

The Women's Media Center

The year 2009 is off to a roaring start for The Women's Media Center with two media advocacy campaigns. Our latest media advocacy campaign was around The O'Reilly Factor's treatment of the veteran news journalist Helen Thomas. In addition to our e-mail campaign, we were able to successfully pitch our Progressive Women's Voices participant Courtney Martin to discuss O'Reilly's insensitive remarks where he called Thomas a witch. Courtney did an amazing job and educated an audience of 3.6 million viewers on the highest rated cable news show on prime time.



This initiative also had the benefit of engaging all three of our programs: it was a media advocacy campaign, the WMC [created original media](#) about it and it utilized one of the women we have media trained. This action took a public stance against sexism in the media and generated more than 15,000 emails sent to O'Reilly and his producers at Fox. This campaign has been a big success for the WMC.

Our second media advocacy campaign was conducted by the WMC's Media Manager Rebekah Spicuglia. In her January 29th [WMC Exclusive](#), Rebekah spread the WMC's message that women can engage the media and get a progressive public fired up and active. Rebekah's exclusive told the story of how she set up an email campaign to expose restaurant giant Chili's for firing her sister over a sexual harassment lawsuit. The WMC spread the word through our community and many of our PWV women forwarded it around as well making this an effective viral campaign. This viral effect was so impactful that in less than four hours after the article was published on the [Huffington Post](#), Brinker International who owns Chili's had commented directly on the Huffington Post website and contacted Rebekah's sister's lawyer to reinstate her.



In addition, in her WMC exclusive commentary, Rebekah also outlined some easy action steps on how to create your own online campaign. As she advises, "Media attention, for its own sake, won't solve a problem. But if you can engage people, they'll want to know what they can do about it. So give them an action item!" Rebekah outlined the four steps she took for strategic action: 1) **Determine Your Goal.** *Ex: Shame Chili's into giving my sister her job back.* 2) **Decide on a strategy.** *Ex: Launch an email campaign, targeting Brinker executives.* 3) **Engage People.** *Ex: Write an article about my sister's case, try to get it posted, including a link to the email campaign.* 4) **Spread the word.** *Ex: Email everyone I know. Post to my Facebook, blog, and relevant listservs. Ask friends to do the same*

For more on how you can help fight sexism in the media, visit www.womensmediacenter.com.