Four ARC members will travel to Detroit the weekend of September 29-30 to attend the quarterly meeting of the Reproductive Rights National Network. We'll report on that meeting in the next newsletter. Don't forget the benefit party, and we'll see you on the picket line!

--Debby Roberts

ABORTION AND THE LAW IN OHIO - SOME RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

In 1976, the city of Akron, Ohio, passed an ordinance designed to make safe, medical abortion next to impossible to get in that city. Ever since, the ordinance has been tied up in court. A court has recently ruled that sections of the ordinance are unconstitutional.

The Akron ordinance has been used as a model for anti-abortion legislation in eleven other states. It required that the physician inform the woman of certain "facts" about her "unborn child" and its development. The woman was to be shown pictures of the developing fetus and told about the functioning of its organs. The woman was also informed of the "fact" that a fetus is "a human life from the moment of conception." This was an attempt to make a particular moral and religious belief into law.

Although this process is called "informed consent," it is really an attempt to intimidate the woman and pressure her to decide against abortion. The true purpose of informed consent is to make the patient aware of any risks to the patient. The Akron ordinance requires that the woman be told of the dangers of abortion, but not of the much greater dangers involved in pregnancy. The court found the anti-abortionists' interpretation of informed consent to be unconstitutional.

The court also ruled that requiring parental or court consent for an abortion performed on a girl younger than 15 and parental notification for a woman younger than 18 is unconstitutional. The court did not rule on most sections of the ordinance, such as the one requiring a 24-hour waiting period after a woman has signed a consent form before the abortion can be performed.

State Representative Ken Rocco (D-Parma) will probably introduce a statute very similar to the Akron ordinance sometime soon in the Ohio State Legislature. The most important feature of his statute will be "informed consent," to require that physicians describe the development of the "child" which can "probably squint, frown, swallow, move the tongue," etc. Rep. Rocco's statute will need to be rewritten following the Akron decision. The statute was to be introduced in September, but Rocco suffered a heart attack.

On July 30, Governor Rhodes signed into law a state budget bill with an anti-abortion rider. A massive telephone and letter writing campaign demanding that the rider be amended or dropped had no effect. This legislation is much more restrictive than the federal Hyde Amendment. It states that no government funds shall be used for promoting, assisting, or performing abortions unless two physicians agree that the abortion is necessary to prevent the death of the "mother," that the pregnancy was the result of a rape reported within 48 hours, or that the pregnancy was the result of incest and the incident and the relative have been reported. This rider goes beyond denying an abortion to a woman carrying a malformed fetus, or a woman who didn't report being raped within 48 hours, or a child who didn't report the relative who molested, or denying funds for medically necessary abortions, or restricting insurance coverage of abortion for state employees. It will also cut off funds to institutions which provide counseling or referral services ("promoting" and "assisting") such as family planning clinics. State hospitals will only be allowed to perform abortions which fall in the narrow range mentioned above, and it