

NEWS

The Fight for Women's Rights in Poland

BY ERIKA SOUKUP

WOMEN IN POLAND HAVE been taking a stand and fighting for their rights since October 22, when Poland's constitutional court issued a ruling that tightened abortion laws that were already one of the most restrictive in Europe. The protests have been organized by the group Women's Strike. The group is not just involved in abortion rights, but has also outlined areas extending far beyond abortion rights where it says urgent change is needed: stronger and wider women's and LGBTQ+ rights in general; the separation of church and state; more support for healthcare, small businesses and education; full judicial independence, per *The Guardian*. The current issue the group is fighting for is women rights and the ability to have control over their bodies, specifically in regards to abortion. The nation, which already had some of the strictest abortion laws in Europe, will now only allow the procedure in cases of rape, incest or when the mother's life is in danger. According to *CNN*, around 98% of abortions in Poland have been conducted as a result of fetal defects, meaning the ruling bans virtually all deter procedures taking place in the country. It could force women to carry a child even if they know the baby will not survive childbirth.

The protestors believe it's not an attack on just human rights, but specifically women's rights. "There is an effective ban on abortion in Poland now," Agnieszka Kubal, a sociology and human rights scholar at University College London, told *CNN* in an interview. "This has to be read in the context of the wider right-wing discourse on abortion in Poland, that women cannot be trusted with the right to choose".

On Friday, October 30, at the capital of Poland, Warsaw, people gathered for one of the largest demonstrations seen in Poland for decades with more than 100,000 protesters in attendance. Unfortunately, the Polish government is acting aggressively towards the peaceful protesters. According to *AP News*, Polish police came under criticism on Thursday for using tear gas and force on mostly female and younger protesters during the latest in a string of women-led protests.

On Tuesday, immense pressure from the protests have stopped officials from publishing the rule, which would make it into a law.

Give or Receive Meals Safely during the Holidays: Nutritional Assistance Located on or Near Campus

RECEIVING ACCESS TO BASIC food needs will be a challenge for many Minnesotans this winter. According to Gov. Walz, "One in eight Minnesotans is struggling to put food on the table as we face a pandemic and its impact on our economy." COVID-19 will continue to affect Minnesotans during the holidays, but there are ways to help. Listed below are places helping provide food to people in need all within two miles of Concordia. In addition, there is information for those needing access to services, and those looking to donate or volunteer.

COMET'S CUPBOARD, partnered with Second Harvest Heartland, is a food shelf available to Concordia students, faculty, staff, and alumni. It is also available to community members by appointment. Comet's Cupboard hopes to "reduce stigma associated with receiving nutrition assistance by creating a welcome environment." The food shelf is located in Meyer Hall 115 for students. To donate, drop off non-perishable items or dollar donations in the Center for Student Engagement office. To schedule an appointment or for more information, go to csp.edu/student-services/cometscupboard/

Meyer Hall 115 Food Shelf Hours: 9am-3pm Monday-Friday

Center for Student Engagement Office: 1282 Concordia Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55104 – Make checks payable to Concordia University Food Shelf.

HALLIE Q. BROWN COMMUNITY CENTER is an African American, nonprofit social service agency open to all since 1929. Their mission is to "improve the quality of life in [the] community by providing access to critical human services, fostering, and promoting personal growth, and developing community leadership." Their food shelf includes culturally specific foods donated by partner stores. Due to COVID-19, the food shelf has transitioned to curbside pickup and delivery only. Appointments via phone or the online request form are required to access the food shelf.

Hallie Q. Brown Community Center has created the Milk and Egg club to support kids affected by the recently increased "milk gap." Hybrid or fully online school models prevent kids from receiving free lunch tuition. They can't get the calcium, vitamin D and potassium that school milk offers, and protein rich foods are often not donated to food shelves. Through the Milk and Egg club, a donation of only \$20 can provide a month's worth of milk and eggs for kids. To fill out a food shelf request form, support the Milk and Egg club, or for more information, go to hallieqbrown.org

Hallie Q. Brown Community Center Hours: 8:30am-6pm Monday-Friday

270 N Kent St, St Paul, MN 55102

KEYSTONE COMMUNITY SERVICES helps those in need including "isolated seniors, youth and families needing connection, and those needing food support." To access food shelf services, no appointment is needed. Upon arrival, there are several social distancing measures in place. Food is served on a first come, first serve basis. To donate food or personal care items, drop off donations at the Merriam Park Community Center. For a list of donation needs, or more information, go to keystoneservices.org

Midway Food Shelf Hours: 10am-12:30pm and 2pm-4:30pm Monday-Friday

1916 University Ave W, St Paul, MN 55104

OPEN HANDS MIDWAY offers hot meals, fresh produce, and bakery items for free. Open Hands Midway is partnered with Second Harvest Heartland and dedicated to "providing means for those who are economically challenged and help obtain nutritious meals and groceries." They have a free meal service (take-out only) and a food shelf. Also provided: a 'pay as you can' lunch every Friday serviced by *Shobi's Table* in the parking lot at Bethlehem Lutheran Church the-Midway.

Open Hands Midway is looking for meal prep volunteers on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10am-3pm. Volunteers are expected to follow COVID-19 guidelines even when not serving food in person. Food shelf donations are also welcome. For a list of donation needs, or more information, go to openhandsmidway.org

Open Hands Midway Free Meals (take-out): 12pm-2pm Monday and Wednesday (No meals December 28 & 30)

Open Hands Midway Food Shelf Hours: 12pm-2pm every other Tuesday

Shobi's Table Food Truck Hours: 11:30am-1:30pm Fridays

436 Roy St N, St Paul, MN 55104