



***The New York Women's Foundation***  
**Activist Philanthropist**

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*"The Hands Project" Art Group, 2015*

Photo Credit: GEMS

# Welcome By Ana L. Oliveira

Dear Friend,

Welcome to the last issue of *Activist Philanthropist* in 2016. We thank you for your continued support as we bring together a variety of voices, stories, and issues pertinent to our mission of promoting economic security and justice for women and families.

Like many of you, we are looking to see how 2017 will unfold for women, communities of color, immigrant communities, and LGBTQ people. We have convened grantee partners to discuss continued and emerging needs for their organizations and the people they serve. We will continue to have these discussions, and want your engagement as we look to build and better support our community.

In this issue, Humera Afridi speaks with Jessica González-Rojas about her leadership and the work of The Foundation's grantee partner National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, whose work exists on an intersection of issues such as health, safety, economic security, and immigrant rights. Nicole Mason examines what a Trump administration could mean for women, families and communities on critical issues including reproductive rights, education, and healthcare.

Looking ahead to our 30th anniversary in 2017, there is much work to be done and now more than ever we will be looking to the vision and leadership of our founders and grantee partner leaders upon whose shoulders we stand.

We hope you will join us as we grapple with these issues, but also celebrate the leadership and community whose strength and resilience helps us move forward in our mission.

Wishing you a happy and healthy holiday and New Year! We look forward to your continued partnership in 2017.

Warm regards



Ana Oliveira  
President & CEO

# In Depth:

## There's Hope in Cities: A Reflection on Where to Focus Efforts and Energy in the Trump Era **BY C. NICOLE MASON**

The declaration of Donald Trump as the next President of the United States in the wee hours of the morning on Wednesday, November 9, 2016 sent shockwaves across the nation, local communities and around the globe. Elected by razor thin margins in just three states, Trump has promised to rollback hard won gains for women, deport millions of undocumented immigrants, repeal the Affordable Care Act and appoint a conservative Supreme Court Justice that could overturn or threaten settled law.

As many struggle to grasp the potential impact of proposed Trump policies and cabinet appointments at the federal level on vulnerable communities, some cities and states have stepped up to offer sanctuary, protect low-income women and families, and to use their resources to push back against potential punitive or draconian policies.

To be sure, across all levels of government, Donald Trump's proposed public policies pose significant threats to marginalized communities and families. The individuals that will be most affected by Trump policies are those that sit at the most marginalized intersections of race, class, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity. On a range of policy issues from poverty to reproductive rights to Immigration and health care, Donald Trump has signaled that he plans to repeal or overturn life-saving legislation with regards to women's health?; devolve authority to states or localities; and impose harsh laws that could see millions separated from their families.

Here's where Trump stands on the issues that matter most to women, families and communities:

### Reproductive Rights and Choice

***“[In the Wake of Trump’s Election] the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health re-commits to fight for health, dignity and justice for the 28 million Latinas and their families in the United States. Each one of us deserves the opportunity to shape our future, to live safe and healthy lives, and to be free to determine if, when, and how we form our families, without shame, stigma or punishment.”***

— **Jessica González-Rojas**, Executive Director,  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health

With regard to access to the full range of reproductive health choices for women, Donald Trump has stated that he is fully committed to appointing conservative Supreme Court Justices that would seek to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. He also plans to institute a federal law that would ban abortion after 20 weeks and strip funding and support for Planned Parenthood. Across race, ethnicity or socio-economic status, all of these efforts would have a dramatic impact on women and families across the country.

In terms of offensive measures or repeals, such as those to repeal the Hyde Amendment, the legislation that bans the use of federal funds for abortion, they are likely to be stalled or non-starters for the new Administration.

In fact, global family planning advocates worry that Trump could re-instate the “Mexico City policy” or the global gag rule that would block funding for international family planning organizations unless they agree not to “promote” abortion or provide referrals to providers who perform it. The re-instatement of the ban is not far fetched. Since its passage in 1984, every time the U.S. presidency has changed party hands, the incoming leader has reversed his predecessor's position on the ban.

Next, less than two weeks after Trump's election, the state of Texas approved two new rules that would require health care facilities to treat fetal remains, regardless of how long it has been gestating, like a deceased person, requiring a burial. Texas is not alone, both Indiana and Louisiana have approved similar measures that have not taken affect because of legal battles and challenges to the laws.

Over the next four years, states will continue to be the battleground for reproductive rights and freedom for women. With encouragement and support from the federal level, anti-choice advocates in red and blue states alike will work tirelessly to impose restrictive and dangerous laws that limit the rights of women to access the full range of reproductive health care options.

## The Affordable Care Act & Medicaid

Through the Affordable Care Act (ACA), more than 20 million Americans have health insurance coverage. Since it was signed into law in 2010 rates for uninsured individuals have dropped significantly--25 percent for Latinos, and 50 percent for Blacks and Whites, respectively. In addition to requiring health care coverage for individuals with pre-existing conditions, the Affordable Care Act has also provided low or no out-of-pocket costs for birth control or prenatal care for women. Despite the positive impact the Affordable Care Act has had on individuals and families, Trump, with the support of House and Senate Republicans, has vowed to repeal the legislation in his first 100 days in office.

Appealing the Affordable Care Act without a sure and viable replacement will have a long-term and devastating impact on low-income individuals and families across the nation. It will also cause undue financial strain and burden to states, cities and localities.

In addition to changes to the Affordable Care Act, Trump's choice for the head of Health and Human Services, Tom Price indicates that there is also strong possibility that he will move to block grant Medicaid, leaving millions of individuals uninsured or under insured. If Medicaid is Block-granted, states will lose money and may be forced to cap enrollment, spend less on health care, or institute wait list for those in need of coverage.

## Immigration Reform

***“New York will remain a “sanctuary city” for undocumented immigrants. The city will reject federal aid that comes with objectionable “strings attached,” such as requiring local cops to turn over people they learn are here illegally, an action that, as a sanctuary city, New York won’t allow.”***

—Mayor Bill de Blasio, New York City

Under Trump, the possibility of comprehensive immigration reform is nil. Predictably, there will be no legislation that will be passed under his leadership that will provide amnesty or a realized pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants. Instead, immigrant rights advocates at all levels of government will be forced to beat back proposed legislation and efforts to deport millions of undocumented immigrants or to erect a wall between the United States and Mexico.

Nationwide, there are 39 cities and 364 counties that purport to be sanctuary cities or localities. Since Trump's election, cities such as Chicago and Washington, DC and states such as California and New York have continued to assert themselves as sanctuary cities and states. They have also begun to prepare for legal battles to protect undocumented immigrants from deportation.

The cost to enforce or deport undocumented immigrants under Donald Trump's plan is astronomical and estimated to cost between \$100 billion to \$300 billion. Enforcement and deportation efforts would also swell ICE's ranks to more than 90,000 — about three times the size of New York City's police force. Connectedly, experts estimate the cost to build a wall between Mexico and the United States could cost upwards of \$25 billion.

Due to the extensive cost, necessary human capital, and the resistance by some cities and localities to help enforce or deport, the probability of erecting the wall or mass deportation happening in four years is slim. However, the fear and harassment faced by immigrant communities in the wake of such dangerous proposals is real and life threatening.

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, an organization that monitors hate crimes and groups, since Trump's election, there have been at least 900 hate and harassment crimes reported to authorities or organizations.

## Poverty and the Social Safety Net

Donald Trump has no clear or viable plan to reduce poverty or expand the social safety net for families. In the absence of a clear plan, Trump will likely rely on anti-poverty plans floated by republicans over the last several years. Specifically, he might turn to Paul Ryan's poverty proposal. Ryan's plan will devastate families and hand over control of 11 key safety net programs including food stamps, housing assistance, childcare and Head Start to cash-strapped states. States with great need would be forced to cut programs and direct support to families, or impose stricter eligibility requirements.

According to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, the most recent House budget gets 62 percent of its cuts from programs for low- and moderate-income people. That includes at least \$150 billion in cuts to food stamps and nearly \$500 billion in mostly unspecified cuts to other low-income programs like SSI (which provides cash to the disabled and elderly), Pell Grants, and what little remains of welfare. Cuts to food stamps alone would kick a combined 3 million people off the program, mostly childless adults, low-income seniors, and low-income families with high child care costs. In short, Paul Ryan's poverty proposal would be a backdoor way of getting rid of the safety net once and for all.

## Education Policy & Reform

Donald Trump's proposed appointment of billionaire Betsy DeVos, school voucher proponent, as Education Secretary could have severe consequences for the already fragile public school system and accelerate the privatization of public schools across the country.

Many Republicans, including Trump want to shrink the Education Department's role in public schools and leave more decisions to states and districts. To this end, Donald Trump has proposed funneling \$20 billion to states in block grants to support school choice and voucher programs. For cities such as Detroit and New Orleans with struggling public school systems, school choice and voucher programs have proven to be ineffective and deepen the gap in educational quality and achievement.

Under Donald Trump, there is much work to be done at the federal, state and local levels to ensure that the gains made are not unraveled or long ago wins reversed. As we move forward and until we can begin to understand more clearly what policies will be proposed at the federal level, we can and should focus our attention at the state, city and local levels where our efforts will have a direct impact on girls, women and low-income families in our communities.

# In Focus:

## “Women Are the Locus of Power”: A Conversation with Jessica González-Rojas, Executive Director of National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health **BY HUMERA AFRIDI**

In June 2016, when the Supreme Court struck down a Texas statute regulating abortion, the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health (NLIRH) had plenty of reason to celebrate—even if the struggle for reproductive justice was far from resolved. Since 1994, NLIRH has been striving to guarantee Latina and immigrant women the fundamental human right to reproductive health, dignity and justice. In this landmark case—*Whole Woman’s Health v. Hellerstedt*—NLIRH submitted its first amicus brief describing the devastating impact on the lives of low-income women from legislation that restricted access to abortion and reproductive healthcare. The Supreme Court victory marks a milestone for the abortion rights movement.

“It was a moment of pride and joy,” said Jessica González-Rojas, Executive Director of the National Latina Institute, an organization that, in addition to its focus on abortion access, reproductive health and justice, and immigrant women’s rights, works to develop Latina leadership and mobilizes families and communities to create systemic change through policy advocacy. “Abortion is a procedure that is constitutionally protected. However, legislators have been trying to go around the constitution to figure out ways to prevent abortion access by creating barriers and obstacles, presenting the laws under the false guise of protecting women’s health,” she said.

By ordering clinics that provide abortion to become mini-hospitals—which would require millions of dollars to realize—the law had legislated clinics out of existence, denying women access to abortion and essential reproductive health care. At the same time, legislators, ironically, also reduced access to contraceptives.

“It just demonstrates the political motives around denying our dignity and our ability to make decisions

for ourselves, by refusing the resources to do so,” stated González-Rojas.

In South Texas, when the clinics were shut down, and the services they needed no longer available, Latina and immigrant women seeking abortion were left with no choice but to self-induce. For low-income women, the ability to travel 250 miles to the closest clinic, find childcare, and get time off from work in order to meet the mandatory delays and waiting period built into Texas law, were not viable options. For undocumented women, driving across the border out of the Rio Grande Valley, through checkpoints, was impossible. And yet, legislators criminalize women for self-inducing abortions in such unjust circumstances, demanding they do time in prison.

“We saw the regulation on clinics as a de facto ban on abortion in our community,” said González-Rojas. “The repercussions were felt by the most vulnerable. And so we raised these issues in the Supreme Court.”

One of the positive outcomes of this case, González-Rojas points out, is that the silent supporters of abortion access were galvanized and energized. They saw through the guise of the law—which endangered women’s health rather than protecting it. “I think that motivated a silent majority,” she said.

The National Latina Institute grew out of the Latina Initiative at Catholics for Choice, and was established in the early 90’s in response to the urgent needs of women of color who felt that the pro-choice label didn’t connect to them—the idea of ‘choice’ being a privilege that many in their communities couldn’t exercise, for reasons such as being low-income, unable to speak the dominant language, and lacking immigration status. They desired a social justice framework with health language and rights language that spoke to their needs and experiences. NLIRH



Jessica González-Rojas, Executive Director, National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health

powerfully centers the voices of Latinas and low-income immigrants through a variety of initiatives. Among these, surveys and robust national polls have been affective in representing the diversity of lived experiences of the Latino community and the range of views on the complex issues surrounding reproductive justice.

A 2016 national poll (<http://latinainstitute.org/en/2016-national-public-poll>) indicated that eight out of 10 people would support a family member's access to abortion care without politicians interfering. During *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt*, stories of empathy and support emerged from the Latino community, highlighting the message that not only are health services needed, but so is support for a loved one who may require services.

"People often create a narrative or stereotype that Latinos are not supportive to abortion access because we're Catholic or conservative," said González-Rojas. "NLIRH is dispelling that myth through our activism, our organizing, the voices we've elevated in the media and the polling data. The proof is right here in this robust national poll where 50% of Latino voters said, 'I believe an abortion can be morally justified through my faith.'"

González-Rojas points out how critical the framing of an issue is in surveys. "Asking Latinos if they're pro-choice or pro-life doesn't translate culturally and linguistically," she said. "Of course, I'm pro-life!" they'll say. But then, the majority will contradict that response by answering in a following question that they support a woman's right to access abortion. So these labels don't work," she explained.

NLIRH's community mobilization is a dynamic, inter-generational effort—a "family affair" as González-Rojas describes it—that is slowly but surely creating a culture shift in attitudes towards reproductive health. In Texas, for instance, a NLIRH team composed of a grandmother, her daughter and ten-year old grandson, actively knocking on doors in surrounding communities, is not an unusual sight. Teenagers as young as 15 are present in community discussions on abortion, reproductive oppression, the power of voting, political systems and how to create change.

"It's part of our DNA to really be part of a family space so that children can see their mothers and grandparents stepping up to and demonstrating leadership. It's a core value of our organization," remarked González-Rojas.

Integral, too, to NLIRH's work is the recognition that women are the locus of power and natural leaders in their families and communities. Women are the ones navigating the system—registering their children for school, and their families to vote, figuring out healthcare, often at their own expense and their own health. “We know it’s a leadership quality and we work to develop that, and to show women how powerful they actually are. Often they don’t have the tools, or understanding, of the political climate in order to know how to make change. We hone their ready leadership. Our theory of change is that the people most impacted are the agents of change,” stated González-Rojas.

Jessica González-Rojas’s own inspiring and empathic leadership has been an evolution from childhood. As the daughter of a Puerto Rican mother from New York, and a Paraguayan father who was an immigrant struggling to learn English, she moved schools and homes multiple times, developing both perseverance and aptitude for stepping up and growing into new spaces, while becoming sensitive to the colonial, Nuyorican experience through her maternal family, as well as the immigrant experience in America through her father.

“It’s a profound privilege to lead an organization that centers Latina voices. I know that my experience of growing up in New York, of having higher education be a priority in my family, does not represent the full Latin community. But as a leader, my passion is not about my own experience but centering others. The stories of all the women and families we work with are my true north. Whenever I feel frustrated by the political climate, I’m reenergized by the community,” González-Rojas declares. “They are so powerful. Despite the barriers many face, I believe they will change the country. To have the honor to celebrate them in my work is profound!”

González-Rojas has also been deeply inspired by her grandmothers. Her maternal grandmother grew up in poverty, had polio and was quarantined in Puerto Rico. Wanting a better life for herself, she came alone to New York at the age of 20, and despite her disability worked hard and raised a family, forging ahead, and unintentionally breaking many barriers. Her paternal grandmother, from Argentina, was a woman ahead of her time— “very fierce, very outspoken, bold, beautiful,

dramatic and strong-willed”—who came to the US, got divorced, left her children behind and built a new life, always secure in who she was.

Never being afraid to speak one’s truth is a quality essential to women leaders, affirms González-Rojas. “You have to be persistent and confident in your voice and perspective. Believe in their value, ignite that power! Sometimes fear prevents us from stepping into roles and doing the work we want to do. But if we do the work in service to our vision of society and a greater goal, that fear will dissipate,” said González-Rojas. “Its holding and knowing that. If I believe in our community, I can’t not believe in myself.”

As a mother of a five-year old boy, González-Rojas declares she has the important duty to raise a feminist! “It’s been really fun. We talk a lot about gender. I push for him to see that things aren’t gendered, but that society creates these norms.” As Executive Director of a national organization, Jessica González-Rojas’s advocacy work dictates travel to Congress and around the country. On balancing career and motherhood, she admits, “Balance is a myth! It’s just about making it work, pulling the resources and the support to make it work. I love what and I do, it feels very personal. The activists give me life!”

Ultimately, González-Rojas aspires to reach a point where the organization no longer needs to exist, when all the reproductive injustices in the world are resolved and women don’t face discrimination, obstacles, and barriers to making decisions that impact their lives. It’s a big goal. To reach it, she envisions the organization growing in the next few years and building a base of powerful leaders who see social justice as the core of life. “I’d love to leave that legacy and see it flourish into our activists becoming elected officials, or the even the President, or bringing that voice and work to other fields, and seeing our children and children’s children create that ripple affect in the country.”

# Op-Ed:

## Trans Women Need Public Resources, Not Just Victim Remembrance

BY ANA OLIVEIRA

Later this term, the U.S. Supreme Court will take up the issue of bathroom rights for transgender people. The heated national debate, ostensibly over restroom access, reflects the extreme prejudice and hostility that transgender people face every day in America. And now the 2016 presidential election has served to compound the anxiety of the LGBTQ community. Several LGBTQ suicide hotlines have reported that since the Republican victory, the number of calls has risen dramatically from normal call traffic.

Statistics from the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) offer a painful picture and validation of the community's fears: hate-related homicides against LGBTQ and HIV-affected people increased 20 percent from 2014 to 2015; 62 percent of the victims were people of color and 67 percent were transgender and gender non-conforming people. By early October 2016, 20 transgender murders had been recorded, including those of 16 trans women, almost all persons of color. And let us not forget the horrific massacre in June at Pulse Nightclub in

Orlando, whose advertisements featured trans women, a daunting example of the ingrained and brutal hatred that exists for the LGBTQ community.

No one is more at risk than a trans woman of color, even here in New York. A female transgender inmate who was housed in a male jail on Rikers Island is now suing the City, saying that guards stood by and did nothing while she was bullied, punched and beaten by fellow prisoners over her gender identity and sexual orientation.

It's time we affirm the lives of trans women and include them across advocacy, services and funding for women. That is why at the New York Women's Foundation, when we say we invest in the lives of women, we mean all women, including trans women. We focus on our mutual concerns, challenges and strengths. Our mission — to improve the lives of women and girls by promoting economic justice, lives free from violence, and health, sexual and reproductive rights — includes assisting those who are transgender.



Hetrick-Martin Institute

Our transgender sisters are among the most vulnerable of our sex. Trans women are four times more likely to live in poverty. They are more likely to be bullied, harassed, discriminated against and be physically and/or sexually assaulted. They also are more likely to attempt suicide. They need our help.

One reason so many transgender women live in poverty is because of the prejudice and exclusion they face gaining employment and navigating the working world as a gender-nonconforming person. New York is a leader in this area having made great strides in legal protections for LGBTQ individuals. In most states, employers do not have to provide legal protections for LGBTQ employees, meaning employees can be fired just for being transgender.

Accessing affordable quality healthcare is a major challenge for trans women because of their unique needs; there are too few specialists in this area of medicine. In addition, the exorbitant cost and discrimination from health insurance providers fuels the problem. According to the Human Rights Campaign, out of 636 U.S. companies analyzed, in 2012 less than a third provided healthcare coverage to transgender employees. While that is a great leap ahead from 2009 when only seven percent of corporations offered coverage, there is so much further to go.

At the New York Women's Foundation our inclusive approach means investing in a range of community-based LGBTQ organizations ready with solutions. In doing so, we have become the tenth largest funder of trans-led organizations in the United States. Recent grantee partners include organizations such as the Callen-Lorde Community Health Center, a provider of quality healthcare, health education and wellness targeted to New York's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

Other transgender advocacy programs we support include anti-violence organizations and a pioneering detainee empowerment project that assists LGBTQ people coming out of immigration detention. The Queer Detainee Empowerment Project provides guidance and assistance for the most at-risk members of the transgender community: LGBTQ undocumented and detainee people who usually re-enter society jobless and in financial need.

Centering the voices and perspectives of youth is critical, which is why we support groups such as FIERCE!, an LGBTQ youth of color organization cultivating social justice movement leaders dedicated to ending all forms of oppression and the Hetrick-Martin Institute, a safe haven offering academic assistance, job-readiness training, arts and culture programming, counseling and even meals to hungry LGBTQ youth.

Trans women and girls have the same right to live safely, be economically secure and have access to gender competent healthcare as any other women and girls. On this November 20th, Transgender Day of Remembrance, let us remember that support by women's organizations means everything and when we include assistance to trans women in our mission, we fight against gender discrimination in all its forms.

***This piece was previously published on [citylimits.org](http://citylimits.org).***

# Fall 2016 in Photos



2016 Fall Gala with A CALL TO MEN's Ted Bunch, Gala award recipient Laurie M. Tisch, board member Jean Shafiroff, Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, and President & CEO Ana L. Oliveira.



Walter Isaacson and board member Cathy Isaacson at the 2016 Fall Gala.



Building Healthier Communities panelists: Ana Orozco, Climate Justice Policy & Programs Coordinator, UPROSE; Angela A. Tovar, Director of Community Development, The Point CDC; Marcia Bystryn, President, New York League of Conservation Voters



President & CEO Ana L. Oliveira with Maria Hinojosa, Jodi Kantor, and Feminista Jones at the *In Focus: Election Outcomes & the Future for Women* panel discussion.



President & CEO Ana L. Oliveira with *Blueprint for Investing in Girls Age 0-8* panelists Reshmi Sengupta, Chanda Hill, Dawn De Costa, Soledad O'Brien, Jocelyn Rodriguez, and report author, Susan Leicher.



Le Cirque Luncheon panelists Anne E. Delaney, Board Alumnae of NYWF and founder of the Starry Night Fund and the Lambent Foundation, and Laurie M. Tisch of the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund with Thelma Golden, Director and Chief Curator of Studio Museum in Harlem and Ana L. Oliveira, President and CEO of The New York Women's Foundation.



The New York Women's Foundation's Board Alumnae at the Le Cirque Luncheon.



2016 Gala Award recipient Laurie M. Tisch with Ana L. Oliveira and Senator Cory Booker.



2016 Celebrating Women Breakfast Award recipient Tory Burch with guest and 2016 Gala Award recipient Dina Powell.



2016 Gala Award recipient, Saru Jayaraman and 2015 Gala Award recipient, Ted Bunch.



The New York Women's Foundation and the YWCA's Girls Ignite Grantmaking co-hort.



The New York Women's Foundation's Board Alumnae at the Neighborhood Dinner in Queens.



Neighborhood Leadership Award recipient Patricia Simon with Madeline Holder.



Dance Theater of Nepal performing at the Neighborhood Dinner in Queens.



Spirit of Entrepreneurship Award recipient Andrea Ormeño with Madeline Holder.



Neighborhood Leadership Award recipient Katherine Kim with Madeline Holder.



President & CEO Ana L. Oliveira presenting the Lifetime Achievement Award to Barbara Brizzi Wynne.



Neighborhood Leadership Award recipient Nathaly Rubio-Torio with Madeline Holder.

# Radiance Photo Corner



*“To be successful you should never give up. Even if your task is difficult and there are challenges, push yourself.”*  
– *Katarzyna Tazearlan, Upwardly Global*

In March 2015, The New York Women’s Foundation released **RADIANCE**, a striking photo book celebrating 46 grantee partners – some of the most powerful and daring activists, visionaries and community leaders transforming and illuminating New York City. In an inspired partnership with renowned photographer Emmanuel Andre, The Foundation embarked on a journey to honor and raise the visibility of leaders who work valiantly to create a better New York City for all. Visit [www.nywf.org/radiance](http://www.nywf.org/radiance) for more information.

# THE NEW YORK WOMEN'S FOUNDATION®

The New York Women's Foundation creates an equitable and just future for women and families by uniting a cross-cultural alliance that ignites action and invests in bold, community-led solutions across the city.

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