

# Saturday Forum

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## My word

# Protecting the right to choose

By Barbara J. Parker and Amy Everitt

This has been a year of unprecedented attacks on women's ability to access a full range of health care, especially regarding reproductive health and abortion.

At all levels across the country, politicians have focused on limiting women's reproductive choices. Various states passed legislation mandating long waiting periods, forcing doctors to provide medically unnecessary ultrasounds and mandating "counseling" at anti-abortion groups before women can access abortion care.

In Oakland, women seeking to exercise their right to choose have been harassed and heckled by anti-choice provocateurs.

No one entering a medical clinic to access any health care service should be harassed, threatened or attacked.

We support vigorous enforcement of clinic-protection laws against those who use intimidation and threats to stop women from entering health clinics. Enforcement is essential to protecting the well-being of women and health care providers.

Oakland's Bubble Ordinance, passed in 2007, creates an 8-foot "safe zone" for patients entering clinics so they do not have to endure a gauntlet of harassment.

The ordinance doesn't take away anyone's right to free speech, it takes away the ability to bully and intimidate a patient seeking lawful health care.

In a year when anti-choice politicians are concocting ways to interfere in women's private medical decisions, Oakland has taken a stand as a city where a woman's right to choose is protected.

*Barbara J. Parker is an Oakland city attorney and Amy Everitt is the state director of NARAL Pro-Choice California.*