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Threat as a Motivator of Political Activism: A Field Experiment

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The research reported here examined the effects of two potential motivators of political activism—policy change threat and policy change opportunity—in a field experiment. Different versions of a letter were sent by a political lobbying organization to potential contributors. One version highlighted threats of undesirable policy changes, another version highlighted opportunities for desirable policy changes, and the third version did neither. Policy change threat increased the number of financial contributions made to the interest group, but policy change opportunity did not. Policy change opportunity increased the number of signed postcards returned to be sent to President Clinton, but policy change threat did not. These findings highlight the impact of interest group recruitment strategies on citizen responsiveness and demonstrate the need to account for sources of motivation in order to more fully understand when, why, and how citizens choose to become politically active.

KEY WORDS: threat, political participation, motivation

More than a century ago, William James (1890) described the world as a “great blooming, buzzing confusion” (p. 462). People react to their information-rich and ever-changing environment by paying careful attention to only a few stimuli at any given time (see, e.g., Eysenck, 1982). One of the most fundamental questions about human nature concerns how people make choices among the myriad competitors for their cognitive and behavioral energy. In the world of politics, a closely related question is “When do people choose to focus their cognitive and behavioral energies on the political process, and why?”

There is a long tradition of work addressing this question in political science. Much of this research shares a conceptualization of participation as motivated by

a desire to maximize rewards and minimize costs. This can be seen in the various attempts at classifying modes of participation as a hierarchy of time and costs (Milbrath, 1971) or the total amount of resources needed to participate (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). Most important, this focus on a cost/benefit analysis to determine whether people participate in politics has been characterized by an emphasis on the *ability* dimension of participation (e.g., skills and resources) at the expense of theory and empirical research on the *motivation* dimension.

There are many variants of the cost/benefit approach to studying participation, including Olson's (1965) theory of collective action (which emphasizes selective incentives as a way to maximize rewards for participation) and McAdam's (1982) political process model (which argues that collective action will occur to the extent that an organization has the necessary resources to be successful). And models of individual-level participation, such as Verba et al.'s (1995) civic voluntarism model and Rosenstone and Hansen's (1993) account of political mobilization and participation, theorize about and measure attributes of individuals (specific abilities, skills, or demographic characteristics) that tip the balance in favor of participation because they decrease the costs.¹

Given the considerable costs of political participation, people are only likely to do so to the extent that they are *motivated*.² For example, Gamson (1968) outlined many reasons why a person with a wealth of resources may choose not to participate in politics. Among these reasons, Gamson argued, is that "he may care very little about the outcome of most issues and thus have no motivation for influence despite his ability" (p. 96). For Gamson, then, resources are indicators of potential. To realize this potential, a citizen needs to be motivated to do so. Therefore, "by itself, the distribution of resources in a system tells us very little about who will attempt influence" (Gamson, 1968, p. 97).

Many individual-level variables—including the amount of political interest or political efficacy citizens have, the strength of party identification, and the strength of people's issue attitudes—have been conceptualized in part as political motivations (e.g., Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960; Converse, 1964; Miller & Shanks, 1996; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993; van Deth, 2000; Verba et

¹ Much of this work focuses on the "costs" side of the equation. However, Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) also theorized about the rewards of participation. According to Rosenstone and Hansen, this is where identity comes into play. Specifically, "strong psychological attachments heighten the value of intrinsic rewards from participation, of the internal satisfactions that derive from taking part. Just as sports fans take pleasure in cheering on their favorite teams, so partisans take pleasure in acting on behalf of their favorite politicians, parties, or groups. The more committed the fans, the more lusty their cheer; the more committed the partisans, the more likely their participation" (1993, p. 19).

² For a definition of motivation, we take our cue from motivational analyses in social psychology. According to Pittman (1998), "a basic characteristic of motivational analyses is the assumption that one salient feature of behavior in situations is that the person is an active participant, an originating striving source with needs, desires, hopes, and fears, and not simply a wet computer through which information enters, is processed, and is emitted as behavior" (p. 550). Therefore, we conceptualize motivation as a specific want or desire that stimulates behavior.

al., 1995). However, with the exception of attitude strength, these variables say very little about individuals' specific goals in participating in politics.³ Therefore, these variables do not help to pin down citizens' *psychological motivations* for participating. Such motivations may very well be implicated by a person's political interests, partisan affiliations, or attitude strength, but goal-oriented political motivations seem likely to be especially sensitive to the political context as well.

One such motivation is the desire to avert political threats—whether they be threats to one's material self-interests, one's well-being, or one's political interests (see, e.g., Brader, 2002). The threat hypothesis is derived in part from Darwinian evolutionary theory. According to this perspective, if an organism is to survive, it must do two things—find food and avoid predators. If an organism is hunting for food and happens upon a predator, the organism must recognize the threat instantaneously and take action. Evolutionary theories argue that the human brain has evolved a mechanism in the amygdala for detecting and responding quickly and automatically to threatening stimuli (Gray, 1987, 1990). In essence, this mechanism causes humans to stop what they are doing, reevaluate their current situations, and determine new courses of action when confronted with a threatening stimulus.

Various scholars have argued that when people face threats of undesirable economic, social, or political changes in the future, they are especially likely to change their political behaviors in an effort to avert the threat, often leading them to join with others to protect the status quo (Gusfield, 1963; Hansen, 1985; Leee & Kellstedt, 1993; Loomis & Cigler, 1995; Ornstein & Elder, 1978; Stewart & Sheffield, 1987). Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen (2000) found that people who feel threatened by political candidates in an election (as measured by anxiety) are more likely to become politically active than those who do not feel threatened.

Miller, Krosnick, Lowe, and Holbrook (2002) noted that a citizen can perceive various types of threats, coming from politicians and other powerful individuals and groups. For example, a politician or interest group could advocate changes in public policy that pose threats to a person's material self-interest, such as increases in taxes. Or a proposed change in policy (such as a new law restricting access to abortion) could pose a threat to a person's values.

Miller et al. (2002) examined the impact of such policy change threat (defined as the belief that politically powerful individuals are mobilizing to change a policy in an *unwanted* direction) on financial contributions to interest groups.⁴ They also

³ Olson's (1965) theory of collective action could be considered as specifying psychological motivations for action, inasmuch as it prescribes that organizations provide selective benefits to induce citizens to take action. However, we agree with Olson that selective incentives are a way to offset the costs of participation, not specific motivations for action in their own right.

⁴ Whereas Marcus et al. (2000) conceptualized and measured threat with regard to emotions, namely anxiety, Miller et al. (2002) focused on a different type of threat: the cognitive realization that public policy may move in an unwanted direction. Miller (2000) found that the cognitive and affective conceptualizations of threat are unrelated, and that policy change threat has an independent effect on political behavior that is not mediated by anxiety.

explored the impact of perceptions of policy change opportunity (defined as the belief that politically powerful individuals are mobilizing to change a policy in a *wanted* direction). Miller et al. (2002) suggested that policy change threat will be more motivating than policy change opportunity, based on two theoretical perspectives. First, prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) describes how the threat of a loss is especially motivating, even more so than the possibility of a gain. And a second theory suggests that opportunity might actually have an *inhibiting* effect on activism. The “social loafing effect” described by social impact theory (Latane, 1981) argues that people devote less effort to pursuing a desired common goal when they believe others are working with them toward the same goal. This is very much like the free-rider phenomenon identified by Olson (1965). So if people believe that others are working to change a public policy in a desired direction, they may decide to allocate their resources elsewhere, because they will be able to benefit from the desired outcome without having to participate.

Miller et al. (2002) also theorized about *when* policy change threat would be most motivating. Specifically, they argued that no matter how much people *want* to act, whether they actually *do* is limited partly by whether they have the resources necessary to do so. For example, people with just enough money to pay for basic living costs do not have the luxury of contributing money to political organizations, no matter how appealing that may seem to them. Therefore, Miller et al. (2002) hypothesized that, when it comes to contributing money to a political organization, income should play a moderating role. Second, they hypothesized that, for someone who attaches a great deal of importance to an issue, the threat of an undesirable policy change would be extremely motivating. This is so because attaching personal importance to an issue, in and of itself, is an indication that a move of public policy in an undesirable direction would be upsetting and potentially devastating (because a lot is at stake for such an individual), rather than simply being undesirable in a cold and purely cognitive sense. If an issue is unimportant to a person, the same threat of an undesirable policy change would not be all that significant. Therefore, attitude importance might also moderate the effect of policy change threat on contributions.

Using various sets of survey data, Miller et al. (2002) found that policy change threat is a powerful motivator of financial contributions, whereas policy change opportunity has no reliable effect. In addition, income and attitude importance moderate the threat effect in the expected directions. Specifically, threat increases contributions more among individuals at higher income levels, and more among people for whom the issue is more personally important.

Study Overview

Miller et al.'s (2002) studies involved either reports of past financial contributions or reports of willingness to contribute money in the future. A more direct

test of the hypotheses would involve a measure of actual behavior. In this paper, we report another test of Miller et al.'s principal hypotheses, this time in a field experiment in which we measured actual financial contributions in response to different political appeals. The current study also measures an additional type of political behavior—expressing one's views to the president. We examined three hypotheses: (1) policy change threat will motivate more financial contributions than policy change opportunity or a control condition; (2) policy change threat will motivate more people to express their attitudes to the president than policy change opportunity or a control condition; and (3) income will moderate the effect of policy change threat on contributions and attitude expression.

Letters

To test our hypotheses, we created three different versions of a letter soliciting contributions to the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League of Ohio (NARAL Ohio). People were randomly assigned to receive one of the three letters in the mail.⁵

One of the three letters was the “control” letter—it allowed an assessment of people's baseline levels of contributing in the absence of threat or opportunity. In order for this letter to be typical of fundraising tools, we collected fundraising letters used by different sorts of interest groups, ranging from the American Civil Liberties Union and Planned Parenthood to the National Rifle Association and National Right to Life. A content analysis of such letters identified elements that were common to nearly all of them, and our control letter contained all of these elements: a description of the organization's goals, evidence of its past victories, attempts to increase efficacy, statements of urgency, and selective incentives to join (see the Appendix for the text of the letters).

The “policy change threat” letter included the same information as the control letter, plus additional information intended to induce a sense of policy change threat among people who favored legalized abortion. Specifically, the letter stated that powerful members of Congress were working hard to make abortions more difficult to obtain, by outlawing dilation and extraction (D & X, a safe abortion procedure), banning all abortions except when there is a threat to a woman's life caused by the pregnancy, and preventing women in the U.S. military from using their own money to pay for abortion services abroad (these pieces of legislation were being pursued in Congress at the time the study was conducted). The letter emphasized that these threats were real and stated that “if these laws are passed, women will lose many of the rights they currently have.” Being told about such

⁵ One advantage of such a field experiment is that the research participants were unaware that different letters were sent to different people and that their behavior was being tracked. We worked in collaboration with NARAL Ohio in conducting this study. NARAL kept all monies raised by the letters and added the contributors to their membership rolls.

legislation and its effects should have induced the belief among supporters of abortion rights that powerful political agents were working hard to enact undesired abortion policies.

The "policy change opportunity" letter included all of the same information as the control letter, as well as information intended to create a sense of policy change opportunity among people who favored legalized abortion. It stated that powerful members of Congress were working hard to make abortions easier to obtain, by eliminating gag rules that limited people's rights to receive complete information about abortion services, eliminating laws preventing Medicaid-eligible women and federal employees from receiving health insurance coverage of abortion services, and eliminating laws requiring waiting periods and parental consent for abortion services (these pieces of legislation were also being pursued in Congress at the time the study was conducted). The letter emphasized that these opportunities were real and stated that "if these laws are passed, women will gain many of the rights they currently do not have." Being told about such legislation should have induced the belief among supporters of abortion rights that powerful political agents were working to enact desired policies.

All three letters asked respondents to contribute money to NARAL Ohio. In addition, the letters gave respondents the opportunity to sign a postcard addressed to President Bill Clinton urging him to support abortion rights. Respondents were asked to send the signed postcard back to NARAL in the envelope provided, so that a bundle of postcards could be sent to President Clinton from NARAL all at one time. The amount of money each letter yielded was recorded, as was the presence or absence of a signed postcard.

Sample

To select letter recipients, we identified the six zip codes in Franklin County, Ohio, in which the greatest number of NARAL members resided. We then obtained a list of all of the registered voters in these zip codes, presuming that registered voters were at least somewhat politically active and might therefore be more responsive to our solicitation letters than would others. To minimize interference from other relevant mailings, we removed people who were already members of NARAL from the list. In addition, we dropped from the list all men, and we dropped all women who were not registered Democrats.⁶ These last two steps were aimed at increasing the number of people in the sample who were predisposed to become active supporters of abortion rights. Among adult supporters of abortion rights, women are twice as likely as men to be politically active on the issue (Verba et al., 1995), and Democrats are more likely than Republicans to support abortion rights (e.g., the correlation between support for legalized

⁶ This means that the recipients of the letters had been solicited by NARAL many times before and had consistently refused to contribute, thereby minimizing expected contribution rates.

abortion and being a Democrat according to the 1996 National Election Study was .14, $p < .001$, $N = 1,663$). From the resulting list of women who were registered Democrats and lived in the six zip codes in Franklin County, 9,000 names were randomly selected.

The 9,000 selected women were then each randomly assigned to receive one of the three letters, so all characteristics of individuals were presumably comparable across the three groups who received the three different letters.⁷ Therefore, any observed differences in contribution amounts among the groups can be confidently attributed to the letters themselves.

Of the 9,000 letters sent, 1,322 were returned to sender because the addressee had moved or the address was invalid (411 in the control condition, 470 in the threat condition, and 441 in the opportunity condition). The number of envelopes presumably delivered was therefore 7,678.

The income of each selected individual was estimated by using the 1990 U.S. Census to obtain the median household income for the census block group of each letter recipient.⁸

Results

The percentage of people who made contributions to NARAL in the control, threat, and opportunity conditions was 0.23%, 0.43%, and 0.39%, respectively. Three different analysis techniques were used to predict a dichotomous dependent variable indicating whether people contributed (coded 0 for people who did not and 1 for people who did).⁹ For these analyses, two predictor variables were created, called policy change threat and policy change opportunity. People who received the threat letter were coded 1 on the threat variable, and all other people were coded 0 on this variable. People who received the opportunity letter were coded 1 on the opportunity variable, and all other people were coded 0 on this variable.

To test the impact of the letters, we first conducted logistic regressions using whether or not respondents made a contribution and whether or not they sent back the postcard as dichotomous dependent variables. Second, we conducted a rare-events logistic regression, which is a logit procedure developed specifically for rare-events data (King & Zeng, 2001). The third analysis procedure we used is a

⁷ Because our goal in this process was to simulate real-world mail solicitations, we did not send a questionnaire with the mailing, nor did we do follow-up interviews. Therefore, we have no information about respondents and non-respondents with which to test this assumption.

⁸ The census income variable had outliers at both tails. To avoid distortions due to these outliers, we dropped them from the negative binomial regression analyses reported below (the top 5% and the bottom 5% of the distribution; see Rousseeuw & Leroy, 1987).

⁹ Contributions were made by six people in the control condition, 11 people in the threat condition, and 10 people in the opportunity condition. This tiny yield (0.3%) is typical of cold mass mailings by interest groups.

negative binomial regression (King, 1989a), which was designed to predict event count data that have only positive integers and have a high concentration of zero values (King, 1989a, 1989b). For these models, the dependent variables were amount of contribution and number of postcards returned. Attesting to the robustness of our effects, all three analysis procedures yielded similar results. We report the negative binomial results below.

We conducted a negative binomial regression predicting whether people contributed or not from threat, opportunity, and income. The effect of threat was positive and marginally significant ($b = 0.66, p < .10$).¹⁰ Neither the effect of opportunity nor the effect of income was statistically significant ($b = 0.54, n.s.$, and $b = -1.95, n.s.$, respectively). Next, the threat \times income and opportunity \times income interactions were added to the model. Neither interaction was statistically significant ($b = -5.11, n.s.$, and $b = 2.10, n.s.$, respectively).

The percentage of people who signed the postcard addressed to President Clinton in the control, threat, and opportunity conditions was 1.08%, 0.91%, and 1.52%, respectively. We conducted a negative binomial regression predicting whether or not people returned the postcard (coded 0 for people who did not and 1 for people who did).¹¹ The effect of threat was not statistically significant ($b = -0.17, n.s.$) but the effect of opportunity was statistically significant ($b = 0.34, p < .10$).

Because returning a postcard does not require disposable income, we did not expect income to play a role in determining who returned postcards in this experiment. Consistent with this logic, neither the main effect of income ($b = -0.65, n.s.$) nor the interaction of income with threat ($b = -4.19, n.s.$) or opportunity ($b = 2.98, n.s.$) was statistically significant. This finding is consistent with Visser, Krosnick, and Simmons' (2003) evidence that income does not moderate the impact of motivational determinants on non-financial activism.¹²

Discussion

The findings reported here provide support for the hypothesis that policy change threat motivates financial contributions to interest groups. Taken in concert with Miller et al.'s (2002) studies—both correlational and experimental, with two different issues (the environment and gun control)—the body of evidence suggests that policy change threat does, in fact, instigate financial contributions.¹³

¹⁰ Given the findings of Miller et al. (2002) and the strong theoretical predictions, one-tailed p values are reported for both the threat and opportunity hypotheses.

¹¹ Numbers of postcards returned in the control, threat, and opportunity conditions were 28, 23, and 39, respectively.

¹² Although we cannot test whether attitude importance moderates these effects, our choice to focus on Democratic women means that we have, in effect, selected a relatively high-importance sample.

¹³ This pattern of results rules out two alternative explanations for the significant difference in contributions between the threat and control conditions. Specifically, both the threat and opportunity letters contained specific arguments to convince people to contribute to NARAL, whereas the

The magnitude of the threat effect documented here is likely to understate the true size of that effect because of the nature of the population we chose for this study. We sent letters to Democratic women residing in parts of Franklin County, Ohio, from which NARAL already had the most members. Because this area was such fertile ground for NARAL fundraising, the organization had sent countless letters to the very people we contacted. And, for whatever reason (e.g., they were opposed to abortion rights, they did not think NARAL is an effective organization, they did not respond to mail solicitations), these women had not given to NARAL in the past. Therefore, our sample may have been one for which no appeal, regardless of the strength of the message, would have been effective. We have some anecdotal evidence to this effect.

In addition, the volume of past NARAL solicitations our sample probably received may have desensitized them to urgent pronouncements about imminent threats. Although we have no data in this regard, Godwin's (1988) analysis of the content of fundraising letters points to the ubiquitousness of fear/threat appeals. Therefore, our sample of women may have received countless threat appeals from the organization in the past, thus leading to a "Chicken Little" effect, or "threat fatigue."¹⁴

This logic suggests that threat appeals may only be effective at the early stages of a campaign. The more an organization relies on threat as a political struggle continues, the more individuals may perceive the organization to be ineffective, and the more manipulative the organization may seem. This rationale leads to an interesting hypothesis: Threat appeals may be effective at obtaining new members for an organization but may not be especially effective at keeping those members active over the long haul. We look forward to future research that tests this new hypothesis.

In contrast to past studies, income did not appear to moderate the effect of policy change threat on financial contributions to NARAL. There are at least two reasons to be cautious before accepting this conclusion. First, the residents of the five zip codes to which the letters were mailed had much higher incomes, on average, than residents of the rest of the state. For example, only 5% of letter recipients lived in census blocks with annual household incomes below \$20,000. In contrast, according to the 1994 Current Population Survey for Ohio, 24% of the residents of Ohio had annual household incomes below \$20,000. The lack of people in our sample in the lowest income categories could limit our ability to detect an interaction between threat and income, because it is precisely individu-

control condition included no such arguments. In addition, both the threat and opportunity letters were about half a page longer than the control letter. If longer letters or letters that contain a specific argument (regardless of the content of the argument) are likely to convince more people to become politically active, then we would have expected *both* the threat and opportunity letters' contribution yield to be significantly greater than the control letter's yield.

¹⁴ We thank Michael Sargent for coining this term in reference to our findings.

als with very low annual household incomes for whom even the strongest persuasive appeal would presumably not motivate financial contributions to interest groups. Second, the income variable used in the present analysis is somewhat crude. We used the 1990 U.S. Census to obtain the median income of residents within approximately a 10-block radius to estimate the income of a single household 8 years later. Therefore, it seems prudent to hesitate before rejecting Miller et al.'s (2002) conclusion that income moderates the effect of policy change threat on financial contributions. Future field experiments might be able to use more precise methods for obtaining demographic information about individuals in the sample.

The Type of Political Action Matters

This is the first study to explore the effect of threat and opportunity on a different type of political action—signing a postcard to be delivered to the president. We found that policy change opportunity motivated the return of postcards, whereas policy change threat did not. At first glance, these results may seem puzzling. Why would threat instigate contributions and opportunity instigate sending a postcard to the president?

Any answer to this question must take into consideration citizens' beliefs about how specific political goals can be met by engaging in specific *forms* of political action. When confronted with the threat that politically powerful individuals are mobilizing to change a policy in an unwanted direction, citizens must survey the political landscape to determine an effective course of action to avert the threat. Citizens may believe that the most effective strategy is to contribute money to an organization that has the resources to launch a multi-pronged counterattack, involving grassroots mobilizing, lobbying, and the like. That is, when it is time for a legislative battle, citizens may see lobbying groups as the best means to avert a threat. In contrast, sending a postcard registering one's views to the president may seem less potent because a president's veto can be overridden by Congress. So when presented with both options side by side, individuals who perceive a policy change threat may choose to contribute money to an interest group to avert the threat because it is most likely to have an effect. In contrast, when told that politically powerful individuals in Congress are already gearing up to change a policy in a wanted direction, lobbying groups may seem irrelevant because they may not be viewed as effective at helping policies to be passed in the abortion arena. The most effective political strategy might be a reinforcing one: sending a postcard to a president who presumably agrees with the policy change and can effectively join the voices advocating the legislation.

The above rationale alludes to another potential moderating factor—citizens' political knowledge. In order to assess the effectiveness of various influence strategies, a citizen must have knowledge about the political predispositions of powerful political actors. For example, sending a postcard urging a president who

was an adamant opponent of abortion rights to support legislation favoring such rights would probably be ineffective. Similarly, contributing money to an organization whose legislative agenda is in opposition to an overwhelming majority of Congress and the president would presumably also be ineffective. Therefore, the effect of policy change threat and policy change opportunity on citizen action may be moderated by citizens' beliefs about politicians' positions on the issue.¹⁵

Conclusion

We look forward to future research that teases apart the complicated interplay between motivation and action. In fact, we believe that this is where political psychology can make one of its greatest contributions to the study of political participation. By taking into account psychological motivations in conjunction with citizens' beliefs about the effectiveness of different types of political action, we can gain a better understanding of when, why, and how citizens become politically active. In addition, this mode of inquiry can help to explain ebbs and flows in modes of participation, as well as the effectiveness of that participation over time.

APPENDIX: Letters for Field Experiment

Control Letter

Dear Pro-Choice Friend,

It is more difficult for a woman to obtain a safe abortion in the U.S. today than at any time since the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade*! If you join NARAL Ohio, you can help solve this problem.

Consider the challenges facing women in Ohio:

- Ninety percent of Ohio counties have no abortion provider.
- Laws requiring waiting periods and parental consent prevent women from making their own choices. In fact, Ohio is among the 11 most restrictive states in the country when it comes to access to abortion procedures.

NARAL Ohio is at the forefront of local and national efforts to protect a woman's right to choose, and supports the full range of reproductive choices, including

¹⁵ We also suspect that these effects would be moderated by efficacy—either citizens' beliefs about their own abilities to engage in various forms of participation, or their assessments of the effectiveness of each type of activity for meeting their goals.

preventing unintended pregnancy, bearing healthy children, and choosing a safe abortion.

With the support of people like you, NARAL has been successful in overturning laws that limited women's access to abortion, in preventing passage of new laws that would have limited such access, and in helping pass new laws that increased women's access. We can continue to have victories like these, but we need your help.

Here's what you can do:

Sign the enclosed postcard to President Clinton, encouraging him to support reproductive rights for all women, and mail it back to NARAL Ohio in the enclosed envelope. We will deliver your postcard to the White House, along with those of thousands of other Americans, to show President Clinton that we want him to take action now on behalf of the pro-choice majority.

Join NARAL Ohio today. Your membership contribution will allow us to keep track of anti-choice activities around the state, monitor access to abortion facilities, and educate the public with factual information. As a member of NARAL Ohio, you will receive our Voice of Choice newsletter, legislative updates, and invitations to special events.

Help secure reproductive freedom for all women! Sign the enclosed postcard to President Clinton, and send in your membership contribution today! We have won in the past, but we can only continue to do so if we have help from our pro-choice friends, like you. Thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,
Susannah Sagan
Executive Director

P.S. **Join today!** Be part of the pro-choice voice in Ohio!

Opportunity Letter

Dear Pro-Choice Friend,

Members of the U.S. Congress are trying to change laws so women can obtain **safe and legal abortions without restrictions!** If you join NARAL Ohio today, you can help us work to ensure that these new laws are passed!

Consider the challenges facing women in Ohio:

- Ninety percent of Ohio counties have no abortion provider.
- Laws requiring waiting periods and parental consent prevent women from making their own choices. In fact, Ohio is among the 11 most restrictive states in the country when it comes to access to abortion procedures.

Powerful members of Congress are now working hard to:

- **ELIMINATE** “gag rules” that limit people’s rights to receive complete information about abortion services.
- **ELIMINATE** laws that prevent Medicaid-eligible women and federal employees from receiving health insurance that covers abortion services.
- **ELIMINATE** laws requiring waiting periods and parental consent for abortion services.

These opportunities are real! If these laws are passed, women will *gain* many of the rights they currently do not have. Pro-choice members of Congress have proven over and over that they are willing to fight for abortion rights. But they need our help to do so.

NARAL Ohio is at the forefront of local and national efforts to protect a woman’s right to choose, and supports the full range of reproductive choices, including preventing unintended pregnancy, bearing healthy children, and choosing a safe abortion.

With the support of people like you, NARAL has been successful in overturning laws that limited women’s access to abortion, in preventing passage of new laws that would have limited such access, and in helping pass new laws that increased women’s access. We can continue to have victories like these, but we need your help.

Here’s what you can do:

Sign the enclosed postcard to President Clinton, encouraging him to work to ensure that this pro-choice legislation passes, and mail it back to NARAL Ohio in the enclosed envelope. We will deliver your postcard to the White House, along with those of thousands of other Americans, to show President Clinton that we want him to take action *now* on behalf of the pro-choice majority.

Join NARAL Ohio today. Your membership contribution will allow us to keep track of anti-choice activities around the state, monitor access to abortion facilities, and educate the public with *factual* information. As a member

of NARAL Ohio, you will receive our *Voice of Choice* newsletter, legislative updates, and invitations to special events.

Help us take advantage of these pro-choice opportunities! Sign the enclosed postcard to President Clinton, and send in your membership contribution today! We have won in the past, but we can only continue to do so if we have help from our pro-choice friends, like you.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,
Susannah Sagan
Executive Director

P.S. **Join today!** Be part of the pro-choice voice in Ohio!

Threat Letter

Dear Pro-Choice Friend,

Members of the U.S. Congress are trying to change laws to make it more difficult for women to obtain a safe and legal abortion! If you join NARAL Ohio today, you can help us work to prevent these laws from being passed!

Consider the challenges already facing women in Ohio:

- Ninety percent of Ohio counties have no abortion provider.
- Laws requiring waiting periods and parental consent prevent women from making their own choices. In fact, Ohio is among the 11 most restrictive states in the country when it comes to access to abortion procedures.

Powerful members of Congress are now working hard to:

- **OUTLAW** D & X, a safe abortion procedure.
- **BAN** all abortions, except when there is a threat to a woman's life caused by the pregnancy.
- **PREVENT** women in the U.S. military from using their own money to pay for abortion services abroad.

These threats are real! If these laws are passed, women will *lose* many of the rights they currently have. Anti-choice members of Congress have proven over and over that they want to take away abortion rights. But we can stop them if we work together.

NARAL Ohio is at the forefront of local and national efforts to protect a woman's right to choose, and supports the full range of reproductive choices, including preventing unintended pregnancy, bearing healthy children, and choosing a safe abortion.

With the support of people like you, NARAL has been successful in overturning laws that limited women's access to abortion, in preventing passage of new laws that would have limited such access, and in helping pass new laws that increased women's access. We can continue to have victories like these, but we need your help.

Here's what you can do:

Sign the enclosed postcard to President Clinton, encouraging him to work to ensure that this anti-choice legislation does not pass, and mail it back to NARAL Ohio in the enclosed envelope. We will deliver your postcard to the White House, along with those of thousands of other Americans, to show President Clinton that we want him to take action *now* on behalf of the pro-choice majority.

Join NARAL Ohio today. Your membership contribution will allow us to keep track of anti-choice activities around the state, monitor access to abortion facilities, and educate the public with *factual* information. As a member of NARAL Ohio, you will receive our *Voice of Choice* newsletter, legislative updates, and invitations to special events.

Help us fight anti-choice threats! Sign the enclosed postcard to President Clinton, and send in your membership contribution today! We have won in the past, but we can only continue to do so if we have help from our pro-choice friends, like you.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,
Susannah Sagan
Executive Director

P.S. **Join today!** Be part of the pro-choice voice in Ohio!

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