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HB 1155 Action Alert

The Sex and Race Selection Bill

Last week has been a busy one for SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective. On Tuesday, February 16, 2010, SisterSong stood with partners Spark Reproductive Justice Now!; SisterLove, Inc.; Planned Parenthood of Georgia; Georgia Women for Change; Feminist Women's Health Center; Raksha; and several members of the Legislative Black Caucus on the Capitol steps to denounce the anti-abortion billboards declaring "black children are an endangered species" and OPPOSE HB 1155, the Prenatal Nondiscrimination Bill. This press conference was conducted in concert with SPARK's Legislate This! event. House Bill 1155 asserts that abortion providers in the state of Georgia solicit women of color to have abortions based on the race or sex of the fetus. While such allegations are unfounded and inflammatory, the bill has sparked much interest. This bill also proposes a ban on sex-selective abortions, furthering the criminalization of women of color without any regard to the broader ubiquitous issues of gender discrimination that are deeply embedded in the fabrics of our lived experiences.

We greatly appreciate the local elected officials that stood in solidarity with us: Sen. Vincent Fort, Sen. Nan Orrock, Rep. Georganna Sinkefield, Rep. Dee Dawkins-Haigler, Rep. Pam Stephenson, Rep. Roberta Abdul-Salaam, Rep. Simone Bell, Rep. Sheila Jones, Rep. Rashad Taylor, Rep. Stephanie Stuckey Benefield, and Rep. Pedro Marin. Rep. Dawkins-Haigler offered profound words of courage while Rep. Rashad Taylor read our statement of solidarity on Tuesday at the Capitol steps that affirmed SisterSong's core reproductive justice principles: our human right to have a baby, not have a baby, and parent the children we already have. This statement has been signed by more than 40 national leaders from communities of color committed to reproductive justice.

Since the press conference, SisterSong has been active on two fronts – mobilizing to have the billboards removed and DEFEATING HB 1155. Since Tuesday, HB 1155 was heard and voted on in the Non-civil Judiciary Sub-Committee. It passed and was then presented in the full Judiciary Committee on Wednesday, February 17. Though it is obvious Republicans are attempting to fast track HB 1155, SisterSong was there amplifying the voices of women of color. When in Sub-committee on Tuesday, SisterSong was the only voice of opposition that testified against the bill and confronted untruths presented by Georgia Right to Life. And though the Sub-Committee passed the bill, sending it to the full committee, the full Judiciary Committee has

suspended consideration (put the bill on hold to consider another day) because the committee didn't have enough time to hear everyone's testimony.

What does this mean? It means we have a window of opportunity to call the chair of this committee and speak out against injustice. While a committee meeting can be called any day to resume "consideration" we must be vocal about our position between now and then. **If you live in Georgia, call Chairman Rich Golick of the Non-Civil Judiciary Committee TODAY and urge him to VOTE NO TO HB 1155. His home number is 770.319.7200; his office number is 404.656.5943; and his email address is rich.golick@house.ga.gov . We have prepared talking points to support advocacy. This is our chance to DEFEAT HB 1155 and stand up for Reproductive Justice.**