



Abortion Rights
Coalition of Canada

Coalition pour le droit à
l'avortement au Canada

Your
Voice for Choice

Canada's only national political pro-choice advocacy group

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Position Paper #100

Why ARCC Supports Reproductive Justice

ARCC supports the concept of Reproductive Justice because we recognize that the sexual and reproductive health and rights of people from many diverse communities are disproportionately affected by marginalization and oppression. These include LGBTQ communities (lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/queer), Indigenous communities, racialized communities, youth, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups. To ensure justice, fundamental inequalities must be addressed for all.

What is Reproductive Justice?

The idea of Reproductive Justice was developed by women of colour in the United States, who did not believe that the pro-choice movement reflected their different perspectives on how to achieve self-determination for themselves and their communities. They envisioned a broader framework because they saw that a woman's reproductive destiny is inextricably linked to the conditions in her community.

The following definition of Reproductive Justice is from "The SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective," a grassroots network representing ethnic populations and indigenous nations in the United States:¹)

"Reproductive Justice is an intersectional analysis that looks at reproductive health through a social justice lens. The short definition for reproductive justice is the human right to have a child, not have a child, and parent the children we have in safe and healthy environments. The formal definition is when women and girls have the economic, social and political power and resources to make healthy decisions about our bodies, [labor], sexuality and reproduction for ourselves, our families and our communities in all areas of our lives."

In 2005, Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice (ACRJ) offered an expanded definition of reproductive justice as *"the complete physical, mental, spiritual, political, social, and economic*

¹ http://www.sistersong.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=140&Itemid=42

well-being of women and girls, based on the full achievement and protection of women's human rights.”

While abortion rights will always remain ARCC's focus, we recognize that abortion is just one aspect of reproductive justice. Another passage from Sistersong is worth quoting:²

“One of the key problems addressed by Reproductive Justice is the isolation of abortion from other social justice issues that concern communities of color: issues of economic justice, the environment, immigrants' rights, disability rights, discrimination based on race and sexual orientation, and a host of other community-centered concerns. These issues directly affect an individual woman's decision-making process. By shifting the focus to reproductive oppression—the control and exploitation of women, girls, and individuals through our bodies, sexuality, labor, and reproduction—rather than a narrow focus on protecting the legal right to abortion, SisterSong is developing a more inclusive vision of how to build a new movement.”

Reproductive Justice Needs in Canada

From ARCC's perspective, Reproductive Justice needs in Canada cover a broad spectrum. We therefore endorse the following programs or rights (at a minimum) to ensure justice for all women and marginalized groups:

- Universal, affordable childcare program
- Comprehensive supports to enable women and transgender people to bear and rear the children they want, while maintaining their full human rights and dignity under the law
- Full funding for contraception in Canada under Medicare
- Foreign aid funding for safe abortion in Canada's maternal health programs, as well as increased funding for family planning programs in developing countries
- A national housing strategy
- Pay equity legislation
- A Guaranteed Livable Income for all
- Compensation for unpaid caregiving work
- LGBTQ people's right to non-discriminatory access to healthcare and employment
- Sex workers' human and labour rights, full decriminalization of prostitution, harm reduction services, and transition services for those who wish to leave the industry
- Public inquiry into the murder and disappearance of Indigenous women
- The full equality of Indigenous peoples, and an end to discrimination and colonialism
- Better programs to address violence against women
- Restoration of funding to women's equality-seeking groups
- Restoration of the long gun registry, the Court Challenges Program, and the long-form census
- The right to “die with dignity” for the terminally ill, with ample safeguards and alternatives in place

² http://www.sistersong.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=141&Itemid=81