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Republicans take aim at birth-control policy

February 9, 2012

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**Letters to the Editor**

February 25, 2012

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As a Pennsylvania clergywoman, I am deeply distressed at the attempt by Harrisburg legislators to shame and manipulate a woman's emotions in order to dissuade her from having the abortion she has already decided is the better decision for her situation. House Bill 1077, which requires women to listen to the heartbeat of a fetus before an abortion is performed, has nothing to do with women's health and welfare and instead creates an undue burden for them, two stipulations that are explicitly identified as both inappropriate and illegal according to the 1992 Supreme Court decision in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*.

This undemocratic and immoral tactic in defiance of the court ruling is a deliberate attempt to force a religiously motivated ideology on all women. Pennsylvania women do not need to be scolded, reprimanded, or guilt-tripped in order to know what is best for their families and their own lives. Legislators promised this session would be devoted to jobs, infrastructure, and the economy of the state. That is clearly a lie. Instead, in league with a religious minority, this is a diversionary tactic to avoid addressing the real moral issues of this state.

Rev. Dr. Beverly Dale, Pennsylvania Clergy for Choice, Philadelphia

Prefer Nordstrom

The surprising news that Marshalls is planning to open a store at 10th and Market Streets, replacing the just-closed Staples store, at first glance seems like a good thing, and the presence of an addition to this reputable chain of clothing stores appears to have the blessing of the Center City District. However, I have to question the wisdom of increasing the number of clothing stores on the Market East strip. Currently, there are Macy's, Old Navy, Burlington Coat Factory, and K-Mart.

With all of the talk over the past several years among our city's civic and business leaders about upgrading the shopping options along Market East to attract the more affluent residents moving into Center City, it would be preferable to get JC Penney, Kohl's or hhgregg in that space. No doubt tourists would take notice and more of them would patronize other Market East shops and restaurants.

Our city's business community and the Center City District need to elevate their vision for this long-neglected commercial strip, which is vital to enhancing the image of Philly's shopping scene, as well as attracting other higher-end establishments. I mean, how about Nordstrom?

Jack Butler, Philadelphia

OK to visit Israel

I take exception to Edward A. Turzanski's remark that it might be best not to make travel plans for the Middle East in April, May, or June ("Panetta's warning - or prediction - to Iran," Feb. 7). I would not travel to Iraq, Egypt, or Syria now because of the continuing internal turmoil and bloodshed. But despite the ominous signs, I would not include Israel in that warning.

Three times between 2000 and 2004, I traveled to Israel during the height of the Second Intifida and I felt perfectly safe. Tourism is one of Israel's major sources of revenue and, in fact, 2011 was Israel's best year for tourism. A warning such as Turzanski's will only serve to scare away potential tourists. Israel has been located in a "dangerous neighborhood" for its entire history, yet the visitors keep coming.

Rabbi Robert Layman, Wyncote