

voice

IN OUR OWN

National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2019

Marcela's Call to Action



Last week, In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda made history. I had the privilege of testifying to members of the House Committee on Oversight and Reform about state efforts to undermine access to abortion. I was joined by Fatima Goss Graves, President and CEO at the National Women's Law Center, Dr. Colleen McNicholas, Chief Medical Officer at Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region and Southwest Missouri, and Jennifer Box of St. Louis, Missouri. My [remarks](#) addressed how the lack of access to abortion and other reproductive health care services impacts Black, Latinx, AAPI, and Native and Indigenous women, transgender and gender non-binary people, LGBTQ people, low-income individuals, people in rural communities, disabled individuals, youth, and immigrants - all those living with intersecting marginalized identities.

This was the first time I've [testified](#) before a House committee. *In Our Own Voice* is five years old and we've been doing a lot of work on several issues, including abortion access, so when we got the call from the committee staff about being a witness, it was very validating for us. Ultimately, my hope is that the message I conveyed demonstrated that these barriers to reproductive health care impact all of us, that we all deserve to be empowered to make our own decisions about our bodies and our lives, and that it is time for this country to trust Black women. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to advocate for better reproductive health care to members of Congress. Please join me and add your voice to make a change by [contacting your representatives](#) today. Let them know that health care is a human right.

Marcela Howell

Founder & President

In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda

See What We've Been Up To

Celebrate Giving Tuesday!

This year, we have seen blatant attacks on our rights—from abortion access to voter suppression—and *In Our Own Voice* has held firm in its mission of lifting up the voices of Black women, femmes, and girls to advance Reproductive Justice for all. **Giving Tuesday is Dec. 3.** Will you help *In Our Own Voice* continue the fight for a more equitable and just future for all? Get your special *In Our Own Voice* 2020 calendar by being one of the first 100 people who contribute \$50 or more on Giving Tuesday!



In Our Own Voice at the 2019 State Sex Ed Summit

Ever wonder how sex education impacts youth of color? While some educators and school systems fail, we tried to meet the grade by presenting at the 2019 State Sex Ed Summit hosted by SIECUS: Sex Ed for Social Change on Nov. 14. Our Vice President of Government Affairs, Jessica Pinckney, moderated the “Destigmatizing the Sexual & Reproductive Health of Young People of Color” panel. This panel was designed to explore how sex education forces youth of color to learn in settings that fail to acknowledge and center specific identities, behaviors, and experiences. We brought together young panelists Aman Tune, a fellow from our Next Generation Leadership Institute, Samantha Graham from [Black Women's Health Imperative's](#) My Sister's Keeper program, and Zainab Jah from [SisterLove, Inc.'s](#) Georgia Access to Medication Abortion (GAMA) project to share their successes in shifting attitudes on sex and sexuality through comprehensive sex education. For more information on the importance of comprehensive sex education, check out our [fact sheet](#).



Domestic Violence Awareness Month Reaches Capitol Hill



Black Women Connect the Dots Between Domestic Violence...

by Lexi White | October 29, 2019 | Posted in Domestic Violence, Reproductive Justice By Lexi White, Senior Policy Manager During the month of October, we have been talking about domestic violence (DV) and intimate partner violence (IPV) as part...

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Moving Beyond ICPD to a Comprehensive Vision for Reproductive Health, Rights, and Justice

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development and the 25th anniversary of the Reproductive Justice Movement. On Oct. 29, the Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE) and Ipas hosted the “Moving Beyond ICPD” webinar that featured our

Founder and President, Marcela Howell. The host organizations coordinated the webinar to generate solidarity among Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and Reproductive Justice advocates working on U.S. domestic and global policy. Marcela drew attention to the importance of addressing all issues that might impact a person's sexual and reproductive health, including the intersections of race, gender, and class. A collective vision for Sexual and Reproductive Health, Rights, and Justice must include a more comprehensive understanding of the individuals we are advocating for. The "Moving Beyond ICPD" webinar was a great step toward creating and implementing this vision.

Following Our Fellows

The Next Generation Leadership Institute fellows at Lincoln University, Shanya Hutchinson and Jenai Patrick, presented the *Walk for a Cause: Fashion Show*, a creative collision of fashion and advocacy that promoted awareness of domestic violence and breast cancer. The purpose of the fashion show was to display the ways that art and creative expression can be a powerful vehicle for RJ activism. Our fellows at Spelman University, Zhana Bishop and Emily Laurore, hosted "So You Have A Law Degree: Now What?" earlier this month to equip students with ways to apply the Reproductive Justice framework into their practice as future lawyers. Sequoia Ayala, JD., MA., Policy and Advocacy Program (PAP) Manager at our partner organization, [SisterLove, Inc.](#) served as the keynote speaker and shared her inspiring story of being a first-generation college graduate attending law school while pregnant with her first child. And over at Hampton University, Aman Tune and Michyah Thomas hosted "Voting Through a Reproductive Justice Lens." Their event was a wrap-up conversation following the Nov. 5 election in Virginia. Students were excited to reflect on what they deemed a successful election and all the ways that Reproductive Justice informs their decisions when voting.



The Next Generation Leadership Institute is designed to provide a leadership pipeline specifically for the Black women's Reproductive Justice movement. The Institute is a two-year paid fellowship program that serves as a formal pipeline for training activists on Reproductive Justice and the intersectional issues that impact the lives of Black women, femmes, and girls. Fellows are selected from HBCUs and are trained in advocacy, community organizing, and strategic communications to become young leaders in the Reproductive Justice movement.

Our Partners In Action



Black Women for Wellness Hosts "Birthing While Black" Panel at NAACP California/Hawaii State Convention

[Black Women for Wellness](#) celebrated a big legislative win when Governor Newsom signed SB 464, the "California Dignity in Pregnancy and Childbirth Act" into law. At last month's NAACP California/Hawaii State Convention, Black Women for Wellness also hosted the "Birthing While Black" panel to lift up the success of SB 464 and to further the conversation around the Black maternal health crisis.



Join SisterLove, Inc. at their WomenNOW! 2019 Summit

[SisterLove, Inc.](#)'s 2019 WomenNOW! Summit will be held in Kigali, Rwanda from Nov. 29 to Dec. 1 and we hope you can make it! The overall goal of this Summit is to set a shared agenda on the intersections of HIV and Sexual & Reproductive Health, Rights, and Justice (SRHRJ). For more information on this amazing Summit please visit womennow.org.



Reproductive Justice & Beyond: New Voices Celebrates 15 Years!

Reproductive Justice & Beyond celebrates 15 years of [New Voices for Reproductive Justice](#) building a social change movement dedicated to the health and well-being of Black women, femmes, and girls! It will be an epic celebration of the New Voices founders, award honorees, and ambassadors from across the nation with amazing guest speakers, live entertainment, food, dancing, and more! It is an honor to have our Founder and President, Marcela Howell [recognized](#) by New Voices with the Voice of Wisdom Award! Grab your [tickets](#) now for the Dec. 7 event.



New Tools & Resources

Together with the National Partnership for Women & Families, *In Our Own Voice* released an [issue brief](#) that addresses two of the most significant crises in

reproductive health: the rising maternal mortality rate and the increasing passage of laws that undermine access to abortion care.

[*Maternal Health and Abortion Restrictions: How Lack of Access to Quality Care is Harming Black Women*](#) connects these two crises and demonstrates how they have implications for women's short and long-term economic security, well-being and quality of life, and ability to live with dignity and participate equally and fully in society.

IN THE NEWS

["Marcela Howell Explains What Testifying In Support of Abortion Access is Like," Bustle](#)

["Women Take the Lead in Honoring Elijah Cummings," The Washington Informer](#)

["This Legislation Could Help Immigrants Access Health Insurance," Rewire](#)

["Black Women Across the Nation Honor Rep. Cummings," Black Girl Nerds](#)

["Rest in Power: Fighting on for Elijah Cummings' American Dream," Ms. Online](#)

["Will SCOTUS Stand With LGBTQ Workers?" Ms. Online](#)

["Asian American Women Power Up in DC," MomsRising Blog](#)



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