

voice

IN OUR OWN

National Black Women's

Reproductive Justice

Agenda

May 2016 Newsletter

Reproductive Rights and Justice Front and Center for Congressional Caucus for Black Women and Girls



Marcela Howell, Founder and Executive Director for In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda, provided testimony during the historic hearing for the Congressional Caucus for Black Women and Girls on April 28, 2016. She was joined by several other notable names, including Melissa Harris Perry, formerly of MSNBC, Sharon Cooper, mother of Sandra Bland, Kimberle Crenshaw, professor at UCLA and Columbia Law Schools and Beverly Bond, founder of Black Girls Rock, to name a few.

Representatives Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ), Robin Kelly (D-IL) and Yvette Clarke (D-NY) are co-chairs of the Congressional Caucus for Black Women and Girls and are credited with recognizing the need for better national focus on the needs of Black women and girls on the federal level. The Caucus for Black Women and Girls is the first and only caucus devoted to eliminating the significant barriers and disparities experienced by Black women and girls.

In Our Own Voice looks forward to working with the caucus to bring Black women's reproductive justice needs to the forefront. To read Marcela's testimony click [here](#).



Real Education for Healthy Youth Act of 2016



In Our Own Voice and the Sex Education Coalition recognized and thanked Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) for sponsoring the Real Education for Healthy Youth Act of 2016 (REHYA). He and 11 co-sponsors have stepped up and showed true leadership in the face of much opposition.

The REHYA seeks to provide for the "overall health and well-being of young people, including the promotion of comprehensive sexual health and healthy relationships, the reduction of unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, and the prevention of dating violence and sexual assault." Emphasis is on comprehensive, evidence-based programs that encourage healthy decision making. The bill covers a lot of ground, including gender, gender identity and sexual orientation-specific sensitivity content and anti-bullying language. Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA) and the late Representative Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) introduced the House companion version.

In Our Own Voice will continue to work with our Congressional partners and the Sex Education Coalition to promote legislation that empowers and informs our youth so that they can enjoy lifelong, positive sexual health. To learn more about the REHYA click [here](#).

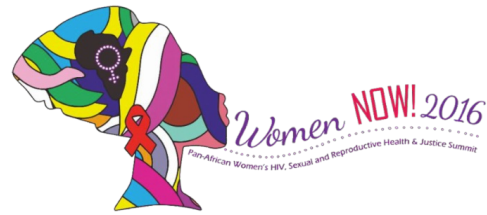
Organizational Partner Updates



People are talking about the report published by [Black Women for Wellness](#). The report is the result of a five year study of the black beauty industry. [Natural Evolutions One Hair Story](#), is a compilation of results, cultural insights, health, and research around Black women's hair and health.

Click [here](#) to learn more and view a video

The [Women Now! 2016](#) summit will take place July 13-15 in Durban, South Africa. The summit will provide an opportunity to organize women and girls of African descent to assess and influence the content and execution of the International AIDS Conference 2016. The summit will address critical areas of concern for the equity and equality of Black women and girls in HIV, Sexual and Reproductive Health policy and research, resources and program implementation.



[SisterLove, Inc.](#) is the project lead, along with host partners Positive Women's Network and Pan-African Positive Women's Coalition. To learn more about the summit and how you can participate click [here](#).

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