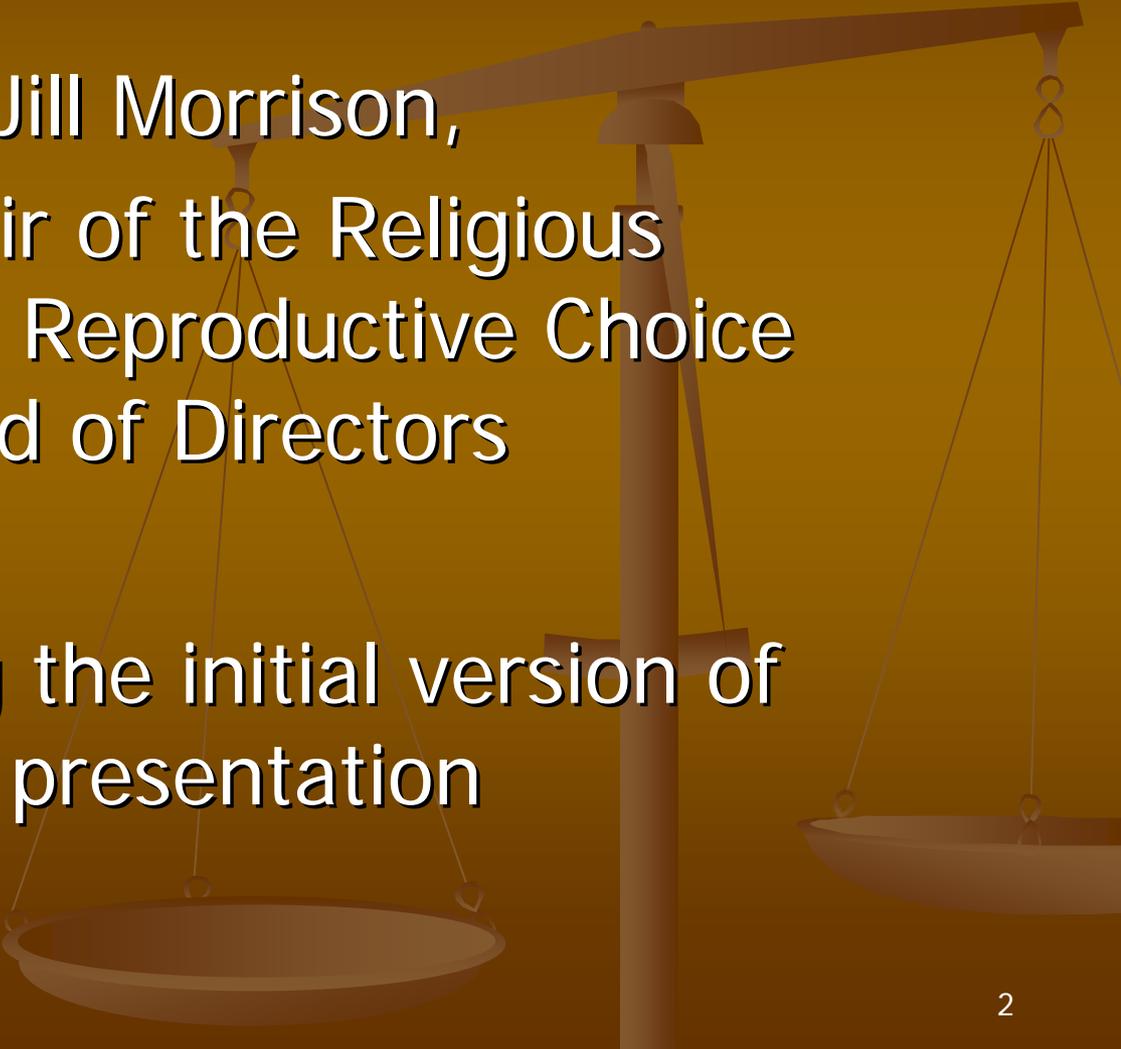


The
Unitarian Universalist Association
of Congregations
and
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
present:

What is Reproductive Justice ?



Many Thanks



To Jill Morrison,
Vice-Chair of the Religious
Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Board of Directors

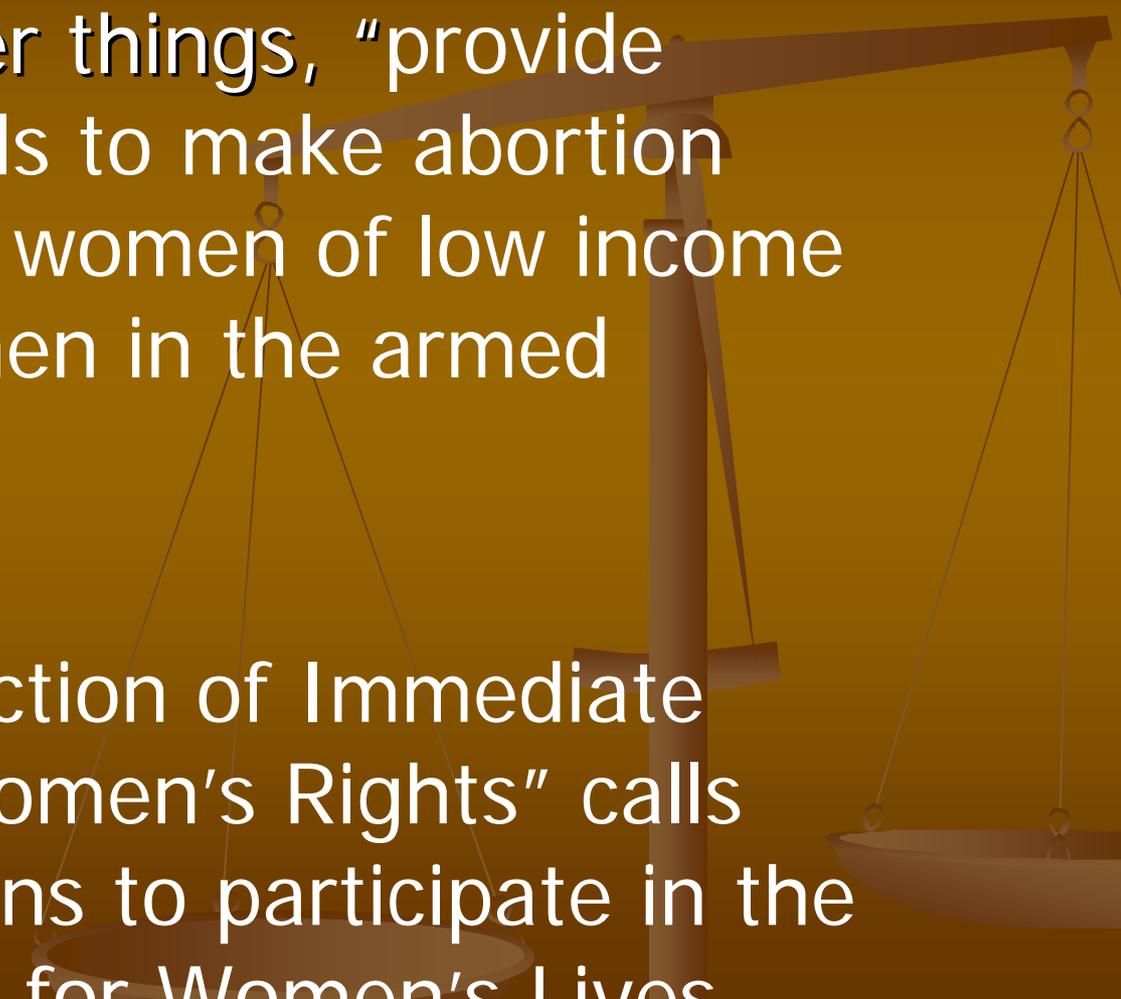
For creating the initial version of
this presentation



Unitarian Universalist History

1963: GA Resolution "Reform of Abortion Statutes" calls for enactment of a uniform law making abortion legal in any compelling circumstance

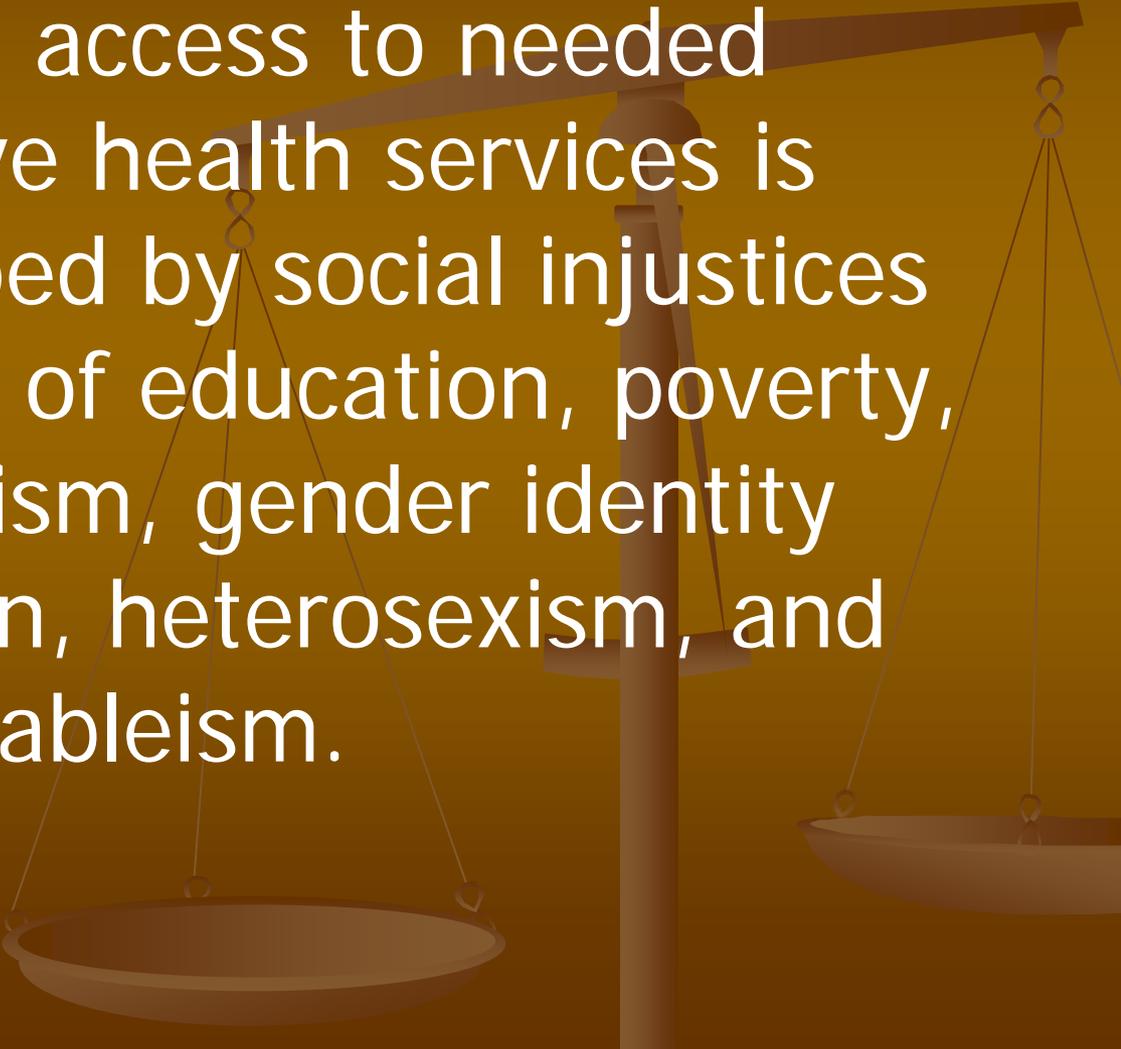
Other statements passed in 1968, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1978, 1980, 1985



1993: GA Resolution “Federal Legislation for Choice” calls for laws which guarantee choice and, among other things, “provide federal funds to make abortion available to women of low income and to women in the armed services”

2003: GA Action of Immediate Witness “Women’s Rights” calls congregations to participate in the 2004 March for Women’s Lives

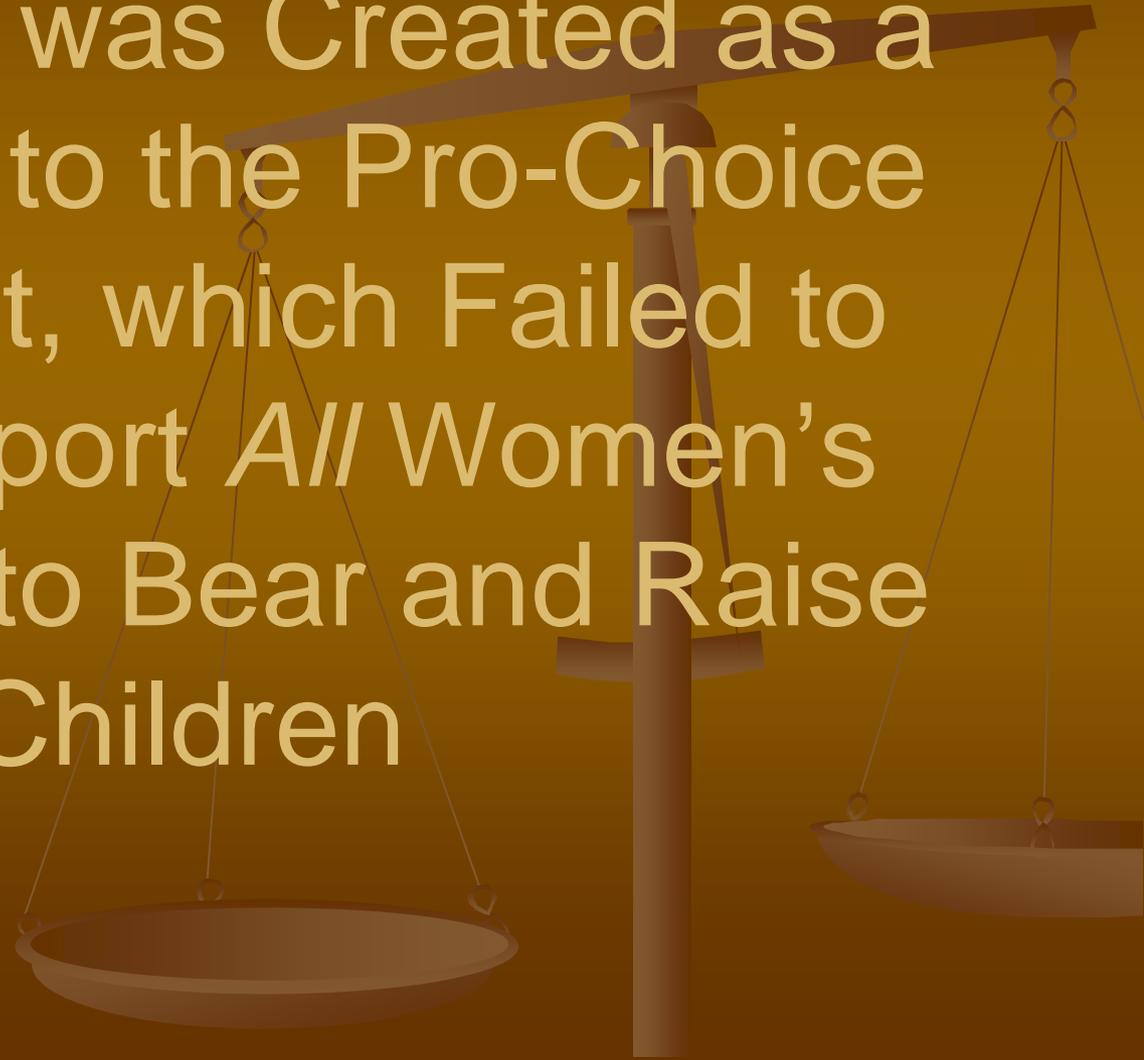




Reproductive Justice emphasizes that each person's ability to live out their rights and access to needed reproductive health services is uniquely shaped by social injustices including: lack of education, poverty, racism, sexism, gender identity discrimination, heterosexism, and ableism.

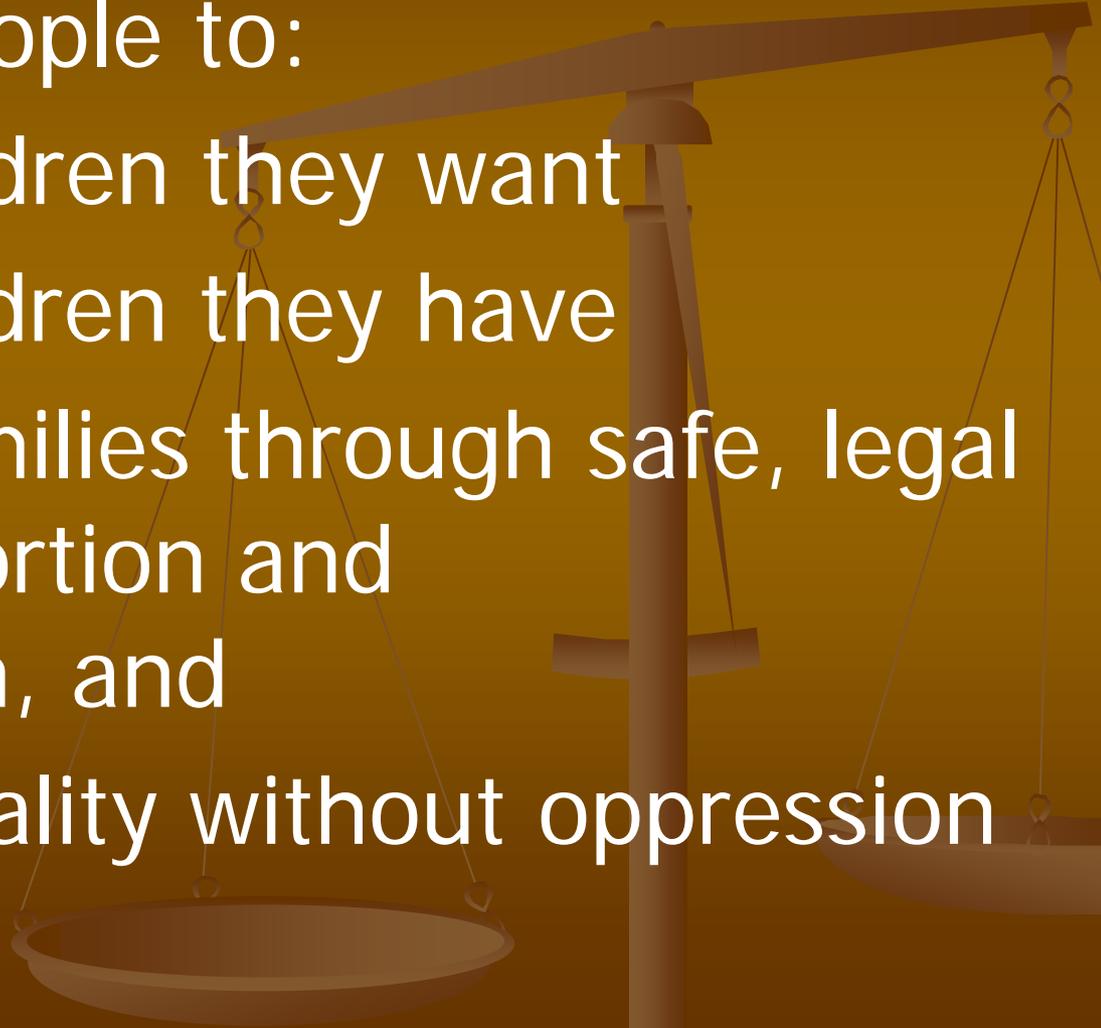


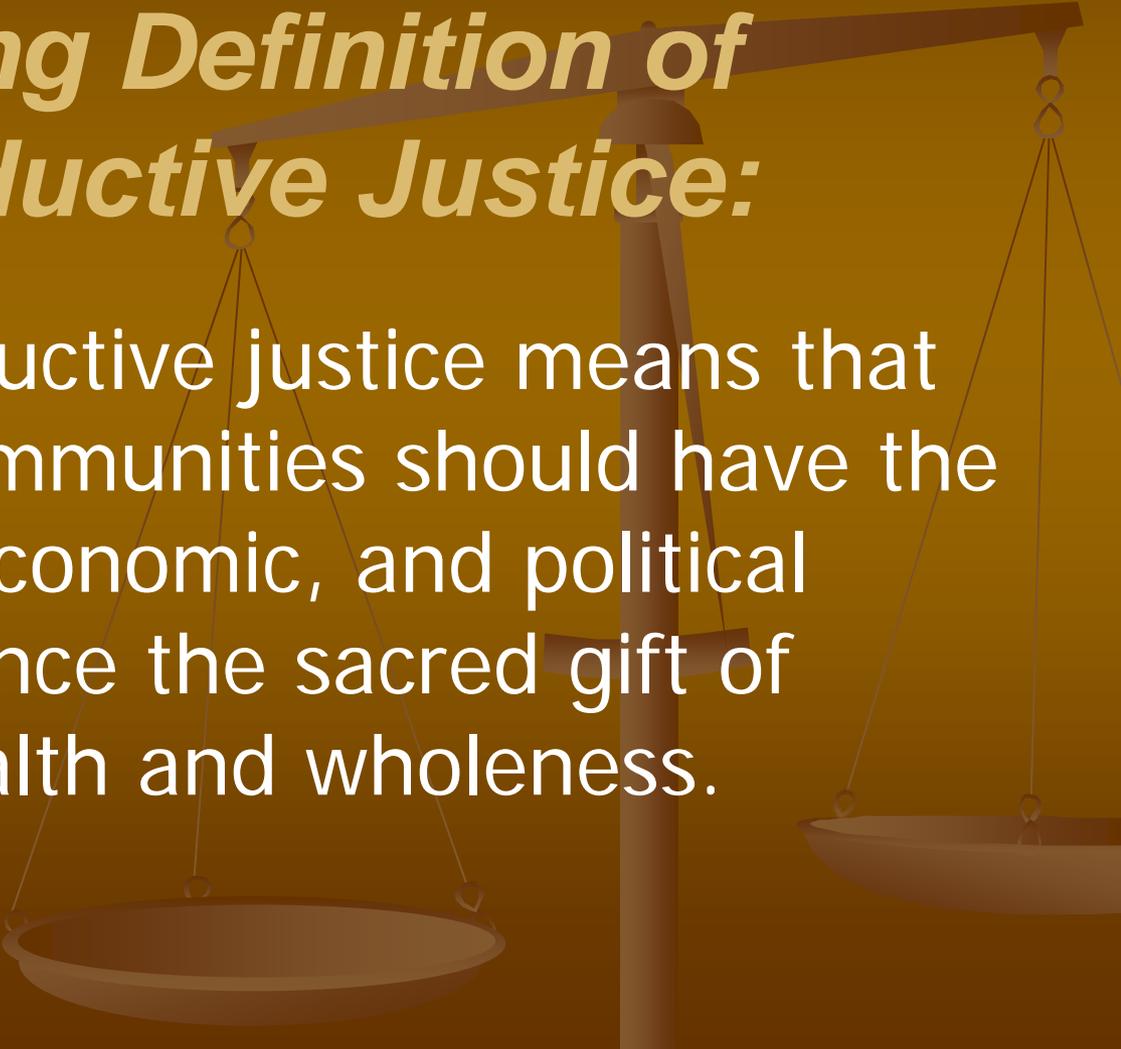
The Reproductive Justice Movement was Created as a Response to the Pro-Choice Movement, which Failed to *Fully Support All Women's* Decisions to Bear and Raise Children





What are the components of Reproductive Justice?

- The right of people to:
 - have the children they want
 - raise the children they have
 - plan their families through safe, legal access to abortion and contraception, and
 - express sexuality without oppression
- 



The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice Staff's Working Definition of Reproductive Justice:

For RCRC, reproductive justice means that all people and communities should have the social, spiritual, economic, and political means to experience the sacred gift of sexuality with health and wholeness.

Reproductive Justice 101



Sister
Song

Lynn Roberts, PhD

Member, SisterSong Management Circle

April 26, 2012

What is Reproductive Oppression?



Reproductive oppression is the control and exploitation of women, girls, and individuals through our bodies, sexuality, labor, and reproduction. The regulation of women and individuals thus becomes a powerful strategic pathway to controlling entire communities. It involves systems of oppression that are based on race, ability, class, gender, sexuality, age and immigration status.



Historical Examples of Reproductive Oppression

- Forced breeding of African American women during slavery
- Sterilization abuse of Native American, African American, Puerto Rican and Mexican American women
- Forced removal of children (boarding schools, foster care)
- Human experimentation on Puerto Rican women for the contraceptive pill
- The Anti-Immigrant Page Law which forbid entry of mostly “Chinese, Japanese and Mongolian” women
- Welfare Reform laws limiting the number of children a woman can have

Frameworks Developed in Response to Reproductive Oppression



Reproductive Justice

Reproductive Health



Reproductive Rights



Framework 1: Reproductive Health

Hallmarks

- Emphasizes the necessary reproductive health services women need
- Addresses the lack of access to reproductive health services and lack of relevant research
- Strategizes on improving and expanding services, research, and access, particularly prevention and cultural competency in communities of color
- Primary constituents are patients/clients needing services and/or education
- Focuses on providers, medical professionals, community and public health educators, and health service providers

Limitations and Challenges:

- Services and education are directed at the individual level
- Root causes of health disparities are not addressed
- It can be resource-intensive without leading to long-term change
- Limited by inherent access issues because different women have varying levels of access to these services and education



Framework 2: Reproductive Rights

Hallmarks:

- Analyzes the core problem as the lack of legal protection, laws or enforcement of laws that protect an individual woman's legal right to reproductive health care services, especially abortion.
- The primary strategy is legal, legislative, and advocacy at the state and federal level.
- Women are organized to participate actively in the political process through the electoral system and encouraged to vote and call their members of Congress or State Legislatures.
- The key players are advocates, legal experts, policymakers, and elected officials.

Challenges and Limitations:

- Focus on individual choice obscures the social contexts in which individuals make choices.
- Assumption of a level of knowledge, access to elected officials, and belief in the effectiveness of the political system.
- Women who are marginalized by immigration status, age, class, race, and disabilities often do not have this access, knowledge, or faith in the ability of the system to meet their needs.



What is Reproductive Justice?

Reproductive Justice is the complete physical, mental, spiritual, political, social, and economic well-being of women and girls, based on the full achievement and protection of women's human rights.

- **Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice (now called Forward Together)**



Origins of Reproductive Justice Framework

- The theory, strategy and practice of Reproductive Justice was created by African American women in 1994 because we were looking for a way to articulate the needs of our communities of color that face multiple forms of reproductive and sexual oppression. We needed an intersectional analysis defined by the human rights framework -- based on the practice of self-help -- that would be inclusive and applicable to everyone.



Key Principles of Reproductive Justice

We believe that every woman has the 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 has with the necessary social supports in safe environments and healthy communities, and without fear of violence from individuals or the government.



Key Strategies of Reproductive Justice

- Support the leadership and power of those most excluded groups of women and girls within a culturally-relevant context that recognizes and addresses the multi-layered impact of oppression on their lives.
- Develop the leadership and build the social, political and economic power of low-income women of color and their communities so they can survive and thrive.
- Advance a concrete agenda that wins real individual, community, institutional and societal changes for poor women and girls of color.
- Integrate grassroots issues and constituencies that are multi-racial, multi-generational and multi-class into the national policy arena.
- Build a network of allied social justice organizations who integrate a reproductive justice analysis and agenda into their work.



Challenges and Limitations of Reproductive Justice Framework

- Challenges people personally and politically by asking them to adopt a worldview that is diametrically opposed to the status quo.
- It involves taking risks, including taking direct action against those who abuse power.
- Long-term change requires more resources and staying power.
- Potential for radical transformation alarms many.

Recent Threats to Reproductive Justice in the U.S.

- Repeated attempts to further restrict abortion access (e.g., personhood bills) and also eliminate Title X funding for primary and reproductive health care for women and youth.
- Federal and state deficit reduction budget cuts at the expense of working and poor communities.
- Anti-immigrant and anti-union policies and rhetoric.
- National billboard campaign to cast abortion as genocide against the black community.
- The Blunt amendment to exempt employers from providing insurance coverage for contraceptives (rejected).
- Arizona's H.B. 2625 that would require women to disclose medical reasons for and allow employers to fire women for using contraceptives.
- State legislation to end shackling of pregnant inmates during childbirth.
- Current Republican blockage of reauthorization and coverage of LGBT, immigrant and Native American women in the Violence against Women Act (VAWA).
- The Supreme Court review of an individual mandate for health insurance.





What is *SisterSong*?

- A national network of more than 88 women of color and allied organizations and 400 individuals who support our goal of improving the lives of Indigenous women and women of color in the U.S through *Reproductive Justice*.
- Represent five ethnic populations and Indigenous nations in the U.S.

African American/Black

Asian/Pacific Islander

Middle Eastern/Arab American

Native American/Indigenous

Latina



How can *SisterSong* be a resource for your work?

- We offer training to constituents and staff:
 - Reproductive Justice 101, 102 and beyond
 - Human Rights Education
 - Self-Help
- Our website <http://www.sistersong.net> is designed to be a resource for up-to-date information on Reproductive Justice.



Sister Song

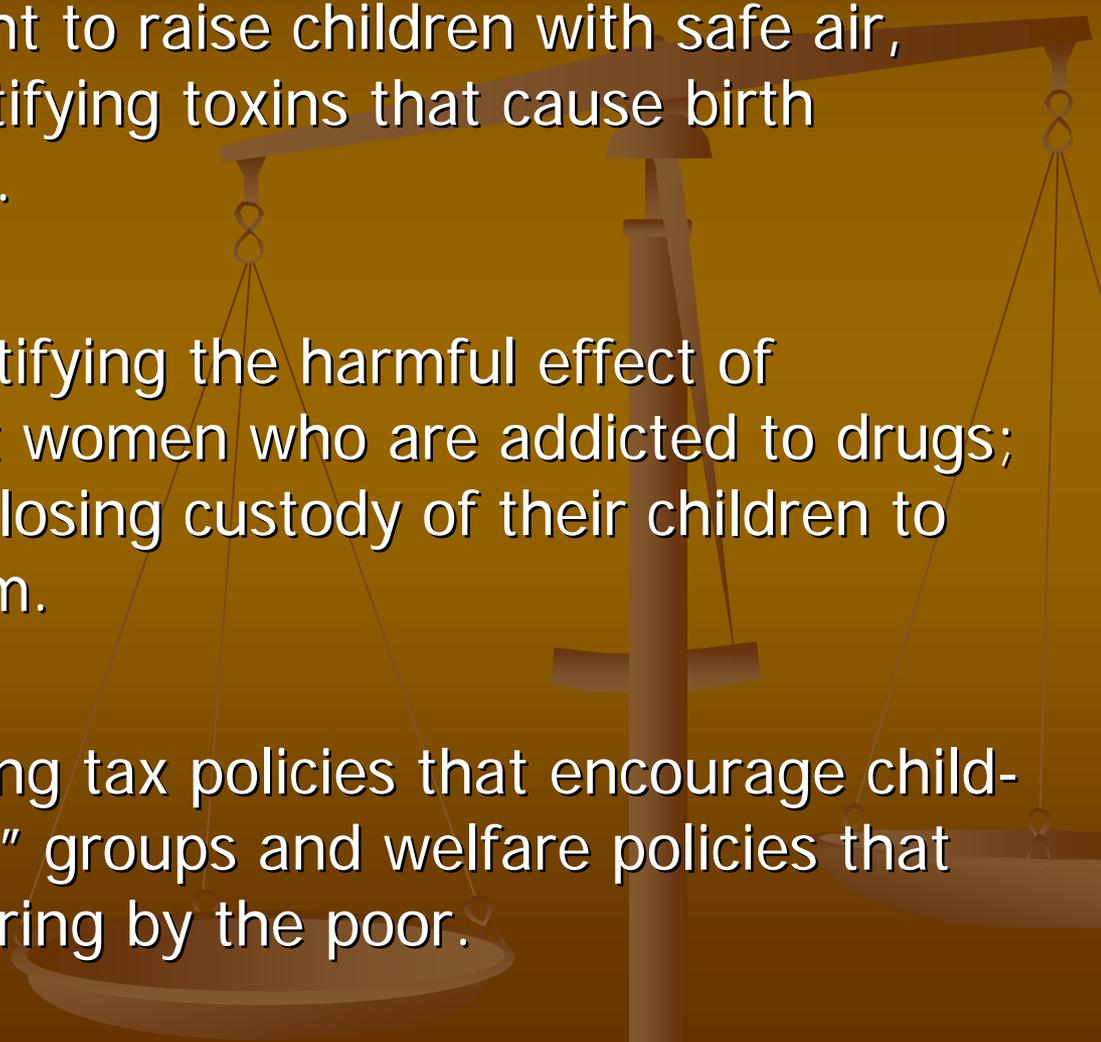
*“If you come here to help me,
you are wasting your time, if
you come because your
liberation is bound up with
mine, then let us begin to work
together”.*

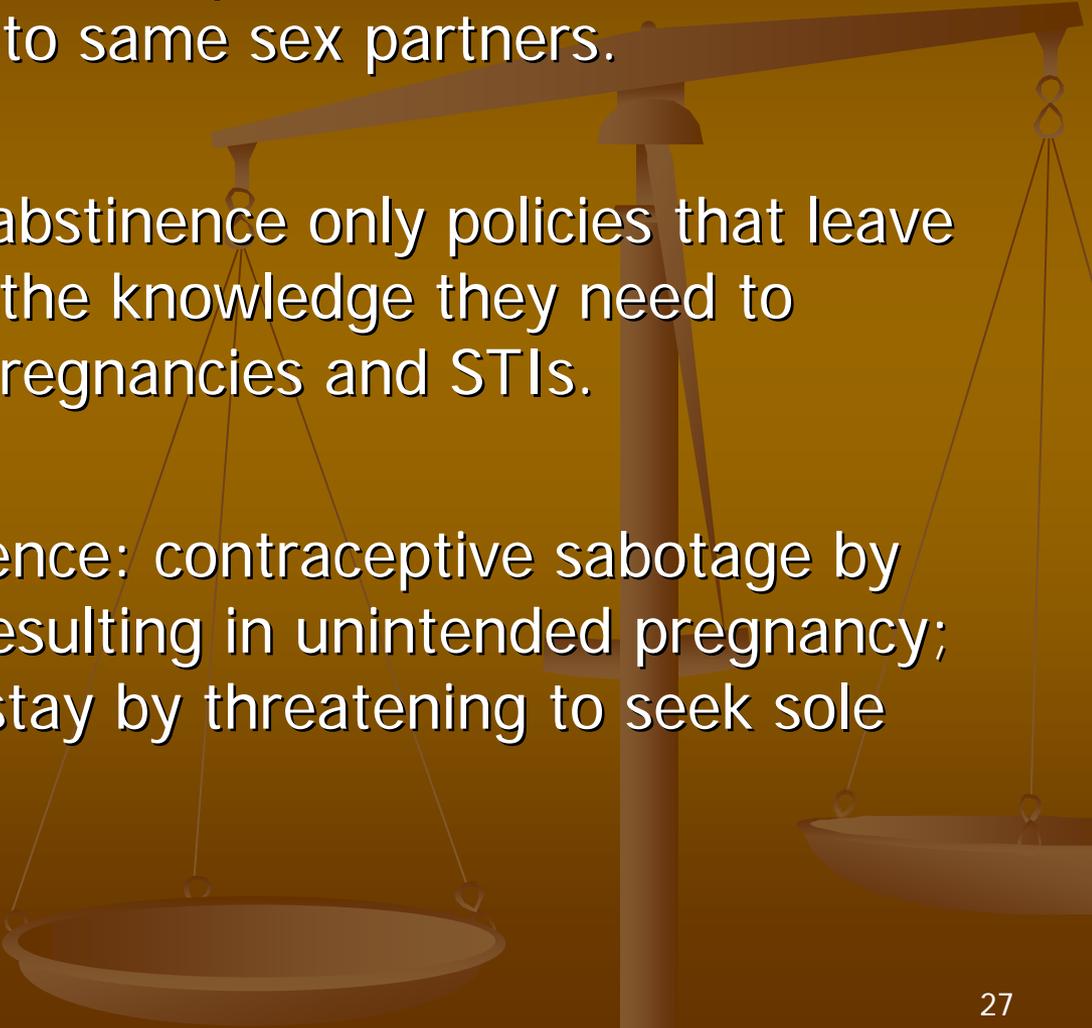
Lilla Watson and Aboriginal activists
group, Queensland 1970





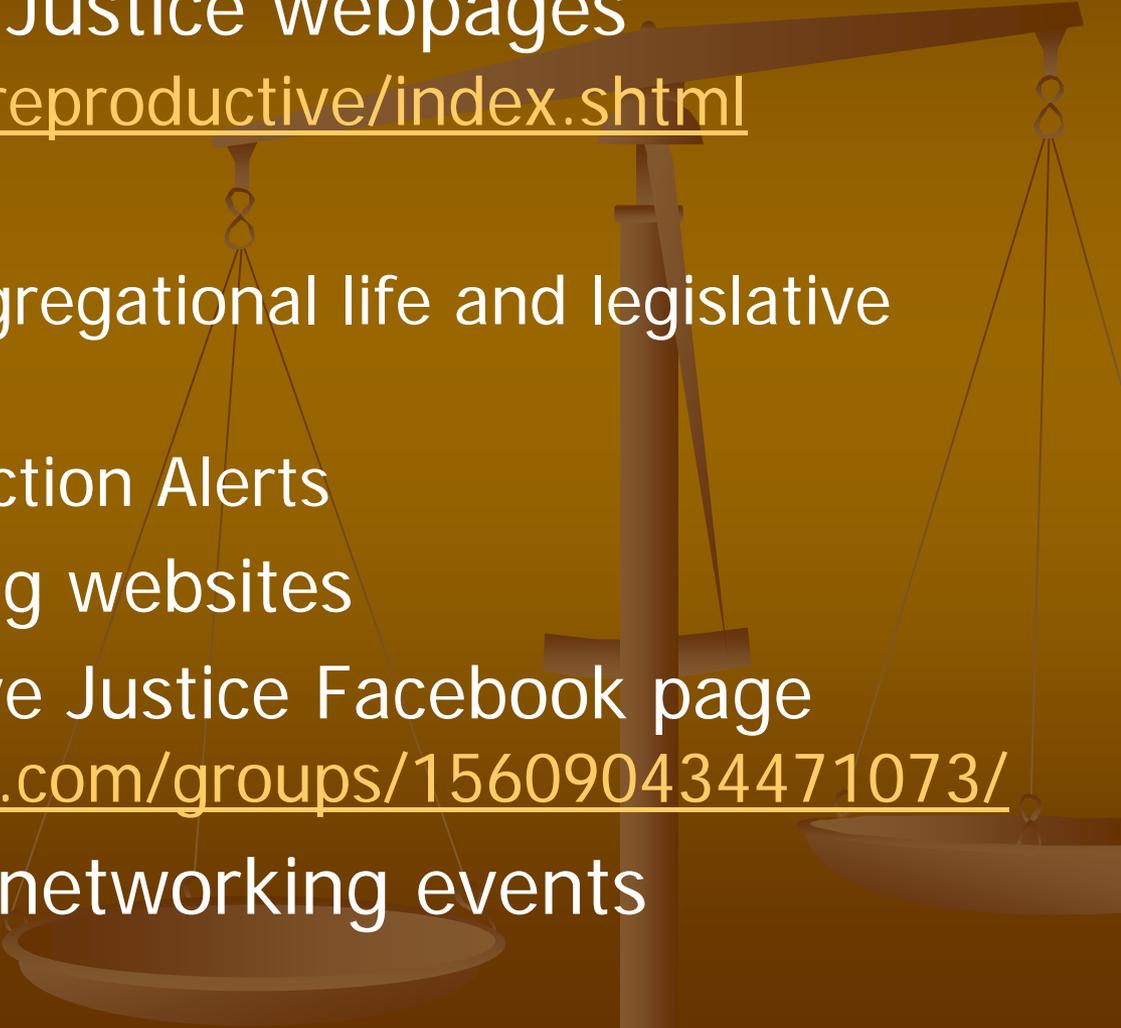
Reproductive Rights + Social Justice

- 
- Environment: the right to raise children with safe air, land and water; identifying toxins that cause birth defects and infertility.
 - Criminal justice: identifying the harmful effect of prosecuting pregnant women who are addicted to drugs; incarcerated parents losing custody of their children to the foster care system.
 - Economics: recognizing tax policies that encourage child-bearing by “desirable” groups and welfare policies that seek to limit childbearing by the poor.

- 
- Immigration: policies that break up families where the children are citizens and the parents are undocumented; denying family rights to same sex partners.
 - Sexuality Education: abstinence only policies that leave communities without the knowledge they need to prevent unintended pregnancies and STIs.
 - Intimate Partner Violence: contraceptive sabotage by controlling partners resulting in unintended pregnancy; coercing partners to stay by threatening to seek sole custody of children.



Moving Forward – National

- UUA Reproductive Justice webpages
<http://www.uua.org/reproductive/index.shtml>
 - This webinar
 - Resources for congregational life and legislative advocacy
 - Women's Issues Action Alerts
 - RCRC and SisterSong websites
 - UUs for Reproductive Justice Facebook page
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/156090434471073/>
 - General Assembly networking events
- 

Moving Forward (With You!)



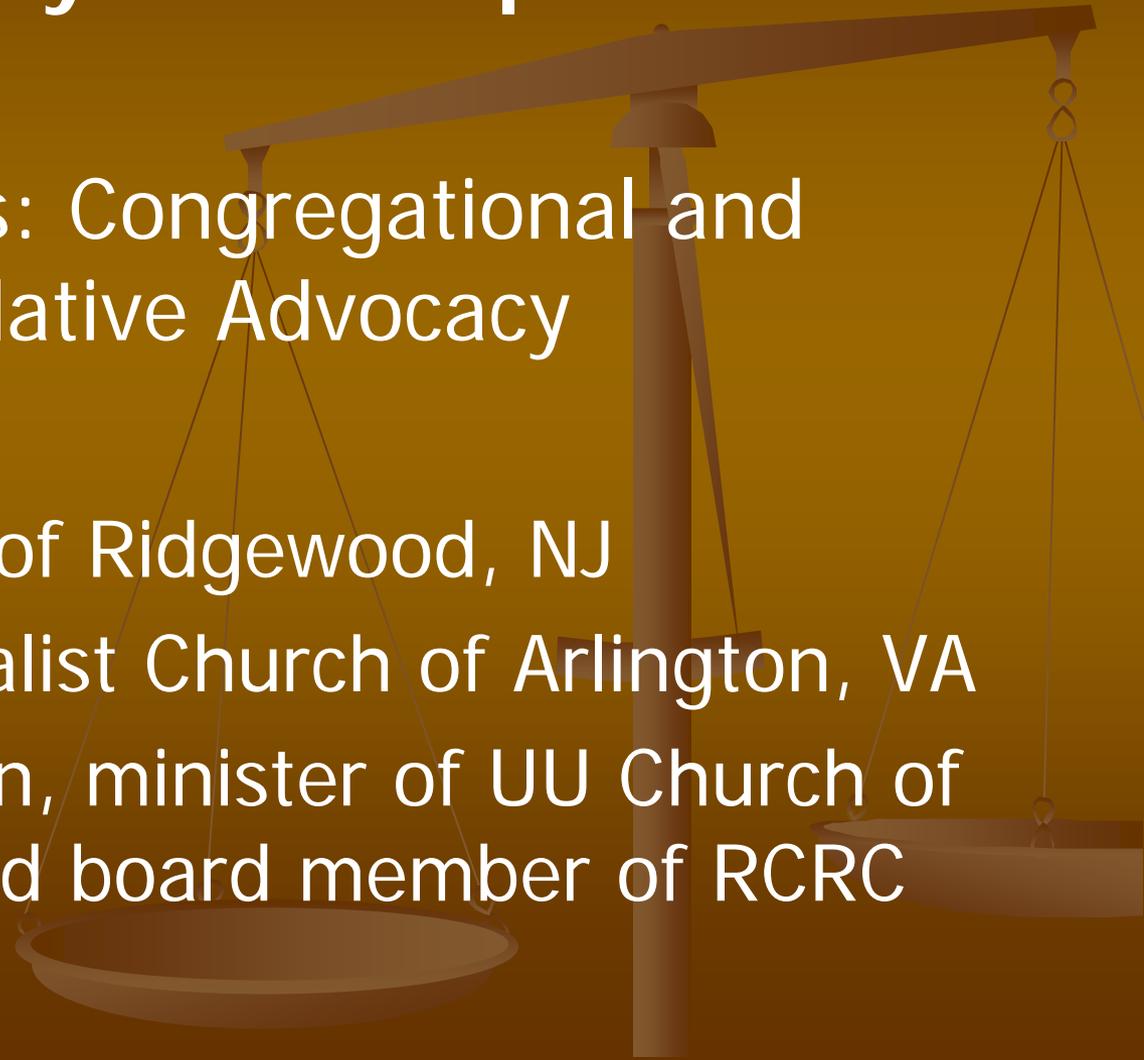
- **If you're affiliated with a congregation:**
 - Work with social justice committee to raise awareness of the issue (guest speaker, share-the-plate, etc.)
- **If you're already involved:**
 - Pass a congregational motion in support of reproductive justice
 - Start a repro justice group (or change the name of the repro rights group)
 - Organize an action or meeting to increase congregational commitment
 - Sunday service or other programming
- **If you're not affiliated with a congregation:**
 - Legislative advocacy
 - Organizing for local legislative advocacy campaign

Next Webinar

Thursday, May 24 8:00pm EDT

Best Practices: Congregational and
Legislative Advocacy

- Unitarian Society of Ridgewood, NJ
- Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, VA
- Rev. Aaron Payson, minister of UU Church of Worcester, MA and board member of RCRC



Proposed Congregational Study/Action Issue (CSAI)

2012-2016:

Reproductive Justice!

Find on UUA.org:

<http://www.uua.org/statements/current/189638.shtml>

Next call: May 11, 2012 at 3:00pm EDT

Contact: Carol Loscalzo
(closcalzo2@aol.com)

Keep in Touch

How'd We Do?

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/webinar-rj>

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