



Final Report to The Nell Newman Foundation

Fiscal Year 2016 (October 1, 2015-September 30, 2016)

The Nell Newman Foundation has been a critical partner to NARAL Pro-Choice America Foundation as we lead the fight to protect and expand reproductive freedom. Never has that support been more important than now.

In spite of everything, we know that 7 in 10 Americans support access to legal abortion. Through our sustained partnership, in 2016 NARAL organized and mobilized the 7 in 10 with bold, impactful campaigns that put abortion access on a national stage; strategically grew our base at the state level to move the needle on proactive policy; held public officials accountable for attempting to block reproductive rights; and shifted the public conversation around abortion access.

As we take on an administration that is already rolling back our rights, we're seeing real consequences for women in the U.S., particularly in communities already facing numerous hurdles to abortion and contraceptive access. The support of partners like the Newman Foundation has been instrumental as NARAL provides a North Star of inspiration to people and works to ensure that all women have access to the reproductive health care they deserve.

Achievements

Exposing the opposition

In 2016, NARAL experimented with new ways to put anti-choice opponents on the defensive, including establishing our opposition research program, which quickly proved to be a critical resource. We brought on a Research Director, whose background includes Media Matters for America, to conduct deep research on the coordinated opposition and their ties, including:

- **Leveraging innovative tools:** Squakr proved critical to our work, providing us with real-time intelligence and insight at a relevance and scale we simply couldn't otherwise replicate, including tracking online our anti-choice opponents to learn their talking points, plans ahead of events, and rebranding efforts. This allowed us to anticipate our opponents plans ahead of our own work, putting us offense rather than defense, as well as better understand our their messaging and next steps.
- **Traditional research:** Anti-choice organizations such as SBA List and Americans United for Life (AUL) are known to our movement, but not always to the broader public. Our Research Director undertook extensive research on these well-funded groups to look deeper into their strategies, network, donor ties, connections to public officials, and other

critical information that we shared with allies, allowing us to more effectively take opponents on. We used this information to develop briefing memos and talking points for our campaigns, as well as embark on the early stages of an internal database that will put all of this information at our fingertips.

- **Shaping the narrative:** While this kind of research doesn't always yield immediate news hooks, we leveraged this new program to build relationships with a variety of media, allowing us to educate them on this issue, these organizations, and the trends we're seeing. By becoming a trusted source, members of the media are now calling NARAL to gather background and look for story ideas, which allows us to shape the narrative and get a more accurate picture of reproductive rights out in the news. As a result, we now regularly work with Vox, BuzzFeed, The Nation, and NPR, as well as with Broadly (on a potential piece on AUL and SBA List), and Mother Jones (on a potential piece for the magazine on anti-choice movement funding). We also provided Rebecca Traister from *New York Magazine* with research for an article on anti-choice connections, and worked with The Huffington Post on two articles on Little Sisters of the Poor's court case and the anti-choice movement.
- **Training our team:** We worked with our network of affiliates to give them the tools to better identify key anti-choice opponents in their state or region that we can research, as well as training them in conducting their own research and campaigns.

Much of the year was spent building the foundation for this research, which is labor and resource intensive, and often requires digging a lot of dry wells before we strike oil. However we soon saw some of the effects it had on our work. Investing in opposition research continues to help us create more effective campaigns and organizing, understand our members better, and home in on whether we're having a true impact with our work.

Impact in Action

NARAL has been experimenting with opposition research for the last few years, and as noted above, this kind of research can be labor intensive and require a lot of up-front investment, but it paid with our 2016 campaigns, including:

- **Exposing anti-choice extremists in front of a national audience:** In 2016, Marjorie Dannenfelser, the extreme anti-choice head of the SBA List, was named chair of Donald Trump's anti-choice coalition, which is dedicated solely to rolling back women's hard-won reproductive rights. Dannenfelser built her career on disempowering women and building an organization to end women's access to abortion. The SBA List's agenda, among other things, includes supporting officials who would imprison a woman or charge her and her doctor with murder for providing abortion services.

Because our Research Director prioritized updating our SBA List research earlier in the year

(prompted by the Merrick Garland/judicial vacancy issues), we had a bevy of data on Dannenfelser and SBA List, which allowed NARAL to quickly and visibly launch a rapid response campaign after her appointment to spotlight her dangerous and insidious agenda on a national stage, circulating our research to public officials and media outlets. Our research is focused and flexible, and because we are doing this work now—research, building relationships with press—we have the information ready so when a national hook presents itself, we can use it as a springboard to publicly hold these opponents accountable.

Mobilizing at the national level

National policy issues are critical to reproductive freedom and can serve as a platform for strategic communications and solid organizing to demonstrate the majority support for advancing our rights, while allowing us to hold accountable the individuals, institutions, and policymakers who seek to curb those freedoms. These opportunities also allow us to create advocacy campaigns that grow our base of supporters for the movement overall, hold bad actors accountable, and create the environment needed to ultimately enact good policy.

In 2016 we also shaped the national conversation about how 7 in 10 Americans—the majority—support access to legal abortion. We built relationships with the media and public officials—from national outlets like *The New York Times* to non-traditional media like Vice and *Ebony*—and invested in our digital platform. And it's no longer just NARAL embracing the 7 in 10. We've seen a range of influencers adopting the 7 in 10, from DNC officials citing 7 in 10 in an interview on Fox, Rebecca Traister (author and writer for *NY Magazine*) citing 7 in 10 on NPR, and #7in10 trending nationally on Twitter, to our allies using our poll in member emails.

Impact in Action

- **Holding officials accountable for failing on Zika:** Anti-choice opponents used the outbreak of Zika, which can cause serious birth defects, to again attack reproductive freedom and go after clinics. Knowing what was at stake, including critical funding for research and prevention, NARAL mobilized the 7 in 10 while leading the messaging and polling to call out opponents for grandstanding, exposing their real agendas—to control women's reproductive choices, even at a cost to families. Leaning into our investment in organizing and opposition research, we launched a national accountability campaign to highlight the shift in public consciousness in later-term abortion, taking it out of the theoretical and placing the decision-making context in current, relevant terms. NARAL released ads calling out policymakers for inaction, as well as polling that showed Americans reject the anti-choice opposition's failed strategy; 85% wanted Congress to put forward a plan immediately that includes support for women's health clinics, and 65% opposed cutting women's healthcare funding.

- **Mobilizing around a pivotal Supreme Court case:** In 2016 the U.S. Supreme Court was at



the center of a critical juncture in the fight for reproductive rights with the *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt* case. NARAL dedicated a special team to [lead our coalition in organizing around the case](#) and working closely with our coalition allies, we helped turn out 2,000 supporters (including 500 NARAL members from eight states) for the March 2, 2016,

#KeepClinicsOpen rally, while engaging 33 million on Twitter alone. When we emerged victorious on decision day, #KeepClinicsOpen trended nationally, and over half of total online conversation from influencers and activists was focused on the case and reproductive rights. Just as importantly, we shaped the narrative, exposing Americans United for Life (which was behind HB2, the law at the center of *WWH*), painting a picture of an anti-choice movement that has been pushing its extremist agenda for years.

We then worked with over 100 allies as part of the All Access Coalition to leverage the momentum of this case to create the All Access Day of Action. With events in 35 cities, including the anchor event in Cleveland that featured Jessica Williams, Leslie Jones, Sia, and Natalia Lafourcade, All Access created a culturally centered opportunity for the 7 in 10 Americans who support legal access to abortion to become activated on this issue.

- **Pushing back against discrimination:** With the 40th anniversary of the Hyde Amendment in September 2016, NARAL worked with our CAARE Coalition allies, shining a spotlight on this longstanding issue to educate the public on the dangers of Hyde and call out anti-choice opponents for attempting to expand and entrench this discriminatory policy, which disproportionately hurts low-income women. To highlight this unfortunate anniversary and reach new audiences, we leaned into our digital and organizing work by hosting a Facebook Live interview with The Huffington Post; launching and circulating an engaging video looking at the dangers of Hyde and what a future without Hyde could look like; and running op-eds in Morning Consult about Hyde, its harms, and what the movement is doing, as well as a second one on Medium featuring real people impacted by the policy.

Moving the ball forward in the states

NARAL has made back-to-basics, state-level organizing a key focus of our work in recent years, and with what's at stake, it is a primary focus of our work going forward. While policy is critical to creating real change, we can't do that without the people power that builds the kind of public pressure needed to move the needle and hold anti-choice opponents publicly accountable. Since early 2015, we have been on the ground in Iowa, a key but under-organized state, where we

deployed an innovative strategy to engage citizens with our four-point Blueprint for Reproductive Freedom, aimed at:

- Protecting and restoring a woman's access to safe, legal abortion
- Assuring affordable and medically appropriate contraception for all women
- Creating paid parental leave programs that allow parents time off to care for a new child
- Protecting mothers from pregnancy discrimination in hiring and in the workplace

In Iowa alone, we knocked on 38,364 doors, called 80,000 people, and added over 13,000 members because the Blueprint resonated with them. From our door-to-door canvasses, 68% of all people we spoke with signed up to support our Blueprint—an unprecedented conversion rate. This four-point agenda provides an access point for anyone because it covers the full reproductive spectrum, which affects everyone at some point. We found though this canvass that people respond well to a values-based platform.

We took our vision of a Blueprint for Reproductive Freedom to states where we can grow our base, such as Nevada (8,000 in just two months, now up to 27,000), Missouri (4,000), Washington (9,300), and Massachusetts (4,000+), as well as Tennessee, Pennsylvania, Colorado, and Minnesota. Using canvassing, conversations with citizens, and digital strategies—including tablets that allow us to better capture data and show videos at the door—we strengthened our foundation, which is critical as we work to stop harmful anti-choice policy and support proactive policies where possible. We also invested in technology to enhance our organizing, including:

- **Canvassing tablets:** Arming our canvassers with tablets provides benefits such as:
 - A better experience for citizens at the door, where they can watch videos in real-time and see updated information about issues in their area, allowing us to call out bad actors and help citizen take action
 - Improved canvassing operations with tablets that ensure better data collection and therefore better follow-up, allowing us to retain more members and improve their experience even after the door-to-door conversation
- **Social media growth:** We partnered with Twitter on a project that helped us advertise more effectively on the platform, amplify our message, and grow our followers even more, thereby broadening our reach and getting our messaging in front of even more people.



By growing our base strategically in the states, we set the stage for accountability campaigns in order to publicly highlight the blatant hypocrisy of anti-choice opponents. We know that not only are opponents working against abortion access, they're working against our entire Blueprint as part of their own anti-woman, anti-family agenda; by creating the foundation and strategically growing our base state by state, we set the terms for accountability to not only advance a

progressive policy agenda, but use our organizing muscle to push back against those trying to pass 20-week abortion bans and other harmful policies.

Impact in Action

In 2016, when Justice Antonin Scalia passed away, GOP officials wasted no time closing ranks, declaring within hours of his death that they would refuse to hear from President Obama's nominee to fill the seat—and there wasn't even a name on the table yet. Sen. Chuck Grassley later said point-blank that he didn't want to move the process forward on nominee Merrick Garland because of abortion. We leveraged this situation to put this issue on a national stage and show the public how critical courts are to reproductive rights, including:

- **Generating public attention and visibility** for this issue by dispatching Founding Father Ben Franklin (aka NARAL member John Robinson) to follow Sen. Grassley during his Iowa town hall meetings, imploring him to #DoYourJob. Mr. Franklin was on the front page of seven Iowa newspapers, including *The Hawk Eye*, *The Des Moines Register*, and *The Iowa City Press-Citizen*; it was also covered by *The Siouxland News*, *The Washington Post*, Roll Call, and Blog for Iowa
- Launching a six-figure c3 radio ad campaign in four key states highlighting Sens. Grassley, (then-Sen.) Kelly Ayotte (NH), Rob Portman (OH), and Ron Johnson's (WI), refusal to do their jobs; the campaign was covered by outlets like New Hampshire's NH1 News and allowed us to **hold them accountable** for putting politics ahead of women's health
- **Partnering with our allies** to push opponents to #DoYourJob, including collecting over **200,000 signatures for a petition**, creating public pressure on officials to take action



NARAL "member" Ben Franklin and Sen. Chuck Grassley in Iowa

Shifting culture through outreach and organizing

Strong reproductive health policies and infrastructure are critical to creating real change; to get there, we must also break down the stigma that surrounds this issue. Mobilizing, organizing, and educating are key components of this; but to reach our activists and the public, we must find new avenues to centralize abortion access. Investment in cultural outreach, including in our Communications, Digital, and Field organizing, is a priority for NARAL and that commitment has paid off. Specifically, we:

- **Optimized our digital outreach by:**
 - **Growing our Facebook audience 24.8%; Twitter by 51.6%, Tumblr by 30.6%, and Instagram by 239%**, significantly broadening our audience
 - **Increasing our email list by 57%**, allowing us to educate and motivate to action a significantly larger base of supporters

- **Boosting our email response rate by 30%** using an innovative tool, Squakr, to map our members against their public social media profiles, giving us a deeper understanding of what motivates them to take action
 - **Experimenting with new platforms**, such as SnapChat, giving us inroads to reach new audiences and creative ways to mobilize potential activists
 - **Generating discussion online** by hosting Ask Me Anything sessions on Reddit, including with Senior VP of Campaigns & Strategy Sasha Bruce, National Campaign Director Mitchell Stille, and our digital team. By fielding hundreds of questions from non-traditional audiences, we're shaping the discussion with new audiences and sparking interest from those on the sidelines
 - **Getting in front of a national audience with nationally trending hashtags** on Twitter, including #7in10forRoe, #HandsOffMyBirthControl, #WontBePunished, and #MenForChoice
- **Helped activists and potential supporters connect more deeply through storytelling:** NARAL contracted with videographer David Grossman to create visual organizing components and videos that [tell the story of this movement](#), our work, our activists, and the energy around this movement, *Whole Women's Health*, and everything at stake. As part of this, we also created a series of videos designed to educate the public in a fun and engaging way on TRAP laws and the *Whole Woman's Health* case, including one [explaining what's at stake](#) and another that looks at the [insidiousness of these laws](#). We even infused a little humor with an "abortion road trip" and Comedians in Cars Getting Abortions, to show how far many women have to drive because of TRAP-induced clinic closures. We've reached over 2 million via social media and received coverage from The Huffington Post.



- **Expanded our audience:** NARAL is shaping the narrative on abortion access in myriad ways, including pulling in new audiences through our Men for Choice program, which is becoming more popular every year (#MenForChoice trending nationally) and includes supporters like Norman Lear, who penned his op-ed, [“Why I’m a Man for Choice.”](#)

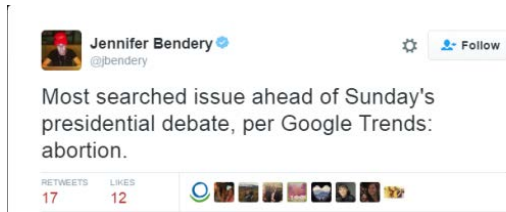


Additionally, because of our work in 2016, we were able to leverage the momentum and energy from supporters following the election. In just a matter of months after election day, we added 466,000+ new email sign ups, 13,000 volunteer sign ups; we're prepared to harness that energy and push our movement forward.

Impact in Action

Building our cultural organizing and digital audience has had a real impact both on short-term campaigns and as we work toward our vision. NARAL held the refs accountable in 2016 with a popular campaign that leveraged our investment in organizing and digital audiences, and put abortion on a national stage.

- **#AskAboutAbortion:** Too often, abortion is treated as a “women’s issue,” quickly overlooked despite the economic implications reproductive rights have for women’s lives.



Tweet by HuffPo reporter Jennifer Bendery

NARAL launched our c3 #AskAboutAbortion campaign to shape the narrative around reproductive freedom and hold the refs accountable for ignoring this issue. For months, we urged the presidential debate hosts to ask candidates how they will address the abortion access crisis, while getting 52,000 Americans to

sign our petition. Even as debate moderators continued to sidestep the issue, the combination of petitions, social media chatter, and public pressure from this campaign resulted in success when the candidates heard the collective roar, and Hillary Clinton proactively addressed the issue, generating headlines and national discussion by chiding moderators and calling attention to the crisis. NARAL continued to push moderators, including collecting 50,000 more signatures with partner CREDO and working with Open Debate Coalition, and had our campaign featured in [Glamour](#). After months of hard work, thousands of NARAL members celebrated a huge victory when Fox News’ Chris Wallace finally heeded their call to #AskAboutAbortion during the final debate, getting both candidates to state their position.

The success of this campaign stems from a combined investment in organizing and digital strategy. As noted above, we used the innovative tool Squakr, a content and social media tracking tool, to map our members. Our email list was over 600,000 at the time; through mapping, however, we found that only about 20,000 are also on Twitter. This is significant because it allows us to get our members involved with us on multiple platforms; it also ensures we can tailor our emails based on whether our members are on Twitter, freeing up the rest of our list for other actions, while also ensuring we maintain a balance on how often we email (too little can be just as bad as too often). With Squakr, we no longer have to guess who is on Twitter; instead of sending emails focused on taking action via Twitter to 100,000 or



200,000 of our list, we can hone in on that 20,000. As a result, we boosted our response rate by 30% (even controlling for size), the effect of which we saw on this campaign.

Conclusion

Thanks to the vision, commitment, and investment of The Nell Newman Foundation, NARAL is investing in the kind of organizing, education, research, and outreach needed to create more effective, impactful campaigns, allowing us to respond to threats and leverage opportunities to not just protect, but expand abortion access. We remain grateful for your ongoing support, and we look forward to continuing our partnership as we tackle challenges and critical opportunities to work to ensure that all women, regardless of income or where they live, have access to the health care they need, want, and deserve.