



Feminists for Life of NY is once again working on a campaign to protect the rights of unborn victims of crimes. The New York State legislature is again this year proposing legislation that will hold accountable those who perpetrate crimes against a waiting-to-be-born child. Current State law holds that a person has to be "born and alive" to be considered a victim of assault or homicide.

This legislation is completely within our FFL's pro-woman, pro-life philosophy. This legislation would protect not just unborn children, but the pregnant mothers who are attacked, often in the a attempts to harm her child(ren). The "born and alive" rule is outdated and ineffective and it hinders prosecutors from protecting the public.

The legislation, as written excludes any acts committed by the mother of the unborn child, any medical procedure (including abortion) to which the mother (or her legal guardian) has consented performed by a licensed medical professional, or the dispensing of prescribed medication. Any organization truly concerned with the rights of women would support this action. Yet many extreme women's groups have spoken in opposition of protecting the most vulnerable and endangered members of society: pregnant women and children.

Join us in letting your state legislators know you want women AND their children protected.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- Write and call your state assemblymembers and senators and ask them to vote in support of S.403 / A.693. Ask them to please tell you how they intend on voting. See our website for a letter to legislators which you can print out and mail or use as a model to craft your own letter.
• Join us for our Second Annual Lobby Day in Albany on Tuesday, April 1. We plan to storm the state capitol with the message "It's no joke, real feminists are pro-women and pro-child".
• Contact someone from the organization and let us know if you can join us on April 1. We can even try to organize a ride with other members from your area.

www.fflny.org

STARTLING STATISTICS...

In a NYC study from 1987-1991, 63% of traumatic maternal deaths were ruled homicides, and 12% car accidents, and from that same study: infant death resulted 64% of the time and maternal death 3.2%.

Only 11% of all fetal deaths result in maternal deaths!

According to a study done by the MD Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene, homicide is the leading cause of death of pregnant women (20%) v. 6% for non-preg women.

A Cook Co. IL study showed 46.5% of maternal deaths to be caused by trauma; 57% of those ruled as homicide by far the highest "method" was gunshot wounds (23%) followed by stabbings (14%) and strangulation (14%).

In the stab and GSW categories resulting in 70% of fetal injuries, only 28% of mothers had extra uterine injuries! meaning the women were stabbed or shot specifically in the abdomen in 72% of the cases!

Also, for stabbings and GSW to pregnant women's abdomens 3.9% resulted in maternal fatality and between 40-70% of fetal mortality. The difference can be accounted for in how the MEs fill out death cert. (most often fetal death is noted as "result of maternal injuries", rather than GSW etc).

The Pregnancy Factor...

"My work training churches to respond to domestic violence took me to many NYS agencies during October 2002. Without exception, every staff person said that pregnant women are at great risk of abuse from Heather Campbell in Ithaca, Dr. Sheila Briody at the St. Joseph's Neighborhood Center, Dr. Susan Horowitz from the University of Rochester, Sara Conley from Catholic Charities in Watkins Glen and Betsy MacKinnon who was acting coordinator of Rochester's Alternatives for Battered Women."

- Suzanne Schnittman, Coordinator, Pastoral Response To Domestic Violence Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester

Recent Cases of Unborn Victims in NY State

2002 Wayne County –
Edward Thayer was charged with a misdemeanor when he punched, kicked and stomped on the abdomen of his pregnant wife. He received a 3 month sentence.

2002 Rochester –
Zaneta Browne, 6 mos. pregnant with twins, shot and killed, allegedly by the father because he wanted to "get rid of them", and his wife. The case goes to trial Jan. 2003.

2002 New York City –
Lourdes Gonzales, 24 yr.-old and pregnant, was raped and stabbed nine times resulting in her death.

2001 Brooklyn –
Off-duty NYPD cop, DWI, killed 24-yr.-old woman who was 8 1/2 mos. pregnant, her unborn son, her 4 yr.-old son, and 16 yr.-old sister.

2001 Genesee County –
24 yr.-old farm worker tried to induce an abortion of a 19 yr.-old pregnant woman's child by lacing her soda with a veterinary drug used for that purpose in animals.

2000 Geneva –
41 yr.-old Michael Jacobs, broke order of protection and visited his ex-girlfriend's home. After arguing with her pregnant 19-yr.-old daughter, he stomped on her head, rendering her comatose. Injured baby was delivered by C-section.

2000 Bronx –
Doctor attacked his pregnant girlfriend, Joy Schepis, with a syringe filled with an abortion-causing drug. She and her child both survived. He can only be charged with misdemeanors.

2000 – Former Binghamton resident, Nikolay Soltys, killed seven family members including his wife who was 3 mos. pregnant.

1995 Westchester –
Pregnant woman bludgeoned to death 8 days before her due date.

1994 Capital District –
21-yr.-old Mary Anne Powell strangled by her husband when 6 mos. pregnant; her body was found 19 months later in duffel bag in the Hudson River.

1993 Troy –
Pregnant 15-yr.-old Antoinette Strobe was killed and dismembered with a hacksaw by her 25-yr.-old boyfriend because she had threatened to expose him as the father of the child. He wanted to avoid statutory rape charges.


Abuse Patterns And The Law

Abusers hurt the possessions their victims value most, but for which they receive minimum penalties. This means breaking precious objects, killing pets, striking victims in private places, and most devastatingly, assaulting the human life in pregnant women. While they might receive a slight punishment for the first three, as it stands now, in New York, they receive no punishment for harming or even killing the waiting to be born child.

From The Frontlines...

"Thank you for the items for this shelter. One woman who came to the shelter was beaten so badly by her abuser that she was unrecognizable at the emergency room. She was six months pregnant at the time, and her abuser kicked her in the stomach several times, screaming that he did not want the baby. Her abuser broke her jaw, punctured her eardrums and broke her ribs. The eldest daughter then hid a three year old because the abuser was coming after him next."

This note was penned by a worker at a "safe house" to Ramona Ross Palmer, Director of the Victims Resource Center in Wayne County. *Newark Courier Gazette*, 01/01/02.



Justice for All?
Did you know that in New York State it is a felony to commit aggravated assault on a pet – but not against an unborn child?
"Animal cruelty is often linked to domestic violence or can escalate into those problems".
Craig Fox, *Auburn Citizen*, 5/17/02

Inconsistent Thinking...

"The Unborn Victims of Violence Act confronts abortion-rights supporters with uncomfortable questions. Why isn't a child in utero a person? State law allows parents of a child who dies before birth to donate that baby's organs; doesn't that mean the unborn child is in fact a person?"

"The state's Child Health Plus program, which provides insurance for low-income families, defines pregnant women as a family of two – the second insured party being the unborn baby.

"The law does recognize – at some point – that life is present in the womb, so why not for criminal purposes?"

(Rochester Democrat & Chronicle, June 3, 02)