



National Women's Law Center

joy,
defiance,^{and} hope

The National Women’s Law Center **2023 Gala**



A Message From the President and CEO



Dear Friends,

When writing this letter, I was determined to find some way to answer the worry, and even fear, that I know many of us are feeling right now. So, I wanted to share with you something that has brought me great comfort this past year: The fundamental truth that this fight has always been a generational one.

Before Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, there was Judge Amalya Kearse, the Black woman who was considered—and passed over—for four Supreme Court nominations since 1981. Before Vice President Kamala Harris, there was Charlotta Bass, the first Black woman to run for vice president in 1952. And over 50 years after Representative Shirley Chisholm, we have 64 Black members serving in our current Congress, the most ever, and just weeks ago witnessed the historic swearing in of Senator Laphonza Butler, the first out lesbian Black woman to ever serve in the Senate.

The point here is that even when things feel momentarily lost, we must remember that in the future—and for future generations—the progress we are fighting for will be found. I do not, however, mean to take away from the “fierce urgency of now,” as Dr. King once put it. We are undoubtedly facing a fundamental and structural problem with so many of our systems. Extremists have catapulted our Supreme Court into crisis; they’re trying to ban our books, control our bodies, and wipe trans people out of existence. Yet amid these attacks, the National Women’s Law Center has still been able to mobilize, and yes, even win:

- After a 10-year-long battle, we helped pass the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, ensuring pregnant workers can no longer be ousted from their jobs for requesting basic accommodations.
- The TIME’S UP Legal Defense Fund supported survivors in their brave fight back against the former owner of the Washington football team Dan Snyder—ending his culture of sexual harassment.
- Almost exactly one year after the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, we launched our Abortion Access Legal Defense Fund, which helps pay the legal expenses for abortion patients and supporters who are facing legal action related to abortion care.

While I am proud of these victories, I believe it is during these times, when our very democracy is frayed, that we have permission to not only take on the threats before us, but to focus on our long-term goals. That is the lesson we have from past generations—they pushed for the progress they wouldn’t live to see even as they protected people from daily harm. And their granddaughters and grandchildren, today’s young people, are dreaming far beyond the pain and peril of these times. They will take down the very gender roles that force women, and all people, into rigid boxes, limiting our agency by telling us how to be.

When I look at my own children and the elders in my family, I know that we are all driving in the same direction. I also know that we need every one of you to ride with us for the long haul. The fear and worry that hangs heavy in these times is a coordinated strategy. Our opponents want us to feel like we have no agency. Because really, they are the ones who are afraid—of what it would look like if, together, we realized our full power and fought for our full democracy. With joy, defiance, and hope.

In Solidarity,

Tatiana Ross Graves

Speakers

As of October 26, 2023



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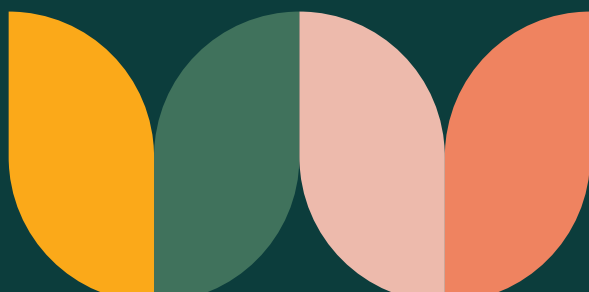
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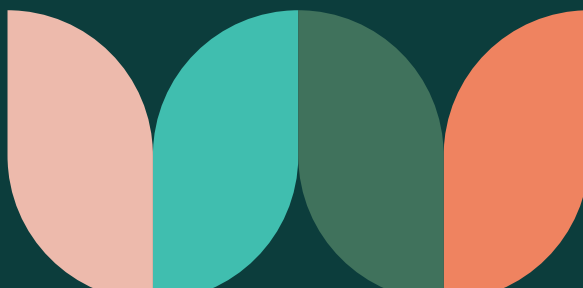
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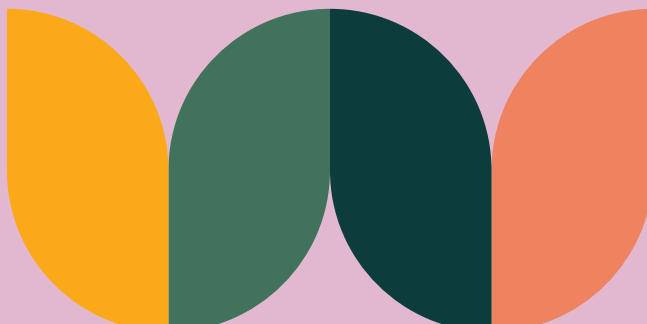
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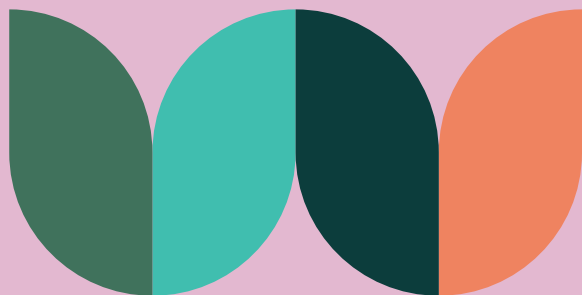
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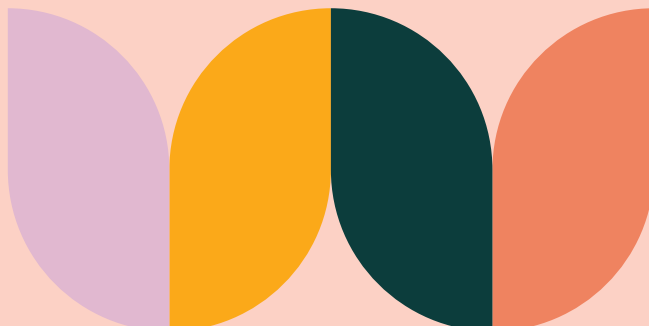
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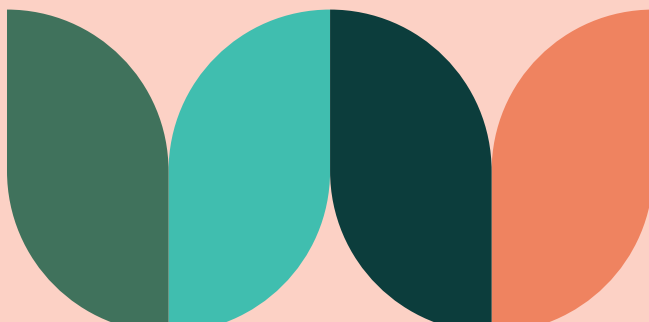
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with joy, defiance, and hope!
All working women, whether they are
nurses, janitors, fast food, home care or
airport workers, are stronger together
through a union. We thank
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for their allyship and solidarity,
and look forward to continue fighting
alongside them for gender justice
for years to come.





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— Yvette Ostolaza
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***“If we want to achieve our goal,
then let us empower ourselves
with the weapon of knowledge
and let us shield ourselves with
unity and togetherness.”***

— Malala Yousafzai

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as it continues
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on gender justice.

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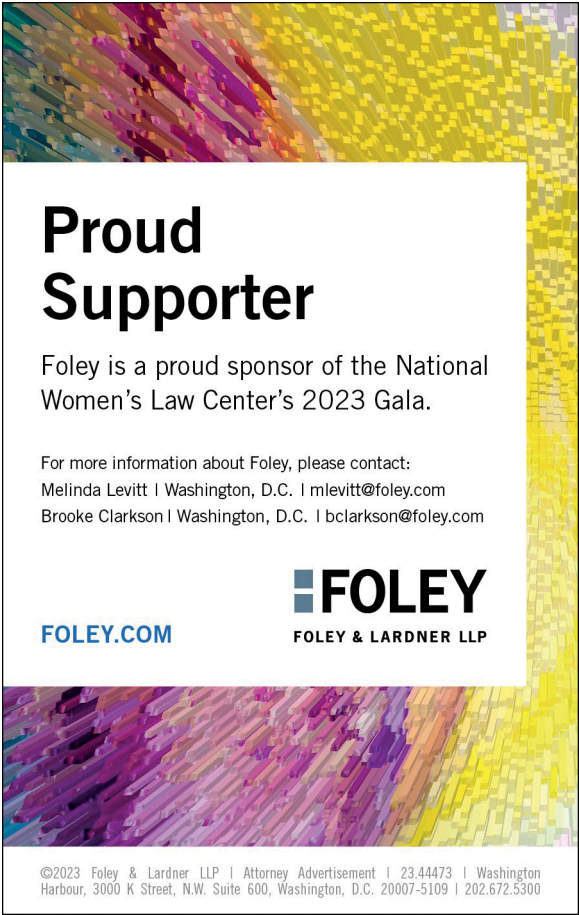
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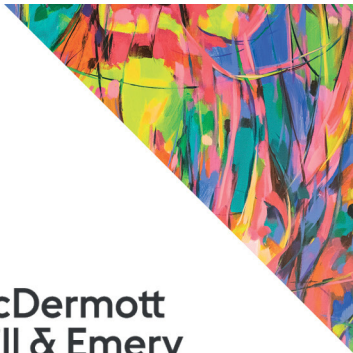
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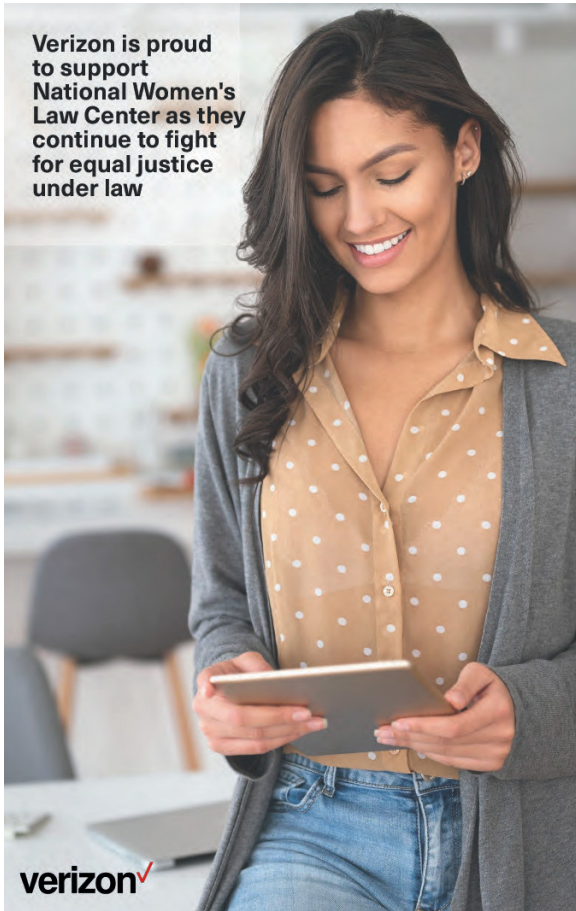
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We are advocates, lawyers, storytellers, researchers, fundraisers, thought leaders, and administrative and financial experts, bringing our full selves, leading and working together to imagine and build a community that achieves gender justice. Our multiracial staff and Board are majority women with multiple gender identities and sexual orientations. We are survivors. We are people who have had abortions, who have accessed fertility services, who have used contraception, and who have built a range of family structures, including through pregnancy, chosen family, adoption, and as caregivers. We are people with disabilities, immigrants, and people who have used and benefited from a range of public assistance programs designed to help families meet their needs. We are people from a range of faith traditions and people without any faith identity. We are NWLC.

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