NWSA Stands in Solidarity with our Colleagues at the
Indiana University School of Medicine and at the University of Notre Dame

Dear Colleagues,

Like you, we understand there are moments when it feels as if we are fighting the same battle over and over again. It is frustrating and maddening as we are experiencing another round of backlash against our field and colleagues. We must speak up and speak out in support of them:

- The first incident involves Dr. Caitlin Bernard, MD, assistant professor of Clinical Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Indiana University School of Medicine, who Indiana's Attorney General Todd Rokita unjustly targeted. In response to Dr. Bernard's decision to terminate the pregnancy of a 10-year-old rape victim, AG Rokita chose to open an official investigation against her. His ongoing public claims have resulted in multiple targeted threats and harassment against Dr. Bernard. What is most concerning is that Indiana University has remained silent about the attacks against Dr. Bernard (so far). We stand with the many voices around the country calling on IU to support our colleague, Dr. Bernard.

- The second involves two professors at the University of Notre Dame's Keough School of Global Affairs: Dr. Tamara Kay, professor of global affairs and sociology, and Dr. Susan Ostermann, assistant professor of global affairs and political science, who have been researching and writing about the impact of abortion bans. Their work to open up the discussion about how "lies and intentional misinformation have dictated abortion health policy in the U.S." led to a public rebuke by University President Fr. John Jenkins. In a letter to the Chicago Tribune, Fr. Jenkins made clear that the university wants to distance itself from the views of Dr. Kay and Dr. Ostermann. Although he notes that professors have academic freedom, it is particularly upsetting that the president chose to do this in light of the ongoing debates about reproductive justice in Indiana. Again, we stand with our colleagues and support their academic freedom.

These specific attempts to curtail our field are occurring within a broader national context that is seeking to silence critical discussions about controversial topics that are of public interest. We intend to continue institutionalizing our leadership approach to responding to challenges and addressing threats to our field and colleagues. If you are experiencing similar difficulties, do not hesitate to contact NWSA directly at nwsa@nwsa.org or by phone at 773-524-1807, so we can amplify your efforts and provide support.
Sincerely,
Karsonya Wise Whitehead, President
Ariella Rotramel, Vice President
Karma Chavez, Treasurer
Heidi R. Lewis, Secretary
NWSA Executive Committee

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