Dear friends,

Two and a half years ago, I stepped into the role of a lifetime. There was so much potential brewing. True abortion access felt real and closer, like the tide was finally turning. It’s painful to think about how quickly that spectre of progress dissipated and, in its place, we have witnessed a deepened gap between emboldened misogyny and racism and the promise of bodily autonomy and freedom for all.

Still, we are growing stronger and working harder to close that gap. At the National Network of Abortion Funds, our message is resounding: we will not be left behind. Our rights will not be sold out, our bodies will not be intimidated into submission, we will not be ignored. Because of you — the incredible network of donors, activists, volunteers, and staff members that make up our network — we continue to grow more powerful every day.

In these pages, we are proud to highlight the creative approaches we use to tackle entrenched problems and new challenges. Abortion rights have always been under attack, but with you on our side, we are disrupting the status quo by centering leadership development of people who have abortions, nurturing strong locally-rooted organizing, and building the culture and supports that make healthy, thriving abortion funds. We challenge the notion that direct service work is not political: in fact, ensuring that people have their basic needs met, including being able to make their own decisions around pregnancy, is central to creating a movement of resistance accessible to all of us.

Because of you, we’re building from a position of strength. Our network is already an extraordinary safety net for up to a hundred thousand people who call our help lines each year. With your support, we’ll provide more than abortion funding; we’ll make space for love, compassion, and dignity for our callers and our network members. We’ll push back against tired narratives about abortion that perpetuate systemic inequities and, instead, invite people to engage with us, forge connections with each other, and build the leadership to change the face of the abortion access movement.

Together, we are modeling what our political landscape should and will look like. Thank you for being part of this community. With your dollars and your belief in possibility, you are making it happen. Thank you for showing up for abortion funds. We couldn’t do it without you.

With love,

Yamani Hernandez
Executive Director
I am Black. I am young. I am a mother. I’ve had abortions. And I’m happy. Yet, the stigma on all of my identities means I get judged. This needs to change. That’s why I’m sharing my story, even with all the risks. I’m proud of my decisions.

When I found out I was pregnant, I was sitting in jail because a bad situation turned worse. I was told I couldn’t have an abortion, and at 20 years old I didn’t think I was stable enough to be a mother. I was denied my decision. I will never forget that through my whole pregnancy I wanted an abortion and was denied access to it. Abortion should always be an option. We shouldn’t get poor health care just because we are incarcerated. Being forced into becoming a parent makes me want to be an even stronger supportive mother and advocate for abortion access — it makes me want to share my story. I love my son. I will continue to fight for his future, and I will support him and his friends through their reproductive decisions. I want young people to see someone who looks like them and has gone through the same thing.

During the abortions I did have, I felt really alone. I won’t ever forget those feelings. Because of the stigma, I didn’t have the support I needed. That’s why I’m excited to be in We Testify. I’m excited to be part of building a community that supports me and other people who’ve had abortions. I have always wanted to advocate around my abortions, but didn’t know how to do it, so this is a way for me to be myself while sharing my abortion stories. Sharing isn’t easy, but if we don’t even take the risk, who else is gonna do it? I can’t wait for the day we talk about abortion the way we talk about cars and pizza. I try to bring it up everyday in my workplace, and with my family. I want everyone to be comfortable with it. That’s my dream.

Read the interview online: wetestify.org/kayla

MISSISSIPPI REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM FUND HOUSE
BY KYLIE CHEUNG

In February, the Mississippi Reproductive Freedom Fund, which operates in a state with just one abortion clinic remaining, moved to fight for reproductive justice in a unique way — by purchasing a house.

As a result of laws placing expensive, medically unnecessary requirements on clinics with the purpose of shutting them down, people seeking abortion in Mississippi face the burden of not only paying for the procedure, but also for the fees involved with traveling a great distance to the state’s only clinic based in Jackson. People in Mississippi seeking abortions struggle to find places to stay due to the state’s 24-hour waiting period requirement for the procedure, and some with family in Jackson fear explaining to their families why they need a place to stay. Others must travel with their children and struggle to find childcare.

The Mississippi Reproductive Freedom Fund house is unique in a network of abortion funds that work creatively to overcome logistical barriers to abortion access. Once operational, the house will serve multiple purposes — one of its most important roles being to offer abortion seeking people from all over the state welcoming and supportive cost-free lodging.

Laurie Bertram Roberts, Executive Director of the Mississippi Reproductive Freedom Fund, hopes the house will provide space and visibility that promotes real change for everyone whose reproductive rights are under threat.

“The house shows what all our needs are, that it’s not just about having an abortion or not having one. Childcare, affordability, women’s safety, the LGBT community and poor people and people of color — it’s not simple,” she said. “Black women have some of the highest maternal mortality rates in the country. Why is that? There’s a lot of needs on that continuum of reproductive justice that aren’t being addressed.”

Read more at: http://bit.ly/MRFFhouse
For years, access to abortion has been under assault across the nation. Despite last year’s Supreme Court win, there are now seven states with only one abortion clinic. While we know the Republican Party leads the charge to restrict abortion rights and shutter clinics, they do not do it alone. Anti-abortion Democrats are there alongside them. As Democratic Party leaders plan for the 2018 elections, we cannot stay silent as they welcome anti-abortion politicians to further erode access. This isn’t a hypothesis — every day, abortion funds hear the negative impact on callers created by anti-abortion politicians, from both parties.

In July, over 140 people who’ve had abortions spoke out with a loving open letter to Democratic Party Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi asking her to reconsider her position welcoming anti-choice politicians and to instead show up for people who’ve had abortions. Our letter was sent to Rep. Pelosi’s office, appeared in the San Francisco Examiner, and was spread across social media. The campaign was a huge success, with an additional 300 people who’ve had abortions signing on to the letter. Read our letter and sign on at: letter.abortifunds.org.

We are strong in our conviction that politicians should represent the people and our needs, including people who’ve had abortions. The Democratic Party, and all elected officials, should be committed to supporting abortion access for everyone.

A few days after we sent Rep. Pelosi our letter, more Democratic Party leaders expressed their support for welcoming anti-choice politicians. NNAF and abortion storytellers from We Testify went out in full force, speaking truth to power about the impact that anti-abortion politicians have had in our communities.

**MEDIA CLIPPINGS:**

“We cannot wait for more advantageous times for Democrats; we cannot make space for legislation or lip service from any politician who does not consistently stand with us in regards to our basic bodily autonomy, and that includes the words they choose to use around the issues of abortion and healthcare.” - Aimee Arrambide, We Testify Abortion Storyteller, in Bustle

“We have so many anti-choice Democrats in state houses... [who] have really been helping to pass a lot of the anti-choice restrictions that we see today. We didn’t get to seven states with one abortion clinic with just the Republican Party. There were Democrats that helped.” - Renee Bracey Sherman, We Testify Senior Public Affairs Manager, in Broadly

“This announcement [by Rep. Luján] today falling on Black Women’s Equal Pay Day is rather ironic, that they are fighting for economic justice for black women but in such a narrow way. Abortion is part of this equation.” - Kristine Kippins, We Testify Abortion Storyteller, in ThinkProgress

“We were excited to see the repeal of the Hyde Amendment included as part of a political party platform, and to go from that to now seeing the Democratic Party trying to appeal to people who support anti-abortion restrictions is a huge concern for us.” - Yamani Hernandez, Executive Director, in The Atlantic
THE NATIONAL NETWORK OF ABORTION FUNDS’ CURRENT MEMBERSHIP CONSISTS OF MORE THAN 70 ABORTION FUNDS IN 38 STATES AND INTERNATIONALLY.

Our unified network of abortion funds are comprised of grassroots organizations who work ceaselessly to broaden abortion access for their communities and callers, elevating the perspectives of those most affected by these barriers. Our network views abortion access as integral to our individual and collective ability to break free of barriers.

Powered by direct funding, practical support, and an unwavering desire to shift culture around abortion care, our network works to ensure that everyone, no matter what, has the power to control their own reproductive lives.

MEMBERSHIP

The membership team weaves connections across the network, promoting collaboration between member organizations and supporting abortion funds to be strong and sustainable organizations who provide compassionate care to people seeking abortions. Earlier this year membership was expanded to individuals, as well, to give supporters access to local, regional, and national calls-to-action, and in-the-know briefings.

COMMUNICATIONS

The communications team provides training and media related support for the entire network, grounding our work in inclusive values-based messaging. Leading programs like We Testify and Bowl-a-Thon, the communications team elevates abortion stories and opportunities to invest in abortion access.

ORGANIZING

Our policy, advocacy, and organizing programming addresses the root causes of inequities in abortion access, and promotes reproductive, racial, and economic justice in our network and beyond. The organizing team supports leaders with the skills and strategies to powerfully lead funds and organize at the local level through programs like the Network Movement Building Lab (NMBL) and Movement Makers.

OPERATIONS

As member funds continue to build up their own infrastructure the operations team provides support in critical areas like financial management, state and federal regulations, and the many other details that help non-profit organizations run successfully.

DEVELOPMENT

Across the network, the development team supports abortion funds in raising money and actualizing the core value that fundraising is a political act and a form of movement building.
“We deeply believe in connecting direct service to advocacy and see a lot of opportunities to engage people in Indiana. There isn’t a lot of organizing happening in this state which is both a challenge and opportunity. I’m so excited to be a part of NMBL for the collective learning, mentorship, and overall support around organizing campaigns. It feels like kismet that this is happening right now.”

Shelly Dodson, All-Options Pregnancy Resource Center, Indiana

“We organized an activist team of volunteers participating in political education around abortion access barriers and co-creating a powerful local campaign. As we engage more in organizing we have a lot of questions around values alignment and creating meaningful relationships with racial and economic justice organizations. We are looking forward to working through this in the NMBL cohort!”

Tabitha Skervin, Women’s Medical Fund, Pennsylvania

“I am in awe of NNAF’s flexibility and thoughtfulness in responding to the needs of member abortion funds, and providing both concrete tools and a space for us to explore solutions together. NNAF is modeling how our processes can reflect our collective brilliance and shared values, just as much as the outcomes.”

Sara Spriggs, ACCESS Women’s Health Justice, California

“Movement Makers has only just started but through the inspirational coaching from NNAF staff I am honing in on my purpose and developing exciting initiatives for Gateway!”

Maia Elkana, Gateway Women’s Access Fund, Missouri
Recently, I sat down with B. Polovina, NNAF individual member, monthly sustainer, and one of my favorite people in this world. - Yas Ahmed

Who are you in the world:
A mild-mannered public servant, a spouse, a dog parent, a lawyer, and five feet two inches of grit. A child of immigrants. A mixed race (Middle Eastern/white) kid from the San Fernando Valley.

Why did you become an individual member and a donor with NNAF:
In November 2016, shortly after the election, I decided to align my values with my pocketbook. I had just gotten a good raise the previous month, I live in a rent controlled apartment in a dual income household in San Francisco, and I enjoy immense privilege. So it was time to get to work. Knowing that all levels of the federal government would be attacking abortion access with unabashed spite, and wanting to participate how I could in working toward equity, I found NNAF.

What do you want others to know about abortion funds:
I want people, especially those who live in states with better abortion access, to reflect on how abortion access has shaped their own lives and how fundamentally important it is to others who may be differently situated. If you believe all people should have bodily autonomy, supporting abortion funds is an excellent match for your beliefs. If you believe in racial equity, and centering Black people and lifting them up in yet another iteration of white supremacy in America, contributing to abortion funds will help you live your principles.

Read online: abortionfunds.org/donor-fall2017

For those who love fashion, the September issue is a big deal because it means the announcement of the new fall lines. In recent years, we’ve seen more and more popular magazines raise up the issue of abortion access, and this is a trend we work hard to participate in as part of our culture change agenda.

In the past two years the National Network of Abortion Funds has graced the digital folds of Cosmopolitan, TeenVogue, Glamour, Redbook, and EBONY (also in print). Editors and reporters at these magazines know that people who buy their magazines crave bodily autonomy and freedom from shame. While many popular magazines may have a ways to go before they are as body positive as we’d love to see, the way abortion access is being covered is certainly a step in the right direction! We can now add Marie Claire’s September 2017 issue to the list with their multi-page feature on abortion funds and the impact of funding barriers on abortion access.

Check out Access Reproductive Care-Southeast, Inc., an abortion fund supporting callers from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Tennessee, shining on the pages of Marie Claire. We are so proud and grateful to Oriaku Njoku, who speaks from the heart:

“BECAUSE THIS ISSUE IS POLITICIZED, PEOPLE TEND TO BE RIGID WITH THESE CONVERSATIONS. I TRY TO MAKE IT MORE CASUAL, LIKE, ‘HEY GIRL, WHAT’S GOOD? LET’S TALK ABOUT THIS ABORTION.’”

Our Executive Director, Yamani Hernandez is also quoted: “Abortion is legal for everybody, but it’s only affordable for some.”

Read online: http://bit.ly/mcabortionfunds
NEW FUND SPOTLIGHT: YELLOWHAMMER FUND

The Yellowhammer Fund is the first statewide abortion fund in Alabama associated with the National Network of Abortion Funds.

Why did you decide to start an abortion fund?

As residents of the rural South, we understand the social and structural barriers faced by people attempting to access abortion care in our region. Escorting patients from their cars to clinic doors is incredibly necessary but we knew our patients needed more. Through the Yellowhammer Fund we will provide funding for anyone seeking care at one of Alabama’s five clinics, and will help with other barriers (like travel, lodging, etc.) as well.

What are you most nervous about in today’s political climate?

As with any work relating to abortion care, there is an element of danger — especially in the South. Since our fund is volunteer-based, some of us could potentially face push-back from employers, neighbors, friends, or family.

We have already experienced difficulties identifying allies in our community who will support our work without perpetuating abortion stigma. We are not the first to face these hurdles and we’re confident we’ll be able to build and sustain a strong base of support.

What’s most important for people to know about Alabama?

We have everything from a 48-hour waiting period to parental consent laws. We have emboldened anti-choice groups outside our clinics who receive support (financial and otherwise) from our state legislators in Montgomery and Washington, D.C. We have a Republican supermajority constantly targeting abortion access while looking for ways to restrict access to healthcare and social welfare programs. However, Alabama also has a fierce group of activists who work tirelessly to ensure that clinic doors stay open and that people can afford the care they need.

Abortion access is getting more scarce across the nation, but if we’ve learned anything down here, it’s that strong networks, like that which is fostered through organizations like NNAF, can take on anything and come out on top!

Read more: abortionfunds.org/welcome-yellowhammer

“JOINING NNAF ENABLES US TO CONNECT WITH AND LEARN FROM INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN DOING THIS WORK FOR A VERY LONG TIME AND BUILD COMMUNITY WITH OTHER SOUTHERN FUNDS WHO FACE SIMILAR CHALLENGES. JOINING NNAF IS TRULY INVALUABLE, ESPECIALLY FOR A NEW FUND.”
WITH YOUR SUPPORT, THE DR. WILLIE PARKER FUND FOR ABORTION ACCESS IN THE SOUTH RAISED OVER $75,000 IN ITS FIRST YEAR! THIS MONEY WILL PROVIDE CRITICAL FUNDING TO THOSE SEEKING ABORTION CARE IN MISSISSIPPI AND ALABAMA.

“Fundraising for the Dr. Parker Fund has allowed us to increase our funding capacity to our Healthline Callers from Alabama and Mississippi! To date, we have been able to fund over $11,000 to folks from Alabama and Mississippi in their time of need. Being able to say yes more on a Healthline call and making sure a caller feels fully supported and affirmed in their decision to have an abortion gets us closer to making Reproductive Justice a reality in the South.”

Oriaku Njoku, Co-Founder & Executive Director at Access Reproductive Care-Southeast, Inc.

TAKE A LOOK INSIDE TO READ MORE ABOUT SOUTHERN ABORTION FUNDS IN ACTION!