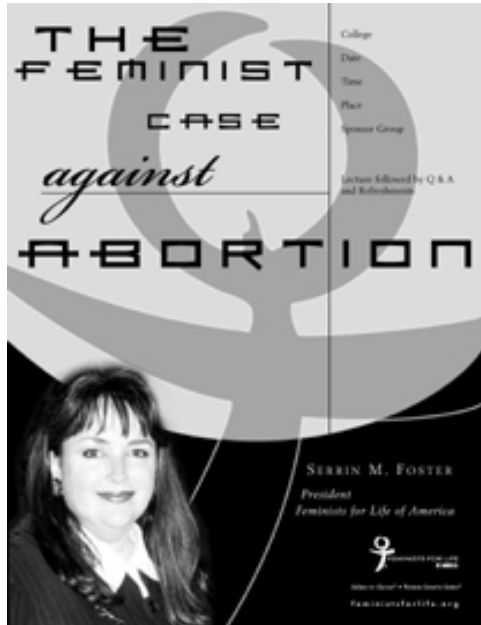


Students applaud FFL's College Outreach Program *Crisis* magazine "Letters to the Editor"

Thank you for your story "Against the Grain: A Day in the Life of Serrin Foster," which beautifully highlighted the wonderful work of Foster and Feminists for Life (June 2003).



Having previously heard Foster articulate the pro-life feminist position, I was eager to have her address the medical community at the University of Pittsburgh. As cofounder of Do No Harm, Pitt's graduate and professional-student pro-life club, I helped to bring Foster and her "Feminist Case Against Abortion" to the medical school on April 8, 2003.

At the close of her lecture, an undergraduate approached Foster and asked: "Have you ever changed anybody's mind?" This graduating senior on her way to medical school then proceeded to tell her story: "At lunch today, I swore that I would be an abortion provider as a doctor, because I saw abortion as a right and a necessity." She then told Foster: "In the half-hour that you spoke, I rethought my position completely." She had been involved in pro-choice activism for 15 years and intended never to turn away women seeking abortions. But after hearing the talk, she will neither perform nor refer anyone for an abortion. "You've given me that reason. I'm now pro-life."

As for me, I am one more statistic: I was pro-choice in middle school based on the needs of the woman, antiabortion in high school based on the biology of the fetus, and integrated the two in college when I became a pro-life feminist after hearing Serrin Foster and the message of Feminists for Life.

Angela T. Fortunato
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



I thoroughly enjoyed reading Tom Hoopes's article, "Against the Grain: A Day in the Life of Serrin Foster." As a recent graduate of the University of California–Berkeley, and copresident of Berkeley Students for Life, which worked closely with Feminists for Life (FFL), I feel that Hoopes's representation of their college-outreach program could use some clarification.

He quotes a Rowan University student who "resent[s] having to pay through tuition and taxes for irresponsible people's choices," and a 31-year-old mother of three who says, "I'm hesitant to subsidize child care for others when I have sacrificed a career and money to raise my own."

FFL's pro-woman, pro-life focus on college campuses seeks *not* simply to look for handouts from the university for student-parents but to expose the discrimination that pregnant women and students with children face in obtaining resources that are accessible to other students.

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FFL then serves as a catalyst for change by challenging universities to reexamine their policies and promoting cost-effective and woman-centered solutions. They include educating students about child-support enforcement when a woman is being coerced into an abortion, connecting women to pregnancy resource centers off campus and the Nurturing Network, and including maternity coverage in student health care. Child-care services may include a day care, a co-op, or volunteer baby-sitters. Telecommuting options could be as simple as providing tapes of missed classes or offering classes on cable or over the Internet. *Their creative solutions help a student stay in school when she faces an unplanned pregnancy and helps nontraditional parenting students complete their education.*

FFL breaks through the rhetoric that sets women against their children and works—even with traditional opponents on the abortion issue—to foster creative solutions for women. FFL's unique Pregnancy Resource Forum debunks the all-too-ingrained university stereotype that a woman cannot keep her baby and also go to school.

When Berkeley Students for Life hosted Foster to moderate a Pregnancy Resource Forum in 1999, it was perhaps the ***first time in history*** when representatives from different administration departments came together to discuss UC–Berkeley's resource shortcomings for the estimated *1,000 to 1,500 student-parents* who attend the premier public institution during any given year.

Although the road to the optimal agreement is long, I see the event as the springboard for beginning our relationship with the Student-Parent Project, an office on campus that coordinates parental exchange of child care and plans student-parent activities for UC–Berkeley parents. We closed the gap in the abortion debate by working closely with the self-proclaimed pro-choice director of the Student-Parent Project. In one of our more substantial accomplishments, we increased the number of baby-changing tables on the UC–Berkeley campus from two to 22, with money raised from outside donors and rerouted from student-activity fees, which could have otherwise gone to something as trivial as a faux sumo-wrestling contest. While this was a big feat for us and student-parents, in reality, it provided a place, besides the sidewalk or classrooms, for female and male parents to change their child's diaper—something present in almost every California public restroom.



With universities' cooperation, FFL is helping women refuse to choose between their education and career plans and sacrificing their children. What a noble cause!

Elizabeth Maier
Alumna, UC–Berkeley, 2003
Copresident, Berkeley Students for Life, 2001-2003

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