

# voice

IN OUR OWN

## National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda

## December 2015 Newsletter

[In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda](#) was created in November 2014, as national policy collaboration with [Black Women for Wellness](#), [Black Women's Health Imperative](#), [New Voices for Reproductive Justice](#), [SisterLove, Inc.](#), and [SPARK Reproductive Justice NOW!](#) based on a firm belief that Black women must be the driving force for the change that we want in our lives. *In Our Own Voice* is the only national Black women's Reproductive Justice organization with the goal to lift up the voices and leadership of Black women at the national and state levels on reproductive rights, health and justice issues, including abortion rights and access, contraceptive equity and comprehensive sex education.

As we say goodbye to 2015, we wanted to take a few moments to give thanks to all our sister organizations and allies in the struggle to ensure reproductive justice to all women and to reflect on all that we've accomplished this past year.

Here is a snapshot of our year in review:

- The *In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda* official launch took place at the National Press Club in Washington, DC on January 15, 2015 and was attended by more than 70 individuals, representing 47 national organizations. The policy briefing focused on our goals, extensive polling data on Black American's attitudes on abortion and contraception, and policy stories from our state partners. We received media coverage in five publications and five radio interviews.
- Our official *In Our Own Voice* website, [www.blackrj.org](http://www.blackrj.org), went live, as did our Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube sites.
- We joined the [All\\* Above All](#) and CAARE Coalition and supported the introduction of the [Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance \(EACH Woman\) Act of 2015](#) (HR2972) sponsored by Representative Barbara Lee (CA), Jan Schakowsky (IL) and Diana DeGette (CO) and 100+ co-sponsors. The bill restores public insurance coverage for abortion.
- We convened meetings of the executive directors from our five partner organizations to strategize about ways to accomplish our collective mission and goals.
- In September, we conducted our first annual Strategic Communications for Policy Change Summit, bringing more than 40 organizational staff, board members, and volunteers together for a five-day strategic planning summit. Participants also visited their congressional representatives during our education day on the Hill.
- We conducted informational outreach meetings with members of the Congressional Black Caucus to both acquaint them with the mission and goals of *In Our Own Voice* and to discuss reproductive health issues. We also conducted educational meetings with several members of

the Pro-choice Caucus and the Progressive Caucus.

- We did presentations on *In Our Own Voice* at the Civil Liberties and Public Policy (CLPP) conference; a meeting of the Board of directors of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC); the Training and Access Working Group; a briefing for the NAACP policy staff; the State Infrastructure Project (SIP) Convening; and the Rutgers Law “Abortion in the 21st Century” forum. All in all, we were able to reach more than 1,500 reproductive health and justice activists.
- We collaborated with Communications Consortium Media Center on an audio press conference that included former U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Jocelyn Elders, and drafted an op-ed piece titled, [What are We Really Doing When We Restrict an Already Safe Procedure](#), authored by Dr. Willie Parker.
- We developed multiple fact sheets and informational post cards on Black women and reproductive health, safe abortion access, contraceptive equity and comprehensive sex education.

It goes without saying that we at *In Our Own Voice* are proud of what we have accomplished in this short period of time. We are honored to be working with five wonderful partners. Each monthly newsletter will continue to highlight their great work, but we encourage you to click onto their websites (above) and read first hand about their successes.

Although we are slightly exhausted as the year comes to a close, we are also energized about what 2016 will bring in the fight to protect the health and well being of Black women and girls.

We invite you to join our [efforts](#).

We wish you all the safest and joyous of holidays and a happy new year!

Marcela. Michelle and Donna



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