

# The Feminist Majority Foundation

Eleanor Smeal, *President*

Dear Friend of Women's Rights:

Your signature on the enclosed Petition is a critically important first step in winning the abortion rights battle -- once and for all.

Let me explain.

Ever since the five-justice anti-abortion rights majority of the Supreme Court handed down their infamous Webster decision, an enormously bitter battle has raged -- in our courts, in our legislatures and even in our streets. The issue of abortion rights has become today's Vietnam!

YET ... there is a practical way to greatly de-escalate this divisive war. To dramatically reduce the need for a vast majority of the 1.6 million surgical abortions performed in America each year.

**Thanks to an historic breakthrough in medicine, there is a truly remarkable means by which the need for surgical abortions can be greatly reduced. In fact, in France in just this first year of use, the need for surgical abortions was reduced by more than 30%!**

**This was accomplished by a safe, efficient new medication called RU 486.**

**BUT ... while more than 40,000 women in France have already successfully used RU 486, it is not available in the United States!**

**WHY? Because the anti-abortion rights forces have been working around the clock to intimidate the pharmaceutical companies and keep them from bringing RU 486 into the U.S.**

So far, the one-sided attack against this medical breakthrough is succeeding. Through targeted letter-writing campaigns aimed at the French firm Roussel Uclaf, which holds the patent on RU 486, and its parent company Hoechst, A.G. in Germany, the anti-abortion rights forces have threatened boycotts and other economic action aimed at "punishing" these firms if they dare bring RU 486 into the United States.

Until now these companies have heard only from the anti-abortion rights side. It's time they hear from us. It's time they learn that there are literally millions upon millions more Americans favoring abortion rights who will support and defend their right to bring RU 486 into the United States -- far more of us who will fight them every step of the way for the rights of women to use every legal, safe and medically accepted means to

terminate unintended pregnancies.

That's why I urge you to join me and the thousands of other caring women and men who support the Feminist Majority in launching a massive campaign to turn the tide on the RU 486 debate and to reduce the need for surgical abortions in the U.S. by demanding that American women be allowed to benefit from this new advance in fertility control.

Please take the first step in this historic **Campaign for RU 486** and **Contraceptive Research** by signing your Petition and returning it to me today.

THEN ... after you have signed the Petition, please make as generous a tax-deductible contribution as you can to The Feminist Majority Foundation to help us carry forward this unprecedented effort to bring RU 486 into the U.S. and to press for greater contraceptive research in general.

With your immediate help we can alert the public to the benefits of this amazing medical breakthrough and rally massive public support for bringing it to the U.S.

And to demonstrate this public support, I, together with Peg Yorkin, Chair of The Feminist Majority Foundation, Jennifer Jackman, Executive Director, and a prominent delegation of American scientists, traveled to France to deliver the first group of signed petitions. We presented over 115,000 petitions directly to Edouard Sakiz, head of Roussel Uclaf, and to Hoechst, A.G., its parent company. We are giving them tangible, positive proof that there is massive public support for bringing RU 486 into the United States.

Primarily because of the petitions, we were the first American delegation received by both firms. It was obvious that they were very impressed by this level of support. We told them they had just begun hearing from Americans who supported abortion rights and there would be tens of thousands more petitions.

Frankly, there are few steps as significant -- and long-lasting -- as the action we can take to bring RU 486 into the United States. If available, RU 486 would become the medical method of choice by which a vast number of American women would safely and non-surgically terminate unwanted pregnancies.

BUT ... unless you and I continue to demand that something be done immediately to begin the process of allowing the distribution of RU 486 in the United States, American women will be denied this new simple method of fertility control for years and years to come!

All because the other side has succeeded in bullying and intimidating the pharmaceutical companies and chilling the atmosphere for research into contraceptive funding. As a result, Americans have so far been denied access to RU 486, and the number of U.S. pharmaceutical firms engaging in contraceptive research has dwindled from 13 in 1970 to one today.

Now more than ever -- given the Webster decision and the frightening prospects of what the Supreme Court might do next -- we must organize the

public to demand that this safe and amazingly effective medication no longer be held hostage by the anti-abortion rights forces.

#### RU 486 Is Safe, Simple

RU 486 can be used -- with over 95% efficiency -- up to the 49th day of pregnancy.

After it is determined that a woman is pregnant, in her doctor's office or women's health center she takes a 600 milligram dose of RU 486. Two days later she returns for an injection of prostaglandin. Within another two to five days, she will have a vaginal blood flow, similar to a heavy menstrual period. She then returns to her doctor to ensure the abortion is complete and the bleeding is controlled. Since this is not an invasive procedure, there is no risk of any infection, nor need for anesthesia.

HOWEVER ... while the most recent Harris poll shows that 59% of all adults think RU 486 should be made available in the U.S., the leaders of the anti-abortion rights groups are doing their utmost to stop it.

They realize that when RU 486 is legalized they would immediately lose one of their most effective tactics -- open harassment and violence at abortion clinics. Because RU 486 can be administered at any doctor's office -- not just at abortion clinics -- picketing becomes meaningless!

And another of their favorite tactics -- the shock of displaying what they purport to be fetuses from typical abortions -- would finally be exposed as fraudulent distortions.

Therefore, the anti-abortion forces have pulled no punches in their effort to knock out RU 486.

Initially, after enormous anti-abortion pressure -- including a boycott of all their products -- Roussel Uclaf, the distributor of RU 486 in France, pulled the product from the French market and cancelled plans to market it in other countries. The company openly admitted they were caving in to anti-abortion rights pressure.

BUT ... just two days later, France's Minister of Health, Claude Evin, ordered Roussel Uclaf to resume distribution in France, declaring that RU 486 was "the moral property of women."

No wonder. Beyond its capacity to dramatically reduce surgical abortions, RU 486 has other amazing properties which hold enormous promise for the benefit of women in the treatment of several major diseases and health conditions. So potentially important is this drug that its inventor, Dr. Etienne-Emile Baulieu, has just been awarded the Albert Lasker Medical Research Award -- America's highest medical research honor and frequently the front-runner of the Nobel prize.

Today RU 486 is being tested to treat:

\*\* Breast Cancer, which one in ten women develop. RU 486 has been found to be very promising in tests performed over the past two years.

\*\* Meningioma, a benign brain tumor which, however, is fatal if

located in an inoperable part of the brain.

- \*\* Endometriosis, a leading cause of infertility. After successful tests on animals, clinical tests are being conducted right now.
- \*\* Caesarean Sections, as RU 486 may be effective in inducing labor in a difficult delivery and reducing the number of Caesarean births.

And RU 486 is being tested to treat glaucoma and ulcers, and has been proven to effectively treat Cushing's Syndrome, a rare form of adrenal cancer.

With this vast spectrum of potential and actual uses, as well as its primary application as a means to medically terminate unintended pregnancies, it is unthinkable that the anti-abortion forces are determined to stop RU 486. We must not let this happen.

Indeed, RU 486 is our moral property -- just as the right to control our fertility is our moral right!

However, the courage of France's Minister of Health has not even slowed down the abortion rights opponents. In fact, some -- they will not reveal the names of their backers! -- have just formed a new lobbying organization mysteriously called the Robins, Carbide, Reynolds Fund (RCR Fund).

This strange name incorporates that of three giant American companies -- A.H. Robins, Union Carbide, and R.J. Reynolds Tobacco -- although none of these firms is in any way involved. In fact, they are extremely unhappy about the usage of their names.

And when you learn what the RCR Fund is about, you can understand why.

In a written "Declaration," the RCR Fund demanded that one of their representatives meet with the head of Hoechst, A.G., the German pharmaceutical company which controls Roussel Uclaf, "to verbalize their opposition to RU 486." And the meeting had better take place or else!

And that "or else" appears to me to be little more than blackmail!

Because if this strange, new group -- recently registered with Congress as a lobbyist -- does not succeed in having RU 486 withdrawn, they threaten to mount a worldwide campaign against the firm claiming the pharmaceutical company could be charged with being a polluter, a violator of anti-trust laws, a discriminator against women and minorities, etc. etc. Blackmail! Pure and simple.

Meanwhile, another religious right group has already launched a boycott of French products like Perrier water and Michelin tires in order to force the French government to rescind its order making RU 486 available.

Boycotts of totally uninvolved firms and other tactics of intimidation are obviously the new tools of harassment the so-called "pro-lifers" have now found to use in their campaign against women. And it's a last-ditch effort. Because they know that when RU 486 comes into America -- and it will, either legally or illegally -- vandalizing clinics and staging massive

pickets will no longer be effective in denying women their right to abortion.

But we must not have it enter the U.S. illegally. We want it properly tested and used with medical supervision to ensure its safety for women. Experts have told us that the chemistry is known for RU 486. And, if it does not enter legally, it will enter illegally within 2-5 years. We don't have a moment to waste for our campaign.

Feminist Majority Foundation research reveals that there are American companies willing to apply for a license to distribute RU 486. But first Roussel Uclaf and Hoechst, A.G. must be willing to either license one of these companies for distribution or be willing to apply to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to distribute RU 486 themselves.

That's why it is absolutely imperative that we join together -- you and I and all others who cherish our right to abortion -- to see to it that all Americans learn about RU 486 and that they make their voice of support known to Roussel Uclaf and Hoechst, A.G.

Only then will these drug companies feel they must bring RU 486 into the U.S. as soon as possible. And only then will every American woman have the option of using this safe, effective method of terminating unintended pregnancies.

That's why I urge you to join our campaign. The pharmaceutical companies have already heard from the anti-abortion rights forces, who almost forced RU 486 off the world market. Now, let them continue to hear from us! So please sign and mail your petition to me today.

At the same time, if you possibly can, please send the Feminist Majority Foundation a generous, tax-deductible contribution. Mounting an education campaign of this magnitude -- with massive public support drives, videos, speakers' tours and other costly, but essential, education and mobilization efforts -- is an enormous undertaking. And each of us must do our part to see that American women are no longer denied access to this "medical miracle."

RU 486 is the "moral property" of women around the world. Let's not let the opposition steal this at the same time they try to rob us of our right to abortion.

Sincerely,



Eleanor Smeal  
President

P.S. Now, after our visit with Roussel Uclaf and Hoechst, A.G. to deliver personally the first group of petitions -- over 115,000! -- I am more convinced than ever that RU 486 will come to the U.S. legally. We must expand our campaign to include more and more concerned Americans. Please let me hear from you today.

