

"IoWoman"

An Occasionally Printed Newsletter

from the

Iowa Commission on the Status of Women

Volume III, Number 1

January, 1973

Commission Meeting

The Iowa Commission on the Status of Women met Dec. 13th and important action was taken in the following areas: abortion, equal pay, Civil Rights confidentiality, athletic programs, and child care.

Equal Pay

After much discussion, the Commission decided that a specific law regarding equal pay was unnecessary in Iowa. It was felt that the Iowa Civil Rights Act presently covers the area of equal pay and that a specific Equal Pay Act would possibly constrict rather than expand Civil Rights activities in this area.

Civil Rights
Confidentiality

The Commission called for legislative removal of the confidentiality clause of the Civil Rights Act (105A.9 Sub-section 4). It was felt that compliance with the Civil Rights Act would be facilitated if the public were more aware of the cases brought to the Commission and the action taken on them.

Abortion

The Commission went on record supporting the concept that the decision to terminate a pregnancy is a matter of conscience and health, not of law, and that laws are appropriate in this area only to assure the proper safeguards for such procedures and to assure the freedom of the individual. It was recommended that Iowa's abortion laws be revised to acknowledge these facts. The Commission also voted to back up its support of abortion legislation by whatever means necessary to achieve satisfactory results and to co-ordinate its efforts with other interested groups. Abortion will be considered early during this session of the General Assembly.

All of you are urged to write your legislators immediately. Do this even if he or she is in favor of changing the Iowa law -- because he or she needs favorable mail to show to colleagues. You are also urged to write letters to the editor of your local newspaper and the Des Moines Register and Tribune.

Child Care

The Commission is urging the legislature to establish an interim study committee to make specific recommendations on comprehensive child care to the second session of the 65th General Assembly. It is hoped that the committee would study existing child care resources in the state, define responsibilities in the area of comprehensive child care, and explore all possibilities of funding. The motion read in part, "We do this in order that these legislators, once informed of the needs of children, will approve enlightened legislation that will grant to all children of Iowa the opportunity to have adequate and comprehensive child care services and facilities." A future meeting of the Commission (tentatively May 5th) will be devoted to examining comprehensive child care.

Study Girls Athletics

The Commission moved to undertake a study of athletic and physical education programs for girls and women.

The projected study plans to deal with these questions:

1. What are the values of athletics and what is their role in the education process?
2. Are athletics a rewarding participatory experience for the individual or an exploitation of the individual for entertainment?
3. What is the level and type of participation presently utilized by girls and women in athletic programs and what programs are currently available and how extensively are they being used?
4. What are the legal, economic, and curricular ramifications, present and future, of athletic programs?
5. Are the programs currently in existence representative of what we want to further?

Roster

The Commission voted to authorize the use of the Roster as a referral source for private as well as public employment with the understanding that the Commission is not recommending women for specific jobs but is rather supplying names of potential applicants. Roxanne Conlin noted that this would be of help to the Iowa Civil Rights Commission especially as a source of names for upper management positions.

If you have not already completed your roster form, do so soon. Additional forms may be obtained from: Ms. Betty Durden, Center for Continuing Education, Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa 50311.

Office

The Commission now has an official "office" in the area south of the Capitol Building. Space has been made available at Suite 206, East Executive Hills.

Next Commission Meeting

The next Commission meeting will be held February 3rd in Des Moines. The main topics under consideration will be penal reform and credit discrimination. Additional meetings have been scheduled for March 24th and May 5th. The March meeting will be primarily concerned with sex role stereotyping in education and several "speakers" have been asked to attend and address the Commission. These meetings will be held at the Employment Security Commission Office Building, 1000 East Grand (directly north of the Capitol Building) and are open to the public.

Governor's Support

Governor Robert D. Ray, in his State of the State message, firmly endorsed abortion reform and increased appropriations for the Iowa Civil Rights Commission. Both issues have been placed high on the list of priorities by the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women.

Equal Pay

A Sioux City bank has been ordered to pay \$53,619.25 in back pay to 75 employees and former employees after the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals found the bank guilty of sex discrimination. Prior to 1967 the bank had been hiring women tellers at rates from \$25 to \$115 a month less than male tellers.

A lower court had ruled in favor of the bank on the basis that the men were part of a "management training program." The lower court's

decision was overturned partially on the basis that most male employees were unaware that any "management training program" existed. The court also stated, "additionally, and more importantly, no woman ever qualified as a management trainee (although) several women employees working as tellers possessed college backgrounds and extensive work experience."

Among those receiving back pay awards were several men who were hired after July, 1967. These men had been paid the same lower starting salary as had been paid to women tellers. The Equal Pay Act prohibits an employer from equalizing wages by lowering the salary of the higher paid group.

Abortion

Doctors at the University Hospitals in Iowa City can frequently tell if an unborn child is normal or abnormal. According to Dr. Hans Zellweger, head of the Human Genetics Division, mongolism can be predicted with certainty and many other genetic abnormalities can be predicted with "great probability." One per cent of all children are born with abnormalities caused by genetic defects.

At present such information may not be used to justify termination of a pregnancy in Iowa. Iowa law now prohibits abortions except to save the life of a pregnant woman.

Genetically abnormal births tend to cluster in certain "high risk" groups, for example, mothers over the age of 40. Dr. Zellweger estimates that at the cost of \$100,000 a year every "high risk" pregnancy in Iowa could be examined. He predicts that the termination of such pregnancies could save the state \$2 million to \$3 million per year in the cost for the care of the severely abnormal. And that is financial savings alone! More important is the averting of the human tragedy such births can bring. At present if a pregnant woman learns that she will give birth to an abnormal child Iowa law gives her no recourse. If she desires to terminate the pregnancy doctors can only advise her to go out of state.

Equal Rights Amendment

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) which the Iowa General Assembly ratified in the last session is facing renewed opposition in state legislatures across the country. Twenty-two states have now ratified the amendment but 16 more must ratify ERA before it becomes the 27th Amendment.

An ERA Ratification Council has been formed to press for state action and to act as an information clearing house on state ERA activities. The Council has representatives from over 40 national groups including a number of organizations not normally classified as "women's groups". Although the states have seven years (until March 1979) in which to ratify the amendment, many groups are pushing for rapid passage and fear a loss of momentum if action is not swiftly taken. Even after 38 state legislatures agree to the amendment it would be two years before the ERA would take effect.

Opponents have concentrated their arguments on a few key issues. One primary target has been that the amendment would make women eligible for the draft. Advocates of ratification have pointed out that women would be eligible, as are men, for deferments because of "hardship on

dependents" and that the volunteer army would eliminate the current draft if accepted. Another point of contention is that passage would invalidate "protective labor laws," for example, laws regulating the number of hours that a woman may be asked to work. Advocates point out that such laws are frequently used as a discriminatory tool to avoid hiring women and many would welcome their removal.

Women's Studies

For the fourth year the University of Iowa will be offering "Myth America: Images of Women in American Fiction." This was the first Women's Studies course offered by the University as part of the regular academic schedule.

Women's Studies at the University of Iowa has not become a formal academic program yet, but each semester there are a number of courses in various departments which are available to both undergraduate and graduate students under the general rubric, "Women's Studies." Some of the courses are offered as part of the Action Studies Program, some as part of the Saturday Class Program, and some as part of the regular course schedule. This semester's list included the following: Austen and the Brontes; Studies in the History of Women, U.S.; Sexual Stereotyping in American Popular Culture; Psychological Aspects of Women's Roles; Women Poets; Human Sexuality; The Missing Ego; Child Care Centers - Development and Administration; Women and their Writing; Discrimination Against Women in the University, IV; and International Women Writers.

Single Sex Athletics

The Indiana Supreme Court has ruled that a South Bend girl may compete to win a spot on a boy's high school golf team. This decision overturned a lower court ruling which had upheld an Indiana High School Athletic Association regulation which prohibited boys and girls from competing on the same teams.

The court's decision distinguished between contact sports and non-contact sports, such as golf, tennis, swimming, track and gymnastics. The court ruled that denying a girl the opportunity to qualify for a team in a non-contact sport denied her the right to equal protection of the laws under state and federal constitutions.

The Iowa High School Athletic Association has a rule similar to that of the Indiana Association's which bars girls from boys' teams.

Athletic Programs in Des Moines

A study of funding of boys and girls athletic programs at the junior and senior high schools in Des Moines has revealed a great disparity in the programs, according to the women's rights committee of the Iowa Civil Liberties Union.

"The survey showed, for example, that expenditures for athletic programs and coaching at Tech high school were over \$30,000 for the boys and \$2,650 for the girls, a ratio of more than 11 to 1. At Hoover the ratio was more than 10 to 1, at North more than 5 to 1, and at Roosevelt more than 8 to 1. At some junior high schools, the expenditures for athletic programs and coaching for boys is 12 to 18 times that for girls. In general, however, the difference in spending for boys and girls programs is less than in senior high schools. The allotments for intramural athletics in junior high schools are equal for boys and girls."

Call for Study of Schools

The Citizen's Advisory Council on the Status of Women has called for studies of sex discrimination in public schools. Surveys in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and New York City have indicated "inferiority in the educational opportunities afforded girls at all levels of the public schools surveyed." They found, for example, that more than one-half of the women and girls in vocational programs are being trained in home economics and one-third are studying office practices, while vocational courses leading to the often higher-paying jobs in trades and industry are frequently closed to girls.

The Council has outlined six major areas for investigation:

1. one sex schools, for example, vocational schools that admit only boys
2. one sex or practically one sex courses in coeducational schools
3. physical education, sports, and other extra-curricular activities
4. textbooks, library books, and other curriculum aids
5. promotion of teachers
6. counseling

U.S. Supreme Court

The U. S. Supreme Court has agreed to review two sex-discrimination cases brought by women Air Force Officers. One case involves Capt. Susan R. Struck, a nurse who was dismissed from the service when she became pregnant. The other involves a Lieutenant who argues that it is unfair for the Defense Department to deny full housing and medical benefits to her, since she is partially supporting her husband, when it pays full benefits to military men who support their wives.

The Court has not yet taken any action on two other recently filed appeals. One of these challenges the listing of help-wanted newspaper advertisements as "jobs - male interest" and "jobs - female interest." The other opposes the Texas Employment Commission's policy of requiring women employees to stop work two months before the expected date of birth.

The first Supreme Court decision ever to invalidate a state law on the basis of sex discrimination was handed down by the Court in its last term when it supported the appeal of an Idaho woman who had been bypassed as the administrator of an estate because of a state law preferring men in this role. Chief Justice Burger chose at that time to rely on the principle of "equal protection": that distinctions among women or any other group in society may not be made arbitrarily and in a way not related to the purpose of the statute in question. Many feminists had hoped for some indication from the court that sex classifications were inherently "suspect" and were disappointed in the basis used to overturn the Idaho decision.

"Dick and Jane"

A two-year study by the Princeton, New Jersey, chapter of the National Organization for Women indicates that at present no reading series which portrays males and females in "a non-stereotyped manner" is available. The group examined 134 books from 12 major publishers and documented 2,760 stories. "Boy-centered" stories appeared 2 1/2 times as frequently as "girl-centered" stories and a clever boy appeared in the stories four times as often as did clever girls. Whereas in the narratives boys built and created things and frequently used their wits, girls were rarely shown doing those things.

Such sex-stereotyping is reminiscent of the racial stereotyping so prevalent a few years ago. Hopefully publishers will respond to accusations of sexism as they have already begun to react to charges of racism.

Working Women

More than one-third of Iowa's total labor force is comprised of women. Nearly 400,000 women are wage earners based on figures from the 1970 Census. Iowa's figure of 36.1 per cent approximates the national average where 38 per cent of the total labor force are women.

In Iowa more than one-half of these women are involved in two major employment categories: clerical work and service work. Of the 161,000 clerical workers in the state, 77 per cent are women. In service work (a wide-ranging category including, for example, waitresses, beauticians, and elevator operators) approximately two-thirds of all employees are women. Women also hold 41 per cent of the sales jobs in Iowa. The majority of women in sales are involved in retail sales and, at this point, there are few women in the wholesale and manufacturing sales area. In professional and technical work women comprise 46 per cent of the labor force, but the bulk of these women are clustered in nursing and teaching, traditional professions for women.

Women, however, are found working in many areas considered in the past to be "a man's province." Recent newspaper articles have featured women who work at such jobs as Certified Public Accountant, wholesale representative, hospital chief-of-staff, deputy sheriff and truck driver. A Des Moines woman has also been selected as one of the first women to train to be a Navy pilot.

Are there women in your area engaged in unusual occupations? If so, let us hear about them. Send your information to: Ms. Clay C. Morain, Editor of IoWoman, 300 S. Maple, Jefferson, Iowa 50129.

Discrimination Against Men

A Polk County District Judge has ignored an Iowa law that permits women to marry when they are 16 but requires men to wait until they are 18. The law allows waivers only if the woman is pregnant. Recently District Judge Wade Clark granted a waiver in a case involving a 17 year old male without inquiring whether the bride-to-be was pregnant. Although the law has not been challenged in the courts the judge felt that the law was not constitutional, since it discriminated on the basis of sex.

Counseling

The Ford Foundation has awarded City University of New York \$4,911 to study testing and counseling procedures to see whether they reinforce traditional sex roles.

Elementary Reading

The Ford Foundation was awarded a grant of \$4,605 to Stanford University to document the extent of sex role stereotyping in elementary reading books.