



**ADVOCACY
IN ACTION**

ADVOCATING CHANGE = ADVANCING LIVES

Not yet a member of NCJWSTL? [Click here](#) to become part of a growing network of courageous and compassionate individuals who improve the lives of women, children, and families every day. You don't have to be a woman or Jewish to join!

THIS WEEK! September Lunch & Learn: Gun Violence and Suicide Prevention



Thursday, September 21, 2023
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM CT

Pat Harkins

When: Thursday, September 21 | 12:00 – 1:00 PM CT

Where: Zoom

[RSVP Here](#)

Suicide by guns claims the lives of nearly 25,000 people in America every year. We must address this public health crisis to reduce gun violence in this country. Though gun violence conversations tend to focus on homicides, **nearly six out of every 10 gun deaths in the U.S. are suicides.**

For September's Lunch and Learn, which coincides with Suicide Prevention Month, NCJWSTL is fortunate to welcome Pat Harkins. In 2009, she lost her 21 year old son to suicide. She became involved with a support group and after a few years was facilitating that group. She joined the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and served as the board's recording secretary for 12 years. She now serves on several committees and is the Healing Conversations Coordinator for the state of Missouri.

We know that this is a difficult topic, but we hope you will join us to learn from Pat how we can do our part in helping to stop this horrific epidemic.

Please [click here](#) to register for the September Lunch & Learn. Questions? Email Jen Bernstein at jbernstein@ncjwstl.org or call 314.993.5181

ADD YOUR NAME and Help Us Oppose Censorship of Our Public Libraries

To protect libraries throughout Missouri, including those at public schools, NCJWSTL has helped convene a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations called **Right to Read**. The coalition will oppose any legislative, state policy or other effort to restrict access to materials at public libraries; the coalition has the utmost confidence in trained, experienced librarians and educators to evaluate and select materials in the libraries' collection.



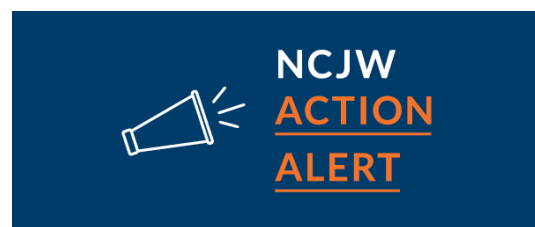
Did you know?

- As a result of a Missouri law enacted in August 2022 restricting some types of materials in public schools, **librarians fearful of criminal prosecution have removed nearly 300 titles** from school library shelves.
- Under an administrative rule imposed by Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft, all public libraries must have submitted by July 31 how they will comply with the vaguely written rule. **Failure to comply could result in loss of state funding**, which comprises a significant portion of small libraries' budgets.
- Missouri is among the nation's top book banning states, **especially regarding restricting access to books about gender, sexuality and race in public schools**.

More attempts will likely be made in the 2024 Missouri legislative session to suppress First Amendment rights. Free and open access to materials at our public libraries is an essential aspect of our democracy.

Please [click here](#) to add your name as an individual member of the coalition. For more information, please e-mail the coalition at righttoreadcoalition@gmail.com.

Tell SCOTUS: Save the Abortion Pill!



Recently, Texas judge Matthew Kacsmaryk invalidated FDA approval of the abortion pill mifepristone, the Biden administration filed an emergency stay.

The ruling in [*Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine v. FDA*](#) invalidating FDA approval of mifepristone is unconscionable. Mifepristone--

approved 23 years ago and used effectively by millions of people for abortion and miscarriage management--is perfectly safe. Anti-abortion extremists are attempting to use the courts to ban abortion nationwide, **even in states that have legal protections for abortion access**.

Shortly after, the Fifth Circuit issued its own anti-science decision by blocking Kacsmaryk's order but rolling back major changes the FDA made to make mifepristone easier to use and obtain. **The case is now going to the U.S. Supreme Court**, and if we lose there, it will be a devastating blow to abortion access.

To make sure all our voices are heard, we're urging people to sign a "People's Amicus Brief" so the judges understand how many millions of Americans oppose banning mifepristone.

Please [click here](#) to add your name to the People's Amicus Brief.

Abortion Access Missouri Clinic Escort Training



**CLINIC ESCORTS WILL
WALK WITH YOU**

When: Tuesday, September 18 | 6:00 PM CT

Where: Provided upon RSVP

[RSVP Here](#)

Are you interested in supporting people who want access to sexual and reproductive health care? Abortion Action Missouri (formerly Pro-Choice Missouri) is looking for you! They need committed and passionate people – like you – to join their Clinic Escort program.

For more than 35 years, Abortion Action Missouri has run the only Clinic Escort Program in the St. Louis metro area. Clinic escorts provide those walking into clinics - whether patients, companions, or staff - with a physical sense of security and a welcoming presence from the moment they exit their vehicle. The Abortion Action Missouri Clinic Escort program is working to ensure everyone coming to regional clinics for abortion access has someone to walk with them. This in-person, two hour training will equip you with the information and skills needed to safely and effectively escort patients to their appointments. Light refreshments provided.

Those interested in becoming clinic escorts must be 18 years or older, attend the training and sign all necessary waivers before beginning.

Please [click here](#) to register for the first step in becoming a clinic escort.

Partner Abortion Clinic Needs Donations

For the past year, NCJWSTL has partnered with local abortion clinics across the river in Illinois to provide direct support services to patients.

One of our partner clinics is in need of a few specific items:

- Gas cards
- Snack bags (pretzels, cookies, granola bars, etc.)
- Diapers (sizes 1-5)
- Travel shampoo
- Baby formula

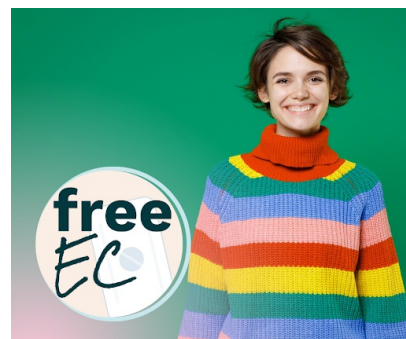


This is an opportunity to make a "hands-on" difference in someone's life. Please drop off or mail any donations to the NCJWSTL office at 295 N. Lindbergh, St. Louis, MO, 63141. For more information, please contact Renee Sigel-Hearst at rsigel-hearst@ncjwstl.org.

Get FREE Emergency Contraception at NCJWSTL!

NCJWSTL is thrilled to announce that we have partnered with the [Missouri Family Health Council](#) (MFHC) to distribute **FREE emergency contraception kits!** This effort is vitally important in the wake of last year's Supreme Court decision overturning Roe vs. Wade, especially in states like Missouri where abortion is illegal. Everyone should have the right to determine when and if they wish to start a family, and emergency contraception is vital in preventing unwanted pregnancies.

Also known as the morning-after pill, or by the brand name Plan B, the emergency contraception pill is an over-the-counter form of birth control that can be taken up to five days after unprotected sex to avoid pregnancy. The



goal of this effort is to reduce geographic and financial barriers Missourians face in accessing emergency contraception pills.

While supplies last, MFHC, NCJWSTL and other partner organizations are offering free EC kits to anyone of any age. **Feel free to stop by the NCJWSTL office to pick up your kit - for you or a loved one.**

If you have any questions, please contact Jen Bernstein at jbernstein@ncjwstl.org. You can also order an emergency contraception kit by mail by [clicking here](#).

Take Action & Join the A-List



Now more than ever you will want to make sure that your name is on NCJWSTL's A-List for 2023! Join us as we stand together and speak out about the issues that matter most.

Together we can make a difference!

A-List sponsorship ads sustain our collaborative efforts to educate the community and elected officials about issues integral to our mission, such as birth control access and voting rights. The full-page ads will run in the St. Louis Jewish Light during 2023.

- **\$18** includes your name in the ad.
- **\$54** makes you an Advocate Plus with your name in bold.
- **\$72** makes you a sponsor with your name distinguished in color

[Click here](#) to see the A-List flyer.

[Click here](#) to see the latest A-List Ad.

Join the A-list [here](#).

Interesting Reading



Nicole Blackmon learned she was pregnant about a month before Tennessee's near-total abortion ban went into effect in July 2022. She'd previously been told conceiving a pregnancy would be difficult because of multiple health diagnoses, including a pseudotumor. Still, the pregnancy was a "blessing," as her only child had been killed in a drive-by shooting months earlier.

At about 15 weeks, Blackmon learned her fetus likely had omphalocele (a condition that affects the development of the abdominal wall, leading to organs growing outside the body) and "atypically" positioned feet. She was told this was a "lethal anomaly." She was denied an abortion.

[Click here](#) to read Caitlin Cruz's article from Jezebel, "Woman in Tennessee Was Denied Abortion Despite Fetus Growing Organs Outside Itself."

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