



PROChoice

Newsletter of
Choice Matters, Inc.,
WCLA-PAC
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2019 Local Elections: The 2020 Precursor

In New York, the 2019 elections will be all about abortion — the issue that anti-choice extremists are hoping will turn out their voters, particularly in this odd-year local election, when no higher offices are on the ballot. They are targeting Town and County offices that they hope will enable them to set the table for their 2020 wins.

Northern Westchester and Putnam, with additional hot spots in Eastchester and Yonkers, are proving to be fertile ground for anti-choice fanatics — and the NYS Reproductive Health Act* (RHA), passed in January 2019, has provided their rallying cry.

Using Donald Trump's words verbatim, they are presenting women and doctors as callous murderers, and the governor and newly elected pro-choice Senate majority in Albany as Satan and his underlings. They are intentionally and completely misleading and misrepresenting (lying) about the RHA.

These zealots succeeded in getting resolutions passed by the Putnam County Legislature and the Carmel Town Board that demand the overturning of the RHA. In Yorktown and Somers, they tried but failed.

Their immediate goal is to take back the Yorktown Town Board where, in 2017, a pro-choice supervisor was elected; to defeat the first pro-choice Democrat to win in Mt Pleasant in 30 years; and to put a raving anti-choice extremist in the County Legislative seat in District 4 being vacated by Mike Kaplowitz.

If they win these races, they will have a springboard from which to catapult into the 2020 elections.

Their larger strategic plan? To reintroduce the ultra-right Astorino agenda back into County government and take back local Town boards so that they can position themselves to defeat newly-elected NYS Senator Pete Harckham and other

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Endorsements:

County Legislator Races

There are six contested races. Two of them are open seats, with no incumbent running for re-election. Four of the six are considered "must win" seats. In addition, staunchly pro-choice candidates Covill and Maher are running for re-election for the first time and, therefore, are more vulnerable.

Targeted Races

Kitley Covill (CLD 2) is one of the most able advocates for Choice. Covill, who is completing her first term as a County Legislator, has an impressive depth of knowledge derived from her broad range of professional experiences, including as Legal Advisor for the Domestic Violence Committee, representing women in Title IX proceedings, and as Inspector General for Yonkers. In contrast, her opponent is anti-choice and does not understand the complexity of issues facing Westchester's women and families. **Re-Elect Kitley Covill!**

Catherine Borgia (CLD 9), first elected to the County Legislature in 2011, has served as an exemplary Chairperson of the Budget Committee for the past two years, carefully looking out for the best interests of the County's residents. Borgia has proven herself to be a strong ally to women and families throughout her tenure as County Legislator. Her opponent is anti-choice and endorsed by the extremist group, Right to Life. **WCLA PAC stands with Catherine Borgia!**

Damon Maher (CLD 10) is an attorney, negotiator, volunteer, and, perhaps most importantly, an independent thinker. Maher is a strong voice for women and families and an ardent opponent of healthcare inequities. He is also a foster, adoptive and biological parent – and he is 100% pro-choice. In sharp contrast, his opponent is anti-choice and

is dangerous for women and families! **WCLA PAC proudly endorses Damon Maher!**

Ruth Walter (CLD 15) is a former Bronxville Court Clerk and currently serves as a Bronxville Library Trustee. As a small business owner and a former investment analyst for a multinational firm, Walter understands first-hand the issues confronting residents of Westchester. Walter would add a pro-choice vote and voice to the County Legislature. Her opponent is staunchly anti-choice and endorsed by the extremist group, Right to Life. **Vote for Ruth Walter!**

Two Critical Open Seats

Colin Smith (CLD 1) is a Peekskill Town Councilman, former Peekskill School Board member and attorney, with an impressive commitment to the Westchester community. Smith is 100% pro-choice. In contrast, his opponent is anti-reproductive rights and has aligned himself with anti-choice extremists promoting the Trump agenda. **Vote for Colin Smith!**

Vedat Gashi (CLB 4), an attorney, is 100% in support of comprehensive reproductive healthcare. He knows how important it is to women of all ages and is committed to safe and private access. In sharp contrast, Gashi's opponent, Michael Grace, is rabidly anti-choice, and galvanized zealots to demand the Yorktown Town Board pass a resolution opposing the RHA, challenging it on behalf of "Baby Doe". Grace is determined to bring Trump's anti-woman agenda back to Westchester County government. *This is a must-win seat!* **Vote Vedat Gashi for Choice!**

On My Mind

by Catherine Lederer-Plaskett, President/Chair of the Board

We know **Judges matters**. They decide everything – our constitutional rights, malpractice judgements, divorces, white collar settlements, everything! So why aren't we paying attention and demanding more control?

If Trump has done nothing else, he has made crystal clear how very important judges are! Trump has already appointed 2 Supreme Court Justices and 150+ right-wing, ultra-conservative, anti-choice judges, many of whom have been rated "unqualified", who will change the face of our legal system for decades to come.

But it's not just Trump. **Here in Westchester, one could argue that judicial ethics rules are not truly ethical or impartial or even constitutional.**

Just this election cycle, the Subcommittee Chair of the Judicial Campaign Ethics Subcommittee, Advisory Committee, told judicial candidates they could not accept WCLA PAC's endorsement. The reasons provided reference our endorsement policy but do so INCORRECTLY. Judicial candidates do not complete questionnaires nor are they asked to support anything that may require going against any law. The only accurate reference is that a candidate may "neither seek nor accept the Right to Life Party (RTL) nomination" – And that criteria seems justifiable because candidates are permitted to accept the RTL Party line, thereby making their opposition to abortion clear.

One must, therefore, ask, "Was this gross misrepresentation intentional or accidental?" Hmm. Let's consider these important facts: the Subcommittee Chair who issued this opinion: 1.) ran for Supreme Court 9th Judicial District in 2011 on the Republican and Conservative lines (the same year the Conservative Party and the Right to Life Party joined forces here in Westchester); 2.) was rated "anti-choice" by us, and 3.) then LOST the election. One can only wonder what this Subcommittee Chair's motivations may be.

Here in New York State, judicial candidates often fear interviews, claiming that the NYS Ethic rules prohibit them from expressing their views on contentious issues like

abortion. The rules they reference are in direct opposition to the 2002 US Supreme Court decision *Republican Party of Minnesota vs White*. In the 5 – 4 decision, the US Supreme Court ruled that Minnesota's clause, which "forbade judicial candidates from announcing their views on disputed legal and political issues", was unconstitutional. Why are NYS judicial candidates still being held to a pre-2002 standard? In all my years here, I've met only one judicial candidate willing to challenge that NYS Ethics position and, perhaps, it's no surprise that he did not get his Party's nod to run.

On another judicial note: our NYS Chief Justice is seeking to "streamline" the judicial system. Sounds great and in some ways is much needed, but the devil is in the details. The claim is that we don't have enough justices where we need them. The proposed solution is to get rid of specific categories of judges including County, Court of Claims, Surrogate's Court and Family Court. Instead, they will all be "Supreme Court" judges and can be moved around where needed.

Sounds good? Not necessarily. For example, take Family Court. Family Court requires a certain type of personality and commitment. The same person hearing white collar crime cases should not be deciding a custody battle. Who will decide which judge serves where and based upon what criteria? Will the decision be based simply on where a judge is needed? Does this mean that judges elected in northern NYS will be sitting on the bench in Westchester? Will we even still be electing judges or will they all be appointed?

The role personal perspective plays in judicial decisions is seismic, in all courts and at all levels. Personal opinions and biases affect how a judge treats those who come before her/him/they, the sentence imposed, the bail required, and more.

Yes, the present system is flawed and cumbersome but it's a lot better than appointments and what we are witnessing in Washington DC. We need a better system for electing judges, not simply replacing it.

Every time you vote for judicial candidates, you are voting for someone with a personal history. That is exactly why WCLA – Choice Matters interviews each judicial nominee and if the nominee refuses to be interviewed, we rate accordingly, as we always have. If someone wants to serve in the courts, we are all entitled to know more, as the US Supreme Court ruled in 2002.

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NYS pro-choice senators in 2020. Winning would give these fanatics the facade of legitimacy. They're betting that there will be a huge Trump turnout in 2020 that can wipe out our 2018 Pro-Choice gains. **Much of what happens in 2020 will depend on who turns out to vote this year, in 2019.**

**The Reproductive Health Act provides women in New York State with the constitutional protection guaranteed by the original Roe v. Wade decision – nothing more and nothing less. The passage of the RHA was necessary as the US Supreme Court is in the process of gutting all the protections recognized by that 1973 decision.*

SUPPORT OUR WORK WITH A DONATION!

Please go to: ChoiceMatters.org or
mail to: PO Box 1175, White Plains, NY 10602

EARLY VOTING IS HERE! Election Day is Tuesday, November 5th

You can vote **ONE** of the following ways:

1. Early Voting, October 26th – November 3rd, times vary day-to-day; You must vote at a specific location that is determined by your address. Go to the Westchester County Board of Elections website for locations and times; or call 914-995-5700.
2. Absentee Ballot; or
3. General Election. You vote at your usual assigned poll site.

Please copy and distribute this page to other Pro-Choice Voters!

2019 PROChoice Voting Guide

WCLA-PAC

Our endorsed candidates are highlighted in blue boxes. Help keep abortion legal and accessible. Vote for endorsed candidates.

WCLA PAC Endorsement Policy, 2019

WCLA PAC makes its endorsements based on the candidate ratings made by the Board of Directors of WCLA - Choice Matters.

WCLA PAC's endorsements are determined case by case. To be considered for endorsement, candidates must complete and return the Organization's questionnaire and participate in an interview if requested. Candidates who fail to return the questionnaire are rated anti-choice and have been fully informed of that consequence before making their decision. All endorsements are made on a strictly non-partisan basis. The questionnaires, incumbents' and opponents' records, leadership, and helpfulness during the legislative session are all reviewed. Consistency between candidates' actions, interviews and questionnaire responses is important. Each race is voted separately. Incumbents may be endorsed over pro-choice challengers if they have consistent voting records and have established a reputation for strong leadership and extra effort in advancing access to abortion and contraception. Non-incumbents may be endorsed if they have demonstrated leadership on the issue. Endorsement is considered only for those who unequivocally support:

- Access to abortion and contraception for all women, unimpeded by laws, restrictions, or regulations.
- Strict confidentiality for all reproductive health care;
- Coverage by public and private insurance of abortion and contraception.

Judicial candidates: To be eligible for endorsement, judicial candidates must participate in an interview if requested, and neither seek nor accept the Right to Life Party nomination.

Explanation/Opinion/Policy

WCLA - Choice Matters requires ALL candidates to submit a completed questionnaire in each election cycle in which a candidate is running. As explained in the Endorsement Policy above, WCLA PAC uses WCLA - Choice Matters' ratings of the questionnaires to make endorsement decisions. Other than candidates running for U.S. president or vice president, WCLA - Choice Matters has maintained this policy **without exception** for over 30 years.

All candidates are informed that if they do not submit a completed questionnaire, he/she/they will be rated "anti-choice".

This requirement is essential for two very important reasons: 1.) It exposes anti-choice candidates who opt not to return the questionnaire rather than tell voters where they stand; and 2.) Candidates' positions change, as exemplified in the cases of Jeanine Pirro (2001) and Virginia Perez (2018.) Only because WCLA - Choice Matters required a completed questionnaire in each election cycle was the Organization able to expose the changes in these two candidates' positions.

County Legislator Catherine Parker categorically refused to submit her 2019 questionnaire and informed WCLA - Choice Matters she believed she should be rated based on other criteria. WCLA - Choice Matters declines to rate her on other criteria because that would constitute special treatment.

WCLA - Choice Matters is non-partisan and is not allied with any political party. The Organization's sole mission is to fight for comprehensive reproductive healthcare for all women and to eliminate all inequities in accessing that care.

The Organization holds all candidates to the same standards, and does not give any individual special treatment. Endorsements are made but not necessarily accepted. WCLA - Choice Matters has never and will never let its judgement and political opinions be compromised on any basis.

SUPREME COURT JUSTICE (Vote for FOUR)

• 9th Judicial District

Westchester, Rockland, Putnam, Dutchess and Orange Counties

NANCY QUINN KOBA (D,SAM)
STEVEN I. MILLIGRAM (D,R,C,I)
LEWIS J. LUBELL (D,R,C,I,SAM)
GINA C. CAPONE (D,R,C,I)

Robert H. Freehill (R,C,I)

COUNTY COURT (Vote for TWO)

MELISSA A. LOEHR (D)
ROBERT J PRISCO (D,C,I,W)
CHRISTOPHER W. MCCLURE (R,C,I)
MICHAEL TAWIL (W)

FAMILY COURT (Vote for TWO)

MARY ANNE SCATTARETICO-NABER (D,R,C,W,I)
WAYNE HUMPHREY (D,R,W,I)

WESTCHESTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE

• District 1

Peekskill, Buchanan, parts of Yorktown and Cortlandt

COLIN D. SMITH (D,W)

Frank A. Catalina (R,C,I)

• District 2

Mt. Kisco, Bedford, North Salem, Lewisboro, Pound Ridge and part of Somers

KITLEY S. COVILL (D,W,I)*

Gina M. Arena (R,C)

• District 3

North Castle, Pleasantville, and parts of Briarcliff Manor, Harrison, Mt. Pleasant, Ossining and Sleepy Hollow

Margaret A. Cunzio (R,C,I)* RTL

• District 4

New Castle and parts of Yorktown, and Somers

VEDAT GASHI (D,W,I,GRN)

Michael J. Grace (R,C) RTL

• District 5

Scarsdale, parts of White Plains

BENJAMIN BOYKIN II (D,W, I)*

• District 6

Rye Brook, Port Chester, and parts of Harrison and Rye Town

NANCY E. BARR (D,W)*

• District 7

Rye City, Mamaroneck Town, Larchmont, and parts of Harrison, the Village of Mamaroneck, New Rochelle and Rye Town

Catherine Parker (D,W)*

→ Please read above: Explanation/Opinion/Policy

• District 8

Elmsford, Sleepy Hollow, Tarrytown and parts of White Plains, Greenburgh and Mt. Pleasant

ALFREDA WILLIAMS (D)*

• District 9

Croton, Town and Village of Ossining, parts of Briarcliff Manor and Cortlandt

CATHERINE BORGIA (D,W)*

Robert J. Outhouse (R,C,GRN) RTL

• District 10

Tuckahoe and parts of New Rochelle and Eastchester

DAMON R. MAHER (D,W)*

Christopher Garitee (R,C,I)

• District 11

Pelham, Pelham Manor and parts of New Rochelle

TERRY A. CLEMENTS (D,W)*

• District 12

Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Hastings, Irvington and parts of Greenburgh

MARYJANE SHIMSKY (D,W)*

• District 13

Parts of Mt. Vernon

LYNDON WILLIAMS (D)*

• District 14

Parts of Yonkers and Mt. Vernon

David J. Tubiolo (R,C,I,GRN,SAM)*

• District 15

Bronxville and parts of Yonkers and Eastchester

RUTH WALTER (D)

Gordon Burrows (R,C,I,SAM)* RTL

• District 16

Parts of Yonkers

Christopher A. Johnson (D,W)*

• District 17

Parts of Yonkers

JOSE ALVARADO (D,I)

Key to ratings:

ENDORSED

PRO-CHOICE, NOT ENDORSED

Anti-choice * Incumbent

RTL: Right to Life PAC and/or LifeNet, past and/or present

Parties: C: Conservative D: Democrat
GRN: Green I: Independence
R: Republican W: Working Families
SAM: Serve America Movement

The Voting Guide is inside this newsletter. Use your power to vote to protect Choice!

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**IF YOU CHOOSE
TO SIT OUT ELECTION 2019
WE WILL LOSE!**

VOTE NOV. 5TH
Yorktown, Mt. Pleasant, New Castle
Pay Attention!

Your local governments are under attack! Anti-choice religious extremists are literally storming townhall meetings here in Westchester.

AND don't think for one moment abortion isn't a local issue! What if the Dobbs Ferry mayor had been anti-choice when the abortion clinic was under constant assault in the 80's and 90's? Or if then-New Rochelle Mayor Tim Itoni hadn't helped Planned Parenthood get zoning approval to open its clinic? Or if Planned Parenthood's Greenburgh clinic hadn't been able to open across the street from the Police Department? Local elections have real consequences.

This year, voters in towns and cities around the County have real and simple options: Pro-choice candidates who trust women to make their own medical decisions versus fanatic zealots who want to repeal the RHA and advance a pre-1973 Trumpian agenda.

You have amazing candidates running who are 100% pro-choice and, if given the opportunity, will lead your towns and cities to brighter futures. Please come out and vote!

RATED 100% PRO-CHOICE

MT. PLEASANT

Francesca Hagadus-Mchale
Laura Divenere

NEW CASTLE

Ivy Pool
Jason Lichtenthal
Jeremy Saland

YORKTOWN

Ilan D. Gilbert
Sheralyn Goodman
Patricia Sullivan-Rothberg

Paid for by WCLA - PAC