



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts:

Policy: Heidi Williamson, National Policy Coordinator, 404-756-2680

Media Relations: Serena Garcia, Communications Coordinator, 404-756-2680/404-452-6398

SISTERSONG Collective Opposes HB 1155 The Sex and Race Selection Bill

SisterSong Denounces This Attack on Reproductive Choice for Women of Color

Atlanta, GA – February 12, 2010: SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective OPPOSES House Bill 1155 - The Sex and Race Selection Bill. This bill seeks to ban the solicitation and targeting of women of color by abortion providers throughout the state.

This misleading issue of abortions for sex- and race-selection in Georgia means that we have to use facts and science to stand up for women of color without undermining our support for abortion rights or without enforcing racial stereotypes about women of color. Intent on driving a wedge between reproductive justice and racial justice organizations, and pro-choice advocates, the bill reflects the false assumption that abortion providers throughout the state “solicit” women of color. If implemented, this bill will adversely impact abortion providers by requiring them to prove that they are not targeting women of a certain race or ethnicity. This burden could result in delayed medical services, particularly for women of color. Additionally, this legislation would alter the racketeering laws of the Georgia Code to include abortion providers. This is unacceptable as abortion is legal in the State of Georgia, and the alleged abuses of this medical procedure are unfounded. Such a bill would have a terrible effect on women’s ability to access reproductive health care services throughout the state.

This bill comes on the heels of a controversial billboard campaign that targets Black women in Georgia. The blatantly sexist and racist billboards declare Black children as an endangered species and prey on the conscience of Black women. The mere association between the born and unborn with endangered animals provides a disempowering and dehumanizing message to the Black community, which is completely unacceptable.

The statewide 80-billboard campaign is sponsored by The Endangered Species Project, a collaborative effort between The Radiance Foundation and Georgia’s Operation Outrage.

We recognize that the lived experiences of women of color, and Black women specifically, drive how and when women choose abortion, not abortion providers who defend women's rights. In order to protect the lives of women and families, abortion must remain safe, legal, affordable, and accessible. Any attack on women's rights is in violation of all of our human rights.

SisterSong will detail the damaging effects of HB 1155 and how the public can advocate for the reproductive justice, reproductive rights, and reproductive health of women of color. Sponsored by SPARK Reproductive Justice NOW, during their Legislate THIS! Action Day, the *Trust Black Women* Press Conference will take place on Tuesday, February 16, 2010 at 12:00 pm on the steps of Georgia's Capitol.

###

The mission of SisterSong is to amplify and strengthen the collective voices of Indigenous women and women of color to ensure reproductive justice through securing human rights. We fight equally for the right to bear – or not to bear – a child, along with the subsequent and necessary enabling conditions to realize these rights. We implement our work within the structure of three national impact goals: 1) Support: To create spaces for Indigenous women and women of color to strategize on developing a national movement of women of color for reproductive justice, 2) Mentor: To build the capacity of Indigenous women and women of color organizations and to increase their visibility, sustainability, effectiveness, and influence, and 3) Advocate: To lift the voices and perspectives of Indigenous women and women of color into the mainstream reproductive rights movement, into communities of color, and into public policies.