

# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2008 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

For over 35 years, the National Women's Law Center has expanded the possibilities for women and girls in our country. The Center uses the law in all its forms: getting new laws on the books; litigating groundbreaking lawsuits all the way to the Supreme Court; and educating the public about ways to make the law and public policies work for women and their families. With an experienced staff of nearly 60, the Center takes on the issues that cut to the core of the lives of women and girls in education, employment, family economic security, and health, with special priority given to the needs of low-income women and their families.

## IN THE LAST YEAR, THE CENTER:

- ✧ Secured an expansion of the Child Tax Credit for 13 million children by playing a leadership role in the coalition that fought for the expansion, and launched with key partners a new coalition effort to address broader issues of tax policy in the coming year and beyond.
- ✧ Spearheaded an extensive national campaign to pass critical pay equity legislation—the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which passed the House of Representatives and fell just three votes short in the Senate, and the Paycheck Fairness Act, which passed the House of Representatives, both of which would give women tools to fight the continuing wage gap.
- ✧ Won critical court victories for female athletes by concluding the nearly decade-long battle to force the Michigan High School Athletic Association to stop discriminating against female high school athletes in the scheduling of sports seasons in *Communities for Equity v. Michigan High School Athletics Association* and by helping to defeat a far-reaching challenge to Title IX athletics policies in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit in *Equity in Athletics v. U.S. Department of Education*.
- ✧ Achieved landmark Head Start legislation that makes more children eligible, improves program quality, and increases the number of infants and toddlers who can participate in Early Head Start, and Food Stamp legislation that makes it easier for families with child care expenses to qualify for this critical nutrition program.
- ✧ Defeated legislation that would have prevented employers from providing needed reproductive health care services because of recalcitrant employees, and led efforts to overturn proposed Department of Health & Human Services regulations that would, if finalized, severely hinder women's ability to get medical information on all reproductive health care options.
- ✧ Issued the Center's annual report on state child care assistance policies, which sparked concrete results when advocates in Utah and Idaho used it to make more families eligible for child care assistance and advocates in Arizona used it to stave off cuts to child care assistance.
- ✧ Won a resounding court victory that improves protections against sexual harassment and assault on campus and confirms that universities have serious obligations under Title IX to protect their students from harassment and assault in *Simpson v. Colorado*.
- ✧ Participated in the submission of *amicus* briefs in several employment cases before the U.S. Supreme Court, including *CBOCS v. Humphries*, which reaffirmed the protection against retaliation as an essential part of protection against discrimination that the Center won in the Supreme Court in *Jackson v. Birmingham Board of Education*.

# NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER

- ✧ Raised national awareness about the problems of girls dropping out of high school by issuing the Center report *When Girls Don't Graduate, We all Fail*, which led to a partnership with the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund to document barriers and recommend ways to improve the experiences of Latinas in school; negotiations with a Georgia school district to correct its policies on pregnancy discrimination; and formulation by the Center of strategies to address the fact that one in four girls fails to graduate from high school in four years.
- ✧ Launched a comprehensive campaign to achieve broad health care reform, creating a new women's health care coalition, serving in a leadership role in the major national health care coalition, and developing research and analysis on how to meet the needs of women and their families—disseminated through Congressional testimony, materials, and briefings for policymakers and advocates nationally and in the states.
- ✧ Helped secure improvements in the economic recovery measures enacted by Congress, including economic stimulus payments for very low-income people, extended unemployment insurance benefits, and increased food and energy assistance, by highlighting the challenges faced by women and their families in the worsening economy and pressing for specific measures to address these challenges.
- ✧ Led a coalition of 70 state and national early childhood leaders to develop an Agenda for Affordable, High-Quality Child Care that will significantly increase high-quality child care for children and their families, and helped secure the introduction of three bills in Congress that would, if enacted, secure some of the Agenda's key components.
- ✧ Developed materials and launched widespread outreach efforts to educate voters about the issues at stake for women in this year's elections and to encourage women to vote.
- ✧ Helped secure a \$17 million increase in Title X funding for family planning services for low-income women, the third largest increase in the program's history, and ensure that deceptive and medically inaccurate abstinence-only sex education programs did not receive an increase in federal funding.
- ✧ Prepared for the upcoming Administration transition by releasing *A Platform for Progress*, a comprehensive agenda that outlines steps the federal government should take to address the unmet needs of women and their families, educating policymakers and advocates about these initiatives, and developing action plans for the coming year and beyond.
- ✧ Conducted a tax credits outreach campaign with advocates in all 50 states that helped increase by over \$2.6 billion the assistance provided to families by the Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, and Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit.
- ✧ Released the fourth edition of *Making the Grade on Women's Health: A National and State-by-State Report Card*, which earned widespread media coverage of women's health issues at the national, local, and online level, and provided an invaluable resource for policymakers around the country to bolster their efforts to improve health policy, spurring several states—including Arkansas, Delaware, Kentucky, and New Jersey—to create efforts to improve their states' failing grades on health policy.

The victories on behalf of women and their families in 2008 would not have been possible without the volunteer assistance that many individuals and organizations generously provided to the Center. In the past year, organizations and individuals providing *pro bono* support included: Arnold & Porter; Covington & Burling; DLA Piper US; Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson; Melissa Hart; Hogan & Hartson; Holland & Knight; Lichtman, Trister & Ross; McDermott Will & Emery; O'Melveny & Myers; Russell & Howe; Sidley Austin; Mark Siman; Stanford Supreme Court Litigation Clinic; Steptoe & Johnson; and Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice. Organizations and individuals that sponsored fellowships included: Everett Philanthropic Fund; Deborah Slaner Larkin & The MARGARET Fund; and the Women's Law and Public Policy Fellowship Program. The Center deeply appreciates this support and looks forward to continuing to work together to expand the possibilities for women and their families in the years to come.