



Taking Action in Florida NOW!

Hello Florida NOW!

It has been one heck of an exciting time since being elected President of Florida NOW! It is my honor and joy to serve as President. Thankfully, Terry Sanders has been right by my side

as I have transitioned from President Elect to President. I have learned so much in the past month, and there is still much to learn. I am excited about every bit of it and thankful for the new board and all the support and work they are doing for FL NOW! We certainly were given an exciting time to lead!

I want to share a few things that we have participated in over the past month. I have also filled this message with invitations on a wide range of opportunities to engage and support Florida NOW as we make fast strides forward. Please choose an area, or two, to contribute your powerful energy!

- Our fierce lobbyist Barbara DeVane and I rallied in Tallahassee to the bitter nasty end of this horrible legislative session. Melina Rayna Barratt (our new Legislative Director), Barbara and I met and are rolling out some exciting summer plans to lobby for our feminist Agenda. Please stay tuned and be ready to engage with us in our Hot Summer NOW Action!
- We know that Florida NOW has been loud and active about working to become the 38th state to ratify the ERA. We are actively collaborating with other groups to create a major push for this before 2020! The nation was inspired and excited by seeing the first ERA hearing in DC in 36 years! It was a powerful sharing of truths about why we need the ERA NOW! Representative Jackie Speier truly knocked it out of the park with her All Star cast of feminists! If you have not seen it yet, please check it out: <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4794883/rep-jackie-speier-testifies-historic-era-hearing>
- With one step forward, we feminists were attacked throughout the nation with Abortion restriction bans passing in 8 states. NOW has been in this game long enough to have seen it coming, yet it is still shocking. What has been amazing has been the level of feminists taking to the streets to stand up for abortion rights! For many of you, this fight is not new. For my generation (Gen X) and a whole sea of others even younger, this was the first time many have shown up to the fight for women, and abortion rights for all folks with a uterus. We attended events popping up all over the nation and within our state. In my hometown of Orlando, we saw a Pro Choice event with 1,400 folks that was planned by a

24 year old woman who had never even attended a protest before. The level of engagement, the uniting and strengthening of our feminist voices has not been seen since January 21, 2017. We have seen a big uptick in engagement with NOW and folks getting serious about fighting back these misogynist and bigoted laws! We must use this opportunity to grow, sharpen our grassroots 'tools' and be ready to lobby at home and in Tallahassee, because the time is NOW!

- I am thrilled to say, that I have had conversations with motivated women and other feminists about starting new chapters in Orlando, in Collier County, in Volusia County, in Greater Marion County, Crystal Rivers, and regaining the chapter in Seminole County. For each new chapter we create new leaders. These leaders will need support and mentoring. I invite anyone interested in either expanding a chapter or supporting an emerging sister chapter to contact me to participate in the New Chapter Leaders/Chapter Initiative. Our new leaders are coming to us with excitement, ideas, energy and friends, but mentoring and support will help facilitate their success and our growth.
- We have had increased interest in revitalizing our Consciousness Raising Circles. This is no accident, as it was so powerful in NOW's past, and still one of our best tools. Many of the folks we are attracting have been busy since 2017, fighting in one way or another in the 'resistance'. Much of this work has been about learning about inclusiveness, micro aggressions, or their privilege, and doing, doing, doing (making signs, postcards, phone calls, Facebook posts, etc.). I firmly believe that sitting actively in circles of feminists and both being heard as well as listening to others is the 'medicine' most needed to restore, further unite, and to fertilize our grassroots to win this fight that is being launched at women and otherwise marginalized folks. I urge those interested in dusting off and renewing the consciousness raising manuals to fit our intersectional world to contact me as we are quickly moving forward and very much welcome your wisdom! What we create here in Florida may be useful to other states, and especially states which are facing similar legislative fights against us.
- I have personally been privileged to intersect with new

communities and represent Florida NOW. I spoke at the Stop the Ban Rally in St. Pete, and in the Pro-Choice Rally in Orlando. I represented Florida NOW when I spoke at a National Day of action and fast food workers strike with Fight for \$15 (livable wage) and spoke against the sexual harassment that marginal wage workers, especially black women face. I spoke at the Orange County Housing (Crisis) Task Force to ensure to amplify how this issue impacts marginalized women and families the most. I attended and made several contacts with the Democratic Women's Club at their Resister March, and a collaborative meeting with Men4Choice. I presented a workshop at the Green party conference addressing White Fragility and Misogyny, and presented the ERA NOW, with the Citrus County League of Women Voters. My schedule is filling up faster than I expected, but please invite me to engage and support your community.

- There is no engagement like attending the National NOW Conference. I hope that many of you have already registered! If you are not planning to attend this year, please consider sending a donation to empowering another feminist to attend. I have received interest requests from 8 people who would love to go and see great value in it, but cannot get there on their own. Folks can share rooms to reduce the cost and attend the conference without a conference fee, but the flight cost still creates a barrier for many. The feminists in need of support are actively volunteering, and contributing to Florida NOW and their local chapters. If you or your chapter are empowered with the ability to help empower another feminist, please donate to Florida NOW and make a comment about what your donation is for.
- Lastly, I must share how incredibly grateful I am to have the opportunity to stand with and for Florida NOW. A big heartfelt thank you to Terry Sanders who is working to help fill in the many gaps as I still have much to learn. I could not be prouder of the hard work that the board has put in and you will soon be hearing from many of them about the work that they are doing. I am thankful for all of the great work that our chapters and members are doing out there. I have seen many of you (or pictures of you) standing on the corners, sweating your tails off, including using Mother's Day to stand for immigrant children. I have seen chapters taking a stand against

misogynistic practices, taking actions to stand for outrageous isolated birth of powerless incarcerated women, and more. Thank you and I hope you are as NOW Proud as I am, because Florida NOW is filled with amazing women and feminists!

Empower The Feminist,

Kim Porteous

Florida NOW President

Florida National Organization for Women

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