

# I rise

## FOR REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS



*Laura Huang, Asian and Pacific Islander Student Outreach Intern*

When I was asked to take a picture for something that “I rise” for, I had to think about it for a second. What do I rise for? Who do I rise for? What does it mean to “rise?” After reflecting on my own life experiences, I wrote that I rise for reproductive rights.

Reproductive rights are the rights of an individual to reproduce and have reproductive health. My definition of reproductive rights expands to include sexual education and health. Today, not everyone has access to reproductive rights, or even comprehensive sexual education. Personally, I believe that it is extremely important for people to have access and knowledge about the different options that are available. As I was growing

up, my family never taught me anything about reproductive or sexual health. When I got my first period, I told my best friend before I told my mom, because I didn’t know how she would react. Even after I told my mom, we had a brief conversation about how to use a pad, and that was it. The only sex ed that I received was the short unit in 5th grade, and a semester of Health Class in high school. When I got my IUD, I didn’t tell anyone except my closest friends and my partner. Why are we, as a society, treating these topics as taboo? Why isn’t it normalized to have discussions about your periods or your sex life or your birth control?

I am privileged enough to have health insurance, and when I decided it was time for me to be on birth control, I was able to have access to a health care provider who assisted me in the process. Not everyone has this privilege to be able to do so, even within the United States. Not everyone has the opportunities to converse with someone who can provide them knowledge. Not everyone has the access to health care providers due to lack of insurance, or insufficient insurance coverage.

I believe that every person should have the ability to make their own choices about their body. I believe that every person should be able to decide whether or not they would like to have children. I believe that every person should have access to services that can assist them in making an informed choice. If that makes me a disagreeable person, then so be it; I would much rather see people receive basic care.

This Critical Social Justice Week, I will be rising for reproductive rights. I will be rising for those who do not have access to birth control. I will be rising for those who do not know about the basics of sex. I will be rising for those who are shamed for having their period. I will be rising for access to health care. I will rise for myself, and for those who cannot.

