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SisterSong's Voter Education Campaign

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At least half the U.S. population recognizes that life as we know it in this country has changed in numerous ways, and the condition of our lives reflect it. For many, these changes have not been for the best, particularly for the poor, women of color and immigrants. Following our first annual meeting, SisterSong decided to undertake a Voter Education Campaign as a way to promote voting. This campaign was conceived to empower the voices of women and to have their needs acknowledged. SisterSong choose to focus on the pivotal role women of color could play in the elections. Thus a Voter Education Working Group was formed with representation from various committees. This collaboration resulted in a voter education fact sheet titled, **10 Good Reasons Why Women Should Vote**.

SisterSong was mindful that 37 million of us across the country did not vote in the 2000 election, thinking our vote would not make a difference. We strongly felt such thinking needed to be challenged. The Voter Education Campaign presented us with an empowerment moment. We learned a great deal from this effort and enjoyed degrees of success with the campaign. The **10 Good Reasons** was sent to the majority of the membership for distribution. They were utilized in a variety of exciting ways, including:

- Members distributed to colleagues and co-workers
- Shared with family and friends as well as clients and patients at health facilities
- Emailed to listservs, which committed to send it out, including Union listservs
- Distributed at demonstrations, community programs and local meetings, particularly in New York and New Jersey
- Placed on several progressive websites
- Distributed during house-to-house voter registration in Los Angeles
- Discussed on several public affairs and news programs
- California members conducted presentations to educate 7th and 8th grade students about women and voting
- The Strategic Communication Committee developed a press kit, targeted and sent to media in various parts of the country

In addition to these avenues, a Yahoo group was set up. Individuals were encouraged to post ways they were using the **10 Good Reasons** as well as share information on other voter education efforts by and/or for women. Voter education and registration efforts from one end of this country to the other proved instrumental to the tremendous increase in voter turn out at the polls. We at SisterSong are proud of our small contribution to that collective turn out. Women exercised their right to vote, to give voice to their issues and to be heard. This empowerment is not diminished by the outcome of the election; rather it is proof of what is possible with more work and organizing.

These next four years are critical in the struggle to preserve reproductive justice, rights and choice. SisterSong is not demoralized by the election's outcome. We are excited by what we have seen and are energized by the continued possibilities to empower women, their families and their communities through advocacy, education and direct action.

As an organization we are committed to the preservation of reproductive justice and choice, which are human rights. Hold on to your copies of **10 Good Reasons Why Women Should Vote**. They will be needed as voters move forward through the many state and local elections over the next four years. One might suspect that in the current political climate the **10 Good Reasons** might increase to 13 or even 15 "Good Reasons." I am sure that each of us reading this can think of at least one more reason to add to the list.