

ACRJ Blog



Wednesday, July 13, 2011

We did it together

By Eveline Shen

On behalf of all of us who have worked on the campaign to remove the racist, anti-choice billboards in Oakland, I want to say thank you for all you did. So many of you **emailed CBS Outdoor** and spread the word about the action that we were able to generate thousands of emails to CBS Outdoor insisting on the removal of the billboards. At the height of the action, over 500 emails an hour were going into their local and national offices.

When the billboards were removed early Monday morning, all of us were relieved, and held our heads high as we walked our own streets. It is critical for us to name and claim Oakland as a place where each woman's right to access the reproductive health care she needs is preserved, no matter her race, income, or immigration status. We are honored that several elected officials have joined their voices with ours. **Congresswoman Barbara Lee reacted with a powerful statement condemning the billboards, and Mayor Jean Quan worked closely with us to ensure CBS Outdoor knew we had the full support of her administration.**

Our coalition accomplished so much in a few weeks...from reaching out to thousands of supporters, to talking with **local and national media**, publishing our own **OpEds** and blog posts, and engaging elected officials. And in the final days of the billboards' presence on our streets, we took a camera and a microphone and headed out to hear from Black women themselves what the billboards meant to them. These **powerful videos** were the result.



The racist billboards are part of a nationwide effort to wedge communities of color, and divide us from each other. Oakland reacted powerfully, with a unified voice to say, "Not here!"

But as we look around the country, we see a different picture. In addition to the highly-publicized attacks on reproductive and civil rights at the national level, in the first six months of 2011, states enacted **162 new provisions** restricting reproductive health and rights.

Many of these laws and regulations are about how abortions are paid for, with limitations on Medicaid, insurance exchanges, and other funding sources. We all know that these limitations hit women of color and low-income women the hardest. The billboard campaign has reminded us of the myriad ways in which our opposition continues to limit access to health care, including abortion, and how these attacks deeply impact communities of color. The billboards are a visible reminder of the strategy to stir up feelings of stigma and shame, and to try to turn families, congregations and communities against each other.

But that didn't happen here. A multi-racial coalition stood together and said no. Two of our most powerful elected officials, both women of color, raised their voices loud and clear, with no apologies, and stood up for the right for women to access all the reproductive health care they need.

Black women on the street said it, Trust Black Women said it, Planned Parenthood Mar Monte, Access WHR, ACLU of Northern California and Law Students for Reproductive Justice said it. NARAL-CA, Generations Ahead, Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice and Strong Families all said it. Our allies in Los Angeles including California Latinas for Reproductive Justice, Black Women for Wellness, and California Black Women's Health Project said it. Allies who joined us, including California Coalition for Reproductive Freedom and the Center for Media Justice said it.

All of you who called, wrote, posted and tweeted said it. **We stand together against these attacks, and we will work together to ensure that all women can access the care we need.**

The billboards could have been a distraction, but our small and mighty group was able to turn them into a powerful opportunity to reach out to each other and all of you, and raise our voices in support of women, families and communities in Oakland.

Heartfelt thanks to all of you. We are not done, but we are together.



POSTED BY ACRJ AT 4:16 PM

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LABELS: **ABORTION, RACIST BILLBOARDS**

1 COMMENTS:



BrendaSalgado said...

Brilliant beautiful women standing and speaking out together. Thank you Strong Families, Strong Women, Strong Communities.

JULY 14, 2011 12:32 PM

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