

"IoWoman"

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from the

Iowa Commission on the Status of Women

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Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Commission will be March 24th at the Employment Security Commission Building from 9:30 to approximately 3:30. The proposed agenda will include a report from the meeting with the Civil Rights Commission, tax reform, sex role stereotyping in education, and the proposed questionnaire on discrimination.

Commission Meeting

The Iowa Commission on the Status of Women last met on February 3rd in Des Moines. The group took important action in the following areas: housing discrimination, girls athletics and physical education, penal reform, credit discrimination and a proposed conference on sex role stereotyping in education. In addition a number of other topics were discussed.

Housing
Discrimination

The Commission called for the addition of the word "sex" to the housing provision of the Civil Rights Act. This would make it illegal for a person to refuse to sell, rent, or lease an apartment or home on the basis of sex. It was noted that the courts' interpretation of the counterbalancing concept of privacy would eliminate certain areas, for example the YMCA, from coverage. The present state Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination in housing on the basis of race or religion but there is no prohibition against housing discrimination because of sex.

Credit
Discrimination

The Commission, on a split vote, decided to postpone seeking legislation during this session of the General Assembly to prohibit credit discrimination against women by banks, credit unions, and savings and loan associations. Strong concern was expressed that women encounter difficulty obtaining credit and that legislation was needed to remedy this situation. However, there is the possibility that credit may be presently covered under the public accommodations clause of the Civil Rights Act and concern was expressed that attempts to obtain legislation might adversely affect judicial interpretation of the act. At present the Minnesota Human Rights Commission is effectively using the public accommodations section of their Civil Rights Laws to eliminate credit discrimination. The Commission stated that if the court rules that credit discrimination is not included within the concept of public accommodation, then the Commission will move to obtain legislation in this area.

Girls' Athletics

The Commission adopted a statement asking Iowa's schools to provide equal opportunities for girls to participate in school-supported athletics. Schools, it was felt, should provide:

- a. Equal access to facilities at prime times
- b. Comparable numbers and quality of coaching and supervisory personnel
- c. Comparable pay for work with boys and girls sports programs for equal time devoted

d. Comparable distribution of available monies.

After reconsidering the action on girls' physical education and athletics taken at its December meeting, the Commission voted to limit the purview of their study of this topic. It was decided that the Commission would simply raise the more philosophical questions suggested at that time. The Commission will, however, study what was considered the more factual issue: 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?

The Commission, with three dissenting votes, also requested:

"That attention be called to the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which guarantees equal protection of the laws and that that guarantee may well require school boards to equalize per pupil expenditures for physical education, recreational and intramural sports programs, inter-scholastic sports, and further that all students in tax-supported schools are entitled to an equal share of tax funds for such programs without regard to their sex and school boards may be under a constitutional obligation to eliminate the disparities and inequities, both in terms of quantity and quality."

A motion to allow qualified students the option of competing with others of equal skill and ability in non-contact sports without regard to whether they are male or female was defeated on a split vote. Advocates of the measure pointed to the recent Indiana Supreme Court ruling in favor of this position. Opponents feared that such action might hamper the development of athletic programs for girls.

Penal Reform

Marilyn Farr, Chairman of the AAUW Committee on the Woman Offender, appeared before the Commission to aid in discussion of penal reform. There was a difference of opinion among members as to whether or not the Commission should take any position on penal reform bills currently before the Legislature. Some members felt that they were not sufficiently related to the status of women while others felt that some of the legislation was pertinent.

The Commission decided to call for passage of two of the current bills:

1) An act relating to community-based corrections programs and services (S.F. 71, H.F. 85) This act would establish community based correction programs, add authority for the chief probation to accept custody and supervision of persons granted parole or probation from a sentence to a county jail, and provide funds for seven residences for community based corrections programs. This is particularly important for female offenders, few of whom are dangerous and all of whom must now go to Rockwell City if sentenced for more than 30 days.

2) An act relating to furloughs and work release programs for inmates (S.F. 66, H.F. 83) This act would amend the furlough law to provide for furloughs to participants in programs and activities that serve rehabilitative objectives. The Senate has approved this bill.

Conference

The Commission will support, in co-operation with the National Education Association and the American Association of University Women, statewide conference on education and sex-role stereotyping. Ten

states will hold similar conferences during the coming year. The Commission recommended that the conference be held in the western part of Iowa, perhaps Sioux City.

Criticism

Senator Gene Kennedy on the floor of the Senate criticized the distribution of the Commission's annual report in early February as a misuse of taxpayer's money. The Commission is directed by law to file such a report each year by February 1 with both the Governor and the General Assembly. The report, the law directs, should include the Commission's proceedings for the previous calendar year and may also include recommendations as it deems desirable, including recommendations for legislative consideration. Senator Kennedy was also critical of the Commission's stand on abortion. The Commission, at its February meeting, went on record commending Senator Minnette Doderer for her support and explanation of the Commission on the Senate floor in response to Senator Kennedy.

Questionnaire
Being Prepared

The Commission is preparing a questionnaire to solicit additional information from women across the state about what areas they feel are in need of improvement so that they will feel and be considered by others to be first class citizens equal to all other persons. The Commission, however, has no enforcement powers; rather its primary responsibility is to remind the public in what areas discrimination exists, to help change attitudes, and to see that discrimination against women is obliterated. Information received in such a survey will be used to aid in determining Commission priorities.

Abortion

The decision on abortion by the Supreme Court is a welcome one. The apparent stalemate in the Legislature on the issue, however, has left many doctors and hospitals hesitant to perform abortions without more concrete directions from the state despite statements by Attorney General Richard Turner and Iowa Chief Justice C. Edwin Moore that the existing Iowa law has been nullified. Many hospitals have "no policy" which is making it difficult for women to obtain abortions, especially in the second trimester of pregnancy. It is hoped that in light of the Supreme Court decision doctors and hospitals will soon begin to make abortions available to Iowa women.

The Iowa State Social Services Commissioner has changed the policy which forbade the use of welfare funds for abortions. The new policy states that abortion will be handled just as any other medical procedure. This change is in line with a decision by a federal court in New York last summer that the refusal to allow the use of welfare funds for abortion denied equal protection of the law to indigent women. The judges noted that indigent women "alone are subject to state coercion to bear children which they do not want to bear" while more wealthy women have more freedom to choice in the matter.

Child Care

House Concurrent Resolution 22, to establish an interim legislative study committee on child care, was introduced in the Iowa House of Representatives on March 2nd by Representatives Joan Lipsky (Republican, Cedar Rapids) and Phil Hill (Republican, Des Moines). This action was advocated at the December meeting of the Commission. Urge your legislators to support this Resolution.

Nixon's Report

The Economic Report that President Nixon sent to Congress in early February showed that in the period from 1950 to 1970 women had made

very little progress in gaining employment outside of the traditional female occupations. With a few exceptions (such as bus driver and bartender) most professions and trades employed nearly the same percentage of women in 1970 as they had 20 years earlier. Women's earnings, even when adjusted for education, experience, and number of hours worked, are still 80% of men's earnings; in this area, also, women have not been able to substantially narrow the gap. The report carried no recommendations of ways to achieve greater equality.

Coaching Salaries

A study of coaches salaries by the Cedar Rapids Women's Caucus - NOW has indicated that girls' coaches in Cedar Rapids schools are being paid much less than those people who coach boys' sports. For example, the "Head Coach" for tennis receives \$700 while the Girls Coach earns \$450; this is despite the fact that slightly more girls than boys were participating in the program. Salaries for coaches of girls' sports ranged from \$175 to \$500. Only one position connected with boys' sports fell below \$500 and the remainder ranged from \$620 to \$1600. The quality of instructors attracted into the field of girls' sports must be negatively affected by such differences in financial compensation. The study also showed that twice as many boys (12 per grade) as girls (6 per grade) were participating in interscholastic sports.

Women Lobby

Of the 240 lobbyists registered at the State Legislature this year, one-third of them are women. These women have registered on such issues as abortion, education, election laws, taxes, the environment and women's rights. A few of the women are employed by such groups as trade associations to lobby but most of them are lobbying on their own time because of their strong interest in specific issues.

Women Aware Follow Up

Last December 1 and 2 Mildred Lavin chaired the "Women Aware" Conference held at the University of Iowa. Professor Lavin attended the National Organization for Women (NOW) Sixth National Conference in Washington, D.C., February 17-19 for the purpose of presenting the resolutions of the five caucuses of the Women Aware Conference at the various workshops of the NOW conference.

AT&T Case

American Telephone and Telegraph Company has promised to compensate employees alleged to be victims of race and sex discrimination with payments totalling between \$12 and \$15 million. In addition the company has agreed to institute a new hiring and promotion policy for women and minority groups which is estimated to cost the company \$23 million in the next year. The U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission brought charges of discrimination before the Federal Communications Commission, where AT&T was seeking a rate increase, in December 1970. In response to AT&T's actions the EEOC has agreed to drop charges before the FCC.

In addition to the money paid to victims of alleged discrimination, the agreement contains an unprecedented feature: about \$4 million will be paid to employees who would have had faster promotion and higher salaries had they been covered by the new agreement up to two years ago. About 10,000 women who are promoted into craft jobs will receive payments ranging from \$100 to \$400 each: this is based on the assumption that they would have received the promotions earlier if the company had had a non-discriminatory policy.

The EEOC had charged that certain jobs such as operator and clerk

were set aside for women and that few women had been able to obtain employment in higher paying craft jobs such as lineman. About 3,000 of those women who do hold craft jobs will also receive retroactive pay increases. Most of them had transferred into craft jobs after many years of work in other jobs within the company. The theory behind this compensation is that if they had been initially allowed to start their careers in the craft field they would now be earning higher salaries.

Management training positions will also be opened more to women. A woman will be eligible if she is a college graduate, the same requirement as for men. The EEOC had charged that in practice women were systematically excluded from management training programs.

Interestingly AT&T has not formally acknowledged that it has discriminated against any of its employees. Perhaps this is due to the fact that approximately 1000 discrimination charges brought by individual employees are still pending and may be processed through the normal EEOC channels.

Conference at Ottumwa

A Women Aware Conference is being held March 22 at Ottumwa Heights College from 3:30 to 10:00 p.m. Three main topics will be considered: New Roles for Women; Health Concerns; and Employment. Among those participating will be Mayor Kathy Kirchbaum, Senator Charlene Conklin, and Senator Mattie Harper. The conference is open to the public.

Insurance Discrimination

A number of women are encountering discrimination when attempting to purchase various types of insurance. Women are sometimes discriminated against in the kinds of insurance they may purchase and the rates they must pay. In addition, sex prejudice of some insurance agents makes the process even more difficult.

The major area of discrimination is in disability insurance. Disability insurance provides the insured person with an income if that person suffers from a long illness or accident that prevents earning to continue. Women commonly may only get illness disability insurance for two years (a few companies are now offering 5 years); a man may usually purchase a policy for as long a time as he wishes. The rationale used by insurance companies to limit this type of coverage is two-fold. The first, they explain, is related to the common law concept that a wife is supported by her husband. Secondly, there is the suspicion that a woman, who has an employed husband, is more likely to remain at home for a longer period of time than her disability necessitates.

Even without contesting the concept that women are more likely to prolong or fake illness (which certainly is a vulnerable argument) this rationale is weak. Many employed women (approximately 6 million) have no other major means of support than their own salary; no special provisions for such women are being made now even though these women obviously do not fit the insurer's stereotypes.

In addition women have difficulty purchasing the same type of financial compensation that men may buy even when their income is similar. A woman doctor in Oregon, for example, was told that her benefits

would be limited to \$100 a week even though men in a similar professional and income bracket could purchase \$250 per week or more.

Pension programs, another form of insurance, also sometimes treat men differently than they do women. A man's spouse usually receives benefits if he dies, but the woman's spouse is sometimes barred from receiving benefits in the event of her death.

In two areas women tend to pay less for insurance than their male counterparts: life insurance (because of longer life expectancy) and automobile insurance (especially in the under 25 age bracket). But even here there are exceptions. Insurance agents may have the feeling that an unmarried woman is not as responsible as a married one (this is particularly likely to happen with a divorced woman) and thus place her in the "high risk" pool. Divorced men are not as likely to encounter the same problem.

It is also difficult for a married woman to insure her property in her own name rather than her husband's, even when she pays the premiums. The advantage of having it insured in her own name is that in case of divorce or separation the insurance would continue without interruption.

Congresswoman Edith Green has introduced a bill in Congress to ban sex discrimination in selling insurance. If this area concerns you, write your Congressman and let him know your feelings.

Woman Pays Child Support

In a recent case in Washington, D.C., the judge not only awarded custody of the three children in a divorce action to the husband, but also ordered the children's mother to pay child support. A shift in the District of Columbia's code three years ago, which made both parents equally responsible for the support of children, paved the way for this decision.

Male Consciousness

"The New Male Consciousness," a conference sponsored by the University of Iowa the first week in February, drew hundreds of participants from the Iowa City area. Highlights of the conference included a workshop on "Stereotyping of Males through TV Ads" by Ray Kril and a presentation by Warren Farrell, author of Beyond Masculinity. Although the conference dealt primarily with "male consciousness" the pressures on women and sex-role stereotyping of women were implication inherent in many of the discussions.

Women's Center in Des Moines

A Women's Center has been opened in the basement of old Dowling High School in Des Moines. The center will serve as a contact point for many types of women's activities and information.

The co-ordinator, Ms. Nancy Davis, plans to build a library which will concentrate on information important to women. The center will also sponsor "survival courses" such as auto mechanics, carpentry, and karate. Men will also be allowed to use the center except for one evening a week.

Free Exams for Women

Free gynecological examinations and possibly prescriptions for contraceptives will be allowed to women students at the University of Missouri-Columbia due to a \$4000 allotment from the Missouri Students Association. In the past students have paid \$12 or more for such an initial examination. The action was in response to a lengthy campaign by the University's Association of Women Students.