



PROChoice

Newsletter of

Choice Matters, Inc.,
WCLA-PAC

Vol. 53, No. 1 Autumn, 2023

ABORTION IS ON THE BALLOT IN WESTCHESTER!

Never before has Westchester County had a Board of Legislators that has acted to protect reproductive health care including abortion access like this one! We at Choice Matters and WCLA PAC have worked for decades for this moment in time. After years of educating voters and candidates, we elected the largest number of pro-choice legislators in County history — a super majority. When the country has needed us most, Westchester has delivered.

But On Election Day All That Could Change!

This election will decide the future of this County Board and, in turn, reproductive health care here in Westchester.

On November 27, 2021, a White Plains reproductive healthcare facility was invaded, suffering what is considered to be one of the worst attacks in New York State history. The Board of Legislators swung into action. Under the leadership of former Board Chair Borgia and former Legislator Shimsky, the County took on the arduous task of drafting legislation to protect, as extensively as legally possible, those accessing

reproductive healthcare facilities and obtaining abortion services. Three days after *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, the bill was signed into law. This year, the Board went a step further. Under County Board Chair Vedat Gashi, they reviewed that legislation and amended it, tailoring it to meet the specific needs of Westchester County, making the law stronger and better than ever.

But now real anti-choice MAGA Republicans and Conservatives are running to take over the Board; and their primary goal is to overturn Westchester's Reproductive Health Care Facilities Access legislation.

Only you can stop them. Vote! Protect abortion access for the women of Westchester and the country. Re-elect our pro-choice super majority and Ruth Walter! Replace the MAGA anti-choice zealot in CLD 15.

Post-Roe, women are traveling from across the country to New York. Westchester has stepped up and provided the safe care needed. We can't let them down now.

Endorsements:

County Legislator Races

The County Board of Legislators consists of 17 seats, all of which are up for election this year. Nine of the 17 are contested races, three of which are open seats, with no incumbent running for re-election. Five are considered "must win" seats.

Targeted Races

Colin Smith (CLD 1), first elected in 2019, is a County legislator, attorney, and 100% pro-choice. He is also a former Peekskill Town Councilman and School Board member. As Chair of the County Legislation Committee, Smith helped draft and pass Westchester's clinic access law. In contrast, his opponent is an anti-reproductive rights zealot who has aligned himself with anti-choice extremists promoting the Trump agenda. **Vote for Colin Smith!**

Vedat Gashi (CLD 4), an attorney, is 100% in support of comprehensive reproductive health care. First elected to the County Board of Legislators in 2019, Gashi knows how important it is for women of all ages to have unfettered, safe, and private access to health care. Therefore, as Chair of the Westchester Board of Legislators, Gashi oversaw the vote to strengthen Westchester's clinic access law. In sharp contrast, Gashi's opponent worked in the Astorino administration and, like his former employer, is anti-choice. *This is a must-win seat!* **Vote Vedat Gashi for Choice!**

Ruth Walter (CLD 15) is a former Westchester County Legislator, Bronxville Court Clerk, and Library Trustee. Walter

is also a small business owner and a former investment analyst for a multinational firm who brings first-hand understanding to the issues confronting residents of Westchester. Walter is a strong voice for reproductive health care while her opponent is rabidly anti-choice. Her opponent voted against the clinic access bill and opposes every possible advancement of women's health care. He has been endorsed by and received donations from the extremist group Right to Life PAC, and is working to bring Trump's anti-woman agenda back to Westchester County government *This is a must-win seat!* **Vote for Ruth Walter!**

Two Critical Open Seats

Emiljana Ulaj (CLD 9) is a union organizer who has worked as a hands-on public advocate, and staff member for the NYS Senate. As a member of a family that emigrated to the United States in the 1990s, Ulaj brings a unique understanding of the challenges facing new refugee families, and the importance of health care. Ulaj will be a strong ally for women and families. Her opponent is anti-choice. **WCLA PAC stands with Emiljana Ulaj!**

Judah Holstein (CLD 10) who is president of a software company, Miracom Computer Corp., has a long history of impactful community involvement, most recently serving three terms as a trustee on the Eastchester School Board, and six years on the Eastchester School Foundation. Holstein is 100% pro-choice. In sharp contrast, his opponent is staunchly anti-choice. **WCLA PAC endorses Judah Holstein!**

Join the Fight!

By Catherine Lederer-Plaskett, CEO & President

**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 greatest assault on women's reproductive health care ever witnessed in the United States, Choice Matters – together with our two political action committees WCLA PAC and ProChoice Voter – is in the trenches, fighting every day for the women of New York. And despite the odds, we continue to win, as we push slowly and methodically forward.

Remember it is the “long game” that counts.

It took anti-reproductive healthcare extremists decades. They were methodical, devising a strategy focused on the courts, state and local elections, and even school boards. It paid off. Not only have they seized control of the US Supreme Court and eviscerated *Roe*, they've succeeded in taking over the federal court system and state houses. They realized that no election was too local to ignore.

Choice Matters has been practicing the same strategy for 51 years here in Westchester and New York State. And we've made tremendous progress: NYS' two US Senators, Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General, Leader of the NYS Senate, Speaker of the Assembly, 65% of NYS Congressional Representatives, the vast majority of the Senate, Assembly and Westchester County Legislature, County Executive, County Clerk, and District Attorney – **They are all pro-choice!** *Compare that with just ten years ago!*

Without your financial support, and our volunteers, we couldn't have done it. Change takes time and money, and we are continuously investing in the future.

Locally we are witnessing the rise of a new crop of anti-choice fanatics energized by the overturning of *Roe*, state bans, and actions by federal courts to outlaw mifepristone. They're running for office at every level of government. And this November, we face possibly losing the most pro-active pro-choice County Board of Legislators Westchester has ever elected.

In the face of all of this, Choice Matters is continuing to succeed in 2023, playing the long game.

- **Westchester's clinic access law is stronger than ever!** Choice Matters has worked closely with the Board of Legislators to tailor the law to meet the specific needs of Westchester County. We are also actively supporting the County Attorney's Office in its defense of the law in court.
- **We fought tirelessly to elect a trifecta pro-choice government in Albany** – and the rewards have been huge. Bills have been passed and signed into law that Choice Matters considers key to protecting and advancing reproductive health care, including legislation that:
 - Requires all 89 SUNY and CUNY universities to provide access to medication abortion on campus or with a referral.
 - Expands protection to healthcare providers when providing medication abortion via telehealth to



patients living in states where it may be restricted or outlawed. This legislation was sponsored by Westchester's Senator Shelley Mayer, a former Choice Matters Board member.

➤ Permits specifically trained pharmacists to distribute self-administered hormonal contraceptives, even if patients

don't have a prescription from their doctor or nurse practitioner. This legislation was sponsored by Westchester's Assemblywoman Amy Paulin, a former Choice Matters Board member.

- **Choice Matters established CATCH** (Center for Analysis and Tracking of Clinic Harassers). This unique national resource center tracks anti-abortion terrorists, compiles strategic resources for clinics, and will showcase legal strategies to successfully halt harassers from violent attacks.
- **We joined together with Citizens for a Democratic Judiciary** to demand a more transparent process in the selection of judges. While the work has just begun, party leaders have been put on notice — And unlike in Brooklyn where the Democratic Committee just nominated an anti-choice Supreme Court justice, the 9th Judicial District has Choice Matters. We interview each candidate and let you know where they stand on reproductive justice. If they refuse to be interviewed, we let you know that too.

These “wins” are key to protecting New York women. But we need your help. Waging this fight has depleted our financial reserves. Your contribution is needed more than ever.

Your support helps Choice Matters move mountains.

Please make a donation in support of the ProChoice Voting Guide. A gift envelope is enclosed. You can also go to: choicematters.org. Thank you for being part of our team!



Remember: In an odd-year election cycle like this, your vote is even more important because it all comes down to voter turnout!

Amas Musical Theatre
Kierstead Productions & Chalant Productions

THE POST-ROE MONOLOGUES

Written by Mimi Ziemann | Directed by Maria Torres

NOVEMBER 6, 2023 7:00 p.m.
Merkin Hall at Kaufman Music Center, NYC

The Post-Roe Monologues explores the real-world consequences of the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* based on interviews and the experience of the playwright as an OB/GYN. A play with music, this is an intimate, character-driven performance that compels conversation and compassion.

This one-night **Benefit** features **Broadway performers** followed by a panel discussion

Proceeds support the National Abortion Hotline and Choice Matters
Prime tickets and sponsorship includes a reception

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

2023 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, 2023

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 individuals, unimpeded by laws, restrictions, or regulations.
- Strict confidentiality for all reproductive health care; and
- 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. Candidates who do not participate in an interview if requested are rated anti-choice and have been fully informed of that consequence before making their decision. Endorsements are made but not necessarily accepted.

Judicial Candidates & Party Affiliation

Often asked: How can candidates run on both the Conservative and Democratic party lines?

Some candidates take as many lines as possible to get elected. While NYS election law does not prevent candidates from running on multiple party lines, candidates often affiliate themselves with parties with which they are most ideologically aligned, e.g. Democrat/Working Families or Republican/Conservative.

The NYS Conservative Party and the Democratic Party platforms are diametrically opposed on issue after issue. The Conservative Party has an extreme platform position on abortion—opposing abortion under almost any circumstance, and favoring bans like those in Texas and other states.

Why do the candidates take the Conservative & Democratic lines?

They do it to get more votes. Judicial candidates, in particular, traditionally take as many lines as possible.

Does that mislead voters?

YES, it does. It's not at all clear what the candidate's core beliefs are. The goal is winning, regardless of whether voters are confused or not about their ballot choices.

How can we tell who we should vote for?

People need to pay attention and do their own research. When it comes to abortion, Choice Matters and its PACs will always do our utmost to vet candidates on their views, knowledge, and record. Voters can also let their local political party leaders know they want policies established that prevent their candidates from accepting nominations from other parties with incompatible views.

SUPREME COURT JUSTICE (You can vote for up to four)

• 9th Judicial District

Westchester, Rockland, Putnam, Dutchess and Orange Counties

FRANCESCA E. CONNOLLY (D,C)

CHARLES WOOD (D,C)

→ For more information, please go to: <https://wclapac.org/2023/05/charles-wood-is-intimidation-acceptable-judicial-conduct/>

ROLF M. THORSEN (D,C)

Larry J. Schwartz (D,C)

John A. Sarcone (R)

→ For more information, please go to: <https://wclapac.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Voting-Guide-2022.pdf>

Karen Ostberg (R)

Susan Sullivan-Bisceglia (R)

JOHN CIAMPOLI (R)

COUNTY COURT JUDGE

ANN B. BIANCHI (D)

Stephen P. Dewey (R)

WESTCHESTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE

• District 1

Peekskill, and part of Yorktown and Cortlandt

COLIN D. SMITH (D,W)*

Joe Torres (R,C)

• District 2

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

ERIKA LANG PIERCE (D,W)*

• District 3

North Castle, Mt. Pleasant, and part of Briarcliff Manor

Margaret A. Cunzio (R,C)* RTL

• District 4

New Castle and part of the Town of Ossining, Yorktown and Somers

VEDAT GASHI (D)*

Daniel J. Branda (R)

• District 5

Scarsdale, most of White Plains and part of Harrison

BENJAMIN BOYKIN II (D,W)*

• District 6

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

NANCY E. BARR (D,W)*

• District 7

Rye City, Mamaroneck Town, Larchmont, and part of Harrison, the Village of Mamaroneck and Rye Town

CATHERINE PARKER (D,W)*

Katie Manger (R,C)

• District 8

Elmsford, Tarrytown and part of the unincorporated Town of Greenburgh and White Plains

JEWEL WILLIAMS JOHNSON (D,W)*

• District 9

Croton and Village of Ossining, part of Briarcliff Manor, Cortlandt and the Town of Ossining

EMILJANA ULAJ (D,W)

Laurie Abbate-Ryan (R,C)

• District 10

Tuckahoe and part of New Rochelle and Eastchester

JUDAH J. HOLSTEIN (D)

Beth Acocella (R)

Parties: C: Conservative D: Democrat
R: Republican W: Working Families

• District 11

Pelham, Pelham Manor and part of New Rochelle

TERRY A. CLEMENTS (D)*

John Hynes (R)

• District 12

Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Hastings, Irvington and part of the unincorporated Town of Greenburgh

DAVID IMAMURA (D,W)*

• District 13

Part of Mt. Vernon

TYRAE WOODSON-SAMUELS (D)*

• District 14

Part of Yonkers and Mt. Vernon

David J. Tubiolo (D,W)*

• District 15

Bronxville and part of Yonkers and Eastchester

RUTH WALTER (D,W)

James M. Nolan (R,C)* RTL

• District 16

Parts of Yonkers

Shanae V. Williams (D)

Debbie Kozak (R,C)

• District 17

Part of Yonkers

JOSE ALVARADO (D,W)

Jose L. Diaz (R,C)

Key to ratings:

ENDORSED (SHADED BLUE/ WHITE LETTERING)

PRO-CHOICE, NOT ENDORSED

Anti-choice

* Incumbent

RTL: Right to Life PAC +/- or LifeNet

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

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**THE MOST
PRO-ACTIVE PRO-CHOICE BOARD EVER!
- PROTECT THEM -
VOTE: ELECTION DAY: NOVEMBER 7TH!
EARLY VOTING: SAT. 10/28 – SUN. 11/5**

Post-Roe – 1 Year +

- 26 states have already banned or are soon likely to ban abortion.
- More than 36 million women of reproductive age live in states that have or are likely to ban abortion. (48.4% of all women of reproductive age in the US.)
- Bans disproportionately affect marginalized communities.
- Most state bans include criminal penalties for performing an abortion, or assisting a person obtaining an abortion. They include jail time, typically 1 to 20 years, but can be up to life in prison; fines from \$1,000 to \$100,000; civil penalties of \$100,000; and loss of one's medical or professional license.
- In at least 3 states, a person can be prosecuted for aiding a person traveling out of state for abortion care.
- The new battleground is overturning FDA approval of mifepristone to make medication abortion illegal nationally.

The Power of the Vote

- Abortion was THE key issue driving many voters to the polls in the midterm elections.
- Citizen-initiated ballot measures are the most viable strategy to protect access to abortion and enshrine this right into state constitutions for long-term security.
- In 2022, voters resoundingly rejected anti-abortion ballot measures in 3 states and passed constitutional amendments protecting abortion in 3 others.
- A constitutional amendment is on the ballot in Ohio on November 7th. It passed the first hurdle earlier this year, in April.
- 14 governors used executive orders to offer legal protections to people seeking or providing abortion care in their state.
- Confirming the power of abortion at the polls, the outspoken Wisconsin Supreme Court candidate won election in April, likely leading to the overturning of the swing state's abortion ban.

Choice Matters is HIRING!

We're looking for people to join our team.

Research Associate • Program Associate • Phoners

- Flexible schedule
- Must be committed to protecting reproductive rights
- Part-time positions
- In-person positions. All applicants must be fully vaccinated.

For more information, email: Choicematters@choicematters.org or call: (914) 946-5363