



# Panelist Bios

## **Sara Ainsworth**

*Panel: The Truth about Crisis Pregnancy Centers*

Sara is Senior Legal & Legislative Counsel at Legal Voice (formerly known as the Northwest Women's Law Center), where she works primarily to advance women's legal rights to reproductive health and to lives free of domestic and sexual violence. She also coordinates Legal Voice's work with the Northwest Reproductive Justice Collaborative, a group of individuals and organizations working for reproductive justice in the region. Before joining Legal Voice, she worked as a legal aid lawyer representing low-income survivors of domestic violence. Ms. Ainsworth also teaches a course on Poverty Law at the University of Washington Law School. She has a particular interest in the nexus of gender violence and reproductive rights, and in advocating for justice for women living in poverty.

## **Dr. Anna Altshuler**

*Panel: The Truth about Crisis Pregnancy Centers*

Medical Degree from University of California, Irvine

Masters of Public Health focusing on health policy from Harvard School of Public Health

Interest in reproductive health policy and social norms around sexual and reproductive health.

As medical student, I started "Medical Students for Reproductive Education," to enhance sexual and reproductive health education for medical students.

I also was an intern for PRCH (Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health).

now resident at University of Washington in obstetrics/gynecology

## **Christa Bell**

*Panel: Art as Activism*

is an award-winning feminist folk poet, performance artist and cultural activist from Seattle, Washington. A National Poetry Slam (NPS) Champion, National Public Radio alumna and internationally touring artist, Bell's work is crafted by combining the oral poetic and storytelling traditions of the Classical Black American Church with rhythmic elements of Hip-Hop and the body-centered awareness and transformative mission of women's sacred ritual. Her work is an act of resistance toward the international corporately-sanctioned attack on women in mainstream Hip-Hop and mass media. As a spoken-word artist, poet and monologist, Bell has created a body of work that is both a cultural insurgency and spiritual-political revival in celebration of the gospel according to women. A graduate of San Francisco State University with a degree in creative writing,

Bell has studied in France and lived in east Africa. She is the author of three collections of poetry, two spoken work CD's and the creatrix of the one-woman phenomenon, "CoochiMagik: A SpokenWord Musical Comedy" directed by acclaimed performance maverick Baraka de Soleil. Christa is currently an artist-in-residence with Seattle Arts and Lectures and a core member of the Brooklyn, NY based performance arts collective, D UNDERBELLY. She has shared stages with political and creative luminaries such as Angela Y. Davis, Saul Williams, Muta Baruka, Ursula Rucker, Bill Frisell and many others.

### **Debbie Carlsen**

*Panel: Wacky, Wild, and Out of This World Ways to Promote Your Cause*

Debbie Carlsen has been organizing in the Seattle community for over 10 years in the feminist, LGBTQ, peace, anti-racism and economic justice movements. She's worked at various social justice organizations in Seattle such as the Washington Women's Voter Project, Washington State Jobs with Justice and MLK Jr. Labor Council. She has her own production company called Ladyking Productions that produces film projects and community cabaret shows. She has been a performing artist for over 5 years and was a founding member of a multi-sized queer draglesque troupe called the Queen Bees, and currently she is a member of a new draglesque troupe called Gayitease. Her passion of connecting movements, oppressions as well as liberations inspired Debbie to start an LGBTQ group called Allyship, a community social justice organization in Seattle. In all of her organizing and activism she incorporates a sense of fun, creativity, art, humor and a splash of good old fashion camp!

### **Cassie Gavin**

*Panel: Abortion Service Providers: A Day in the Life*

Cassie is an RN that works in family planning at Harborview Medical Center and also am in grad school to become a nurse practitioner at Seattle University.

### **Corrigan Gomencia**

*Panel: Reproductive rights...not just a "women's issue"*

Corrigan is currently the Chief Financial & Operations Officer for Ruth Dykeman Children's Center an agency that works with children, youth and families. Prior to that he was the Director of Administration at NARAL Pro-Choice Washington, a political women's rights organization. Corrigan grew up in Libby, Montana and later in Spokane, Washington. He came to the Greater Seattle area in 1999. He currently lives in North Seattle with his husband Sam, cat Cleo and dog Merlin. In his spare time he like reading, gardening and watching movies.

### **Dustin Hall**

*Panel: Reproductive rights...not just a "women's issue"*

Dustin is a student and activist going to school at Washington State University, majoring in Digital Technologies and Cultures. At WSU, he is currently treasurer of the Young Democrats, Vice President of VOX: Voices for Planned Parenthood, and Co-president of Students For Choice as a NARAL intern. In the past he was president of his high school's Gay Straight Alliance and a volunteer sexual educator through Planned Parenthood's

Teen Council. Through his work with these volunteer groups he has been involved in fighting for reproductive rights, queer rights, and comprehensive sexual education, among other causes. Currently he works as a waiter at Stafford Suites, an assisted living facility, but aspires to one day work in media authoring and graphic design for a nonprofit.

### **Alissa Haslam**

*Panel: Our Democracy needs YOU: Preparing for a Career in Politics*

Alissa recently transitioned out of NARAL as the Public Policy and Field Director at NARAL Pro-Choice Washington and is beginning her next professional adventure as Program and Development Director at the Progress Alliance of WA. Alissa has been a field organizer, political director, and lobbyist. Prior to working for reproductive rights, Alissa lived in Oregon and worked for marriage equality and LGBTQ rights. Alissa has a degree in Anthropology and spends her free time reading, knitting, and talking to her cats (and friends too).

### **Sarah Henderson**

*Panel: Pro-Choice Organizing by Youth, For Youth*

Sarah is a high school intern at NARAL Pro-Choice Washington and a peer educator in Planned Parenthood's Teen Council. She is the president of Inglemoor High School's Gay Straight Alliance and the vice president of Cascadia Community College's Gay Straight Alliance, and is also involved with a few LGBT rights groups in Seattle.

### **Jessie Israel**

*Panel: Our Democracy needs YOU: Preparing for a Career in Politics*

Jessie has a fifteen year track record of bringing together groups to invest in local community development, environmental and equity issues. She has trained around the world on building public-private partnerships & developing sustainable communities. In 2009, Jessie ran for Seattle City Council. While she didn't win, she garnered immense support and established herself as a "political rising star." When she's not running for office, Jessie works with King County and has been on point to help reshape King County Parks into an entrepreneurial, performance-driven governmental organization. This transformation allows parks to generate non-tax revenue and ensure green space remains open, even during tight fiscal times. Israel serves on the Parks management team with operating revenue of more than \$20 million & 150 permanent employees. She directly oversees Parks business revenue target encompassing 25% of overall operating revenues. Prior to joining King County, Israel managed start-up non profit, the Center for Women & Democracy at the University of Washington. In the 1990's as a consultant, Jessie worked with neighborhood planning groups to establish the Central Area, Eastlake, Denny Triangle, Wallingford neighborhood plans. In 2006, she was named one of the Puget Sound Business Journal's 40 Under 40, one of the region's "rising business stars who are under the age of 40 and possess a certain passion that drives their business and community involvement to a new level." Israel has a long history of community service with City Year Seattle/King County, National Women's Political Caucus of Washington, National Democratic Institute - Morocco, Washington Women United, BaseCamp Seattle and the United Nations 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing China.

Jessie spent more than two years as a volunteer with the United States Peace Corps in rural Guinea, West Africa. She has a BA in Political Science from Seattle University in the Capitol Hill neighborhood.

### **Gigi Kritselis**

*Panel: Abortion Service Providers: A Day in the Life*

Gigi has worked in reproductive healthcare for almost nine years, in a variety of areas. Hired in 2001 by Cedar River Clinics Renton clinic, she has worked in administrative roles, doing statistical reporting and data entry, and intake. She has worked as an abortion counselor and options counselor, and also as an assistant to the nurse practitioner in Cedar River Clinics' Well Woman Program. Gigi is also a student, having entered the nursing program at PLU earlier this month. She plans to earn her Bachelor of Science in Nursing, and hopes to work as a SANE certified forensic nurse in the future.

### **Rev. Vincent Lachina**

*Panel: Reproductive rights...not just a "women's issue"*

Vincent is a native of Birmingham, Alabama. Born into an Italian Catholic family, his first years were in the Roman Catholic Church in preparation for the priesthood. As a teenager, he became a Protestant and joined a Southern Baptist congregation. He holds the BA in Religion and English from Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama, and the MEd in Religion and Education from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Ft. Worth, Texas. An ordained minister for more than 45 years, he has served in a variety of church positions, including: Minister of Youth, Minister to the Deaf and Hearing Impaired, Missionary to Nairobi, Kenya, Minister of Education, Church Administrator and Senior Pastor. For seven years he served the Southern Baptist Convention as a consultant and editor for youth leadership and special ministries at the Baptist Sunday School Board (now Lifeway). He is now active in the American Baptist Conference. In November 2004, Lachina was selected to take the position of Washington State Chaplain for the four Planned Parenthood affiliates of Washington (with added responsibilities in Northern Oregon, Alaska and Idaho).

Vincent has lived in the Seattle area for more than 24 years. He is a proud father and grandfather. And he is currently an active lay member of Seattle's University Baptist Church (ABC),

### **Representative Marko Liias**

*Panel: Our Democracy needs YOU: Preparing for a Career in Politics*

Representative Marko Liias was born and raised in South Snohomish County and graduated from Kamiak High School in Mukilteo. After high school, he worked his way through college with the help of student loans and scholarships, and received his bachelor's degree from Georgetown University. Rep. Liias has worked as a freelance journalist, researcher, and most recently as a small business owner. For five years, he helped lead a small family business specializing in green residential construction. It was his involvement in the local chamber of commerce that led Rep. Liias to consider public service. In 2005, he was elected to the Mukilteo City Council, where he served for two years. In January 2008, Rep. Liias was appointed to the House of Representatives. After his election to a full term in November 2008, he was selected as Vice Chair of the House

Transportation Committee. He also serves on the Agriculture & Natural Resources, Community & Economic Development & Trade, Education, and Rules Committees. Rep. Liias also represents the House of Representatives as a member of the Trade and Transportation Committee of the Council of State Governments – West.

In addition to his service in the Legislature, Rep. Liias works in the community as a volunteer with the Kamiak Debate Program and as a board member of the Youth Suicide Prevention Program. He currently lives in Edmonds.

### **Kristina Logsdon**

*Panel: Our Democracy needs YOU: Preparing for a Career in Politics*

Kristina Logsdon first developed her organizing skills working with the environmental health non-profit, Washington Toxics Coalition, as a field organizer. While working to pass state legislation, she became acutely aware of the inequities between communities and the officials elected to represent them. As Racial Justice Campaign Coordinator for the political action committee, Progressive Majority, Kristina recruited and trained progressive candidates of color for public office. Under her tenure she broke many ceilings including helping to elect Washington State's first Samoan-American elected official. Kristina is currently Political Director with the Win/Win Network where she manages the Ballot Initiative Network and oversees efforts to empower underserved communities in Central Washington.

### **Sara Yong Chan Miller**

*Panel: The Trouble With Health Care Reform*

### **Alison Mondt**

*Panel: The Trouble With Health Care Reform*

Alison is NARAL's Communications and Public Policy Director. She joined NARAL in 2006, and during her time with the organization she has worked to elect pro-choice leaders at the local, state and federal levels; she has championed legislation for accurate and comprehensive sex education in our schools; and she has launched media and public education campaigns about access to emergency contraception (a.k.a. the "morning-after pill" or Plan B) and funding for reproductive health care. Prior to working for NARAL, Alison was active in Oregon politics, as a legislative aide to a state senator and as a finance associate for David Wu for Congress. Alison is a member of the Board of Directors of the Washington Bus, an organization that engages young people in politics (see also: VoteBot).

### **Brett Niessen**

*Panel: Comprehensive & Medically Accurate Sex Ed: Want it? Get it!*

Brett Niessen, MPH is a family planning health educator and consultant with Public Health Seattle & King County. He works in Federal Way and at juvenile detention, teaching students about birth control methods, STDs, and relationships. He manages the TeenClinic.com website and is working on creating Facebook and MySpace pages for Teen Clinics in King County. Brett also helps manage the Healthy Youth Alliance, an organization that helps organize communities and train teachers around comprehensive sex education in schools throughout Washington. He has written clinical HIV treatment

and care curriculum for doctors in Africa and was a Rural Child Health volunteer in Thailand with the Peace Corps. For four years, he was a middle school teacher in Mercer Island, teaching science, English, and history.

**Dr. Deborah Oyer**

*Panel: Abortion Service Providers: A Day in the Life*

Dr. Oyer is Medical Director and owner of Aurora Medical Services. Aurora Medical Services has been a leading provider of family planning and abortion in the Pacific Northwest since 1985. Dr. Oyer graduated from Harvard Medical School and completed her family medicine residency at Providence Medical Center in Seattle. For the past 18 years she has specialized in women's reproductive health care. She lectures at UW Medical and Nursing Schools and trains medical students and residents in her office. She also speaks nationally on contraception and abortion. Deborah Oyer has served on the Board of the National Abortion Federation and the National Medical Committee of Planned Parenthood. She is a member of the clinical faculty at the University of Washington School of Medicine.

**Alyssa Piraino**

*Panel: The Truth about Crisis Pregnancy Centers*

Alyssa is a student and campus organizer at Fairhaven College in Western Washington University studying film and activism.

**Mollie Price (a.k.a. VoteBot)**

*Panel: Wacky, Wild, and Out of This World Ways to Promote Your Cause*

Mollie was hit by a Bus in the summer of 2007 and spent 10 weeks in political campaign bootcamp as a PolitiCorps Fellow in Portland, OR. She has since transferred to a new line and serves as Outreach and Summer Fellows Director at the Washington Bus.

Mollie's political organizing tools of choice are popsicles, VoteBots, music by Selector Tang, and a 1987 MCI, 47-seat, red and gold AutoBus.

**Caitlin Safford**

*Panel: Comprehensive & Medically Accurate Sex Ed: Want it? Get it!*

Caitlin diligently works for NARAL Pro-Choice Washington in Seattle, where she exclusively works to implement comprehensive sex education into Washington school districts. She is also the Co-Chair of the state sex education coalition, the Healthy Youth Alliance. She graduated as a proud Husky from the University of Washington in three years with a B.A. in Political Science. In her free time, she enjoys arguing about politics, baking and reading vast quantities of books. The ideas surrounding women's rights, including the right to choose, is always at the forefront of her mind.

**Basil Shadid**

*Panel: Art as Activism*

Basil was the Post-Coordinator on the Academy Award nominated documentary Iraq In Fragments. He's had significant roles on several prominent documentaries including Rachel and Girls On The Wall. As a DP and Camera Operator, 2009 took him to 5

countries and 13 US states to film for various projects that had him running through flood waters or hanging out with Gilnetters as the sun set in Alaska waterways. His MA in Mental Health Counseling combined with years of filmmaking gives him a unique perspective on story, collaboration and community awareness. He co-runs Dual Power Productions, which seeks to transform society through the development and production of film, books and events. Learn more at [www.writinghome.com](http://www.writinghome.com).

### **Chelsea Tremblay**

*Panel: Pro-Choice Organizing by Youth, For Youth*

Chelsea is a senior at Washington State University, majoring in Political Science and Women's Studies. She likes to say she's really majoring in Social Justice Activism, but WSU doesn't have an official degree for that. She's been active in student groups and progressive organizing for four years, including being a Students for Choice organizer for the past two. When she takes a break from trying to save the world she enjoys reading, going to the co-op, imagining the perfect after-college job, and dreaming about the dog she's going to get.

### **Collin Dahl-Veenstra**

*Panel: Pro-Choice Organizing by Youth, For Youth*

Collin is a student activist at the University of Puget Sound and a second-year intern with NARAL Pro-Choice Washington. Helping found UPS's Students For Choice group in Fall 2008, she is a passionate advocate for reproductive rights, bodily autonomy, and other social justice issues. Upon graduation, Collin plans to train as an abortion doula through the New York City-based Doula Project.