

It was a dismal holiday season for reproductive rights and 2015 looks just as bleak.

By Rebecca F. Zipp

On December 3, Representative Rick Brattin of Missouri filed a bill that would require women to gain the man's consent prior to obtaining an abortion. A rape or incest victim could avoid this requirement by producing a copy of the police report "proving" that she is a victim of crime.

On December 9, Ohio lawmakers failed to pass a bill banning abortion once a fetal heartbeat is detected. Similar bans are being challenged in Arkansas and North Dakota.

On Tap for 2015:

Tennessee's state Speaker is drafting three anti-abortion bills. The bills would create a mandatory waiting period, forced counseling, and additional inspection requirements for facilities already providing abortions.

Texas state senator Ed Lucio has promised to introduce a bill which forces women to undergo an hour long adoption seminar prior to obtaining an abortion.

Arkansas and Iowa state legislatures are expected to consider or attempt to ban telemedicine abortions. Doctors will no longer be able to prescribe RU 486 remotely if such laws go into effect.

Thank you for staying informed and for taking action on this crucial issue.



Rebecca F. Zipp is a deputy district attorney and co-chair of the Reproductive Rights and Women's Advocacy Committee. She currently serves as the vice chair of the Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

True Grit and a Growth Mindset: The Secrets of Success for Women Lawyers

By Kristin Beattie

Am I "gritty?" Do I have a "growth mindset?" These were the questions on the minds of approximately 40 Lawyers Club members, as they gathered in a Procopio, Cory, Hargreaves & Savitch conference room high above downtown for the Lawyers Club Professional Advancement Committee's November 7 program.

Attendees learned about these two key attributes from Roberta "Bobbi" Liebenberg, senior partner at Fine, Kaplan and Black and the Chair of the American Bar Association's Commission on Women in the Profession. Liebenberg was joined by Katherine "Katie" Larkin-Wong, an associate at Latham & Watkins and a member of the American Bar Association's Gender Equity Task Force.

Liebenberg and Larkin-Wong presented information on two of the most important characteristics successful women lawyers have in common: grit and a growth mindset. They educated program participants about some of the science behind these traits and highlighted the fact that women can learn and improve on these key attributes, which are necessary for women to succeed in reaching leadership positions in law firms.

Lawyers Club members discovered that "grit" is behavioral persistence in the face of adversity, accompanied by the sustained, passionate pursuit of goals, while a "growth mindset" is a belief that abilities can be developed and are not fixed. Liebenberg and Larkin-Wong shared research showing that female attorneys with high grit and growth mindset belief systems tended to be successful in their careers. Liebenberg stressed that the concepts of a growth mindset, grit, and success are interlocked. She encouraged the attendees to use those characteristics to overcome negative inner voices and doubts that may hold women back from leadership.

The second part of the program was interactive. Liebenberg and Larkin-Wong shared several video vignettes involving workplace challenges faced by female attorneys. They then facilitated a discussion about these common situations. Program attendees' wide range of legal experience—from first year law students to firm partners—informed and enriched the discussion, which continued after the program had concluded.

Mara Elliott, a Chief Deputy City Attorney commented, "I was fascinated by the video examples we watched during the presentation and the discussion that followed. We assessed how our female counterparts handled certain challenging situations, and talked about how the situations could have been better handled using grit and growth mindset."

Jamie Quient, an associate at Procopio, the event's host and sponsor, commented, "This program fundamentally changed my mindset to see challenges not as setbacks but as opportunities to grow and improve. That is what true grit and a growth mindset is all about."

Several concepts and strategies resonated with program participants: At your next performance review, will you ask about areas that need improvement or instead, ask about your growth opportunities for the next quarter? Do you believe your potential to learn and grow is fixed, or are your abilities and possibilities infinite? Can you navigate obstacles, realize your potential, and dispel the inner voices holding you back from your goals? These were the important messages Liebenberg and Larkin-Wong asked the audience to consider.

For further information on these concepts, Lawyers Club members can access the "Grit Project Toolkit" through the American Bar Association's website (www.americanbar.org).



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