NOW plans to defeat lawmakers who voted to override veto

By SCOTT DYER
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The National Organization for Women announced plans Wednesday to target for defeat all Louisiana lawmakers who voted to override Gov. Buddy Roemer's veto of the anti-abortion law Tuesday.

During an appearance on "Good Morning America" Wednesday, NOW National Secretary Kim Gandy of New Orleans predicted that Louisiana's anti-abortion law will be reversed by a new state Legislature before the law can make its way to the U.S. Supreme Court to challenge the landmark case Roe vs. Wade.

Gandy noted the Louisiana Legislature ranks 50th in the United States in female representation, with only four women legislators.

In a telephone interview Wednesday, Gandy said Louisiana will have to double the number of women in the Legislature in order to catch number 49 Mississippi.

Gandy said that NOW started in March to organize a statewide effort to identify progressive, pro-choice women to run for the Louisiana Legislature, but predicted the anti-abortion override will intensify those efforts.

"We may not be able to find opponents for all 95 of the legislators who supported the override, but we're certainly going to put special emphasis on the open seats and the candidates who voted against us," she said. "If we can't change their minds, we're going to change their faces."

Gandy, the coordinator of NOW's WomenElect project in Louisiana, said her organization already has set up committees to coordinate women's campaigns in Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Slidell/Covington, Ruston, Shreveport, Monroe and Orleans/Jefferson.

She said the goal is to recruit women to seek office, then help them with the specifics of running a campaign, giving them tips about organizing a grassroots effort, developing a strategy, increasing their visibility, recruiting volunteers and getting out the vote.

To help the effort, NOW has hired Nevada political consultant Harriet Trudell, who has been involved in several successful gubernatorial and congressional campaigns.

Gandy said the abortion override may be the impetus needed to get more women involved in Louisiana politics.

"Louisiana women are real riled up over this," she said.