward and become less tolerant of differences.

As the poll shows, support for freedom of choice has declined among those under thirty. It should be noted that the anti-choice lobby aims its message at young people, with the purpose of filling them with guilt and horror. Those of us who have children in junior and senior high schools must find out just how the subject of family planning and abortion is presented in our children's classroom. Make sure that if an anti-abortion group is allowed into the school, the teacher has made provision for presenting another view. Insist on this. The slide show presented by anti-choice speakers is particularly objectionable; it is misrepresentative of the facts and a source of trauma to children. Tell the principal and/or teacher at your child's school that you can provide freedom of choice information. Then write to us for it.

B.C. PROVINCIAL ELECTION

A member in British Columbia has sent us a clipping from the New Westminster Columbian about attempts by anti-choicers to secretly push through a motion to end abortion services at the Surrey Memorial Hospital.

It appears that one of the anti-abortion board members was defeated during board elections in 1977, but was later appointed to the board by provincial Health Minister Bob McClelland. Unfortunately, we have no further information. Perhaps B.C. members could pursue this during the provincial campaign.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Won't you please help pay for this special election newsletter by renewing your membership for 1979, if you haven't already done so. Remember: 79 on your label means that you're up-do-date. See renewal form on page 3.

ARE YOU MOVING OR HAVE YOU RECENTLY MOVED?

Be sure to notify us so that you will continue to receive mailings. Tell us your old address as well as your new one.

ANNUAL MEETING - April 21, 1979.

The annual meeting (about which you received information in the March newsletter) promises to be interesting and topical. If you can't come, we'll be reporting on it in the next newsletter.

PRE-ELECTION POINTERS

The following are some ways that you can make your pro-choice views known to candidates.

Write a letter to every candidate and pass the letter on to a friend to use as a sample.

Phone the candidate and get a friend to do the same. All you need say is "I support freedom of choice on abortion." You can leave a message consisting of this same statement. Or you can leave a message for the candidate, requesting that she or he call you back.

State your position to canvassers who come to your door. Ask the canvasser to have the candidate phone you or stop off and visit you to discuss the issue.

Go to the candidate's committee room and voice your concern to the campaign manager.

Phone the committee room and make an appointment to speak to the candidate at the committee room or in your house.

Go with a friend. If you can, go with someone whose experience with abortion rights would add weight to your own views - a social worker, school teacher, school guidance counsellor, nurse, public health nurse, doctor, counsellor in contraception and abortion, etc.

Ask if the candidate received our material and if she or he wants to discuss anything related to it. If possible, leave pro-choice material with the candidate. CARAL can provide you with more.

Speak from your own personal understanding of the issue; it is not necessary to be an expert. The voting public is made up of people who have personal views on personal issues.

Explain that the candidate will be approached by the anti-choice lobby (if she or he hasn't been already) and that the lobby's technique is to try to frighten the candidate into believing that it can defeat her or him. Make clear that the no-abortion-under-any-circumstances people represent a tiny minority of Canadians (5% according to the March, 1979 Gallup Poll).

Go to coffee parties, all-party candidates meetings, etc. Remind everyone that the anti-choice lobby represents a small minority of Canadians. If an attempt is made to monopolize the evening, point out that there are other important issues to discuss - the economy, unemployment, national unity.

Phone , or write a supportive letter, to a candidate you see taking a good position in public. If you see a candidate waffling on the subject, get to her or him immediately.

REMEMBER: YOU CAN DO ALL OF THE ABOVE IN ANY AND EVERY RIDING, WHETHER YOUR OWN OR NOT. NO ONE KNOWS THIS BETTER THAN THE OPPOSITION.

<u>RENEWAL FORM</u>	Single - \$10	Sustaining - \$25
Date _____	Family - \$15	Affiliated Group - \$25
Name _____	Limited Income - \$3	Sponsor - \$100
Address _____		Donation
	City	Prov. Postal Code
Amount Enclosed _____		

Leave abortion to woman, doctor: 57%

While there has been a slight drop in the proportion of Canadians who feel that the decision to have an abortion should be made solely by a woman and her doctor — from 62 per cent five years ago, to 57 per cent today — still a solid majority feel this way.

National response to this question, today, in 1974 and in 1972 follows:

“Do you agree, or disagree with the following statement: ‘The decision to have an abortion should be made solely by a woman and her physician?’”

	NATIONAL		
	Today	1974	1972
Agree.....	57%	62%	61%
Disagree.....	36	31	31
Can't say.....	7	7	8

The drop-off in level of agreement has occurred among many adults (58 per cent), among those in their 30s and 40s (56 per cent) and among those 50 years and over (58 per cent). In 1972, when this question was first asked, considerably more of those under 30 years (71 per cent) were in agreement than were those in their 30s or 40s (61

Gallup Poll

per cent) or those 50 years and over (51 per cent).

A second question, asked of those who disagreed that responsibility should be left with a woman and her doctor, was:

“Would you make an exception in the case of a woman whose mental and physical health is in danger?”

Combining the results of the two questions shows that over eight in 10 agree, on that basis:

	NATIONAL		
	Today	1974	1972
Agree.....	84%	81%	87%
Disagree.....	5	11	4
Can't say.....	11	8	10

Results today are based on personal interviews with 1,030 adults, 18 years and over, in their homes across Canada. Interviewing on the current study was completed in mid-February. A sample of this size is accurate within a four percentage point margin, 19 in 20 times.

For "many", read "young": →