

## Unequal under the law

Riddle us this: When is a woman not in charge of her own health? When five men in robes say so.

For the first time since *Roe v. Wade* was handed down in 1973 legalizing abortion, the U.S. Supreme Court has put the government firmly between a woman and her doctor.

The court upheld a federal law outlawing so-called “partial birth” abortions, even in the case where the life of the mother is in jeopardy. The lack of a health exception is what, seven years ago, the court invoked to strike down a similar abortion ban enacted in Nebraska, Justice Sandra Day O’Connor providing the swing vote that shot down the law. O’Connor later retired and was replaced on the court by Alito.

Justice Anthony Kennedy, writing the majority opinion in *Gonzalez v. Carhart*, said the law’s opponents “have not demonstrated that the act would be unconstitutional in a large fraction of relevant cases.” Also voting in the majority were Chief Justice John Roberts and Justices Samuel Alito, Antonin Scalia, and Clarence Thomas.

Voting in the minority were Justices Paul Breyer, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, David Souter, and John Paul Stevens.

“Thus, legal challenges to undue restrictions on abortion procedures do not seek to vindicate some generalized notion of privacy; rather, they center on a woman’s autonomy to determine her life’s course, and thus to enjoy equal citizenship stature,” wrote Ginsburg in her rebuke of the majority opinion.

The decision opens the door for state legislators to pass laws that substantially interfere in the doctor-patient relationship and to severely limit access to abortion and reproductive health care, and is likely to have a chilling effect on doctors’ willingness to provide certain forms of care for fear of prosecution. This means a woman’s health and safety could largely depend on where she lives, not her actual health needs.

While we can agree to disagree on the issue of abortion, we should all agree that it is not our right to play the role of God through our government. Nor is it anything short of patronizing to think that a woman should not be in charge of her own reproductive rights. Not society, the government, or a religion should be.

## Fueling up at the nuclear power station

Just when you think all sources of possible revenue have been tapped, along comes a secret reservoir of wealth that has been heretofore left intact.

This week, Pres. Pro Tem Sen. Peter Shumlin, D-Windham, announced he’s found a magical source of untapped moolah — the deep pockets of Entergy, the corporation that owns Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant — to fund the expansion of efficiency programs into home heating.

It’s hard to see the connection between dry cask storage of spent nuclear fuel and home heating. Last we checked, no one was heating their homes with nuclear fuel, though if you heat your home with electricity some of those electrons may have originated from Vernon.

Lawmakers need to refrain from grabbing cash for every pet project with a fee on electrons, dry casks, or fuel rods. Not because Entergy can’t afford it, because they can.

Vermont lawmakers must be able to make a clear decision next year about the fate of Vermont Yankee and whether it should be allowed to operate beyond 2012 when its current operating license expires. They will not be able to make such a decision if their pet projects are being fueled by money from Entergy’s coffers.

Already, Entergy pays millions of dollars into Vermont’s clean energy fund, the Radiological Emergency Response Plan fund, as well as local food banks, non-profits, and charities in Windham County.

And, the list goes on.

If Vermonters are serious about breaking the nuclear habit, then they should start by returning Entergy’s checks, or not ask them to write them in the first place.

Treasurer Jeb Spaulding just announced he is willing to put millions of dollars back into Vermont through an economically-targeted investment program. Vermonters can save more than \$400 million with a \$150 million investment, according to the Department of Public Service. And, with such a great payoff, someone should be able to make a business plan work.

If Sen. Shumlin and other Democrats think this is such a grand idea, then that should be the place to look for money to fund this program, not Entergy or taxpayers.

# POLITICAL QUIZ

Q. What’s the difference between:  
Alberto Gonzales testifying in a Senate  
committee and a rug on the floor?



A. Well, a rug on the floor just lies there,  
and... h-m-m-m

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## letters • • • • •

### Thanks for domestic violence article

In response to your very well done article on domestic violence (*Vermont Guardian*, April 19): I am a sixth generation Vermonter — part of my family settled in Williamstown in the late 1700’s. Part of my youth was growing up in a very abusive home raised by my grandmother, who today would have been charged with child abuse.

My father was incarcerated most of my childhood for multiple offenses.

One of my first jobs out of college was working for the Barre City Police Department with many of the officers being those who had arrested my father. From that point, I dedicated my life to the judicial system. Today, I am the executive director of one of the most innovative and well-known domestic violence agencies in the United States.

Last year, CNN’s *The Paula Zahn Show* aired our program for abused men. I have developed a program dedicated to children who have witnessed abuse within the home.

Donna Leclerc  
Englewood, FL

### Men are victims, too

I am an attorney who works with male victims of domestic violence. After reading your recent article on domestic violence, which said you will be covering the issue more, I want to ask that you print this letter and provide fair and accurate coverage of the issue to include male victims, a large, hidden class who face severe public neglect.

The Centers for Disease Control’s latest data says: “In the United States every year, about 1.5 million women and more than 800,000 men are raped or physically assaulted by an intimate partner,” at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/ipvfacts.htm>.

That makes men at least 36 percent of the victims. And, although men underreport more than women in crime data, most sociological (behavior-based) data shows that women initiate domestic violence as often as men. California State University summarizes almost 200 of these studies at <http://www.csulb.edu/~mfiebert/assault.htm>.

The University of New Hampshire recently confirmed this again in a 32-nation study on dating violence and found that con-

trolling behavior exists equally in the perpetrators of both sexes.

Many male victims are disabled or elderly. Many refuse to hit back or are afraid of arrest or losing child custody if they do. Many just “take it” while their children continue to be damaged by the exposure to the violence. We cannot break this intergenerational cycle by ignoring half of it.

Marc E. Angelucci  
Los Angeles, CA

Mark Angelucci is with the National Coalition of Free Men.

### Impeachment: At what cost?

I am at a loss as to your politicians, I wonder how much money is wasted with these impeachment hearings (*Vermont Guardian*, April 20) that even Shumlin has said that there is not enough time remaining in the legislative session to take up the resolution. Be safe, Be well, and may God Bless the United States.

Dennis Wells  
Jacksonville, FL



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### Thanks Vermont

At this moment, I sure wish I lived in Vermont. Thanks go to all the state senators who voted for the articles of impeachment.

Regarding this matter, my voice counts, even though I don't live in the great state of Vermont. What you did affects me in Massachusetts. What those in the Vermont House of Representatives do regarding this will affect me as well. This is not just a Vermont issue — this decision reverberates around the entire world.

I hear the opinions of restraint and contemplation, but I must tell you my "gut" tells me time is running out. More men and women will die, more of our hard-earned tax dollars will fill war profiteering coffers, more secrets, more lies, more deception.

It's well past time to say loud and clear: Enough! Thank you, Vermont Senate, for taking this bold stand. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

*Keith Martin  
Westford, MA*

### Nuclear power is not "green"

There are some who believe that because Vermont Yankee has no carbon emissions it is a solution to global warming.

Vermonters need to know that every step in the production of nuclear power uses fossil fuels. The enrichment process uses electricity produced from low grade coal; fossil fuels are used in the mining of uranium, its transportation, and in building facilities, and will be used to deal with the 20 to 30 tons of radioactive waste produced every year at Vermont Yankee for more years than we have lived on Earth.

Not only do fuel rods come with a cloud of pollution, but consider also that an "accident," or a terrorist, could make New England uninhabitable forever; there is a deadly connection between nuclear power and nuclear weapons ("depleted" uranium and plutonium); the industry receives billions in tax breaks and subsidies; and, saddest of all, we are leaving our children (if they survive), for hundreds of generations, a legacy of a radioactive wasteland.

Please remember that the Vermont Legislature took back the power to stop the re-licensing of Vermont Yankee for 20

more years. Ask your legislators to "just say no!" and remember Chernobyl.

*Jane Newton  
South Londonderry*

### Help bring Hollywood to Vermont

I am a naturopath. My wife has multiple sclerosis. She is an actor. We have formed Vermont Movies. We are interested in bringing Hollywood movies to be filmed on location in Vermont. We would like to support all creative, independent Vermonters who are tormented by chronic, and debilitating diseases. Also we would like to support starving artists, musicians, and dancers.

We need to hear from the hospitality industry. We need beds, and food, and media coverage to make this happen. Are you willing to be an extra, a carpenter, a local friend to a star?

Will you accept a Vermont currency for partial payment? Like bread bucks. We are starting Manchester "moola money."

Please send your ideas to [vermontmovies@gmail.com](mailto:vermontmovies@gmail.com), or P.O. Box 2673, Manchester Center, VT 05255.

*Dr. Dan Muffoletto, ND  
Manchester*

### Thanks volunteers

The Board of Directors and staff of the ALS Association Northern New England Chapter (ALSANNE) would like to take this opportunity, during National Volunteer Week, to thank the hundreds of volunteers who have contributed their time and efforts to improve the lives of those living with ALS.

ALS, commonly known as "Lou Gehrig's Disease," is a fatal neuromuscular disease that affects approximately 30,000 people in this country each year. Many ALS patients in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont benefit from the services and programs provided by the chapter. Whether they serve on a special events committee, assist in the office, facilitate support groups, or help raise public awareness, volunteers play a key role in the chapter's ability to meet the needs of more than 150 people with ALS in our tri-state region.

The ALS Association, dedicated to fighting on every front

to improve life for those living with ALS, focuses on three areas of expertise and commitment: research to find a cure, advocacy at the highest levels of government, and comprehensive care and support services for all people living with Lou Gehrig's disease. The chapter couldn't do this without the support and efforts of its many volunteers.

*Gary Sullivan  
Jo Ann St. Pierre  
Concord, NH*

*Gary Sullivan is president of the board of directors and Jo Ann St. Pierre is the executive director of the ALS Association Northern New England Chapter.*

### Thanks, Pat

The Humane Society of the United States wishes to thank and congratulate U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy for his efforts to stop dog fighting and cockfighting. Thanks in part to Sen. Leahy, Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, the Animal Fighting Prohibition Enforcement Act passed the U.S. Senate unanimously. The U.S. House of Representatives had previously cleared its version by a landslide vote of 368-39, and it is now on the president's desk.

This anti-crime legislation will provide felony-level penalties for interstate and foreign animal fighting activities, and outlaw commerce in cockfighting weapons. Animal fighting not only fosters unspeakable cruelty to animals, but also spawns other criminal activity, such as narcotics traffic, illegal gambling, public corruption, and violence toward people.

When animal fighters can earn tens of thousands of dollars wagering on a single fight, a slap on the wrist is considered just a cost of doing business. Stronger penalties are needed to stop this organized network of criminal activity, and that's why the National Sheriffs Association and 400 law enforcement agencies from across the country joined The Humane Society of the United States in backing this bill.

Thanks to Sen. Leahy for working to give animal fighting the knock-out punch.

*Michael Markarian  
Washington, DC*

*Michael Markarian is the executive vice president of the Humane Society of the United States.*

# CROW BOOKSHOP

"Books give not wisdom where none was before. But where some is, there reading makes it more."

—John Harington (1561-1612)

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