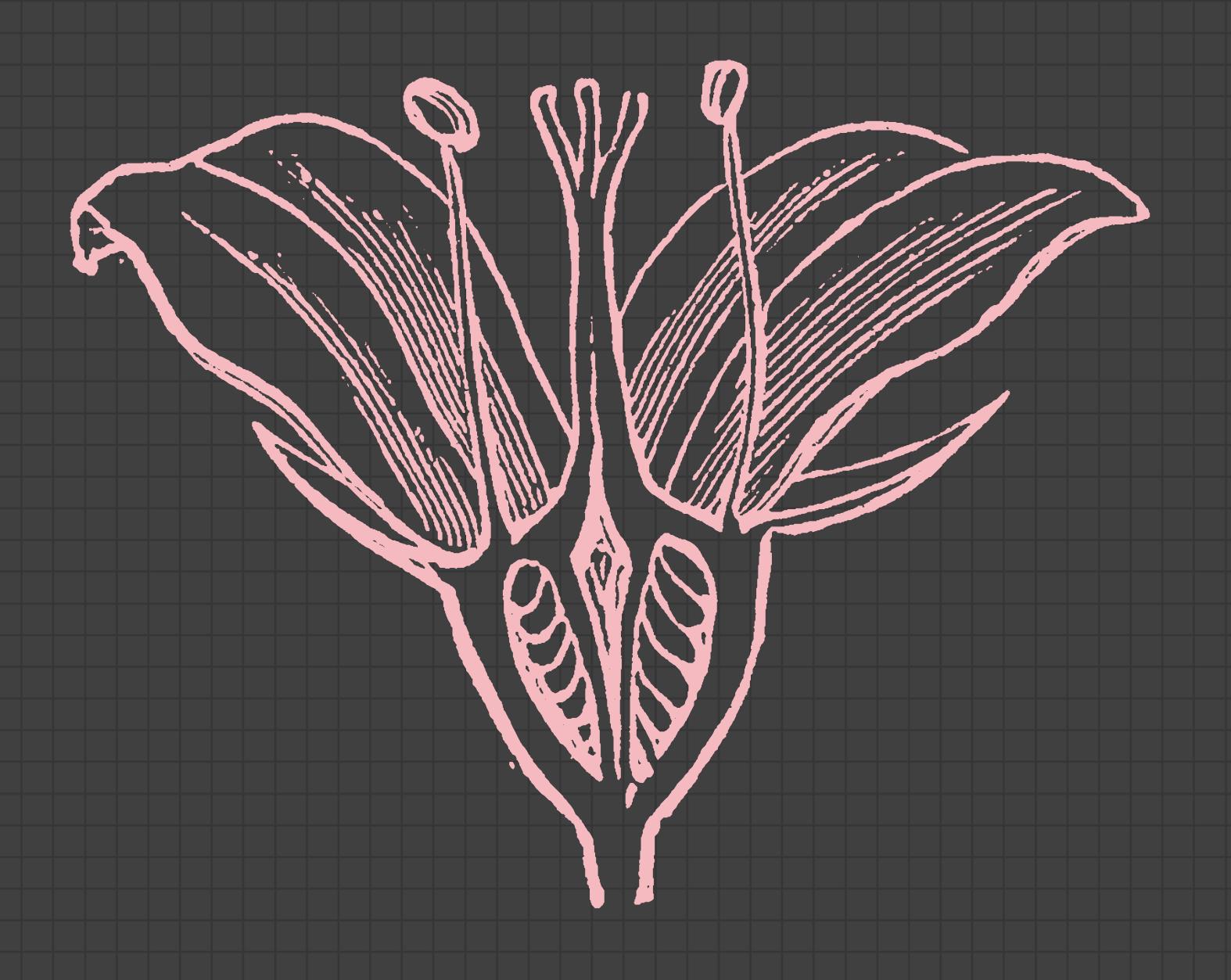
#VuleyFellows

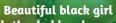
What does reproductive justice mean to you?





CHOOSING WHEN AND HOW I BLOOM

"Before [the fellowship], I was
a social media supporter. It's
opened my eyes to other
ways to be with the
movement."



He raised you well, the daddy who was your role model
Being your own idendepedant woman was his major sell
Life tore you apart and questioning did you do
Through pain and anguish, however other's decisions pushed you
through

Regardless of the transition and road you kept true to who were....

Until the black superwoman complex got you with its enticing lure

Unrealistic expectations from place of racism and patriarchy left

While males around you abused you forcing you to identity shed
To the church you escaped to only face the external stigma that
pressed you within

Religion folded its back on you through events such as abortion, sexual identity and sin

Pressed upon by hatred, taken advantage of again you pressed through

Until faith, freedom and being true to yourself captured you A circle, a sisterhood, you were encompassed with a new found

No longer a victim to the #weinstein #metoo #epstein and #muteRkelly movements

Insert middle fingers to those immature little bous.



"The fellowship showed me ways to incorporate reproductive justice in the work I want to do."





Religious Freedom Trumps Reproductive Rights

By: Erica Barton

Earlier this year, the federal government finalized a ruling to expand protections for health care providers' religious and moral convictions. The regulation adds to existing protections to "ensure vigorous enforcement" of federal conscience laws. The goal of the ruling is to protect providers who refuse to provide health care services for religious reasons from discrimination law suits. Yet, there is no mention of protections for patients who are refused care. Because of existing conscience protections and the current administration's track record, it doesn't seem that this ruling is sincerely intended to protect health care providers. Instead, the expansion of religious freedom protections are just another assault on reproductive rights.

The federal government has long recognized conscience protections for health care providers "who refuse to perform, accommodate, or assist with certain health care services on religious or moral grounds." The Church Amendments were enacted as a response to Roe v. Wade, and explicitly protect health care providers who morally object to providing abortion or sterilization procedures. The Coats-Snowe Amendment expanded protections in the 1990's to protect health care entities who recieve federal funding from discrimination for morally objecting to providing abortion care or abortion training. The Weldon Amendment, first introduced in 2005, defined 'health care entity' as "an individual physician or other health care professional, a hospital, a provider-sponsored organization, a health maintenance organization, a health insurance plan, or any other kind of health care facility, organization, or plan," and extends conscience protections to all of them. Most recently, the Affordable Care Act protects health care providers and facilities from discrimination by health plans, if they refuse abortion care or referrals.

The recent ruling, Protecting Statutory Conscience Rights in Health Care, reinforces already existing protections and, basically, encourages providers to exercise their right to refuse health care services. While abortion is explicitly cited, the new ruling protects the right to refuse care in other cases, too. Providers can morally object to providing contraception, or care for LGBTQ persons. This is unnecessary and overreaching. The government has a responsibility to protect all of its citizens. Four laws have already been put in place protecting health care providers from discrimintation, yet there is no explicit protection for those who are denied care.

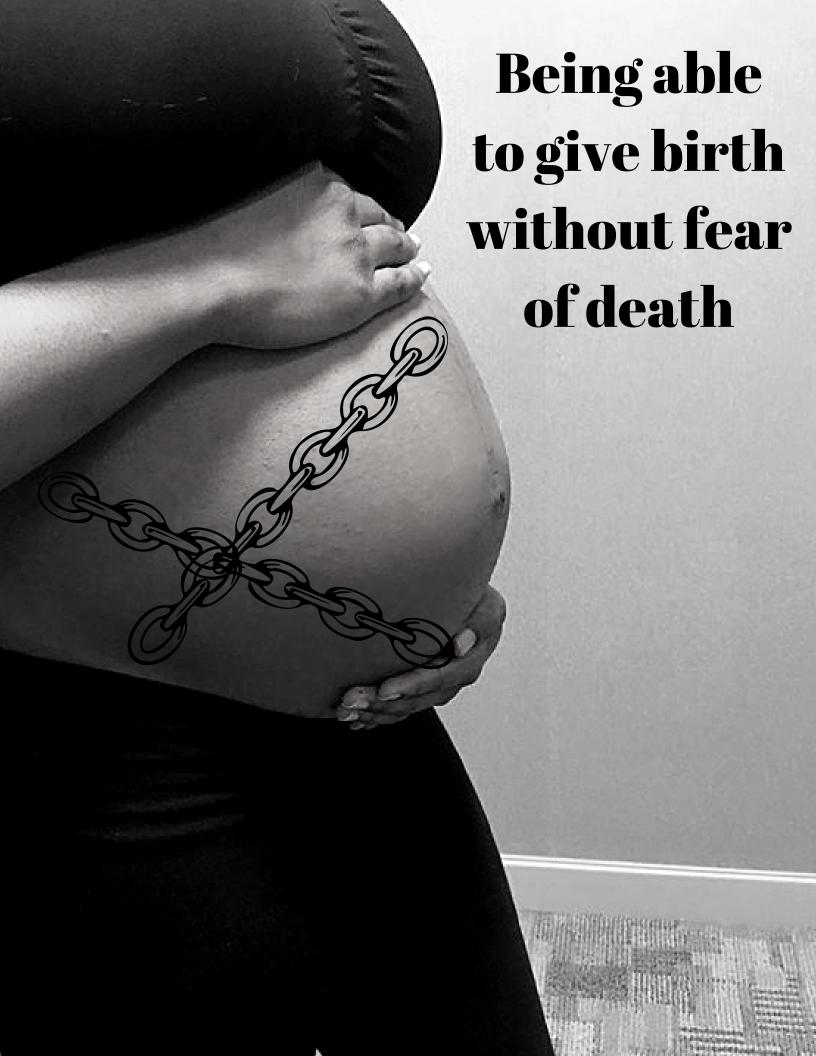
The expansion of religious protections are happening alongside attacks on reproductive rights. The current administration has cut funding to programs that provide abortion care as part of family planning services and no longer requires those organizations to provide comprehensive prenatal information, like adoption and abortion counseling. This goes beyond just barring services. The federal government is allowing information to be withheld from those seeking family planning services. The administration also openly supports anti-abortion legislation. Earlier this year, the President and Vice President attended an anti-abortion protest to speak out against it, even citing the bible as "the truth" against abortion. And, in his State of the Union speech, President Trump said, "all children, born and unborn, are made in the holy image of God."

Of course, religious freedom is a right. It is protected by the U.S. Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This is the right to hold the religion of one's choosing without discrimination. It also means that someone can't be forced to participate in a religion that they do not choose. Forcing religious beliefs on someone is prohibited, and using religion to exert control over someone's behavior, such as when they have children, is reprehensible. Yet, that's exactly what these conscience protections allow. The Trump administration is forcing a certain religious ideology on the entire population, and places a provider's right to religion above a patient's personal autonomy and right to freedom from discrimination themselves.

Health care providers should think about the consequences of refusing health care for religious reasons. Consider if holding true to your convictions is worth putting someone in a potentially harmful position. For the public - vote! There is a huge election coming up. Changing the administration is key to changing harmful policies and protecting access to reproductive health care.

"I enjoyed the teach-in and the process of putting something together."





"I really enjoyed the writing workshop and the Reflective Structured Dialogue training.""

