

NORTHWESTnews

require women to undergo counseling and wait 24 hours before having an abortion.

Fields says the proposed law raises concerns on several fronts. Because only a few Oregon counties even have abortion providers—most are in Portland and Eugene—women from rural areas will have to add an extra day to their travel. This will be especially difficult for poor women who will have to find accommodations and take time off from work.

But mostly Fields finds the measure insulting. "It's a really demeaning piece of legislation because it's basically passing a law that demands women think," she says. "Women think really well about this decision on their own."

Fields struggles sometimes trying to get the sexual minorities community to understand that reproductive rights are a queer issue. "It's hard trying to communicate to folks who are so safe in their gay lives," she says. "It's hard to make them understand that this threat is very real."

She and her partner, Grant High School drama teacher and *Claire of the Moon* star Trisha Todd, have gone to great lengths to ensure that Fields' mother will not disrupt their lives. Fields recently cut ties with her because she felt like her mother was not respecting her family.

"With the baby coming, I had to deal with some real concerns—if something happened, her trying to take the child, or her trying to take the child, period," Fields says. She adds, "A lesbian trying to have a relationship with a woman that's a member of the Christian Coalition is like a black person trying to have a relationship with a parent who's in the KKK."

Fields feels her upbringing gave her some insights to the Christian right wing that others don't have. "It makes me understand in a way that other people don't understand how the other side is working, how hard they are working," she says.

Because of her mom's anti-gay stance, Fields plans to have Todd adopt the child as soon as possible after the birth. The baby is due at the end of this month.

"I have this woman in my life and I have no idea what she's capable of in this situation," Fields says of her mother. "It would be nice if the adoption was about joy, as opposed to fear."

Sadie Fields has authored hundreds of pages of anti-gay and anti-choice writings on the Georgia Christian Coalition's Web site. About the U.S. Supreme Court ruling overturning sodomy laws, she wrote, "Not only have they condoned an immoral act, they have also sent a strong signal of encouragement to men and women to remain in a lifestyle that is dangerous and deadly."

She continues: "Who is to say what the next generation (or at the rate we are declining—this generation) will 'breathe' into the Constitution?"

Will it be to overturn state laws against pedophilia, prostitution, bestiality and every other form of adult sexual activity?"

Fields is fighting not just to keep her mother from interfering with her life but also for the rights of women across Oregon, which is one of the few states with no restrictions on abortion. She and NARAL want to keep it that way.

One recent victory was the passage of an emergency contraceptive law. It gives emergency room patients access to the morning-after pill if they've been the victim of rape or incest.

"This is a big victory for us," Fields says. "Since Catholic hospitals have been merging with secular hospitals, there's been a big lapse in the access that women have to reproductive health care in the hospital setting."

Fields knows better than to bask in the glory of victory for long. She is gearing up for the 2004 election and the "Informed Choice" ballot measure. She is busy polling candidates on their stances regarding sexuality education, contraception access and abortion rights. She is organizing volunteers from around the state and educating the public about the threats to women's rights.

Better than anyone, she knows who she is battling against. jf

KATHY BELGE is a Portland free-lance writer.

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—Tess Fields


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