



PROChoice

Newsletter of
Choice Matters, Inc.,
WCLA-PAC and PROChoice Voter
Vol. 50, No. 1 Autumn, 2020

Protect Our NYS Senate Majority!

For decades, New York State failed its residents. First, because of an anti-choice Republican-controlled Senate, and then, because of a Senate manipulated by the IDC (Independent Democratic Conference), women were forced to go out of state to receive vital abortion care. Why? Because New York State did not provide women with all the healthcare guaranteed by *Roe v. Wade*. Women were shortchanged and their lives were put at risk. Beginning in 2007, reproductive health organizations, including Choice Matters, began championing the Reproductive Health Act (RHA), demanding its passage. But the RHA failed to be introduced; and then when it was, it languished in committee.

Not until 2018, when Democrats won 39 out of 63 seats, did a pro-choice majority take control of the NYS Senate. As one of its first acts, under the leadership of the new Majority Leader, Andrea Stewart-Cousins, the NYS Senate, and the Assembly, passed the RHA on the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. Governor Cuomo promptly signed it into law.

Now with the passing of Ruth Bader Ginsberg and the nomination of anti-choice conservative Amy Coney Barrett, the importance of the Reproductive Health Act stands in sharp relief. When abortion once again becomes a state issue, NY women will have the RHA. The US Supreme Court can overturn *Roe*; it can gut a decision - but it does not make law. The RHA will protect women in NY under almost all circumstances. It could be vulnerable if: 1.) Congress passes legislation banning part or all of the RHA; 2.) The RHA is challenged in court and that challenge makes its way to the Supreme Court; or 3.) Voters do not elect or re-elect those NYS senators and assembly members committed to women's reproductive freedom.

Choice Matters fought for years to educate voters to elect a pro-choice majority. Now the very senators who helped build the Democratic majority that passed the RHA into law are being targeted. For many, it is their first bid for re-election. **We must re-elect our Senate allies.**

Endorsements:

Targeted Races

CONGRESS

Mondaire Jones (CD 17) is a strong new reproductive justice ally. He is 100% pro-choice and has publicly committed to making abortion an integral part of any universal healthcare plan he supports. **We are excited to welcome and support Mondaire Jones!**

THE STATE SENATE

NYS' Most Closely Watched Race

Senator Pete Harckham (SD 40) is the GOP's #1 target. Harckham is 100% pro-choice and was a proud co-sponsor of the Reproductive Health Act and the Comprehensive Contraception Coverage Act. He believes New York women deserve 21st century healthcare and legal protections – and his voting record proves it! In contrast, his opponent, former county executive Rob Astorino, is the personification of an anti-choice zealot! **Re-Elect Senator Pete Harckham!**

Harckham's opponent, Astorino, is an ultra-conservative who is an outspoken enemy of the RHA and believes his religious convictions are more important than the constitutional rights provided under *Roe v. Wade*. When he ran for governor, he declared that "everything [was] on the table" including cutting funding of abortion; and as county executive, he vetoed women's safe access to reproductive healthcare and cut comprehensive teen sex ed programs. Instead, he honored abstinence-only advocates. This Trump ally also waged a war on women as heads of families, financial providers and care givers. He cut all funding to food pantries; afterschool programs; child abuse prevention; mental health programs; and neighborhood health centers, which provide Title X services and today impact COVID care. He slashed funds to the eviction prevention foreclosure fund and the Invest in Kids and Youth Bureau, and limited access to County

Government help in domestic violence situations. **Women cannot afford this self-proclaimed Trump "interpreter"!**

VIRTUAL FUNDRAISER EVENT FOR
**THE YELLOW PRO-CHOICE
VOTING GUIDE**

- - HONORING - -

CONGRESSWOMAN NITA LOWEY

The Power of the Female Voter
with panelists
Suzanne Berger - Ximena Francella
Gina Jackson - Jewel Williams

Special Guest
**Congressional Candidate
Mondaire Jones**

Sunday, October 25 from 4 pm - 5 pm Tickets \$50
Paid for by WCLA PAC | RSVP Info@WCLAPAC.org
Tickets at: WCLAPAC.org

Join the Fight!

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

**Your support is our future.
Your gift will help us continue to fight against daily
threats to women's reproductive health.**

In the midst of the global pandemic and a long-overdue revolution, we – together with our two political action committees WCLA PAC and ProChoice Voter – are in the trenches, fighting for the women of New York. And despite the odds, we've been WINNING!

- We sent anti-choice IDC co-founder Carlucci packing* and opened the door for Mondaire Jones to be our new congressional representative.
- We took on the Westchester County Democratic Committee demanding that the next County Chair embrace all planks of the Party platform, particularly abortion rights. They now have a new County Chair, Suzanne Berger, who has a history of making sure all committee members know a candidate's position on reproductive freedom *before voting*.
- When other states were using COVID to declare abortion a non-essential/elected medical procedure, we were out in front, making sure New York recognized it as the essential, time-sensitive healthcare it is.

These "wins" are key to protecting New York women. Unfortunately, we have depleted our financial reserves, having been unable to host the critical fundraising and social events that make all of our work possible.



Our ProChoice Voting Guide is essential, but pricey due to labor, printing and mailing costs. We couldn't sacrifice it – not now – **Because ELECTIONS MATTER!**

We are operating in a hostile climate for reproductive care. We need informed and involved voters, like you. We don't know what new restrictions are headed our way. **But with your generous**

support, Choice Matters and its two pacs will have the necessary funds to mobilize voters, advance reproductive freedom policies and laws, and protect New York women.

In the most consequential election ever, we must fortify New York State. As we predicted, abortion is becoming a state issue. We fought hard and, in 2019, we passed the Reproductive Health Act. Now we must protect the Senators and Assembly members who helped us, and we must make abortion financially and geographically accessible to all, which it is not.

Your generous gift helps Choice Matters move mountains. We are committed to keeping voters informed; getting financial and geographic access policies adopted; and our pro-choice candidates elected.

A gift envelope is enclosed. You can also make an online gift at: <https://choicematters.org/donate-now/>

Thank you for being part of our team!

*Read Pro-Choice Group Out to Take Down Carlucci, The Hudson Independent

**Send us your email address to
ChoiceMatters@ChoiceMatters.org**

Judges - Not Just The US Supreme Court Kind!

On September 18th, US Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg died. The world stood still - that is, until Donald Trump and Mitch McConnell declared that a new Supreme Court candidate would be nominated and confirmed before Election Day, despite positions taken and statements made in 2016. Now we have nominee Amy Coney Barrett. Outrage is justifiable.

But judges don't *only* impact us when they sit on the US Supreme Court.

Did you know that in every single general election, you vote for judicial candidates - the very ones who might one day preside over a case in which you are involved? And that they are selected by political parties, the criteria for which is not disclosed?

All of those candidates have unique stories that impact their life views and, thus, their judicial determinations. The role individual perspective plays in decisions is seismic. Personal opinions matter. Temperament, previous decisions and prior actions reveal what kind of judge a candidate will be. Biases affect how judges treat those who come before them, the sentence imposed, the bail required, and more. Every time you vote for judicial candidates, you are voting for someone with a personal history.

Precisely for this reason, Choice Matters interviews each judicial nominee, letting them tell their story; and if the nominee refuses to be interviewed, we rate accordingly. We

also explain the reproductive healthcare laws and how some judges can *massage* them, illuminating bias. If someone wants to serve in the courts, we all need to know more. Just imagine the impact a judge's view on reproductive rights can have in states that require parental notification/consent, where fetuses are sometimes given attorneys.

This year, you can choose between qualified candidates who have extensive experience and understanding of the issues confronting women and their families, or you can vote for their anti-choice opponents.

EARLY VOTING IS HERE! Election Day is Tuesday, November 3rd

You can vote ONE of the following ways:

1. Early Voting, October 24th – November 1st, 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. Call 914-995-5700 to confirm your polling location.

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

2020 PROChoice Voting Guide

WCLA-PAC and PROChoice Voter

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

U.S. PRESIDENT/VICE PRESIDENT

**JOSEPH R. BIDEN/
KAMALA D. HARRIS (D,W)**

Donald J. Trump/Michael R. Pence* (R,C)
SBA/RTL
HOWIE HAWKINS/ANGELA WALKER (G)
Jo Jorgensen/Jeremy Cohen (LBT)
Brock Pierce/Karla Ballard (I)

NYS SUPREME COURT JUDGES

9th Judicial District: Westchester, Putnam, Rockland,
Dutchess & Orange. (Vote for 4)

**E. LOREN WILLIAMS (D)
ALEXANDRA D. MURPHY (D,C)
ROBERT S. ONDROVIC (D,C)
SAM D. WALKER* (D,R,C)**

Richard J. Guertin (R,C)
Mark Starkman (R)

DAVID V. HASIN (R)

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

• **District 16**
Westchester County: Eastchester, parts of Greenburgh,
Mamaroneck, Mt. Vernon, New Rochelle, Pelham, City of
Rye, Scarsdale, Yonkers; plus parts of the Bronx.

JAMAAL BOWMAN (D)

Patrick McManus (C)

• **District 17**
Westchester County: Cortlandt, parts of Greenburgh,
Harrison, Mt. Kisco, Mt. Pleasant, New Castle, North
Castle, Ossining, Peekskill, Rye Town, parts of Yorktown;
City of White Plains; plus Rockland County.

MONDAIRE JONES (D,W)

Maureen McArdle-Schulman (R)
Yehudis Gottesfeld (C)
Michael I. Parietti (SAM)
Joshua Eisen (ECL)

• **District 18**
Westchester County: Bedford, Lewisboro, parts of
Mt. Kisco, parts of New Castle, parts of North Castle,
North Salem, Pound Ridge, Somers, parts of Yorktown;
plus Dutchess County: Beacon, East Fishkill, Fishkill,
Poughkeepsie (City & Town), Wappinger; plus Putnam
and Orange Counties.

SEAN PATRICK MALONEY* (D,W,I)

Chele C. Farley (R,C)
Scott A. Smith (LBT,SAM)

NEW YORK STATE SENATE

• **District 34**
Westchester County: Pelham, parts of Mt. Vernon, plus
parts of the Bronx.

ALESSANDRA BIAGGI* (D,W)

James B. Gisondi (R)
Antonio Vitiello (C)

WCLA PAC & ProChoice Voter Endorsement Policy, 2020

WCLA PAC and ProChoice Voter make their endorsements based on the candidate ratings made by the Board of Directors of WCLA – Choice Matters.

WCLA PAC's and ProChoice Voter'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.

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.

• **District 35**

Westchester County: Greenburgh, Scarsdale, parts of
New Rochelle, of White Plains & of Yonkers.

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS* (D,W)

• **District 36**

Westchester County: parts of Mt. Vernon; plus parts of
the Bronx.

JAMAAL T. BAILEY* (D)

Robert Diamond (C)

• **District 37**

Westchester County: Bedford, Eastchester, Harrison,
Mamaroneck, No. Castle, Rye (city & town), parts of
White Plains and Yonkers.

SHELLEY B. MAYER* (D,W,SAM)

Liviu Saimovici (R,C)

• **District 38**

Westchester County: Ossining; plus Clarkstown,
Orangetown, Ramapo in Rockland County.

ELIJAH REICHLIN-MELNICK (D,W)

William J. Weber, Jr. (R,SAM)

• **District 40**

Westchester County: Cortlandt, Lewisboro, Mt. Pleasant,
City of Mt. Kisco, New Castle, North Salem, City of
Peekskill, Pound Ridge, Somers, Yorktown; Dutchess
County: Beekman, Pawling; Putnam County: Carmel,
Patterson, Southeast.

PETER B. HARCKHAM* (D,W,I)

Rob Astorino ® (R,C,ROS) SBA/RTL

NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY

• **District 88**

Westchester County: Eastchester, parts of New Rochelle,
Pelham, Scarsdale, parts of White Plains.

AMY PAULIN* (D,W,SAM)

• **District 89**

Westchester County: Mt. Vernon, parts of Yonkers.

J. GARY PRETLOW* (D)

• **District 90**

Westchester County: Parts of Yonkers.
Nader J. Sayegh* (D,I)

• **District 91**

Westchester County: Mamaroneck, parts of New Rochelle,
Rye (city & Town.)

STEVE OTIS* (D,W,I)

• **District 92**

Westchester County: Greenburgh & Mt Pleasant.

THOMAS J. ABINANTI* (D,W)

• **District 93**

Westchester County: Bedford, Harrison, Lewisboro, Mt.
Kisco, New Castle, North Castle, No. Salem, Pound Ridge,
parts of White Plains.

CHRIS BURDICK (D,W,I)

John Nukulovic (R,C) SBA/RTL

• **District 94**

Westchester County: Somers, Yorktown; plus Putnam
Valley, Carmel, Southeast, Patterson in Putnam County.

STEPHANIE J. KEEGAN (D)

Kevin Byrne (R,C,I,SAM,ROS)

• **District 95**

Westchester County: Cortlandt, Ossining, Peekskill; plus
Phillipstown, Kent in Putnam County.

SANDRA GALEF* (D)

Lawrence A. Chiulli (R,C) SBA/RTL

DISTRICT ATTORNEY

MIMI ROCAH (D,W)

Bruce P. Bendish (R)

FAMILY COURT JUDGES

Westchester County (Vote for 2)

**NILDA MORALES HOROWITZ* (D,C,I)
MICHELLE I. SCHAUER* (D)
KENNETH L. BUNTING (R,C)**

WESTCHESTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE

• **District 13**

Parts of Mt. Vernon

TYRAE WOODSON-SAMUELS (D)

Key to ratings:

PRO-CHOICE, ENDORSED

PRO-CHOICE, NOT ENDORSED

Anti-choice, not endorsed

* = Incumbent

® = Former Right to Life candidate

SBA/RTL: Susan B. Anthony/Right to Life Endorsed

Parties: D: Democrat R: Republican

C: Conservative W: Working Families

I: Independence G: Green LBT: Libertarian

ROS: Rebuild Our State SAM: Serve America
Movement

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

WCLA-Choice Matters
P.O. Box 1175
White Plains NY 10602
914/946-5363
www.ChoiceMatters.org

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**VOTE LIKE YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON IT!
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3RD!**

The Trump Legacy

For four years, Trump has served as a rallying cry, and a distraction. The consummate 3-card monte dealer, Trump has focused the public eye on the most recent dumpster fire and away from his incremental systematic destruction of the American Democratic process, the environment, and constitutional and civil rights through a re-write of our judicial system.

Trump is leaving an indelible mark on the judicial system. He, together with Mitch McConnell, has stacked the courts with ultra-right judges who will advance a pro-wealth, anti-all-that-we-value court, and will protect him should the cases against him advance to higher courts. His list of appointments is staggering and will rock our judicial system for decades to come.

As of September 29, 2020, **218 Article III* of Trump's judicial nominees have been confirmed**, including two to the US Supreme Court, 53 to the Courts of Appeals, 161 to the District Courts, and two to the Court of International Trade. There are presently 35 nominations and 59 vacancies. (*Article III judges are appointed for life!)

21 of Trump's Article I judicial nominees have been confirmed, including to the US Court of Federal Claims and Tax Court. Seven nominations, five vacancies and four future vacancies are in the wings. Trump also designated the chief judges of the Court of Federal Claims.

If your knees aren't knocking and your stomach turning, they should be.

Sadly, when it comes to the courts, most voters zone out. That's unfortunate because Judges Matter. They decide everything including our constitutional rights, tax and malpractice judgements, and white collar settlements.

Trump is the consummate opportunist He engages his voters using the power of the opposition to propel himself forward. And he will do anything to win. To confuse that, to endow him with actual purpose beyond himself, is to empower him, and distract from the real dangers.

At this point in time, **Our Power IS Our Vote**. After November 3rd, we the American people must wake up and pay attention to ALL judicial nominations. A true American Democracy rest on the shoulders of the judges appointed to our courts.

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