

## UNRESTRICT MINNESOTA

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# Minnesota has long been considered a beacon for abortion rights and access.

## UNRESTRICT MINNESOTA

“I am in a long-term, healthy relationship with my partner of 12 years. **I had an abortion during the pandemic after our birth control failed.** It was a lonely experience, not because I questioned my decision, but because the culture we live in and my family of origin is hostile to abortion-care. I advocate for abortion because I want to live in a world where all parents are willing parents and where **all people have an ability to control their own future/destiny.**”

- Marissa

“When I was about 22 years old, I became pregnant. **I knew I wasn't ready to be a parent, so I decided I would get an abortion.** I don't remember much of the process, but I know I was able to find a clinic with relative ease. I remember being so afraid of the whole process, just due to how demonized it had become within society. **My hope is that any person seeking an abortion can have access to this life saving health care, just like I did.** I want to help remove the stigma and shame connected to abortion and fight to keep access for all.”

- Alycia



Our reasons for supporting abortion are personal and powerful.

Thanks to those who have shared their experiences.

Gender Justice is proud to be the organizational and financial home of UnRestrict Minnesota, the powerful multi-racial coalition and reproductive freedom campaign that has led Minnesota to become a national leader for reproductive freedom. In this Gender Justice newsletter, you'll find more details about UnRestrict Minnesota's recent accomplishments and the work ahead on pages 16-17.

# PARTNER NEWS



“Our coalition is made up of abortion providers, abortion funds, lawyers, doulas, policy experts, and so many more.

We are building a world where people from all walks of life are invested in bodily autonomy and reproductive health care access.”

## -Our Justice

UnRestrict Minnesota Community Partner

Our coalition is driven by the growing number of advocates, health care providers, lawyers, union members, and concerned citizens who support every Minnesotan's right to access abortion care.

Get to know the 30+ UnRestrict Minnesota Community Partners in our new and expanded Community Partners section on the website! We have Q&As with partner members, information on their work in the community, and opportunities for you to get involved with them directly.



This is where UnRestrict Minnesota was born.

How could we tell the story of Minnesota's abortion restrictions when no one knew of their existence? We needed to lift the veil and get these laws in front of everyone we could.

Your support helped Gender Justice bring together a coalition that now includes more than 30 community organizations, and these groups hit the pavement to get the word out. **Community members like yourself held house parties, attended drag shows, organized on campus, went to the theater, and talked with farmers and parents at the Minnesota State Fair.** Donations from people like you helped to splash the laws on billboards, digital ads, and stickers all across the state so that everyone could learn the truth about what people were forced to endure when accessing and providing abortion care.

Your support of the UnRestrict Minnesota campaign was instrumental in setting the stage for our legal win in *Doe v. Minnesota*. Judges are people too, and they can take their cues from the public. You rallied, donated, called your lawmakers, and spoke out LOUD for abortion. You gave voice to the largest cross-sector, multi-racial coalition for reproductive freedom and justice in state history, helped establish the first ever Reproductive Freedom Caucus at the State Legislature, made historic progress in the 2023 legislative session — and we're not done yet!

**UnRestrict Minnesota has been a beautiful, collective effort that continues to set the standard across the country ♥**

Minnesota has long been considered a beacon for abortion rights and access. Yet for decades—and unbeknownst to 96% of the state—politicians had quietly enacted a slate of anti-abortion laws that, combined, made it traumatic, and sometimes even impossible, to get care.

These laws, known as TRAP (targeted regulations of abortion providers) worked together to make it more difficult to provide and obtain abortion care. **In 2019, in partnership with The Lawyering Project, Gender Justice filed the case *Doe v. Minnesota* on behalf of two healthcare providers, the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis, and abortion fund Our Justice.** The case was rooted in a novel legal theory to take on these laws as a whole, cumulative effort to undermine our constitutional protection to have an abortion.

In preparation for the lawsuit, we commissioned PerryUndem to conduct statewide focus groups and polling.

**We found that only 4% (yes, 4%!) of people could identify a single abortion restriction, despite there being many.**

Even more, the vast majority of folks thought our state laws actually affirmed, rather than restricted, access to care.

From the courtroom to the statehouse, 2024 is teeing up to be a monumental year. In the arena of gender justice we're not just spectators – **we're game-changers.**

**CHALLENGE**

**ACCEPTED**



# Hello Friends,



MEGAN PETERSON, Executive Director (she/her/hers)

I joined Gender Justice in 2016 not knowing what was to come with the election that November. Now, we find ourselves back in the same place. When Trump came into office that year, we made a decisive pivot away from filing our cases in federal court—which had been a major strategy for Gender Justice—to filing our cases in state court where we could rely on the Minnesota Human Rights Act and Minnesota Constitution.

We knew it was only a matter of time before the federal courts would go off the rails and saw the need to build up state-level protections that would provide a buffer as our federal and civil rights are weakened.

**This strategy worked.** With your support, donations, and encouragement, we have been able to enjoin Minnesota’s abortion restrictions, affirm constitutional-level protections for transgender people, and prove in court that denying someone contraception is a form of sex discrimination under Minnesota law.

**TOGETHER, WE HAVE MADE MINNESOTA A NATIONAL BEACON FOR OUR RIGHTS—THANKS IN LARGE PART TO YOUR SUPPORT ADVOCATING, ORGANIZING, AND SHOWING UP WHEN IT MATTERED.**

**But we know too well how easy it is to roll back this progress.**

Not unlike 2016, we again find ourselves in a moment of great uncertainty and we must be ready to evolve as our opposition escalates their attacks.

To be honest, I’m terrified about the threats that are emerging at a national level. It’s clear that the 2022 *Dobbs* ruling reversing *Roe v. Wade* was just the beginning of the attacks on our bodily autonomy. White Christian Nationalists have set their sights on birth control, marriage equality, and even interracial marriage. In February, an Alabama Court ruled that embryos created through in vitro fertilization (IVF) should be considered children. Here in Minnesota, we’re seeing upheaval in our community school boards as radicalized parents are trying to drive out the teachers who are creating welcoming and inclusive classrooms for all students.

What do people like you and I do in the face of this uncertainty and extremism? We find power and support within our communities and fight back as hard as we can, together.

This year, we have an opportunity to add the strongest protections against gender discrimination in the country to Minnesota’s Constitution through the Minnesota Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Minnesota’s ERA would protect everyone against discrimination based on race, color, national origin, ancestry, disability, or sex—including pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation—no matter who’s in power in state government.

With your support, we are going to keep bringing precedent-setting cases that change the law and people’s lives. And we’re going to share Gender Justice’s model of changing hearts and minds and moving the law forward with other changemakers across the country.

Last year was the culmination of a significant chapter for Gender Justice. Thanks to incredible support from community members like you, in just five years we transformed from a handful of lawyers wearing multiple hats to a powerful team of 25 advocates, litigators, organizers, and non-profit leaders partnering with thousands of activists, donors, and supporters operating across two states. We have a new office in Bismarck, North Dakota as well as a sister organization, Gender Justice Action, a 501(c)4 political and advocacy organization that is already propelling our work forward at the state legislature and at the ballot box!

With increasing attacks on our communities, this growth has been necessary. And it’s only been possible because you were there with us every step of the way.

It seems impossible to imagine right now, but we look forward to a day when we don’t need Gender Justice to exist as an organization – when we’ve achieved our vision of a world where everyone can thrive no matter their gender, gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation.

But for now, we know how desperately we’re needed, and we’re gearing up for many fights to come. This year, we’re

laying the path for our next major chapter by undertaking strategic planning, a process that nonprofits commonly use to define their vision for the future and identify shared goals and objectives. We’ll be gathering community input and developing a plan to continue to fight the coordinated effort to roll back our rights while also building on the significant legal and legislative wins we have achieved. As you’ll see across this newsletter, it is not enough to pass a law or a constitutional amendment – we must then put it to work.

We cannot set a plan for what is to come without you. Please keep watch for a supporter survey that will be distributed as part of our strategic planning process. We want to hear your thoughts on where you see our work being most impactful as the next course is charted. **Your voice in our planning for the future is essential.**

What I’ve found to be true over and over in my time with Gender Justice is this: it’s never the wrong time to fight for people’s rights. We should be proud of what we’ve achieved together over these last 7+ years since Trump was elected, thanks to this powerful community we have built, and I know with our courage and savvy we’re ready to take on new challenges, both anticipated and unpredictable.

One thing I can say for sure is that we aren’t turning our back on anyone in any state. Thank you for your solidarity and your support.

“  
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”

## **GENDER JUSTICE RECEIVES TRANSFORMATIONAL \$2 MILLION GIFT FROM MACKENZIE SCOTT’S YIELD GIVING OPEN CALL**

This past March, Gender Justice announced that we were the recipient of a transformative gift of \$2 million from MacKenzie Scott’s Yield Giving Open Call! **This is the largest one-time donation in Gender Justice’s history.**

Gender Justice was selected from among 6,353 applications from all 50 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico. After a process involving multiple levels of review, feedback, and diligence involving peer applicants and an external Evaluation Panel, Gender Justice was in the group of highest-scoring organizations.

For fourteen years, thanks to thousands of generous supporters, Gender Justice has built a track record of innovative work to advance gender equity through the law, playing a pivotal role in huge victories for abortion access and trans rights, setting groundbreaking legal precedents, and building transformative coalitions.

**With a conservative legal movement threatening our fundamental rights here in Minnesota, North Dakota, and across the United States, this gift could not come at a more crucial time.** We are incredibly grateful and humbled by this recognition from Yield Giving.

# Fighting for Justice in the Courts

Strategic and impact litigation continues to be the cornerstone of the work that your donations support here at Gender Justice. We're known for taking on cases where the law is still unsettled, and where the precedent we set will help define and reinforce our human and civil rights for years to come.

Our team only takes on cases we can put our full weight into – where if there is an unexpected turn or a harmful ruling, we have the capacity to keep digging in and keep pushing forward. This spring, the Minnesota Court of Appeals announced decisions in three of our long-running cases filed back in 2019: *Doe v. Minnesota* (overturning Minnesota's abortion restrictions), *Cooper v. USAPL Powerlifting* (fighting for the rights of trans women to compete in sports), and *Anderson v. Thrifty White* (protecting access to emergency contraception).

We're also not afraid to go big and take on a national airline. This past November we filed *Ali v. Sun Country Airlines*, a case where our client—and new mother—faced discrimination when she tried to pump at work (a legal right for all nursing parents in Minnesota).

**Thanks to your donations and encouragement, we have the resources and the resolve to take on the big, long fights that will not only secure justice for our clients, but also improve conditions for us all.**



Andrea Anderson



Doe v. Minnesota Victory Party



JayCee Cooper

## A HISTORIC RULING AGAINST SEX DISCRIMINATION

*ANDREA ANDERSON v. THRIFTY WHITE*

In a historic and groundbreaking decision on March 18, the Minnesota Court of Appeals ruled that a pharmacist's refusal to fill a woman's prescription for emergency contraception based on his personal beliefs constitutes illegal sex discrimination under the Minnesota Human Rights Act. **The ruling is the first in the United States to find sex discrimination in the context of a pharmacy's refusal to fill such a prescription.**

Gender Justice and co-counsel Lockridge Grindal Nauen PLLP filed the lawsuit, known as *Anderson v. Thrifty White*, in 2019 on behalf of Andrea Anderson, a mother and foster parent. Despite a valid prescription from Ms. Anderson's doctor for the emergency contraceptive ella, the lead pharmacist at McGregor Pharmacy (formerly

Thrifty White), told Ms. Anderson that his beliefs precluded him from giving her the medication, and refused to serve her.

The Minnesota Court of Appeals ruling sends a clear message that discrimination in reproductive health care for any reason is not only unacceptable, but illegal under Minnesota law. **This is a huge victory for every person who seeks care without prejudice that has been made possible thanks to your support and dedication.**

While the decision found the pharmacist's actions constitute illegal sex discrimination under Minnesota law, the court remanded the case to the district court for trial on the question of the pharmacy's liability, so your continued support helps us continue litigating this case.

## ANOTHER VICTORY IN THE EFFORT TO REMOVE MINNESOTA'S ABORTION RESTRICTIONS

*DOE v. MINNESOTA*

A judge declared Minnesota's abortion restrictions unconstitutional back in 2022, but that hasn't stopped anti-abortion groups from trying to turn back the clock. This February, the Minnesota Court of Appeals denied an anti-abortion activist group's request to intervene in the historic decision that struck down the state's abortion restrictions, *Doe v. Minnesota*.

The group, MOMS (Mothers Offering Maternal Support) filed their appeal at the 11th hour with the goal of relitigating the two-parent notification provision that was struck down as part of our 2022 win. Unfortunately for MOMS, a key question judges ask when deciding to accept an intervention appeal is "why now?"

MOMS needed—and failed—to provide good reason for waiting until the last possible minute to step in on a case that has been ongoing for several years. **We're thankful that their attempt has been unsuccessful so far, but they have appealed to the Minnesota State Court so this case continues.**

**Thank you for being a vital part of this crucial fight. Together, we can protect our victories and pave the way for a future where everyone's right to access abortion care is respected.**

## FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHT TO COMPETE

*JAYCEE COOPER v. USA POWERLIFTING*

In a second ruling in our case on behalf of JayCee Cooper, the Minnesota Court of Appeals affirmed on March 18 that discrimination against athletes based on transgender status violates the Minnesota Human Rights Act. However, the Court sent the case of our client, JayCee Cooper, a transgender woman who was denied entry into USA Powerlifting (USAPL) competitions, back to a district court to determine whether USAPL rejected her because she is transgender.

While we are glad that the Court of Appeals affirmed that it is illegal to discriminate against trans people in sports, we believe it is crystal clear that this is what happened here, and we still need to ensure the courts recognize that. **Our work does not stop with this ruling.** Far from it. Your continued support will help us keep fighting for transgender Minnesotans.



# Breaking Down Complex Issues

Gender Justice provides expert legal and policy analysis and breaks down complex issues for every audience. Our analysis comes from a deep understanding of how the law works, how it is enforced, and the impact it has on people's real lives.

Too often the justice system is used as a tool for oppression. We have a deep understanding of the ways shifting norms around gender influence emerging law and policy, as well as a commitment to racial justice and undermining white supremacy, including pursuing intersectional legal and advocacy strategies.

## Wanted: Women's Economic Security

In search of businesses, staff, and organizations interested in learning more about the protections afforded by the Women's Economic Security Act (WESA). Are you a manager or part of an Employee Resource Group (ERG) or community organization that serves pregnant or pumping people? You should know your rights and expectations around safe and equitable workplaces.

**Contact us to get more information or request a training to learn more about the legal rights and requirements granted by WESA.**

Visit [genderjustice.us/training](https://genderjustice.us/training)

**Interested in learning more? Check out our briefings on topics like medication abortion, the Supreme Court, and discrimination against LGBTQ+ people on our YouTube channel, @Gender\_Justice**



## Dig Deeper: "A Closer Look at New Workplace Protections for Pregnant and Pumping Employees in Minnesota"

When it comes to laws protecting pregnant and pumping employees, there's a veritable alphabet soup of acronyms. Read our article from Gender Justice Senior Staff Attorney Sara Jane Baldwin published in Hennepin Lawyer that digs into four of the most crucial: WESA, MPLA, PWFA, and PUMP.

Complexities aside, what's important to know is that Minnesota workers must be accommodated if they are pregnant and nursing.



# Thank You!

This past year has been monumental—from positive rulings in multi-year cases and a historic legislative session to new, groundbreaking projects—and we couldn't be more excited about what's to come.

**Our Gender Justice team is honored to be doing this work with you and grateful for the recognition we've recently received.**

## Attorney of the Year Winners: Third Consecutive Year!

Gender Justice's Christy Hall, Senior Staff Attorney, and Jess Braverman, Legal Director, were recognized as attorneys of the year for 2023 by *Minnesota Lawyer!* The award was given for their work on *Lusk v. Minnesota Department of Corrections*. **This is the third consecutive year our powerhouse team has won this recognition.**

## Alliance for Justice: Tip the Scales Award

This past November, our Executive Director Megan Peterson accepted the Ally for Justice award from the Alliance for Justice (AFJ). AFJ is a kindred organization that works to build the strength of progressive movements by training and educating nonprofit organizations on advocacy, while harnessing their collective power to transform our state and federal courts.



## Minnesota Women's Press: 2024 Readers Recommend



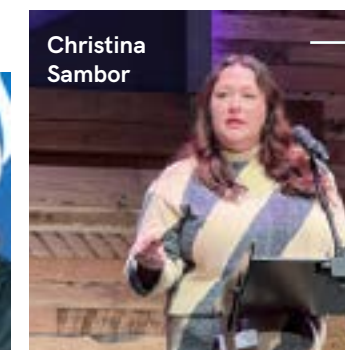
We're so excited that *Minnesota Women's Press* readers voted the **Gender Justice Brief as their favorite podcast!** It has been so fun bringing you with us as we have candid conversations about the gender equity landscape with some of our favorite people.

Check out one of our most listened-to episodes wherever you get your podcasts: [Unpacking the Supreme Court Ruling in 303 Creative v Elenis](#), featuring OutFront Minnesota's Kat Rohn in June 2023.

## Exemplary Leader: Christina Sambor!

Christina Sambor, a licensed attorney and the North Dakota State Director at Gender Justice, was presented Planned Parenthood's 2023 Exemplary Leader Award at the Progress on the Prairie event this past November in Fargo. The Exemplary Leader Award recognizes an individual who has displayed a deep commitment to Planned Parenthood's mission and work in North Dakota.

Thanks to Christina's leadership, Gender Justice, along with the Center for Reproductive Rights and Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP, is suing North Dakota to challenge its abortion laws, which are some of the most restrictive in the United States. Christina previously led the lobbying effort for the North Dakota Human Rights Coalition during the 2023 legislative session and has led the opposition to the state's efforts to restrict reproductive health care and LGBTQ+ rights.



Christina Sambor



Christy Hall

## Congrats, Christy! Twin Cities Business Notable Women in Law

*From Twin Cities Business:* In her 12 years as a practicing attorney with Gender Justice, a St. Paul organization dedicated to gender equity, Christy Hall has had an impact on Minnesota civil rights, crafting and litigating multiple precedent-setting cases to advance gender equity. In one case, Hall convinced a jury that her client's former employer not only failed to take action against sexual harassment and abuse in the workplace but also retaliated against the client for reporting the abuse. She won \$750,000 in damages for her client. Hall was also a critical member of the team that persuaded a state district court to block most of the state's abortion restrictions just a couple of weeks after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*. **"No obstacle is too big for Christy to tackle,"** says Gender Justice executive director Megan Peterson.

# An ERA for ALL



HERE'S WHY OUR ERA COULD BE THE BEST IN THE NATION:

### *It's Explicit.*

The new ERA language makes crystal clear what is included within the protections of the ERA. We define reproductive freedom so that judges know that protections include (but are not limited to) abortion care, prenatal care, postpartum care, infertility treatment, and much, *much* more. We also define gender identity and gender expression to include access to gender-affirming care.

**By being explicit, Minnesota's ERA would secure robust protections for the long haul.**

### *It's inclusive and intersectional.*

The law tends to be slow to adapt and evolve, and in recent years we've seen this show up in cases where people are discriminated against based on multiple protected characteristics. We want to make sure that our discrimination protections are intersectional.

We can guarantee equal protection under the law AND we can do it in an intersectional way, recognizing that structural oppression doesn't happen in a vacuum. That's why our version of the ERA will also protect equality on the basis of race, color, ancestry, national origin, and disability alongside sex and gender.

### *It directs courts to apply strict scrutiny.*

If the government is going to do something discriminatory, then we want courts to closely scrutinize their reasoning and not just rubber stamp those laws and actions. With strict scrutiny, the law or policy must be narrowly tailored to achieve a compelling government interest or it will be struck down.

Currently discrimination based on religion and race, as well as abortion restrictions, are subject to strict scrutiny. Other forms of sex discrimination, including discrimination against transgender Minnesotans, are subject to intermediate scrutiny. The new ERA language will ensure that strict scrutiny is applied to all claims of discrimination based on all protected characteristics.

In Minnesota, we believe in freedom, fairness, and equality for all. We believe the protections guaranteed by our Constitution and our laws should apply equally to everyone. As of this newsletter, the Minnesota Constitution does not expressly guarantee equal protection under the law based on sex and gender.

### **That's why we need an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA).**

In the 2023 legislative session, the Minnesota Senate succeeded in passing a state ERA based on the 2022 language passed by Nevada, but it failed to pass the House. We knew a serious discussion was needed to figure out how to get this ballot initiative across the finish line and to ensure Minnesota's ERA is as strong as possible.

Thanks to supporters like you, Gender Justice's legal team led a process to gather input and insight from a cross section of the legal community. We recruited attorneys and law professors with expertise in constitutional and human rights law, legal aid, gender and racial discrimination, disability rights, LGBTQ+ rights, reproductive rights, and more. We studied other states' ERAs and pushed to set a new, high bar for aligning our laws and Constitution with our state's values of equity, non-discrimination, and reproductive autonomy.

## Proposed MN ERA Language

As of the writing of this newsletter, this is the current language under consideration at the State Legislature after revisions from the state revisor, to the best of our knowledge.

**All persons shall be guaranteed equal rights under the laws of this state.** The state shall not discriminate against any person in intent or effect on account of one or more of the following:

- (a) Race;
- (b) Color;
- (c) National origin;
- (d) Ancestry;
- (e) Disability; or
- (f) Sex, including but not limited to:
  - (i) Pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes, and reproductive freedom;
  - (ii) Gender identity or gender expression; or
  - (iii) Sexual orientation.

Any action by the state that denies an individual's equal rights shall be invalid unless, at a minimum, it is the least restrictive means of achieving a compelling governmental interest.

For purposes of this section, reproductive freedom means making and effectuating decisions about all matters relating to one's own pregnancy or decision whether to become pregnant, including, but not limited to: prenatal care, miscarriage care, abortion care, childbirth, postpartum care, contraception, sterilization, infertility care, and lactation. For the purposes of this section gender identity or gender expression includes but is not limited to making and effectuating decisions about gender-affirming care. For the purposes of this section, State means the state or any agency, or any political subdivision of the state.

This section is self-executing. This section does not limit or narrow existing rights in this constitution. Nothing in this section shall invalidate or prevent the adoption of any law, regulation, program, practice, or benefit designed to prevent or remedy discrimination on the basis of characteristics listed in this section.

## How a Ballot Initiative Becomes a Constitutional Amendment in Minnesota

### FIRST, THE HOUSE AND SENATE VOTE TO PASS THE BILL

The legislature votes on and passes the ballot initiative proposing to change the Constitution. The legislation must be approved by a majority vote of both bodies of the legislature. It does not need to be signed by the Governor, and a Governor's veto is not applicable here.

### SECOND, THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT APPEARS ON THE BALLOT DURING A STATE GENERAL ELECTION

Voters have the opportunity to ratify and enact the ballot initiative. The ballot will list an amendment title and a brief description of the amendment itself.

### LASTLY, AMENDMENTS ARE RATIFIED IF APPROVED BY A MAJORITY OF ELECTION VOTERS

The Minnesota Constitution requires the majority of those voting in the election—not just a majority of those voting on the amendment question—to ratify the amendment. So, if a person leaves the amendment blank that is the equivalent of a "no" vote. If the initiative is approved by the majority of voters, the amendment takes effect immediately, unless specified to take effect at a later date.





Gender Justice Action  
is the political and  
advocacy arm of  
Gender Justice



# It is time to ensure that we truly have equality for all – no exceptions.

In 2023, lawmakers across the country introduced nearly 1,100 bills aimed at restricting reproductive rights and healthcare access and enacted 148 of them. In addition, extremist lawmakers introduced 600 anti-transgender pieces of legislation and 87 passed. Meanwhile, here in Minnesota, in a single, extraordinary legislative session, lawmakers managed to make Minnesota a trans refuge state while also systematically dismantling the barriers to reproductive health care that anti-abortion extremists had been building for five decades.

In Minnesota, we believe in freedom — and that the protections in our Constitution and our laws should apply equally to everyone. **It is our civic right AND responsibility to make sure the Constitution reflects our values as fully and clearly as possible.**

But right now, the Minnesota Constitution doesn't offer everyone equal protection under the law, leaving too many people and their rights vulnerable. Without constitutional protections, it's too easy for politicians to roll back our fundamental rights. We're seeing it happen in too many places — to people who need abortion care, transgender people, and many others.

We're not going to let that happen here in Minnesota. At a moment when people's freedoms are under attack at the U.S. Supreme Court and in too many state legislatures across the country, we must pass an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in Minnesota to protect our rights no matter who's in power in state

government. This new Minnesota ERA would offer everyone the strongest possible protections against discrimination based on race, color, national origin, ancestry, disability, or sex — including pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.

THE MINNESOTA ERA WOULD GUARANTEE EVERY MINNESOTAN THE SAME EXACT RIGHTS UNDER THE LAW. IT'S THAT SIMPLE.

We have the opportunity to pass one of the strongest Equal Rights Amendments in the country. Minnesota once again can be a national leader in guaranteeing equal rights and protections for everyone—without exception—and serve as a beacon of hope to people across the US whose rights and freedoms are under attack.

With your help, we can protect our rights no matter who happens to be sitting in the governor's office, the state legislature, or the courts.

SIGN THE  
PETITION TO  
SUPPORT THE  
MINNESOTA  
EQUAL RIGHTS  
AMENDMENT



## Did You Know?

The Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA) and the state Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) both help protect our rights in different ways. Here's how:

### MHRA

- + Broad anti-discrimination statute that prohibits discrimination in, among other places, education, employment, and public accommodation.
- + Includes discrimination by private parties (like businesses etc.)
- + Prohibits some forms of government discrimination in public services.
- + The MHRA has lengthy case law behind it, providing strong protections and allowing for remedies like damages.

### ERA

- + Constitutional amendments are the "biggest tool in the toolbox," and are the furthest we can go in the state to create the highest level of protections.
- + If a law violates the Minnesota Constitution, that law cannot be enforced.
- + Constitutional amendments are about how the government treats us. For example, if the Minnesota government decided they wanted to ban abortions or marriage equality, the ERA would give us the power to stop that.

## Celebrating 10 Years

THIS MAY, THE PIVOTAL WOMEN'S ECONOMIC SECURITY ACT CELEBRATES ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY.

In 2014, Gender Justice helped shape and pass this transformative piece of legislation that raised the minimum wage, required employers to accommodate pregnant and nursing workers, helped women-owned small businesses succeed, enhanced protections for victims of violence, and more.

To celebrate join us and our partners Monday, May 13 at the Minnesota Senate Building. Together we'll share in the work that led to this achievement and dig into the ways WESA still continues to expand women's economic security in Minnesota today. Watch for event updates on Gender Justice social media channels.



# THIS YEAR AT THE CAPITOL – OUR FIGHT CONTINUES

## YOU'RE CONTINUING TO MAKE PROGRESS TOWARDS GENDER EQUITY BY SUPPORTING OUR 2024 MN POLICY AGENDA

From passing the Trans Refuge Bill to ending state funding for crisis pregnancy centers and repealing Minnesota's unconstitutional and harmful abortion restrictions, Gender Justice supporters like you helped advance some of the most equitable policies in the country in 2023. At a time when people's rights nationwide are under attack, our progress to defend and expand our rights in Minnesota couldn't be more critical.

Stay up-to-date on the progress at the legislature:



But there is still more work to do. Even with our rights protected in Minnesota, many people still can't access the reproductive health care or gender affirming care that they desperately need because affordability and other obstacles stand in the way. And we need to solidify protections so that no matter who is in power in the state government, our rights can't be taken away.

At Gender Justice, we aim to shape laws from the jump — when they are written and decided. With that in mind, our goals for this year, broadly, are to fortify protections for gender and reproductive freedom, remove the roadblocks for affordable and accessible care, and promote healthy families and advance reproductive justice.

## FORTIFYING PROTECTIONS FOR GENDER AND REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM

### *Equal Rights Amendment*

The **Minnesota Equal Rights Amendment** would guarantee every Minnesotan the same exact rights under the law.

It would offer everyone the strongest possible protections against discrimination by the state based on race, color, national origin, ancestry, disability, or sex — including pregnancy outcomes, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.

**Bill Numbers:** SF 37 / HF 173

**Chief Authors:** Sen. Mary Kunesch, Rep. Kaohly Her

## REMOVE THE ROADBLOCKS TO AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE CARE

### *Mandate Insurance Coverage for Abortion*

Requires state and private health insurance plans in Minnesota to cover abortion care. Currently, abortion care is carved out of many health plans. To ensure equitable access, abortion care needs to be treated like other essential health care.

**Bill Numbers:** SF 3967 / HF 4053

**Chief Authors:** Sen. Alice Mann, Rep. Zack Stephenson

### *Funding for Abortion Clinics*

We need a sustainable abortion provider ecosystem in Minnesota to not only address the needs of Minnesotans, but also the influx of patients we have seen as a result of the national attacks on abortion access.

The majority of patients served by clinics that provide abortion care are covered by Medical Assistance/Medicaid. Medicaid reimbursements that clinics receive for appointments cover less than half of the cost of providing abortion care, making it challenging for clinics to keep their doors open. This has contributed to clinic closures, lack of access, and longer wait times. One-time funding is needed to help ensure that clinics can stay open and that Minnesotans and people traveling from out of state can continue to receive care.

**Bill Numbers:** SF 5272 / HF 5077

**Chief Authors:** Sen. Lindsey Port, Rep. Samantha Sencer-Mura



## PROMOTE HEALTHY FAMILIES AND ADVANCE REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

### *Ban on Pelvic and Breast Exams on Unconscious Patients Without Consent*

Bans medical providers from performing pelvic or breast exams on unconscious patients, a practice used in medical training, without the patient's prior consent.

**Bill Numbers:** SF 3873 / HF 78

**Chief Authors:** Sen. Erin Murphy, Rep. Kristin Robbins, Rep. Andy Smith

### *Insurance Coverage for Gender Affirming Care*

Would codify the current practice of the Minnesota Departments of Commerce and Health, which have been in place since 2015, increasing predictability for insurers, consumers, and providers. It adds a definition of Gender Affirming Care in line with medical best practices, to provide clarity and security for patients and providers, and ensure that legislators and insurers don't get between patients and their care team.

**Bill Numbers:** SF 2209 / HF 2607

**Chief Authors:** Sen. Scott Dibble, Rep. Leigh Finke

### *Uniform Parentage Act*

Updates Minnesota's parenting laws to address needs for LGBTQ+ families, specifically around recognizing both same-sex parents as birth parents on legal documentation.

**Bill Numbers:** SF 3504 / HF 3567

**Chief Authors:** Sen. Erin Maye Quade, Rep. Athena Hollins

### *Nonprofit Grant Funding to Support LGBTQ+ People Relocating*

Funding to support LGBTQ+ people and families moving to Minnesota from states with anti-LGBTQ+ laws.

**Bill Numbers:** SF 3502 / HF 3386

**Chief Authors:** Sen. Erin Maye Quade, Rep. Athena Hollins

### *Insurance Coverage for Vasectomies Over the Counter (OTC) Contraceptives*

These bills require health insurers to cover vasectomies and over the counter (OTC) contraceptives. It is essential that all forms of contraceptives be covered, regardless of type or the gender of who needs them.

**Bill Numbers (OTC Contraceptives):** SF4232 / HF 4313

**Chief Authors:** Sen. Lindsey Port, Rep. Athena Hollins

**Bill Numbers (Vasectomies):** HF 4211 / SF4089

**Chief Authors:** Sen. Alice Mann, Rep. Amanda Hemmingsen-Jaeger

### *Minnesota Building Families Act*

This bill requires all health insurance plans that provide maternity benefits to provide comprehensive coverage for fertility treatments.

The bill would help ensure more equitable access to fertility treatments across income level, relationship status, and reason for infertility.

**Bill Numbers:** SF 1704 / HF 1658

**Chief Authors:** Sen. Erin Maye Quade, Rep. Jamie Long

### *Statewide Health Education Standards*

Health education standards are the only required academic standard not set at the state level. We want to ensure that all students have access to medically accurate, comprehensive health education — including sex education, violence prevention, and education on healthy relationships.

**Bill Numbers:** SF 3746 / HF 3682

**Chief Authors:** Sen. Mary Kunesch, Rep. Carlie Kotyza-Witthuhn

# We're Bringing the Fight to North Dakota

Regardless of the state where we live, most of us just want the same thing: to have our basic needs met, to feel valued, and to be and feel safe. **Our human and civil rights should never be dictated by our ZIP code.**

And while the way we live or express ourselves may look a little different across state lines, there is a throughline connecting us all.

Gender Justice was founded in 2010 with the vision of becoming a regional organization, with an eye towards our neighboring states—North Dakota, South Dakota, and Iowa—within the Eighth Federal Circuit. The 2016 presidential election changed that. With former President Trump in office, we shifted focus to build up legal protections in Minnesota. Thanks to the support of our community, that strategy has paid off and brought us to a place where we can return back to the original intention of serving the region.

This past year, supporters like you have helped Gender Justice step up our work in North Dakota. With your help, we are bringing our model for achieving gender equity to North Dakota. Working alongside local advocates, we are plugging into existing efforts to fight for LGBTQ+ rights and reproductive freedom.



Unfortunately, right now there is a concerted effort to make North Dakota increasingly hostile to women and LGBTQ+ people. Ultra-conservative groups have been coordinating new lines of attack in their long standing campaign against reproductive rights, LGBTQ+ equity, and transgender rights in particular.

But, North Dakota—while conjuring images of being MAGA-central—is a state sincerely rooted in values of individual freedom, liberty, and self-reliance. Recently the North Dakota Supreme Court ruled that there is in fact constitutional protection for abortion as “all citizens of North Dakota have the right of enjoying and defending life and pursuing and obtaining safety.” And, when we talk with folks across the state about the onslaught of legislative attacks on LGB and trans people, we hear frustrations about why state lawmakers can’t just leave people to their business.



North Dakota can be a great place to live. And there is real promise for growing the work to solidify gender equity across the state. **Thank you for making this work possible.**



## T.D. v. WRIGLEY

**Transgender kids are like all kids — they live happier and healthier lives when they receive the health care they need.** Despite this, North Dakota legislators made it a crime for doctors to provide essential health care to transgender kids — even though that same healthcare remains legal and available to young people who aren’t transgender.

This law singles out a small group of North Dakota kids for unequal treatment under the law simply because they are transgender — denying them widely used, evidence-based, life-saving health care.

Thanks to support from people like you, Gender Justice is working to restore the rights of trans youth through litigation on behalf of three North Dakota families. The three children in this case—T.D. Dolney, age 12; James Doe, age 12; and Pamela Roe, age 15—have been forced to leave their home state and go to great lengths, travel great distances, and incur great expenses to continue accessing the care they’ve been prescribed.

This past January a North Dakota District Court heard the testimony of our clients, their doctor, and a North Dakota psychiatrist who treats transgender youth.

The families who brought this case have made clear how dramatically their lives improved when they were able to get the health care they need, and how badly they continue to be harmed every day this law remains in effect. We are hopeful the court has now heard enough to stop the government’s unfair treatment of these kids based explicitly and exclusively on their gender identity.

**LEARN MORE AND GET INVOLVED:  
[GENDERJUSTICE.US/NORTHDAKOTA](https://genderjustice.us/northdakota)**

## THE FIGHT TO PROTECT ABORTION

In July 2022, the Center for Reproductive Rights and its partners filed a lawsuit on behalf of abortion providers against North Dakota’s “trigger ban” on abortion. The following March 2023, they received a positive ruling blocking the state’s abortion ban. **However, lawmakers wasted no time in passing a new law banning all abortion with narrow exceptions in April 2023.**

In June 2023, your support made it possible for Gender Justice to join an amended complaint with the Center for Reproductive Rights and Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP against this extreme new abortion ban.

It’s clear that extreme anti-abortion politicians in the North Dakota legislature want to ban abortion across the state at all costs and are willing to disregard their own state Constitution to do so. Just six weeks prior to the ban being signed into law, the North Dakota Supreme Court recognized that the state Constitution protects the right to obtain an abortion in life-saving and health-preserving cases. Anti-abortion lawmakers were undeterred, and continue their efforts to invade our most personal decisions and disregard women’s health.

The new law’s exceptions for when healthcare practitioners can provide abortion care are not only exceedingly limited, but are vague and create legal uncertainty that has a chilling effect on healthcare across the state.

**North Dakota has been a place where people tend to their own lives, families, and businesses, and let others do the same.** These new laws targeting LGBTQ+ residents and reproductive freedom are wildly out of sync with the majority of North Dakotans who support the rights of people to live free from government-sanctioned discrimination. With your support, we’re not going to let them get away with this.

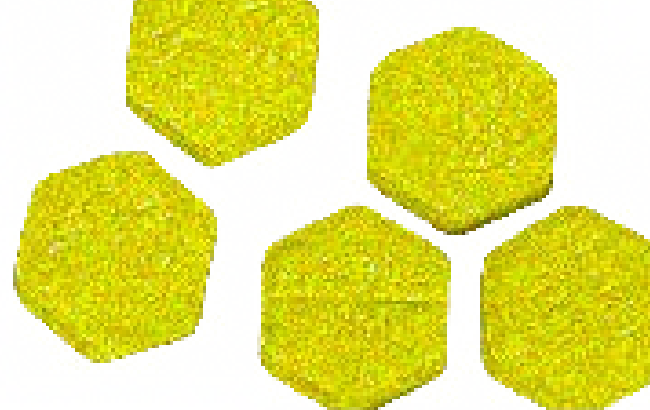
“It says ‘liberty and justice for all,’ but I don’t feel like I’m getting that justice if I’m not able to get the things that non-transgender children can get.”

T.D., plaintiff



Have you seen?!

# The UnRestrict Minnesota Guide to Getting an Abortion



**We all deserve the opportunity to live a safe, healthy, and fulfilling life — and sometimes that can include having an abortion.**

With the **UnRestrict Minnesota Guide to Getting an Abortion**, we hope to make this process a little easier and to reduce the stress so that you can focus on you and your safety, care, and comfort. This guide answers your questions about where to get an abortion in Minnesota, how to access financial and practical support, different types of abortion, and so much more!

## Medication Abortion

(aka the “Abortion Pill”) is available for pregnancies that are under 10-11 weeks from the last menstrual period. A medication abortion consists of a combination of medications (mifepristone and misoprostol) that, when taken within a day or two of each other, cause one’s body to pass a pregnancy (some describe this experience as similar to a miscarriage). People who choose medication abortion typically experience a day of heavy bleeding and cramping, which is why it is best to plan to take the second medication in a comfortable and safe environment.

## Procedural Abortion

(or in-clinic abortions) Procedural abortion is the general phrase for an in-clinic abortion procedure in which the physician is directly removing the pregnancy. There are two types of options that are based on how far along into the pregnancy you are. This type of abortion is completed in a doctor’s office and there are no incisions.

### What are my options?

The first step in determining which method(s) of abortion are available for you is to figure out how far into the pregnancy you are. A quick way to do this is to identify the first date of your last menstrual period (LMP). Knowing this will help you understand where you are within your pregnancy.

There are online calculators that can help. Reproductive health care providers are also happy and able to assist in calculating your LMP either over the phone or in person during a consultation.

Medication abortion (aka the “abortion pill”) is available for pregnancies that are under 10-11 weeks from the last menstrual period, and in-clinic abortions are available to patients within the first and second trimesters.

Those who need abortion care later in pregnancy (the later half of the second trimester and on) tend to find out new information during a prenatal visit. These patients require care at a hospital or clinic that specializes in abortions later in pregnancy. Your OB/GYN or local abortion provider will be able to assist you in connecting with these specialty providers.

**Help us spread the word about our new guide by sharing the page on social media and with your friends and family.**

By sharing this essential resource, not only could you help someone who needs access to abortion care, but you are also helping bust abortion stigma by being loud about your support for reproductive freedom.



### 2024 Reproductive Freedom Lobby Day

**“If there’s one thing that Minnesotans have made clear over the past couple of years, it’s that reproductive freedom is central to our values.”**

Gender Justice Executive Director Megan Peterson testified in the Senate Commerce Committee hearing on March 7, 2024 for the Abortion Coverage Act bill. That same day, more than 150 Minnesotans showed up loud and proud at the Capitol for reproductive freedom, LGBTQ+ equality, and bodily autonomy for all at UnRestrict Minnesota’s Reproductive Freedom Lobby Day.

**Thanks to you, we were able to send a message loud and clear to our state legislators that there is broad and strong support for reproductive rights across the state.**

Throughout the day, supporters:

- **Learned about reproductive justice** and how to have conversations with friends and family about abortion, LGBTQ+ equity, and other important issues at **impactful workshops led by our amazing partner organizations**
- **Connected with state legislators** about reproductive rights legislation that matters to them
- **Rallied with neighbors** and heard from leaders throughout the state about all of the work that is happening for abortion access
- **Attended a hearing for the Abortion Coverage Act bill** which would ensure that private insurance plans cover abortion care

**Thank you for helping to make this incredible day happen!**

## Medication Abortion at the Supreme Court

At Gender Justice and UnRestrict Minnesota, we believe everyone should have the ability to make decisions about their own reproductive lives and future, including choosing the method of abortion that works best for their circumstances.

On March 26, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments for *U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) v. Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine*, a case about the FDA’s approval of the abortion medication mifepristone.

One question at the center of this case is the legitimacy of the FDA’s 2016 approval allowing mifepristone—one of the two drugs used in the FDA-approved medication abortion regimen—to be used up to 10 weeks of pregnancy, rather than 7. Also at issue in the case is the FDA’s subsequent decision in 2020 to allow advanced practice clinicians to prescribe mifepristone, to allow mifepristone to be mailed to patients, and to allow mifepristone to be prescribed via telehealth.

Many of the Justices—including Justice Amy Coney Barrett and Justice Neil Gorsuch—expressed skepticism about the plaintiff’s standing, but no doubt this case has the potential to become the most consequential chapter for reproductive health care since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*.

### Here are some key things you should know:

- Abortion, including medication, remains legal and accessible here in Minnesota.
- Restricting mifepristone would significantly compromise abortion access across the country, including here in Minnesota where state law protects abortion rights.
- There is overwhelming evidence that medication abortion is safe and effective for virtually anyone who wants to end a pregnancy in its earliest stages.



# Opening the Doors to the People's House



Monica Meyer  
Political Director  
she/her or they/them

Hi, I'm Monica 🙋

My life's work has been to figure out how to organize enough people to ensure that their experiences, hopes, and dreams help shape policies that improve people's lives, and bring more love and justice into the world.

Like many, I didn't come from a particularly political family, but I started becoming more involved during college. At one point, the group I was involved in got the school to come out against unsafe food practices and I testified on behalf of the college before a committee at the Capitol. This was an important issue and our organization did the work to get the whole college to get on board with us. I felt prepared and excited to talk with legislators about our concerns. Instead, I was called "young lady" and told I didn't know what I was talking about. I just felt belittled and discouraged by the experience.

I left that day knowing more needed to be done to create avenues for regular people to feel present and heard at the Capitol, city hall or anywhere decisions were being made. So many of us have good ideas about how to improve our world, but there are too many barriers to having our voices heard. **Our experiences need to be taken seriously by our policymakers.**

From there I started organizing and working for economic, racial, environmental, and gender justice with so many courageous, inspiring humans. I eventually got a job at OutFront Minnesota organizing statewide for LGBTQ+ equity. We had to fight against anti-LGBTQ+ policies much of the time but we were able to stop them from becoming law because thousands of Minnesotans joined us to say, "no hate in our state" and "love will prevail." I am so fortunate to have been able to be a part of defeating a constitutional ban on marriage, enacting marriage equality, and working with LGBTQ+ youth to pass one of the country's strongest anti-bullying laws.

**I love figuring out how to get more people and more stories, opinions, dreams, and ideas infused into our policies and into our state.**

The policy work that you make possible at Gender Justice is important because it changes people's lives. But the only way it can move forward is by working together to bring people along with us while we organize and change the narrative around what a more just and equitable Minnesota can look like.

That's why, with the support of many dedicated individuals like yourself, we recently launched Gender Justice Action, Gender Justice's 501(c)4 advocacy and political sister organization. With your support of Gender Justice Action, we can add electoral advocacy campaigning to our toolbox — making it possible to have more direct conversations with our communities about what's at stake at the Capitol.

**Together, we've elected leaders who are doing really great work on behalf of Minnesotans.**

That work is bolstered by all the Minnesotans who are excited by the progress we're making. We're seeing a positive snowball as people are energized with ideas on how to move forward at the Capitol, school board, city council, you name it.

Thanks to you, Gender Justice Action is harnessing the energy of Minnesotans, including fierce advocates for LGBTQ+ people, for healthy families, and for reproductive freedom. Together, we're getting people out to vote, helping get critical bills across the finish line, and cultivating new champions for gender equity.

We see on the national level what the Christian Nationalists are coming for. *Roe* was just the beginning. It is no secret that birth control, gender-affirming care, IVF, marriage equality, and even interracial marriage are all on deck. That's why we need to put everything on the table to fight back.

If you're organizing for LGBTQ+ equality, you are also fighting for reproductive freedom, and vice versa. The folks working to squash your rights are working to squash all of our rights. They aren't siloed and we shouldn't be either.

**I'm so excited to get to the place where we aren't just fighting back, but where we can dream big.** Where we can achieve our wish list of ideas and policies that improve and enrich our real, daily lives.

We know Minnesotans stand on the side of gender equity. We know that when we come together, we are a big, mighty force for justice. The only way to make lasting progress is by showing up for the long haul, together.

*Monica Meyer has been leading organizing, activism, fundraising and policy advocacy on behalf of issues of equity and justice since 1992. Before Gender Justice, Monica worked for LGBTQ+ liberation as the Executive Director of OutFront Minnesota. During Monica's twenty years at OutFront Minnesota, she loved getting to work with thousands of justice-loving people fighting to make Minnesota more loving and equitable.*

*Under Monica's leadership, OutFront Minnesota secured key victories advancing LGBTQ+ equity, including helping to form and lead Minnesotans United for All Families, the campaign to defeat a constitutional amendment banning same-sex couples from the right to marry and secure marriage equality through the Minnesota legislature. Monica also oversaw OutFront Minnesota's successful efforts to pass one of the country's strongest anti-bullying laws, a policy to secure trans inclusion in sports, and elect pro-equality candidates up and down the ballot.*

*Some of Monica's recognition includes the Humphrey Institute's Public Leadership Award, the Lynx's Inspiring Women Award, HRC's Brian Coyle Award, the Charlotte Striebel Award from MN NOW, and the MN School Social Work Association's Friend of Social Work Award.*

## I INVESTED EARLY.

As a lifelong social justice activist, I've been through a lot of ups and downs in our fight to make our world more just and inclusive. Seeing the demise of *Roe* in 2022 was a new low.

That's why, as I learned about Gender Justice Action's plan to elect Minnesota's first-ever pro-reproductive freedom majority in 2022, I didn't hesitate to lend my support.

**I made a gift to help Gender Justice Action, the new political and advocacy arm of Gender**

**Justice, get off the ground. In just a few short years that investment is already paying off as our plan to elect a pro-reproductive freedom majority worked, and we've passed legislation making Minnesota the standard bearer for enacting equitable policies.**

With so much at stake on a national level, we need to keep this momentum going here in Minnesota. Please join me in supporting Gender Justice Action so that we can keep making Minnesota a national leader for gender equity.

- **Barbra Wiener**, Gender Justice Action Donor

## SUPPORT MONICA'S WORK WITH GENDER JUSTICE ACTION

Your gift today will help **Gender Justice Action** advance the boldest gender equity agenda in Minnesota history.

**GENDER JUSTICE ACTION**

*Gender Justice Action is the political and advocacy arm of Gender Justice.*





# Crisis Pregnancy Centers: A Threat to Reproductive Freedom and Pregnant People Across the US

We were proud to be at the premiere of the documentary *Preconceived*, which tells the stories of some of the thousands of people who have been deceived by the coercive anti-abortion propaganda mills known as crisis pregnancy centers.

There's more to know about CPCs than can be conveyed in any one film, so here are some additional facts and resources — and if you're interested in taking action, we hope you'll sign up to learn more, host a *Preconceived* screening, or advocate in other ways for real, full-spectrum reproductive health care.

## FACTS ABOUT CPCs

- Crisis pregnancy centers are anti-abortion organizations that use misinformation, deception, and coercion to try to prevent people from getting abortion care.
- CPCs make false claims about abortion — frightening the people who come to them for support with false claims about high complication rates and links between abortion and breast cancer, infertility, mental illness, and preterm birth.
- CPCs promote the debunked practice of “abortion pill reversal” — an untested medical procedure that the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists called “unethical” and “not based in science.”
- CPCs disproportionately target low-income people and pregnant people of color.
- CPCs engage in unregulated surveillance of their patients — amassing vast amounts of sensitive medical and personal data that could be used to prosecute abortion patients in states with criminal bans on abortion care.

*Here in Minnesota, Gender Justice conducted a study with the Alliance: State Advocates For Women's Rights & Gender Equality that found:*

- CPCs outnumber abortion clinics in Minnesota 11 to 1.
- Minnesota CPCs make false claims about abortion at twice the rate of other states.
- Most CPCs in Minnesota do not provide any medical services at all. Only 9% claim to have a physician and only 20% indicate they have a registered nurse on staff.

**The list goes on.**

## WHAT CAN BE DONE TO STOP CPCs

- Educate yourself. Start with **Designed to Deceive**, our report on Minnesota CPCs with the Alliance: State Advocates For Women's Rights & Gender Equality.
- Encourage your elected representatives to take action against anti-abortion CPCs — ensuring government funding goes only to legitimate full-spectrum reproductive health care organizations, holding CPCs accountable for their deceptive practices through consumer protection laws, and ending state-sanctioned CPC referrals.
- Spread the word about the threat that CPCs represent via social media and in-person conversations with your friends, family, and community.

## HOST A SCREENING, LEARN MORE, AND TAKE ACTION

Sign up for action alerts from Gender Justice, and check the QR code on this page if you're interested in getting a conversation started about CPCs by hosting a screening of *Preconceived* — we'll help you get started!



We're hitting the road this summer and coming to a pride event near you! LGB and Trans liberation are cornerstones of Gender Justice, and so we've made the audacious decision to table at every Pride event across the state.

**Whether you drop by our booth and say hi or join us on the other side of the table as a volunteer, we can't wait to talk with you about the latest work and resources to protect and expand our human and civil rights.**

Interested in volunteering at Gender Justice's booth at your local Pride festival? Let us know! Contact Gender Justice Organizer Jay at [jay.belsito@genderjustice.us](mailto:jay.belsito@genderjustice.us).

## Happening Monthly: Trans Equity Trainings

You're invited to join us for our monthly Trans Equity Trainings, where participants...

- ...learn how best to talk about issues affecting people who are transgender.
- ...find ways to take action to combat the rising tide of violence against trans people.
- ...meet others who are passionate about the fight for trans equity and empowerment.

**With these conversations, we are raising awareness about what it's like to be a transgender person here in Minnesota and across the U.S.** We'll share resources and connect the dots between issues affecting people who are transgender and other gender-related issues that have traditionally been siloed from each other.

Here are just a few things attendees have said about the trainings:

- "I didn't know the breadth of current attacks on trans people. I know some that make the news but there are a lot"*
- "Great review of the language and landscape"*
- "I really liked the maps and data, found it all very fascinating"*

**These virtual conversations take place the third Thursday of each month over Zoom and are open to all genders and all allies from across the country. Watch our Gender Justice social media channels and e-newsletters for upcoming dates and to RSVP.**

## REQUEST A TRAINING

Are you interested in bringing this conversation to your network, or looking to dive deeper around a particular issue (such as trans athletes, legal efforts, or something else)?

Jay would love to talk more about what your goals are over tea, coffee, or Zoom!

Contact: [jay.belsito@genderjustice.us](mailto:jay.belsito@genderjustice.us)

**We all have a part to play in this work, so sign up to join, and we'll see you there!**







# THANKS TO ALL WHO ATTENDED THE INAUGURAL GENDER JUSTICE BRUNCH THIS PAST OCTOBER!

Gender Justice staff and board members would like to extend a deep gratitude to all guests and to our generous sponsors, including Ciresi Conlin LLP and Wanta Thome PLC, without whom our inaugural brunch would not have been possible.

Brunch guests enjoyed scrumptious appetizers from Chowgirls Catering, signature Gender Justice Spritz cocktails, music from DJ Tricky Miki, and drag performances by Sasha Cassadine and Dick von Dyke — all in the sunny space at Glass House.

Of course brunch was accompanied by a sparkling conversation on the intersection of gender identity, race, and the law. Gender Justice Legal Director Jess Braverman and Melissa Murray, legal analyst for MSNBC, the Frederick I. and Grace Stokes Professor of Law at New York University, and co-host of the popular podcast “Strict Scrutiny,” managed to bring down the house while shedding light on some of the most pressing issues we face today.

**Thanks to all who attended—and to our many generous sponsors and supporters—we hope you’ll save the date and join us for the next one on December 8!**



We are excited to continue this tradition of lively, rich, informative, and inspiring brunch conversations in 2024:

# Save the Date

Sunday, December 8 | The Depot Minneapolis

CLE (Continuing Legal Education) credit is available. Visit [genderjustice.us/brunch](https://genderjustice.us/brunch) for more!

## Support Gender Equity

### BECOME A GENDER JUSTICE SPONSOR

Gender Justice sponsors represent a bold community dedicated to the envelope-pushing work needed to truly achieve gender justice. **Your commitment fuels the fight to expand and protect our human and civil rights** in Minnesota and North Dakota, positively impacting the lives of our communities now and for generations to come.

#### Sponsor the Gender Justice Brunch

Join Gender Justice for a brunch celebration with an exciting guest, performers, and more! The event draws a unique mix of lawyers, activists, elected officials, community leaders, influencers, students, and others committed to gender equity. CLE (Continuing Legal Education) credit is available.

The 2023 Gender Justice Brunch sold out within a week of launching ticket sales, so be sure to reserve your sponsorship now!

#### Sponsor Gender Justice Event Outreach

Throughout the year, you can find Gender Justice staff tabling at over 30 community gatherings and Pride events throughout Minnesota and North Dakota.

Support our outreach efforts by becoming an Event Outreach sponsor! Your sponsorship will allow Gender Justice to attend additional events, educate more people about gender equity, and share resources—like our trans rights toolkit—more broadly! Plus, this is a great way for your brand to reach thousands more people each year!

#### Advertise on the Gender Justice Brief Podcast

The Gender Justice Brief podcast features the latest legal analysis, legislative developments, and more about the issues that matter most. Hosted by Gender Justice staff, the Gender Justice Brief provides insights and analysis on how to dismantle barriers to gender equity and expand protections so that all people can thrive regardless of their gender, gender expression, and sexual orientation. We regularly bring on special guests and experts to provide unique perspectives and insights.

Bring your message to our listeners by advertising, sponsoring an episode, or supporting an entire season of the show!

#### Custom & Bundled Sponsorships

Have an idea for other ways your business can support Gender Justice? Interested in sponsoring us multiple ways throughout the year? Contact us and we will work with you to design a package that works best for your needs.

Through social media (**40,000+** followers), email lists (**16,000** reached), text messages, events, outreach, and other touchpoints, Gender Justice reaches over **100,000** people every year!

#### Support Gender Equity with Employee Giving

Advance gender equity by encouraging your employees to donate to Gender Justice. One-time or recurring donations can be made online or through your workplace giving program. Gender Justice’s EIN is 80-0603630.

**FOR QUESTIONS OR TO BECOME A SPONSOR, CONTACT:**

**Bethany Whitehead**, Senior Manager of Institutional Giving | [bethany.whitehead@genderjustice.us](mailto:bethany.whitehead@genderjustice.us) | 651.789.2090



# This is who we are. This is what we do.

*A joint letter from Summra Shariff, Gender Justice outgoing Board Chair, and Ann Tobin, Gender Justice incoming Board Chair.*

In this moment of transition between us, as the outgoing and incoming chairs of the Gender Justice Board of Directors, let's reflect on a moment of profound transition for this organization.

Looking back, so much has changed so quickly. Like most people who are not on the front lines of abortion rights work, we assumed *Roe v. Wade* was the settled law of the land. Luckily, we benefited from Gender Justice Executive Director Megan Peterson, and her team's leadership when they sounded the alarm bells early when it was clear that the right wing was methodically dismantling core rights.

**But the Gender Justice team wasn't just ringing alarm bells. They had been planning for this moment for years.**

We developed a multi-pronged campaign of litigation, legislative advocacy, field organizing, and strategic communications aimed at ridding the state of Minnesota of its restrictions on abortion rights and reproductive freedom - and **propelling Minnesota into the vanguard of states offering hope and sanctuary to those whose rights and freedoms would come under relentless attack after the fall of Roe.**

Being a part of this organization as it swung into action and made good on its plans and the extensive groundwork it had laid was nothing short of breathtaking. From the forward-thinking litigation strategy that got most of Minnesota's anti-abortion laws scrapped as unconstitutional to the legislative advocacy that led to the outright repeal of five decades' worth of law chipping away at reproductive freedom, Gender Justice not only met the moment, but vastly exceeded it.

All the while, the organization was launching equally innovative initiatives and racking up additional victories

across the range of issues it confronts—defending the rights of transgender athletes, of breastfeeding mothers suffering discrimination in the workplace, of people denied emergency contraception because of pharmacists' personal beliefs, and more—and expanding its geographic footprint with a new office in North Dakota and a new lawsuit challenging that state's ban on essential health care for transgender and nonbinary youth.

All of this is central and true to the vision, the mission, the character, and the heart and soul of Gender Justice. **We recognize the inherent interconnection of all struggles toward gender equity and liberation, in all places.** We do not rest on our past accomplishments, as impressive and important as those accomplishments are. We look to the future, to the battles we know remain ahead, and we plan and prepare as thoroughly as we can to take them on. In the face of dire circumstances, we overdeliver.

This is who we are. This is what we do. And as Gender Justice continues to advance its sweeping vision for the future of gender equity and reproductive freedom in the United States, we will always be proud to offer our leadership, our support, and above all else, our gratitude.

**Summra Shariff**  
Outgoing Board Chair

**Ann Tobin**  
Board Chair



## Follow us on LinkedIn

Progress takes all of us. Join our network of changemakers on LinkedIn and let's connect around the work of pushing the law forward.



## THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR INCREDIBLE DONORS AND SPONSORS!

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**And 2,812 more organizations, businesses, and individuals, like you!**



# Fresh Faces WELCOMING NEW STAFF

## BETHANY WHITEHEAD, *Senior Manager of Institutional Giving*

Bethany Whitehead has had a varied career in nonprofits over the past two decades, serving as the Executive Director of Banfill-Locke Center for the Arts, as Membership Director at the Walker Art Center, as the Board President for FilmNorth, Program & Communications Director at the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, and as the General Manager of Open Book in Minneapolis, among other adventures. She currently serves on the board of the Minnesota Prison Writing Workshop and volunteers with the Women's Prison Book Project.

## LARK LEWIS, *Legal Assistant/Paralegal*

Lark Lewis is a Legal Assistant/Paralegal at Gender Justice. She earned her undergraduate degree from Kenyon College, where she majored in music as a flutist and pianist and minored in environmental biology. Lark went on to obtain a law degree from Hamline University School of Law, where she graduated magna cum laude, was nominated for Best First Year Brief, and was both a mock trial finalist and Presidential Scholarship recipient.

## GABBI PIERCE, *Communications Manager*

Gabbi Pierce brings an extensive background of movement, non-profit, and community based work to her role as Communications Manager for Gender Justice. As a queer trans woman, she strives toward uplifting gender oppressed voices and struggles, and believes firmly that collective action has the power to motivate substantial change. In 2022, she served as the first trans member of the Minnesota AFL-CIO General Board where she fought for and represented trans and queer workers in the state. Prior to her work on trans labor issues, Gabbi was part of the national staff team of Sunrise Movement, where she ran internal communications for the movement's thousands of grassroots climate organizers.

## ATZÍN RAYAS FERNÁNDEZ, *Operations Manager*

Atzín brings a wide background, including childcare, teaching art, youth STEM programs, food service, business management, and mutual aid organizing. They studied studio art and psychology at Kalamazoo College and are currently in school for a master's in advocacy & political leadership. Their recent years of work in internal operations management, finance, and HR led them to work with Gender Justice as the operations manager.

## NOAH PARRISH, *Communications Director*

Noah Parrish joined Gender Justice in April 2024 as Communications Director, bringing 15 years of experience in strategic communications, policy, and electoral organizing. Previously, Noah worked as a communications consultant, working with nonprofits to gain headlines and use ethical storytelling to inspire action. He has held communications leadership roles at McKnight Foundation, Public Citizen, American Bridge PAC, and the Michigan League of Conservation Voters. Across these positions, Noah utilized creative and innovative media and digital strategies to shape narratives, influence policy, and win campaigns.

## PATRICK JONES, *Director of Finance and Administration*

Patrick brings over ten years of nonprofit operations and finance experience to Gender Justice, primarily in the public health and healthcare fields. Prior to that he had a long career in IT, including working for Apple as a Genius. He studied at the University of California and Augsburg University and has a BA in Management Information Systems and Business Administration.

A California native, Patrick has lived in the Twin Cities for most of his life. He currently lives in the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood of St. Paul with his spouse Natalie and two cats. He also has three grown children who live in the Twin Cities.

## LISA GULYA, *Research and Advocacy Specialist*

Lisa Gulya joins Gender Justice through the American Council of Learned Societies Leading Edge Fellowship to apply her skills as a social scientist to advancing gender equity, reproductive justice, and LGBTQ youth well-being. Lisa previously taught sociology and public affairs at Macalester College and the University of Minnesota, including courses on childhood, sexuality, and qualitative research methods.

In addition to teaching, her experience includes applied research with the Minnesota Justice Research Center and the American Academy of Neurology. Lisa has a PhD in sociology from the University of Minnesota and a bachelor's degree in English and Russian with a concentration in women's studies from St. Olaf College.



## Staff

MEGAN PETERSON, Executive Director, she/hers  
 TANA HARGEST, Deputy Director, she/hers  
 ERIN MAYE QUADE, Special Projects Advisor, she/hers  
 JESS BRAVERMAN, Legal Director, all pronouns  
 CHRISTY HALL, Senior Staff Attorney, she/hers  
 BRITTANY STEWART, Senior Staff Attorney, she/hers  
 SARA JANE BALDWIN, Senior Staff Attorney, she/hers  
 GRACE MOORE, Saeks Public Interest Legal Fellow, she/hers  
 LARK LEWIS, Legal Assistant / Paralegal, she/hers  
 CHRISTINA SAMBOR, North Dakota State Director, she/hers  
 MONICA MEYER, Political Director, she/hers and they/theirs  
 GRACE REARDON, Advocacy & Engagement Manager, she/hers  
 JAY BELSITO, Organizer, they/theirs  
 LISA GULYA, Research and Advocacy Specialist, they/theirs and she/hers  
 MICHELLE HESTERBERG, Development Director, she/hers  
 BETHANY WHITEHEAD, Senior Manager of Institutional Giving, she/hers  
 NOAH PARRISH, Communications Director, he/his  
 GABBI PIERCE, Communications Manager, she/hers  
 STACEY BURNS, Information Specialist, she/hers  
 REIKA YOKOOKA LUCENTE, Development Coordinator, she/hers  
 PAÓLA LOPEZ-CORTÉS, Executive Assistant, she/hers  
 PATRICK JONES, Director of Finance & Administration, he/his  
 HEIDI NYBROTEN, Senior Manager of Operations, they/theirs or she/hers  
 ATZÍN RAYAS FERNÁNDEZ, Operations Manager, they/theirs/elle

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# BRIEF



The Gender Justice  
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