

WE CALL FOR THE PASSAGE OF THE RESOLUTIONS TO END  
STERILIZATION ABUSE

We support the right of people to  
be sterilized if they want to be.  
We oppose forced or coerced ster-  
ilization.

At statewide International Women's Year meetings at least 4 states passed resolutions regarding sterilization abuse; Missouri's is set out below and New York's is on the reverse side of this sheet. We call on the delegates of those states in which sterilization abuse resolutions were passed to honor their responsibilities by putting forward these resolutions on the convention floor. We also call on all delegates to this convention to pass these resolutions.

What Sterilization Abuse Is

Sterilization is an operation which renders a person permanently incapable of reproduction. In the last decade, millions of people, mostly non-white and most of them women, have been sterilized all over the world without their knowledge or against their will. The ways in which sterilization abuses have occurred are: 1) operations performed without a woman's knowledge immediately after an abortion or childbirth; 2) consent to the operation obtained under duress--as when a woman is actually in labor; 3) consent forms signed in a language a person does not understand; 4) pressure by doctors or social workers to choose sterilization as a form of birth control, including threats of loss of welfare or other government benefits; 5) actual forced sterilization, as occurred when India enforced mandatory sterilization in some states.

Sterilization Abuse and Population Control

Sterilization is a major weapon in the arsenal of population control groups. The concern of the proponents of population control is to manipulate the population of specific groups--mostly poor and minority women, both inside and outside the U.S.--in order to maintain existing social and economic arrangements. They are not concerned with these people's rights to control their own lives.

RESOLUTION PASSED AT MISSOURI STATE IWY MEETING:

Be it resolved that we, conferees of the Missouri State Meeting in Observance of International Women's Year:

1. Support family planning and the individual's right to contraception in the context of informed consent and social justice.
2. Oppose population control programs which impact upon minority and poor populations.
3. Harshly condemn sterilization abuse domestically and abroad.

RESOLUTION PASSED AT THE NEW YORK STATE MEETING:

Be it resolved: That the New York State Women's Meeting supports regulations, guidelines, and laws which curb sterilization abuse by:

- a. Supporting extension of the time between signing consent forms and the performance of the sterilization to 30 days as in New York City.
- b. Affirming that a witness of the patient's choice be present at the counselling session, if desired, and at signing of consent.
- c. Ensuring that the consent form, instructional materials and the counselling session be plainly worded in the preferred language of the patient.
- d. Ensuring that all risks, benefits, and alternatives to sterilization be fairly and completely discussed.
- e. Ensuring that the patient understand that the procedure is permanent.
- f. Ensuring that the patient be informed orally and in writing that no services or benefits will be withdrawn if the patient refuses a sterilization or changes her/his mind.
- g. Stipulating that all patients be at least 21 years of age.
- h. Forbidding all hospital personnel and social services personnel from introducing the idea of sterilization to a woman who is in labor or undergoing delivery.
- i. Developing a system whereby statistics will be gathered and made available to the public regarding:
  1. numbers of sterilizations performed annually
  2. kinds of procedures utilized to achieve sterilization
  3. numbers of sterilizations performed upon women admitted to hospitals for abortions or childbirth
  4. place where sterilizations are performed (Hospital, clinic, doctor's office)
  5. the sterilized person's racial, ethnic, and economic status.

Be it further resolved: That the New York State Women's Meeting work with other organizations to achieve these ends.