

# The Roadrunner/ El Correcaminos



Newsletter of the New Mexico Human Rights Coalition/Education Fund  
P. O. Box 7927, Albuquerque, NM 87194-7927  
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## Equality and opportunity are in the dark

The gains in employment that racial and ethnic minorities and women had made since the advent of affirmative action are gone.

In 1975, under federal mandates, Executive Order 11246, Contract Compliance and M/WBE Orders, minorities and women began to make great strides toward equality of opportunities. Both the public and private sectors initiated programs and made special efforts to increase the utilization of minorities in employment, contracting, and businesses.

Where has it all gone? Is Martin Luther King's dream dead? Apathy pervades the community and civil rights organizations where equal opportunity is concerned. One wonders if the current community and civil rights leaders have over served their usefulness.

These civil rights organizations have lost sight of their mission. They have become too focused on giving scholarships and awards, fund-raising, and promoting conferences that, although beneficial, ultimately have little impact on their constituencies.

These groups have no program or plan in place to advance employment and business opportunities for their constituencies. Do they think that "we all have made it" or that "the struggle is won, and that there is no need for further advancement?" If so, one wonders where they got this idea. One wonders if the current leadership even remembers how to go about designing such strategies. In the 1950s, '60s and '70s, all was laid at their feet. Governments and the private sector were, and still are, required to establish affirmative action programs to

by Frank J. Miranda, Executive Director  
NM Human Rights Coalition

eliminate discrimination, both societal and systemic, to increase the number of minorities in all levels of employment including contracting and in the utilization of minorities in women-owned businesses.

Where are our civil rights leaders now when they are still needed? They are "sitting on their laws" and thinking that the job is done and the struggle is over. Leaders expound on higher level education for women and minorities or on whom they can get into office. But what about the masses, the ones who fought the fight, marched and demonstrated and died to bring about equality to all of us? What about the many young Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans of today? Who speaks for them? One of the major failures is that we have not prepared them to speak for themselves or to carry on the fight for civil rights.

It is time to establish programs and take direct action to regain the losses of jobs and business and contracting opportunities we once worked so hard for. It's time for our leaders and organizations to stop and reassess where we are in regards to equal opportunity. If they have no program and no agenda for civil rights, then they should disband. In the years of the civil rights struggle, all peoples and organizations worked to end discrimination against minorities and women, to open the

doors to America's land of opportunity. Today most minority and women's organizations don't work together nor do they support each other for the cause of civil rights. There is a need for these groups to come together and work to make change.

The New Mexico Human Rights Coalition (NMHRC) can make this change happen. It is the only viable organization in the state committed to promoting equality and rights for all.

Now is the time to join the NMHRC and also to develop the necessary programs and strategies to bring back the opportunities in city, state and county government as well as in the private sector.

You can do the following:

- Recommit your organization to a "civil/human rights" agenda;
- support and join the NMHRC;
- make a nontaxable donation to the NMHRC.

Remember, the laws and regulations are still in existence, and they are on our side. Let's begin to work towards making them viable again. If your organization needs help in identifying issues and developing strategies and programs for your constituencies, contact the NMHRC. A coalition representative can meet with your organization to make a presentation. For more information or to join the coalition, contact NMHRC, P.O. Box 7927, Albuquerque, NM 87194; phone (505) 292-4211 or email [nmhrc@comcast.net](mailto:nmhrc@comcast.net). Make donations to the NMHRC at above address.

The coalition is committed to resurrecting the civil rights movement. Please work and support the coalition!

*"Have we lost sight of our mission?"*

## NEW MEXICO HUMAN RIGHTS COALITION

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Chair: Diana Montoya (Las Mujeres de LULAC)  
Vice chairs: Eric Sirotkin (National Lawyers Guild) &  
Jennifer White (National Organization for Women)  
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Secretary: Peter Weinreb (Anti-Defamation League)

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- ❖ Adelante Development, Inc
- ❖ American Civil Liberties Union, New Mexico
- ❖ Americans for Indian Opportunity
- ❖ Anti-Defamation League, New Mexico State Chapter
- ❖ Anti-Racism Training Institute of the Southwest
- ❖ EQUALITY New Mexico
- ❖ ENLACE Comunitario
- ❖ Human Rights Office, City of Albuquerque
- ❖ Jewish Federation of Greater Albuquerque, Inc.
- ❖ Las Mujeres de LULAC
- ❖ MANA de Albuquerque
- ❖ National Lawyers Guild, New Mexico Chapter
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- ❖ New Mexico Conference of Churches
- ❖ New Mexico Holocaust & Intolerance Museum
- ❖ New Mexico Japanese American Citizens League
- ❖ New Mexico Voices for Children
- ❖ PFLAG Albuquerque
- ❖ Somos Un Pueblo Unido
- ❖ The ARC of New Mexico
- ❖ United South Broadway Corporation

## B. Rucobo is NMHRC coordinator

Bonnie Rucobo, Albuquerque Human Rights Office Community Liaison, recently accepted the position of coordinator of the New Mexico Human Rights Coalition (NMHRC).

She provides administrative support for all activities and committee meetings. She also writes stories and coordinates articles from member organizations for publication in the newsletter.

Rucobo is on the board of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, and has served as past president of the Albuquerque Chapter, National Organization for Women.

She attended Reed College in Portland, Oregon, as an undergraduate, and earned her J.D. at Golden Gate University in San Francisco. Rucobo worked as a reporter and news director for public radio stations in Corvallis, Oregon, and LaCrosse, Wisconsin, after graduating from Reed with a degree in French literature.

## Sam Sokolove new head of JFGA

Sam Sokolove was named executive director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Albuquerque (JFGA) in August. Prior to that, he was executive director of the San Diego Chapter of the American Jewish Committee, the Jewish community's leading human relations organization. He also served as the founding executive director of the National Jewish Partnership for Social Justice in New York City, an initiative to renew the Jewish community's devotion to social justice, and as young leadership director for the Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County. Additionally, he has held a number of community organizing and development positions throughout the United States.

The Philadelphia-area native is a graduate of Temple University and the University of Michigan. He is married to Eva Buchwald, a school social worker, and has a 2-year-old daughter, Sarea Paloma.

Sam's articles, reviews and opinion pieces have appeared in a number of national and regional publications, and he interpreted issues related to international terrorism, civil liberties and intergroup and interfaith relations for local television affiliates of CBS, ABC, Fox and UPN. Sam also served as film critic for *San Diego City Beat*.

Sam's priority with the JFGA is to reassert the role of *tzeddakah*, or charity in the Jewish tradition, through the JFGA's annual campaign, and to identify ways to make the meaning and message of the federation's annual campaign more resonant. Sam has also made reasserting the federation's role as a primary conduit between the Jews of New Mexico, Israel and Jewish communities worldwide a priority. Also, Sam, who has extensive background in leadership development programming, recognizes that the federation must begin to mentor and engage younger Jews to ensure the next generation of Jewish communal leadership in New Mexico and beyond.

# NMHRRC cosponsors *Race Matters* conference May 16

*"RACE MATTERS – Youth policy through a racial lens"* is the title of a May 16 conference cosponsored by New Mexico Voices for Children, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the NMHRRC, and others including the Albuquerque Human Rights Office. It will be held in the University of New Mexico Continuing Education Conference Center, 1634 University Boulevard NE, Albuquerque from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

The conference is intended to raise awareness of the impact that race has on New Mexico's youth, specifically in the areas of juvenile justice, child welfare, and teen pregnancy.

Felicia Griffin, director of development, New Mexico Voices for Children, explains that although state policies and practices impacting these areas may appear to be race neutral, children of color are disproportionately represented in

the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

Speakers from the Annie E. Casey Foundation include Gretchen Test, a child welfare expert; Raquel Mariscal, a juvenile justice authority, and Barbara Sugland, a social demographer. Local speakers include Judge Barbara Vigil, a Children's Court Judge in the First Judicial District; State Representative Tom Swisstack, director of the Bernalillo County Juvenile Detention Center, and Romaine Serna, Protective Services Division Deputy Director of the NM Children, Youth and Families Department.

The event will include sessions on race and media, child welfare, juvenile profiling, youth access to behavioral health care, and adolescent reproductive health.

Conference fees, \$65 for adults and \$25 for students, include materials, lunch, and snacks. Scholarships are available. For reservations or more information, contact Felicia Griffin, development director, NM Voices for Children at (505) 244-9505, ext. 10, or visit [www.nmvoices.org](http://www.nmvoices.org).

## **History, Art & Faces: A Collage of the South Broadway Neighborhood**

United South Broadway Corporation and the South Broadway Neighborhood Assn. are sponsoring an exhibition of history and art entitled *History, Art & Faces: A Collage of the South Broadway Neighborhood* in the South Broadway Cultural Center Gallery May 2 through June 28. Historic and recent photographs, written histories, and art in many different media tell the story of both the

neighborhood and the corporation. An open reception is slated for May 12 in the center at 6 p.m. Contact Cindy Lopez, James Simermeyer, or Margy Hernandez at 764-8867 for more information.

United South Broadway Corporation, which grew out of the South Broadway Neighborhoods 1986 revitalization efforts, is celebrating its twentieth anniversary this year.

## **Mayor's response eagerly awaited**

The Albuquerque mayor's racial profiling task force unanimously adopted a comprehensive biased-based policing action plan at its final meeting on September 15. When signed by Mayor Martin Chávez, the device will be the only voluntary comprehensive plan in a municipality to address biased-based policing.

It was forwarded on October 24 for adoption by the city to Mayor Chávez, who has stated he is committed to dealing with racial profiling not only in law enforcement but in all city departments. It is essential that we hold the mayor to his word and demand that he sign the biased-based policing action plan now.

## **SD's abortion ban has broad implications**

by Bonnie Rucobo

*"ENTITLED, An Act to establish certain legislative findings, to reinstate the prohibition against certain acts causing the termination of an unborn human life, to prescribe a penalty therefore, and to provide for the implementation of such provisions under certain circumstances."*

*South Dakota Women's Health and Human Life Protection Act (Preamble)*

In early March the governor of South Dakota signed into law the Women's Health & Human Life Protection Act (HB 1215) banning abortions in almost all cases including when a woman is pregnant as a result of rape or incest.

The law mandates that anyone terminating or aiding in terminating a pregnancy is guilty of a Class 5 felony with punishment including five years in prison and a \$5,000 fine. It creates a narrow

exemption in cases where a physician's effort to save a pregnant women's life results in accidental death or injury to the fetus. The bill also has a provision that physicians shall make reasonable medical efforts to preserve both the life of the mother and her unborn child in a manner consistent with conventional medical practice.

Lawmakers in 11 other states (Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, West Virginia) are proposing similar legislation.

The South Dakota bill was designed to challenge the United States Supreme

(see *Abortion ban*, page 4)

# Abortion ban has broad implications

(continued from page 3)

Court's ruling in *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 decision that recognized the right of women to terminate pregnancies. *Roe* established a trimester scheme with varying guidelines within each time period, leaving the responsibility for the decision to the woman and her doctor.

Abortion opponents are seeking to overturn the *Roe* decision as the two new conservative members of the high court, Chief Justice John Roberts Jr. and Justice Samuel Alito Jr. may vote to restrict or do away with women's right to procreative choice.

Planned Parenthood, sole abortion provider in South Dakota where about 800 procedures are performed each year by doctors from neighboring Minnesota, is preparing a legal challenge to the new law, though no lawsuits were filed immediately. It's likely a federal judge would suspend the ban if challenged in court.

South Dakota abortion rights activists also are seeking a referendum to overturn the ban. The campaign led by the South Dakota Campaign for Healthy Families must collect 16,728 signatures by June 19 to put the issue on the November 7 ballot. If collected, the law will not take effect as scheduled on July

1 but will be put on hold until voters determine its fate in November.

In a novel development, the president of the Oglala Sioux Tribe on the Pine Ridge Reservation, Cecilia Fire Thunder, a former nurse, was incensed upon hearing of the passage of the law.

"To me, it is now a question of sovereignty," she said. "I will personally establish a Planned Parenthood clinic on my own land which is within the boundaries of the Pine Ridge Reservation where the state of South Dakota has absolutely no jurisdiction."

*Indian Country Today* has reported that if the law takes effect, Native American women will be impacted in greater numbers than any other ethnic or racial group in South Dakota. By national statistics, Native American women are sexually assaulted at a rate 3.5 times higher than all other racial groups.

Sarah Stoesz, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota indicates there is some benefit of this legislation to the pro-choice community in that it has "awakened and stirred the passions of the reproductive rights movement across the country."

New Mexico's Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) adopted in 1973 reads: "Equality of rights under law shall not be denied on account of the sex of any person." The New Mexico Supreme Court has ruled that the ERA requires the state to pay for abortion on demand for indigent women, above and beyond providing the procedure in cases of danger to the life of the mother, rape, or incest.

The decision determined that the state's refusal to fund elective abortions for poor women violated the state ERA. The court ordered the state to pay for all "medically necessary" abortions. Within the context of abortion law, "medically necessary" is a legal term of art that means that the abortion was performed by a licensed professional.

Though the NM law is far more progressive than in South Dakota, a challenge to *Roe v. Wade* could have serious repercussions to pro-choice rights throughout the United States. We should not be complacent in the face of this upcoming legal challenge.

For more information on abortion rights, contact Planned Parenthood of New Mexico, 719 San Mateo Boulevard NE, Albuquerque, NM 87108, (505-265-5976).

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*The New Mexico Human Rights Coalition is a voluntary, nonpartisan association of autonomous organizations and agencies, united, with a commitment to human rights and equal opportunity.*

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