



History of NARAL Pro-Choice America

- 1969 The National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws (NARAL) is founded.
- 1973 On January 22, 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court hands down the landmark *Roe v. Wade* decision recognizing that the constitutional right to privacy encompasses a woman's right to choose abortion.
- NARAL changes its name to the National Abortion Rights Action League.
- 1975 Two years after the landmark *Roe* decision, Massachusetts obstetrician and gynecologist Ken Edelin is imprisoned for performing an abortion.
- NARAL moves its offices to Washington, D.C., placing more emphasis on federal lobbying and policy.
- 1976 Efforts by NARAL and other pro-choice organizations generate more pro-choice mail to Congress than ever before to oppose the Hyde amendment. The amendment passes and becomes law in 1977, banning federal Medicaid funding for abortion care for low-income women.
- 1977 Rosie Jimenez dies in McAllen, Texas, from complications of a cheap and unsafe abortion. Jimenez was covered by Medicaid, but she was denied a safe abortion as a result of the federal Hyde amendment.
- 1979 NARAL effectively continues its fight against resolutions in state legislatures calling for Congress to convene a Constitutional Convention to outlaw abortion.
- 1981 On his third day in office, President Reagan meets with anti-choice leaders to demonstrate his support for passage of a constitutional amendment banning abortion.
- 1985 NARAL launches the "Abortion Rights: Silent No More" campaign, using the slogan "We are Your Mothers, Your Daughters, Your Sisters, Your Friends, and Abortion is a Choice We Have Made."
- 1987 NARAL and other pro-choice organizations are instrumental in defeating the nomination of anti-choice nominee Robert Bork to the U.S. Supreme Court.
- 1989 In response to the Supreme Court's announcement that it will hear *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, a case threatening the protections of *Roe*, NARAL co-sponsors one of the largest pro-choice demonstrations ever held in the nation. An estimated 500,000 pro-choice Americans march on Washington, D.C.

NARAL develops its “Who Decides?” message in response to the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, which rendered the right to choose the most vulnerable it has been since 1973.

NARAL works with pro-choice legislators to introduce the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) to codify *Roe v. Wade* into federal law.

- 1991 While fighting the nomination of anti-choice Judge Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court, NARAL President Kate Michelman testifies before the U.S. Senate, publicly revealing her personal story for the first time. In 1969, after being abandoned by her husband as a young mother of three, Kate was required by Pennsylvania law to appear before an all-male hospital panel for approval to have an abortion. After intense personal questioning about her life, the panel granted Kate permission. Yet before she could have the abortion, she was forced to further seek the consent of her husband who had abandoned her family.

The NARAL Foundation sponsors *The Politics of Abortion and the Impact on Scientific Research*, a symposium to educate policy makers about the critical link between unfettered scientific research and public health.

- 1992 In *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey* the U.S. Supreme Court scales back the constitutional protections provided by *Roe v. Wade*. In response, NARAL holds Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) hearings across the country and steps up its lobbying campaign to pass FOCA.

NARAL convenes the National Commission on America Without *Roe*, where national experts discuss and catalog the ramifications of losing the right to choose and recommend policies to save this important liberty.

NARAL is instrumental in mobilizing thousands of pro-choice Americans, which helps elect then-Gov. Bill Clinton, the first fully pro-choice President.

- 1993 After intense lobbying by NARAL and other women’s groups, Congress passes and President Clinton signs into law the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Two days after taking the oath of office, on the 20th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, President Clinton issues executive orders overturning five discriminatory anti-choice policies.

An anti-choice protest turns lethal with the first murder of a doctor who performs abortions in Pensacola, Florida. By the end of 1998, six others, including doctors, clinic staff and a security guard, will be murdered.

To more accurately reflect the organization’s comprehensive approach to reproductive health policy, NARAL changes its name to the National Abortion and Reproductive

Rights Action League. NARAL also launches the “Real Choices” campaign to highlight the goals of its expanded mission: to preserve access to abortion while working to enact policies to make abortion less necessary.

- 1994 NARAL and other pro-choice organizations work toward the passage and celebrate the enactment of the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act (FACE).

For the first time since *Roe*, the result of the midterm elections gives anti-choice lawmakers control of both houses of the U.S. Congress. Observers say complacency among pro-choice voters, generated by a false sense of security with a pro-choice president, is a major factor for this outcome.

- 1995 The newly elected anti-choice majority in Congress mounts the most intense assault on the right to choose since *Roe*, overturning many of Clinton’s executive orders. State lawmakers mirror the attack.

NARAL representatives participate in the United Nations 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing.

- 1996 NARAL President Kate Michelman addresses delegates to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

An FDA Advisory Committee recommends approval of the medical abortion drug mifepristone, known as RU 486. NARAL Legal Director Marcy Wilder testifies in support.

- 1997 NARAL works with pro-choice legislators to introduce two important pieces of pro-choice legislation: Equity in Prescription Insurance and Contraceptive Coverage and the Family Planning and Choice Protection Act.

NARAL President Kate Michelman testifies before a joint House-Senate Committee on the dangers of legislation outlawing abortion procedures.

The NARAL Foundation hosts a congressional briefing, *American’s Health Held Hostage: How Politics is Paralyzing Medical Advances*.

- 1998 The first fatal bombing of a women’s health clinic leaves an off-duty police officer dead and a clinic nurse severely wounded.

NARAL and other pro-choice organizations successfully work toward passage of equity in contraceptive coverage for federal employees and their families.

Congressional opponents of choice force the 102nd vote on reproductive rights issues since gaining control of Congress in 1995. Pro-choice lawmakers win only 15 of the 102 votes.

NARAL and NARAL-PAC work to elect pro-choice candidates to office throughout the country, winning 97 of 114 races.

- 1999 After receiving its largest single grant in its history, the NARAL Foundation launches *Choice for America*, a multi-year marketing and mobilization campaign to reinforce the core principles and values underlying the pro-choice position.
- 2003 NARAL changes its name to NARAL Pro-Choice America, and launches the largest grassroots mobilization initiative in our history.
- 2004 NARAL Pro-Choice America cosponsors and helps organize the March for Women's Lives. With more than a million participants, the March is the largest demonstration of any kind in American history.

NARAL Pro-Choice America President Kate Michelman, who had served in the position for nearly two decades, retires.

NARAL Pro-Choice America mobilizes thousands of volunteers, makes nearly 12 million direct contacts with targeted voters, and airs compelling advertisements in five key states. We help John Kerry to narrow victories in the states where we work the hardest - New Hampshire, Oregon, Washington and Wisconsin.

NARAL Pro-Choice America announces Nancy Keenan, a Montana native who served as an elected pro-choice public official for nearly two decades, as its new president.

- 2005 To emphasize the fundamental American values of freedom and personal responsibility, NARAL Pro-Choice America issues its prevention challenge to President Bush and other anti-choice leaders.

NARAL Pro-Choice America President Nancy Keenan embarks on the "Heartland Tour," traveling to states like Texas, Minnesota, Oregon, and Washington to meet with affiliates, community leaders, stakeholders, and policy-makers to discuss proactive, pro-choice policies and messages.

NARAL Pro-Choice America launches the Choose Justice campaign to alert Americans to the threat posed to *Roe v. Wade* by a change in the composition in the federal judiciary, most notably two vacancies on the Supreme Court. The campaign attracts thousands of new member activists and engages a new generation in the fight to protect *Roe v. Wade*.