



DULUTHINK

NEWSLETTER OF THE LAKE SUPERIOR FREETHINKERS

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The War on Women's Reproductive Rights; Alive and Well in 2019!

Guest Speaker—Katherine R. Welsh

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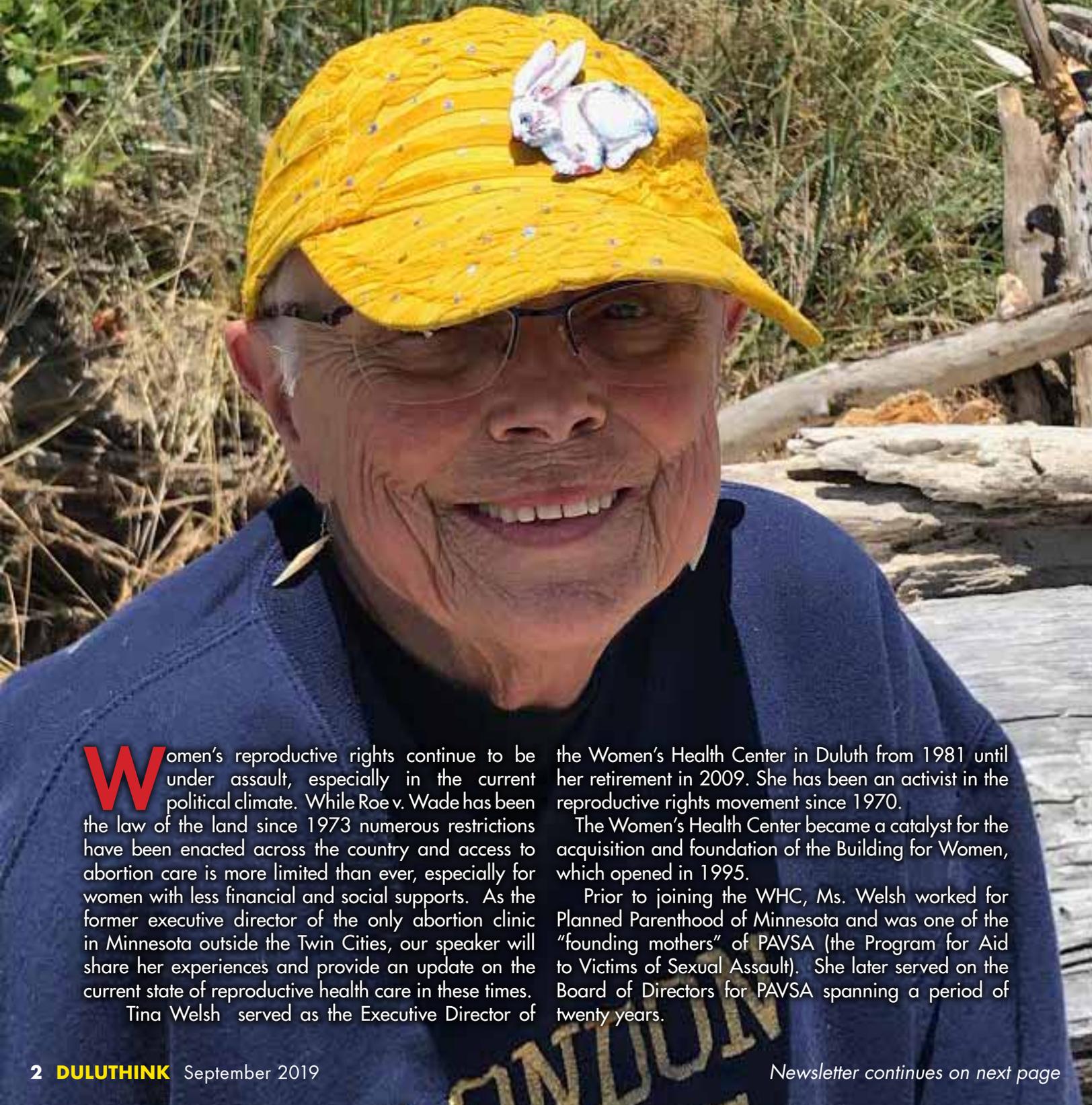
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The War on Women's Reproductive Rights; Alive and Well in 2019!

September Guest Speaker—Tina Welsh



Women's reproductive rights continue to be under assault, especially in the current political climate. While Roe v. Wade has been the law of the land since 1973 numerous restrictions have been enacted across the country and access to abortion care is more limited than ever, especially for women with less financial and social supports. As the former executive director of the only abortion clinic in Minnesota outside the Twin Cities, our speaker will share her experiences and provide an update on the current state of reproductive health care in these times.

Tina Welsh served as the Executive Director of

the Women's Health Center in Duluth from 1981 until her retirement in 2009. She has been an activist in the reproductive rights movement since 1970.

The Women's Health Center became a catalyst for the acquisition and foundation of the Building for Women, which opened in 1995.

Prior to joining the WHC, Ms. Welsh worked for Planned Parenthood of Minnesota and was one of the "founding mothers" of PAVSA (the Program for Aid to Victims of Sexual Assault). She later served on the Board of Directors for PAVSA spanning a period of twenty years.



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FFRF: Oppose rule to legalize taxpayer-funded discrimination in name of religion

The Freedom From Religion Foundation has submitted a formal comment condemning a proposed Department of Labor rule that would allow federal contractors to discriminate against employees based on “sincerely held religious tenets” of the corporation or business.

In an alarming new twist, the rule would protect a federal contractor engaging in discrimination based on conduct that the employer says violates their religion. Worse still, for-profit companies would be given a cover for labor discrimination so long as they invoke a religious purpose for such actions.

This proposed regulation would most obviously target LGBTQ individuals. Anti-gay employers have a long history of disingenuously arguing that they are not discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation, but rather on “lifestyle” choices or “conduct.”

But this rule could also be used to deny employment to atheists, members of a minority religion, single mothers or anyone else who isn’t practicing the “right” religion in the “proper” way, in the eyes of an employer receiving federal funds. In other words, Christian employers could discriminate against non-Christians, including atheists, or even against anyone they deem to be a “bad Christian.”

Giving federal contractors a religious license to discriminate in employment places the federal government’s stamp of approval on all manner of bigotry. The Trump Administration’s proposed rule shamefully lets our taxpayer dollars go to discrimination by federal contractors. This

harmful proposal would roll back decades of progress on labor law and the protection of the rights of LGBTQ and other vulnerable individuals.

FFRF is urging the Labor Department’s Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, which regulates anti-discrimination requirements, to reject the proposal.

“The Labor Department instead should adopt rules that will protect employees who have a history of suffering discrimination, rather than legalizing invidious discrimination,” says Dan Barker, FFRF co-president.

LSF t-shirts on sale at Sept. 1st meeting

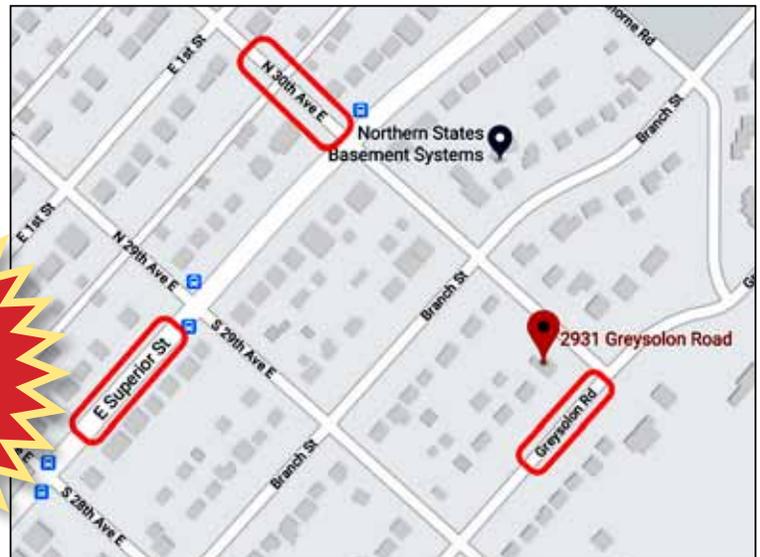


First Thursday LSF Happy Hours with Tom & Gerry

Join us **September 5th** and every first Thursday of the month **at Mexico Lindo** in the **Fitger’s Brewery Complex** for Happy Hour **from 4:00—6:00pm**. Your hosts **Tom and Gerry** are looking forward to sharing food, drink, and lots of fun with you. And after all, if you are not there, well, we will all miss you!

Pavilion Parties

This September we will continue our gatherings on the lawn of our Flounder, Bill Van Druten. These gatherings will continue rain or shine (we'll move inside if necessary), on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month. Come along at 1:00 pm or later. Bring some food item you have made, or maybe an interesting libation, to share with other attendees. We'll talk and laugh at his lovely home: 2931 Greysolon Road in Duluth. Park anywhere on Greysolon Road but not on 30th Avenue!



Upcoming LSF Presentations

DATE	PRESENTER	TOPIC	HOST	REFLECTION
Oct. 6th	Frans de Waal (TED)	Moral Behavior in Animals	Bill Guse	Dr. Bill Van Druten
Nov. 3rd	Jane Whitledge	Thomas Paine	Jim Lyttle	
Dec. 1st	Jim Lyttle	Civil Communication		
Jan. 5th	Bill Guse	New Evangelical Themes		Dr. Charles Gessert
Feb. 2nd	Howard Moore	Darwin		



Upcoming LSF Social Dinners with Sue Anderson 5:30pm

Sept 18th	Little Angie's Cantina	11 Buchanan St., Duluth MN 55802	(218) 727-6117
Oct 16th	Grandma's Saloon	522 South Lake Ave., Duluth MN 55802	(218) 727-4192
Nov 20th	Clyde Iron Works	2920 W. Michigan St., Duluth MN 55806	(218) 727-1150
Dec 18th	J.J. Astor (Radisson)	505 W. Superior St., Duluth MN 55802	(218) 727-8981

Planned Parenthood defunding — Is El Salvador a cautionary tale for U.S. reproductive rights?

It's an ominous portent that Planned Parenthood announced its forced pull out from U.S. federal funding the very same day a Salvadoran woman's trial for delivering a stillborn finally ended.

The situation in El Salvador presents a cautionary tale to the United States. Back in 2017, Evelyn Hernandez Cruz, now 21, was found guilty of homicide in El Salvador — a nation with one of the world's strictest bans on abortion. An attempt to reform that ban, predicated on Roman Catholic doctrine, failed last year in El Salvador's Congress.

Unbelievably, this young woman was sentenced to 30 years in prison for having undergone an involuntary and life-threatening stillbirth. Instead of receiving caring support after being found unconscious in a latrine in her village in April 2016, this high school student was treated like a criminal. After she was taken to a hospital, officials there reported her to the police. She spent 33 months in prison before being released this year to await her second trial until her belated acquittal yesterday. Even during the retrial last week, prosecutors argued that this teenager should have known she was pregnant and sought prenatal care.

While Cruz was thankfully acquitted eventually, several other women in her situation are in prison or face prosecution in El Salvador. Is this the future in the United States?

As of today, U.S. women's access to reproductive health care, already imperiled, has become more endangered, especially for those who are low-income. Trump has imposed a domestic gag order on Title X, the federal program that for nearly half a century has successfully been offering

contraception, pregnancy tests, cancer screenings and STD testing for low-income patients. To continue receiving such funding, Planned Parenthood would have been forced to create separate facilities for abortion care, and barred from referring patients seeking abortions. In this ludicrous scenario, Title X clinics could give a patient a list of physicians, including some who may perform abortion care,



yet could not indicate who on that list provides abortion care.

So yesterday, Planned Parenthood announced that it will withdraw from this federal family planning program. It has received about \$60 million annually in federal funds to conscientiously serve more than 1.5 million low-income women every year, including 40 percent of all Title X recipients. In some states, such as Utah, Planned Parenthood has been the only group receiving Title X funds. In other states, it is the main provider. This defunding is a disaster.

Title X very obviously prevents unwanted pregnancies, thereby preventing many abortions. But try

telling that to the rabid Religious Right in charge of our government today.

Planned Parenthood's announcement is no surprise, as Monday was the deadline for it to show compliance in order to remain eligible. Dr. Diane Foley, a deputy assistant secretary in the Department of Health and Human Services who has compared abortion to slavery and the Holocaust, has been put in charge of Title X. She had previously headed two phony "crisis pregnancy centers." She once inveighed that abortion is "a battle that is happening in the heavenly realms that Satan doesn't want to lose."

There is a further state/church issue. To heap insult upon injury, HHS appears ready to essentially start transferring Title X funding from Planned Parenthood to "faith-based" providers and other anti-abortion outfits. Many of these entities already manage to receive public funding, and now they are poised to use our federal dollars to not deliver legal reproductive health care and referrals to American women in need.

The Guttmacher Institute has correctly stated, "The Trump administration is seeking to transform Title X from an agent of reproductive autonomy to a tool of government-sponsored reproductive coercion." And the New York Times insightfully editorialized today, "This whole sorry affair is a reminder that while many Americans are rightly afraid of a future without reproductive rights, in some ways that future is already here."

An El Salvador-type scenario in the United States may not be that far on the horizon.