



DAILY WOMEN'S HEALTH POLICY REPORT

ELECTION 2008 | NARAL Pro-Choice America Endorses Sen. Obama; EMILY's List Criticizes Endorsement
[May 15, 2008]

NARAL Pro-Choice America's political action committee on Wednesday endorsed Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.) for president, a move that drew criticism from **EMILY's List**, which supports Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.), the **AP/Minneapolis Star-Tribune** reports (Fouhy, *AP/Minneapolis Star-Tribune*, 5/14). According to the **Washington Post**, the endorsement also "sparked an outcry" on NARAL Pro-Choice America's **blog** (Slevin, *Washington Post*, 5/15).

Nancy Keenan, the group's president, in a statement said that she believes Obama will secure the Democratic nomination. Obama "steadfastly supports and defends a woman's right to make the most personal, private decisions regarding her reproductive health without interference from government or politicians," Keenan said. She also praised Obama for working to "unite Americans on both sides of this debate behind common sense, common-ground ways to prevent unintended pregnancy," including supporting legislation that would increase access to family planning services, provide teenagers with comprehensive sex education and prevent pharmacies from denying women "access to their legal birth control prescriptions" (NARAL Pro-Choice America **release**, 5/14).

Ellen Malcolm -- president of EMILY's List, a group that supports female candidates who support abortion rights -- criticized the endorsement (McCormick/Pearson, **Chicago Tribune**, 5/14). "I think it is tremendously disrespectful to Sen. Clinton -- who held up the nomination of a **FDA** commissioner in order to force **approval** of Plan B and who spoke so eloquently during the Supreme Court nomination about the importance of protecting *Roe v. Wade* -- to not give her the courtesy to finish the final three weeks of the primary process," Malcolm said. She added, "It certainly must be disconcerting for elected leaders who stand up for reproductive rights and expect the choice community will stand with them" (EMILY's List **release**, 5/14). Howard Wolfson, Clinton's communications director, said he was surprised by the endorsement, adding that Clinton's "leadership and advocacy on choice issues is second to none" (*AP/Minneapolis Star-Tribune*, 5/14).

Keenan praised Clinton's record of supporting abortion rights, saying, "Americans have been fortunate to have two fully pro-choice candidates in the race for the Democratic nomination" (NARAL Pro-Choice America **release**, 5/14). She added that Obama's views on abortion rights and the selection of judicial nominees "will be a major reason many voters, especially pro-choice independent and Republican women, will cross party lines" and vote for Obama rather than the Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) (Talev, **Miami Herald**, 5/15). According to the *AP/Star-Tribune*, NARAL Pro-Choice America's PAC board previously was evenly divided on whether to support Clinton or Obama but ultimately decided unanimously to endorse Obama (*AP/Minneapolis Star-Tribune*, 5/14).

NBC's "**Nightly News**," on Wednesday interviewed Clinton. In response to NARAL Pro-Choice America's endorsement of Obama, Clinton said, "Well, obviously, I am disappointed because of the work that I've done for so many years. I'm proud to have the support of, you know, many other groups that share my views and my commitments to issues." She added, "But we're going forward, and we're going to see where this process finally resolves. And we'll have a nominee, and then we'll all be united" (Williams, "Nightly News," NBC, 5/14).

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