

ABSTRACT

THESIS: Menstrual Trolls Under a Political Bridge: A Feminist Criticism of Periods for Pence

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This study uses feminist rhetorical criticism as a lens through which to analyze Periods for Pence, a social movement in which Indiana women made calls detailing their menstrual cycles to the office of former Indiana Governor Mike Pence. Periods for Pence began in March of 2016 in response to Pence's signing of HEA 1337, severe anti-abortion legislation, into law. The rhetorical analysis reveals that the women of Periods for Pence use consciousness-raising, a second-wave feminist protest strategy, in a third-wave feminist context that highlights women's reproductive health and physiology. Specific elements of consciousness-raising including narrative, use of humor, and symbolic reversal are detailed. Ultimately, this study suggests that rhetorical critics should view feminism and feminist theoretical approaches to research not as occurring in waves, but as occurring with fluidity and persisting over time.