



iowa commission on the status of women  
[www.women.iowa.gov](http://www.women.iowa.gov)

# Forward

## Paid Sick Days

570,000 Iowans—47 percent of Iowa workers—are not able to take a paid sick day when they are ill. (2008 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.)

No one should face the awful choice between their health and their paycheck or job. But hundreds of thousands of working Iowans must decide between the two every time they are faced with even the most common illness or when a family member gets sick. Either they go to work sick (or send a sick child to school or daycare)—or they stay home, lose pay, and risk job loss or workplace discipline.

Many families simply can't afford this choice, and choose instead to go to work sick. Workers without paid sick days are more likely to go to work sick with an illness like the flu and are more likely to send a sick child to school than workers who have paid sick days—spreading illness to coworkers and customers, classmates and teachers, and the general public. They are also more likely to use emergency rooms for their own health needs and those of their family members because they are unable to take time away from work to see a doctor—driving up health care costs.

The Iowa Commission on the Status of Women supports a minimum standard of paid sick days in Iowa to preserve families' economic security, keep businesses running smoothly, AND protect the public health.

## Elections: Losses for Women

The elections of 2010 showed a decrease in the number of women representing Iowans at the state and national levels.

Both women, Roxanne Conlin and Mariannette Miller-Meeks who ran for US Senate and House of Representatives respectively, were defeated by male incumbents. Iowa remains, with Mississippi, as the only state to have never sent a woman to Congress or the Governor's mansion.

In the 125 races for seats in the Iowa General Assembly, 44 women ran and 27 were elected. Seven women will serve in the Iowa Senate (four Democrats and three Republicans) and 24 women in the Iowa House (eight Republicans and 16 Democrats) for a total of 31 or 21% of the Legislature, which is down from the previous year.

Five women of color will serve: Senator Swati Dandekar and Representatives Deborah Berry, Ruth Ann Gaines, Helen Miller, and Phyllis Thede.

Women can make gains in future elections by preparing themselves now. Cities, counties, and the state search for interested people to serve on boards and commissions. If you are interested in serving, contact your city, county, or visit [openup.iowa.gov/boards/](http://openup.iowa.gov/boards/) to learn more about serving on a state board. In 2011, the Catt Center at Iowa State University will hold its campaign school, Ready to Run and in 2012, 50-50 in 2020 will hold the Blueprint For Winning Academy.

## 50-50 in 2020

Although Iowa women make up 53% of the registered voters and turn out to vote in higher percentages than men, only 21% of the seats in the 2011 Iowa Legislature are held by women, and Iowa has never elected a female governor nor sent a woman to Washington as U.S. Senator or U.S. Representative.

50-50 in 2020 aims to change that by 2020, which marks the 100th anniversary of woman suffrage. A bipartisan initiative to achieve political equity in Iowa, 50-50 in 2020's goal is to have 25 women in the Iowa Senate, 50 women in the Iowa House of Representatives, one woman governor of Iowa, one woman in the United States Senate, and two women in the United States House of Representatives by 2020.

The organization is committed to creating a bipartisan, issue-neutral movement for the purpose of electing Iowa women to public office. By recruiting, training, and mentoring women in sufficient numbers, they are working to achieve political equity. 50-50 in 2020 encourages participation of women of all ages, ethnic backgrounds and economic sectors of the society. To learn more, visit [www.50-50in2020.org](http://www.50-50in2020.org).

The Iowa Commission on the Status of Women is a partnering organization.

## Friends of ICSW

What happens when you bring incredible women together in a beautiful home, and serve fabulous food and wine? You create a signature event, Women You Know, Women You Want to Meet, sponsored by the Friends of the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women.

On September 15, 2010, Attorney Lorraine May graciously opened her home to more than 100 women, while her co-host, Ambassador Mary Kramer provided the perfect entertainment: performance-level piano music. Chef Terrie Kohl cooked up delicious food, while our co-hosts provided wine and mouthwatering desserts. Thanks, also, to Mark Adams, Bob Bisgaard and Walter Russian for “chauffeur” guests, and to Lori SchraderBachar for all her behind-the-scenes hard work.

The true stars of the event, however, were the women who attended. Every year, a delightfully diverse group of women gather to talk about what’s important to them, make new connections, and catch up with long-time friends. New projects, collaborations and ways to get involved are born. The event has become such a success, that new Women You Know events are springing up all over the state.

But Women You Know is more than just a great gathering of women. It is also a fundraiser for the ICSW, which provides support to ICSW staff to do amazing things to support women and girls in Iowa.

Go to [www.friendsoficsw.org](http://www.friendsoficsw.org) to learn more about the event. And if you didn’t make it this year event, we hope you will add your name to our list of fabulous women attendees next year!

## ICSW Programs for Youth

The ICSW has two programs for youth currently accepting applications: Capitol Girls and the annual *Write Women Back Into History* Essay Contest. Whether you are a student, family member, teacher, youth volunteer, or interested citizen, we ask you to encourage the young people in your life to participate in these programs.

### Capitol Girls

On February 16, 2011, Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa, Girl Scouts of Eastern Iowa & Western Illinois, and the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women will be holding Capitol Girls. High school girls from across Iowa will convene in Des Moines to learn about the workings of the Iowa General Assembly and have an opportunity to shadow women legislators and learn about how state laws and budgets are developed and passed.

The day will begin with an inside look at the Iowa General Assembly and then girls will be paired with legislators.

Space is limited to 30 girls. Girls will be chosen by application process, which are due by January 14, 2011.

To download the application or more information, visit [www.women.iowa.gov/just\\_for\\_girls/index.html](http://www.women.iowa.gov/just_for_girls/index.html) or contact Lori SchraderBachar at ICSW, 515/281-4470 or by e-mail, [lori.schraderbachar@iowa.gov](mailto:lori.schraderbachar@iowa.gov).

### Write Women Back Into History Essay Contest

March 2011 will be designated as Women’s History Month by the Governor, the Iowa Senate and House of Representatives, the President of the United States, and the U.S. Congress, and will be celebrated in hundreds of communities and thousands of classrooms in a nationwide observance.

To give students a deeper and more relevant appreciation of women’s role in history, the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women, the Iowa Department of Education, and the State Historical Society of Iowa are sponsoring the 27th annual statewide essay contest, “Write Women Back Into History,” for students in grades 6 – 9. The 2011 theme is “Our History is Our Strength.”

Our shared history unites families, communities, and nations. Although women’s history is intertwined with the history shared with men, several factors - social, religious, economic, and biological - have worked to create a unique sphere of women’s history. Learning about women’s tenacity, courage, and creativity throughout the centuries is a tremendous source of strength.

Prizes will be awarded, each finalist will receive a certificate signed by the Governor, and the winning essayists will be recognized at a special ceremony at the State Capitol during Women’s History Month (March 2011). They will also be introduced in the Iowa Senate and House of Representatives. All winners’ names will be released to the press, and a special effort will be made to inform students’ local media of their honor.

Guidelines are available on-line at [www.women.iowa.gov](http://www.women.iowa.gov) or by contacting Lori SchraderBachar at 515/281-4470, 800/558-4427 or [lori.schraderbachar@iowa.gov](mailto:lori.schraderbachar@iowa.gov).

### DHR Gets New Website and Facebook Page

The Iowa Department of Human Rights launches its new website in mid-January! In the meantime, visit the old site at [www.humanrights.iowa.gov](http://www.humanrights.iowa.gov) to view the Department’s Annual Report.

“Like” the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women and the Iowa Department of Human Rights on Facebook.



## Title IX: More Work To Be Done

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 forbids sex discrimination in any educational institution receiving federal assistance. With few exceptions, Title IX forbids discrimination in admissions, recruitment, access to courses and participation in extracurricular activities, treatment of students, services and financial aid, use of facilities, student employment, and employment of personnel.

Despite the enormous progress that Title IX has spurred in eliminating blatant discrimination against women and girls in education—including in sports—there is still much work to be done. For instance, not all high schools across the country are providing equal opportunities for girls to participate in sports, and some are even cutting athletic opportunities in ways that exacerbate existing gender inequities or create new ones.

Although girls make up half of all high school students nationwide, they make up only 41 percent of all high school athletes. The National Women's Law Center estimates schools provide girls with 1.3 million fewer opportunities to play sports as compared to boys.

High schools that discriminate deny girls the well-documented benefits of sports, including better physical and mental health, more responsible social behavior, and greater academic achievement, including higher graduation rates. Given the fact that sports help girls as well as boys stay engaged in school, it is even more critical to provide athletic opportunities in an equitable manner.

In November, the National Women's Law Center filed complaints against twelve school districts across the country for failing to provide girls with equal opportunities to play sports, in violation of Title IX. The selected school districts—one in each region where the US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has an enforcement office—are representative of the widespread lack of opportunities that girls still face in school sports programs. No Iowa schools were included. The OCR has the main responsibility for enforcing Title IX and can investigate any school where it believes there may be Title IX problems, but it rarely does.

Every school or school district that receives federal funding is required to designate and/or adequately train at least one employee to coordinate Title IX responsibilities. Title IX regulations also require that the names and contact information of each Title IX Coordinator be made public by the educational institution. Iowa has a Title IX Coordinator within the Iowa Department of Education: Margaret Jensen Connet. She can be reached at (515) 281-3769 or [Margaret.JensenConnet@iowa.gov](mailto:Margaret.JensenConnet@iowa.gov). If you have questions or concerns about an Iowa school, contact the local or state coordinator.

## Grants Promote Women's Educational Equity

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) Educational Foundation works to advance educational and professional opportunities for women in the United States. The AAUW Community Action Grants program provides funds to individuals, AAUW organizations, and local community-based nonprofit organizations throughout the country for innovative programs or non-degree research projects that promote education and equity for women and girls. Special consideration is given to projects focused on K-12 and community college girls' and women's achievements in science, technology, engineering, or math. One-year grants of up to \$7,000 provide seed money for new projects; two-year grants of up to \$10,000 provide start-up funds for longer-term programs that address the particular needs of the community and develop girls' sense of efficacy through leadership or advocacy opportunities. The application deadline for both types of grants is January 15, 2011. Visit the AAUW website at [www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org) to submit an online application.

## Women's Businesses

In 2007, women owned 7.8 million businesses and accounted for 28.7 percent of all businesses nationwide, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners. These firms generated \$1.2 trillion in receipts, about 3.9 percent of all business receipts nationwide.

Businesses owned equally by men and women numbered 4.6 million firms (17.0 percent of all businesses) and generated \$1.3 trillion in receipts (4.2 percent of all receipts).

"As business owners, women in 2007 had a major impact on the nation's economy, employing more than 7.6 million workers," said Census Bureau Deputy Director Thomas Mesenbourg. "In addition, the businesses they owned equally with men added another 8.1 million workers. Furthermore, businesses where women were owners or half-owners numbered 12.4 million firms, representing 45.7 percent of all firms."

Of the 7.8 million women-owned businesses in 2007, 88.3 percent (6.9 million businesses) had no paid employees. These businesses generated \$182.3 billion in receipts (15.3 percent of all women-owned business receipts).

These new data come from Survey of Business Owners: Women-Owned Businesses: 2007, which provides detailed information every five years for women-owned businesses, including the number of firms, sales and receipts, number of paid employees and annual payroll. The Survey of Business Owners defines women-owned businesses as firms in which women own 51 percent or more of the equity, interest, or stock of the business.

## Bits & Pieces

- ♀ The ICSW wishes to thank fall intern Stephanie Corbett from Simpson College. Corbett, a senior, worked on legislative policy briefs.
- ♀ The Larned A. Waterman Iowa Nonprofit Resource Center maintains a database of Iowa non-profits, which is searchable by selecting “Iowa’s Nonprofit Community” link from the navigation bar at the top, then “Iowa Nonprofit Database from the middle of the page.
- ♀ Polk County has been selected as a study location for the National Children’s Study, and is the only study site in Iowa. The study will provide a source of information, which may help improve the health and development of children for future generations. It will look at many factors that affect children’s health like family health history and the places where children live, learn, and play. Eligibility requirements include women 18-49 years old who are pregnant (or planning to become pregnant in the next few years) and living in one of the selected areas. For more information about the study and participation, call (515) 558-6220, email [ncsoperations@uiowa.edu](mailto:ncsoperations@uiowa.edu) or visit [www.NationalChildrensStudy.gov](http://www.NationalChildrensStudy.gov).
- ♀ visit [www.feedthepig.org](http://www.feedthepig.org) for resources to help improve your saving and spending habits. This website, hosted by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, will not only provide you with tools and tips to improve your financial situation, you can also share your own financial questions, stories, and advice with your online peers using Feed The Pig’s ‘Discussion Spotlight.’ Brown Bag Lunch Calculator: How much will you save annually by bringing one bagged lunch per week? You may be astonished! <http://www.feedthepig.org/lunchcalc>
- ♀ The ICSW was saddened by the death of Iowa Women’s Hall of Fame member Mary Jane Odell. Odell was the former Iowa Secretary of State and broadcast pioneer.



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