



# Io Woman

A Publication of the Friends of the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women • Vol. XXXV, No. 1, January/February 2005

## 2005 Priorities

The Iowa Commission on the Status of Women (ICSW) has proposed as priority areas to the Governor and General Assembly for 2005 the following:

- An increase in funding levels for the Iowa Community Empowerment school-ready and early childhood programs for zero to five. (Child Care)
- Increase in the minimum wage. (Economics)
- Requiring private and public health insurance to provide benefits for the treatment of biologically-based mental illnesses under the same terms and conditions as for other illnesses. (Insurance)
- Restoration of state funding as a line item of \$1.2 million for the Legal Services Grants Program administered by the Office of the Attorney General. (Justice)
- Automatic restoration of voting rights for felons upon completion of sentence and parole. (Justice)
- State appropriation for infrastructure improvements at the Iowa Juvenile Home. (Justice)
- Restoration of stable funding for domestic violence and sexual assault programs in the state budget. (Violence Against Women)

## ICSW Adopts Proposals for Governor and General Assembly

As a state agency, the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women (ICSW) works to eliminate inequities for women by advocating for changes in state laws, by supporting studies in important areas, and by championing gender-specific changes within state government.

To do that, the ICSW annually submits proposals to the Governor and General Assembly. Following are the 2005 Legislative, Administrative, and Study Proposals. During the 2005 Session, the ICSW will support or oppose legislative action that relates to any of the proposals. Please note that proposals are not in order of importance.

### LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

#### **Aging Issues and Long-Term Care**

*In 2002, Iowa ranked third in the percentage of population over 85 years of age, fourth in the percentage of population over 75 years of age, and fifth in the percentage of population over 65*

*years of age. In 2000, 59 percent of persons over 65 in Iowa were women. As the baby boom generation gets older, the need for both paid and unpaid caregivers will increase. A 2001 ICSW study on CNA wages and benefits found that 73 percent earn under \$10 per hour with few benefits and high turnover. A typical family caregiver in today's society is an educated, working, married woman in her mid-forties that spends about twenty hours per week providing unpaid care to her mother. To address the needs of the aging, and of paid and unpaid caregivers for dependent adults, the ICSW supports:*

- 1.** Strengthening and enhancing Iowa's laws on abuse of vulnerable individuals.
- 2.** Amendment of state tax policy in the Code of Iowa Chapter 422.9(2)(e) regarding tax deduction to include spouse, brother, and sister for whom in-home care is given.
- 3.** More standardized education, continuing education, and opportunities for advancement for direct care workers (nurse aides/home care aides) in order to ensure equitable pay.

## Lunch & Learn

Join the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women on Thursday, January 6 at the ICSW Priorities Lunch and Learn. The free event will begin promptly at 12 noon and end at 1 p.m. Bring your own lunch to the Legislative Dining Room in the State Capitol and hear more about the ICSW's 2005 Legislative Priorities. The event will include a panel discussion on issues and a question and answer period.

Panel members include Shanell Wagler, Iowa Department of Management; Jan Laue, Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO; Margaret Stout, Alliance for the Mentally Ill of Iowa; Dennis Groenenboom, Iowa Legal Aid; Marty Ryan, Iowa Civil Liberties Union; Karen Connell, Iowa Juvenile Home; and Marti Anderson, Crime Victim Assistance Division. Moderating the panel will be Charlotte Nelson, ICSW.

For more information or for special accommodations, please contact the ICSW, 515/281-4461, 800/558-4427, or <ahr.icsw@iowa.gov>.

4. Continued funding for Iowa CareGivers Association.
5. Funding to support expansion of the Iowa Nurse Aide Registry in conjunction with the Iowa CareGivers Association's Better Jobs Better Care grant.
6. Annual earmark of \$200,000 from Civil Money Penalties for the Iowa CareGivers Association to maintain its Direct Care Worker Scholarship Program.
7. Creation of a Direct Care Worker Credentialing body to be housed within the Iowa Department of Public Health and in cooperation with Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals' Direct Care Workers Registry, and the Iowa Department of Human Services. Members appointed should include primarily direct care workers and consumers, providers, state entity representatives, educators, and licensed nurses.

### Child Care

*Iowa ranks behind three other states in the percentage of children with both, or the only parent, working. The percent of mothers with children under age six in the labor force is 74.1, and 83.6 percent of mothers with children ages six to seventeen only are in the labor force. Child care is an economic and social infrastructure issue that affects the bottom line for business, the standard of living for families, and the future competitiveness of the state. To insure quality affordable child care, in particular for women seeking training and/or employment, the ICSW supports:*

1. **An increase in funding levels for the Iowa Community Empowerment school-ready and early childhood programs for zero to five. (Priority)**
2. A child care and/or preschool subsidy for every Iowa family below 85% of the state median income.
3. Adequate compensation, including benefits, for childcare workers.
4. A professional development system for child care/preschool workers of prerequisite and on-going training, and a process for credentialing workers.

5. Requirement that all child care/preschool settings be licensed and adhere to standards that ensure quality care and experiences.
6. Maintaining matching funds to allow DHS to draw down from the Child Care Development Fund.
7. Quality early childhood programs through:
  - a. provision of resources for the TEACH/Apprenticeship education and compensation program;
  - b. increasing the funding for monitoring and support of child care centers and Child Development Homes; and
  - c. increasing the child care provider reimbursement payments to child care programs to meet the most recent market rate.
8. State investments in Head Start and Early Head Start.
9. Instituting an At-Home Infant Care program.

### Economics

*In 2000, 62.7 percent of women age 16 and older were in Iowa's workforce, which represented 47.4 percent of the total workforce. According to the wage study released that same year, Iowa women made 73 cents for every \$1 a man made. The study also found that 64 percent of female respondents reported annual wages of \$25,000 or less while 66 percent of males reported wages over \$25,000. To address the economic needs of Iowa women, the ICSW supports:*

1. **Increase in the minimum wage. (Priority)**
2. Development of a plan for extending a comparable worth policy to all public employees in Iowa, with state assistance to local government entities in conducting comparable worth studies and a plan for making state revenue-sharing monies at future dates contingent upon adopting comparable worth pay schedules for local government employees.
3. Increased funding for Iowans in Transition program grants through the ICSW at the FY01 level of \$185,000 providing pre-employment services to

an additional 900 displaced homemakers, single parents or female offenders.

4. Development of a plan to achieve pay equity for employees in private industry furthering the goal of eliminating wage discrimination on the basis of gender.
5. Continued financial assistance to targeted small businesses.
6. Legislation to outlaw the unfair employment practice of discrimination based on a person's use of Family Medical Leave.
7. A legislative resolution to study the economic, fiscal, and social impact of the establishment of a living wage in Iowa.
8. Legislation to allow an action to be brought based on fraud relative to a judgment of distribution of marital assets within one to five years after the discovery of the fraud.
9. Opposing an amendment to the Iowa Constitution providing for public vote on tax increases.
10. Establishing a vehicle for 12 weeks of partial wage compensation for a person taking family and medical leave.
11. Legislative changes for clarification and cost savings for the Child Support Recovery Unit's operations.
12. Legislative proposals as endorsed by the Coalition Against Abusive Lending addressing predatory lending.

### Equality

*The 2004 Status of Iowa Women Report documents the need for continuing to improve the quality of life for women in this state. To achieve equality while improving the status of women, the ICSW recommends:*

1. State funding to provide staff and support for the provision of technical assistance on educational equity for school districts and to monitor implementation of Iowa's multicultural, gender-fair curriculum requirement as well as Title IX.
2. Incentives for males and minorities to enroll in programs for training

elementary education teachers and secondary family and consumer science teachers, and for females and minorities to enroll in programs of training for secondary industrial technology, mathematics, and science teachers.

3. Gender balance on boards and commissions of political subdivisions of the state.

4. Amending the Iowa Civil Rights Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

## Health

*Good health is essential to leading a productive and fulfilling life and to participating fully in the economic, social, and political life of the state. It requires safe and healthful physical and social environments, sufficient incomes, safe and adequate housing, proper nutrition, preventive treatment, and education on maintaining healthful behaviors. It is an irony that many health care workers do not earn enough to afford their own health care coverage. To increase the quality of health in women, the ICSW supports:*

1. Focusing on health care reform until health care coverage is accessible to all Iowans.

2. Full funding and implementation of the State Children's Health Care Initiative (*hawk-i*), with consideration of available options including coverage of parents.

3. Expansion of Medicaid coverage to include parents of eligible children.

4. Continued funding for statewide chlamydia screening.

5. Access to mammography, colposcopy, and screening for diabetes for low-income women without Medicaid.

6. Continued funding for follow-up treatment when screening for breast and cervical cancer indicates abnormalities.

7. Coverage for screening tests for women who are at risk for ovarian cancer.

8. Increased funding of family planning services through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

9. Access to all reproductive health care options for women as currently available.

10. Continuation of funding for the community adolescent pregnancy prevention programs at the current level.

11. Opposition of the criterion that family planning and reproductive health services grants be awarded to agencies who engage in the fewest abortions.

12. Increased reimbursement rate under Title XIX for dentists to care for children in WIC and Head Start programs.

13. Increased funding to programs for quality substance abuse treatment, including treatment tailored specifically for methamphetamine use.

14. Opposition to any legislative language defining when life begins.

15. Full funding of the state's portion of Medicaid.

16. Open access to psychiatric medications that are most effective in treating mental illness.

## Insurance

*In recognition of the needs of all persons to insure against the risks related to illness, disability, retirement and death, and in particular noting the needs of persons following divorce or disability or death of a spouse, the ICSW supports:*

**1. Requiring private and public health insurance to provide benefits for the treatment of biologically-based mental illnesses under the same terms and conditions as for other illnesses. (Priority)**

2. Equality for substance abuse treatment coverage.

3. Elimination of discriminatory practices on the basis of gender or marital status in the issuance or operation of any type of insurance policy, plan, program, or coverage, including but not limited to rates, payments, or benefits; for example, exclusion of obstetrical care for unwed dependents.

4. Continuing to reform health insurance coverage for the uninsured and underinsured.

5. Expansion of relationship definition for family coverage health insurance to include members in the same household.

6. Requirement that the phone number to call and obtain more information about the external review process be printed on insurance cards and be posted in a prominent place in health care facilities, so that a person who has been denied coverage knows how to appeal.

7. Tax credits and asset protection in long-term care insurance.

8. Allowing ex-spouses to continue as a member of a group health insurance policy if they have been a policy member for more than five years.

## Justice

*Women in Iowa have unique needs relative to the administration of justice in all areas, including legal assistance. The female prison population in Iowa is on the rise, climbing from fewer than 100 in 1985 to 723 at midyear 2004. The ICSW supports:*

**1. Restoration of state funding as a line item of \$1.2 million for the Legal Services Grants Program administered by the Office of the Attorney General. (Priority)**

2. Automatic restoration of voting rights for felons upon completion of sentence and parole. (Priority)

3. State appropriation for infrastructure improvements at the Iowa Juvenile Home. (Priority)

4. The establishment of a gender-specific continuum of care for females beginning with restricting all 100 placements at the Iowa Juvenile Home to females.

5. Strengthening and expanding our community based corrections as a way to alleviate the growth of our prison population.

6. Corrections budget funding to provide for adequate staffing commensurate with Iowa's growing offender population for the safety of the public, staff and offenders.

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7. Elimination of mandatory minimum sentencing and restoring more discretion in sentencing to the judiciary.
8. Intensive residential community-based facility for drug offenders on probation.
9. Expansion of substance abuse treatment in prisons and communities.
10. Re-visiting the proposal to use 100 beds at the former Knoxville VA facility for substance abuse treatment.
11. Re-emphasizing (and supporting with resources) the importance of education in rehabilitation and the reduction of recidivism.
12. Establishing and funding additional restorative justice programs.
13. Continuation of no-fault dissolution of marriage.
14. Statewide expansion in re-entry programming, including the Keys Program pilot, to reduce recidivism.
15. Expansion of the Star Therapeutic Community Program currently in use at the Iowa Correctional Institute for Women. Expand relationship based Families in Transition program in the Therapeutic Community to all inmates.
16. Opposition to reinstatement of the death penalty.
17. Changes in the *Code of Iowa* to lower the number of years required between applications for commutation.

### **Violence Against Women**

*Since 1995, 78 Iowa women and 14 Iowa men have been killed by their partners. In fiscal year 2003, 20,841 victims of domestic violence were served by programs receiving state dollars. That same year, 3,560 adult, teenage, and child survivors of sexual assault sought services from Iowa's sexual assault crisis centers. In light of the number and degree of violent incidents committed against women, the ICSW supports:*

1. Restoration of stable funding for domestic violence and sexual assault programs in the state budget. (Priority)
2. Amending *Code of Iowa* Chapter 724.26, so that state law is the same as the federal law that prohibits persons

who have committed domestic violence or who are subject to a no-contact order from possessing firearms.

3. State legislation to criminalize trafficking of persons, to award benefits for victims, and institute a statewide task force.
4. Amending *Code of Iowa* Chapter 236.8 so that the even "attempted" contact in violation of a protective order can be prosecuted or a contempt action brought.
5. Amending the *Code of Iowa* Chapter 562A.36 to ensure that victims of domestic violence can call the police or emergency assistance without facing eviction, and provide a civil penalty for violations of this right.
6. Mandatory notification by law enforcement to sexual assault victims of their specific rights.
7. Amending *Code of Iowa* to improve the crime victim notification process to allow registration at any point, with registration information contained in one centralized database, which can be accessed by all components of the justice system.
8. Improved access to FBI background checks to allow victim service agencies to check national criminal records for potential employees and volunteers of sexual assault centers.
9. Repeal of or change in *Code of Iowa* Chapter 708.2A(5)a that limits the time frame for counting previous domestic violence convictions.
10. Legislation requiring every state department or agency referenced in the annual Domestic Violence Death Review report to respond to the recommendations in writing within sixty days of the issuance of the report.

### **Welfare**

*To endorse Iowa's efforts to reform the welfare system, particularly to make services available that promote economic self-sufficiency, the ICSW supports:*

1. Full funding for child care, education, and training for Family

- Investment Program (FIP) participants through the maintenance of effort requirement for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
2. Increased grant level for the Family Investment Program (FIP).
  3. Increasing work deductions (earned income disregards) under Family Investment Program (FIP).
  4. Continued medical coverage for former welfare recipients beyond the one-year limit to cover the gap between leaving public assistance and becoming totally self-sufficient.
  5. Fully restored funding for the Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS) program.
  6. Restoration of the Emergency Assistance Program for housing and utilities when Iowans are threatened with homelessness.
  7. Restoration of \$400,000 appropriation to the Homeless Shelters Operations Grant (HSOG) through the Department of Economic Development.
  8. Dedication of revenue from real estate transfer tax to fund homeless shelters, low income housing, and housing rehabilitation.
  9. Investment of work related TANF High Performance Bonus for one-time use to strengthen FIP employment and training programs, including Family Development and Self-Sufficiency.

### **PROPOSALS TO EXECUTIVE BRANCH FOR ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION**

The ICSW supports:

#### **Economics**

1. Promotion of state/federal dependent care pre-tax deductions for in-home day care, in-home nursing care, child day care, adult day care, and household services in conjunction with day care.
2. Promotion of earned income tax credit and child care income tax credit.
3. Promotion of assistance with tax preparation to low-income Iowans.

4. Amending the state plan for implementing the Workforce Investment Act to include a strong initiative for training women for nontraditional, higher-paying jobs.
5. Policies that promote job sharing and flex-time in employment.
6. Partnership with the Iowa Finance Authority in an effort to educate Iowa women on the opportunities available for down payment assistance and low interest rate mortgages.
7. Promotion of a requirement that credit be given for skills developed through volunteer and homemaker work experience for purposes of qualifying for hiring and promotion in all personnel selection systems in Iowa state government, its political subdivisions, and all businesses/parties that contract with the state government.

### **Education**

1. Continuation of affirmative strategies to promote opportunities for women and minority persons in educational administration, which in turn results in role models for students and a vehicle for change in the educational environment.
2. Increased educational support for programs that encourage females and minority students to study mathematics, science, and technology at all levels as well as to pursue careers related to mathematics, science, and computer technology.
3. Promotion of female participation in educational programs leading to nontraditional, higher-paying jobs.
4. Promotion of financial literacy courses in schools and communities.
5. Infusion of equity training and strategies for effectively working with diverse learners into the college level preparation programs for school administrators, teachers, counselors, and coaches. (To supplement, not replace the current human relations courses.)
6. Encouragement for school districts to use methods and resources already

at their disposal to gain equitable treatment for young women and men and to ensure quality educational environments that ensure that all students achieve to their maximum potential.

7. Provision of English as a Second Language adult education.

### **Government**

1. Making services through the Department of Human Services (DHS) more accessible and understandable particularly emphasizing the need for advocates for clients of DHS.
2. Continuing redesign of the delivery system for financial assistance services so that families are served more quickly and effectively, which includes one point of entry.

### **Health**

1. Promotion of prenatal screening to include counseling to high-risk women to have confidential HIV test and treatment if necessary to prevent transmission.
2. Guaranteed eligibility, upon approval of a Medicaid waiver, for family planning services up to 24 months after a pregnancy has ended.
3. Monitoring managed care for substance abuse and mental health treatment to insure that specific needs of women, including aftercare, are met.
4. Monitoring the delivery of services through Empowerment Zones, to assure that needs of families are being met.
5. Encouraging the state to apply for a federal waiver to allow state employees access to the *hawk-i* program.
6. Education on the illegality of female genital mutilation (AKA female circumcision).
7. Appropriate response from law enforcement to harassment at reproductive health care facilities in Iowa.

### **Justice**

1. Monitoring the implementation of the Iowa Supreme Court's Equality in the Courts Task Force's final recommendations.
2. Continued education of judicial nominating commission members regarding the need to increase the number of women and minorities in the Iowa judiciary, and encouragement of judicial nominating commission members to give weight and consideration to relevant background and experience in the selection of candidates.
3. Improvement of the procedures for enforcement of financial settlements, including alimony and other judicial decisions.
4. Educating judges about the current law and problems created by nonpayment of support.
5. Advocacy by legislators with the Department of Corrections in establishing and changing administrative rules involving the cost of telephone calls, visiting hours, and expanding the definition of family so contact from persons closest to the inmates is enhanced.
6. The mediation/arbitration approach to child custody except in cases where domestic violence or child abuse are involved.
7. Making services, such as mental health services, to families involved in the juvenile court available immediately.
8. Development of a new program to house children with their young mothers who are residents of the Iowa Juvenile Home.

### **Violence Against Women**

1. Monitoring the implementation of recommendations of the Supreme Court Task Force on Courts' and Communities' Response to Domestic Violence.
2. Improved mandatory training requirements for judicial branch personnel to include judges, clerks of court and county attorneys.

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## **STUDY PROPOSALS**

The ICSW supports:

1. Study of issues related to the awarding of guardianships, conservatorships, and designation of other substitute decision-makers, taking into account the rights and needs of the parties involved.
2. Study through the Coalition Against Abusive Lending of check-cashing centers and currency exchanges, payday loans, rent-to-own operations, pawn shops, warranties for used cars, and same-day-pay temporary agencies, to ascertain extent of victimization of the working poor.
3. Study of materials to determine whether financial advisors are being encouraged to sell products (e.g. insurance, trusts, annuities) based on gender assumptions such as the incompetence or unwillingness of women to handle financial affairs.
4. Study of the need for substance abuse training for nurses.
5. Study of a mechanism to expedite the reunification of parents with children taken away by the Department of Human Services.
6. Study of issues related to child custody, including judicial discretion, rulings of Iowa judges, consideration of primary caregiver presumption, and consideration of shared custody presumption.
7. Review of the statute of limitations in prosecution for child sexual abuse.
8. Study by Iowa Department of Public Health of sickle cell anemia, diabetes, infant mortality and keloid treatment in African-Americans.
9. Study of the reasons why women attorneys do not apply, or reapply, for appointment to judgeships in greater numbers.
10. Study of judicial nominating commission legislation, including the possibility of alternating the male and female most senior justice as chair, and the possibility of increasing the number of applicants submitted to the Governor, balanced by gender.
11. Study of various recommendations to revise the Civil Rights Code, enhancing penalties, increasing rights of complainants, and expanding coverage.
12. Study of child support issues, including:
  - Amendment to *Code of Iowa* Chapter 633.425 classifying unpaid child support first in payment of debts of an estate
  - Providing legal representation for persons seeking child support
  - Institute child support assurance to aid families unconditionally until the state enforces and collects court-ordered child support
  - Proposal to move child support enforcement and collections to the Department of Revenue.
13. Study to determine the scope and nature of mandatory training in gender-specific services for appropriate staff at all state agencies involved with juvenile justice as well as any agencies that receive state funds.
14. Study of the compensation for workers in treatment programs for adolescent females.
15. Study of the unemployment rate of ex-offenders due to felony convictions to determine what effect this unemployment rate has on recidivism.
16. Study of divorce law reform.

## **A Celebration of Iowa's Women Jurists**

On November 18, 2004, the American Judicature Society presented "A Celebration of Iowa's Women Jurists" at the Iowa Judicial Building in Des Moines. Honored jurists were The Honorable Margaret Briles (first female district court judge in Iowa – 1977-1992), The Honorable Patricia Houlihan (Fifth Judicial District Associate Judge – 1991-2000), The Honorable Janet Johnson (first woman on the Iowa Court of Appeals – 1978- 1983), The Honorable Lynne Brady Neuhaus (first woman judge in Iowa – 1973-2002), The Honorable Linda Neuman (first woman on the Iowa Supreme Court – 1986-2003), and The Honorable Linda Reade (Fifth Judicial District Judge – 1993-2002, when she became the first woman judge from Iowa to be appointed to a U.S. district court .

Each woman was introduced featuring highlights of her career, including leadership in professional associations and in law schools. A portrait of each honoree was unveiled following her introduction. These portraits will be hung in the courtrooms in which they served, where women's pictures have been notably absent over the years.

In 2004, women comprised 17.8 percent of the state judiciary positions. There were 61 female judges in Iowa, out of a total of 343. The American Judicature Society noted in its program about the honorees that "we celebrate their legacy that carries remarkable spirit and great intellect, and we celebrate all women judges and the path they create for Iowa's future."

## **Friends Donate to Iowa Female Inmates**

Friends of Iowa Women Prisoners was concerned about inmates keeping in touch with family members during the holiday season, so FIWP donated 700 stamped envelopes and 800 stamps for distribution to the 600+ women at the Iowa Institution for Women in Mitchellville.

Donations are being accepted to assist female inmates with correspondence courses in March 2005. Checks made payable to FIWP Scholarship Fund may be mailed to FIWP, c/o Hawthorn Hill, 3001 Grand Avenue, Des Moines 50312.



## Women, Land and Legacy

Iowa farm women are speaking up. Women, Land and Legacy, a project of the USDA State Outreach Council (SOC), is inviting and giving women the chance to do so. As a pilot project, women in five Iowa counties are participating in this unique outreach project that reaches out to women at the local level and helps them connect to the information and assistance that they think will be most helpful to them.

Traditionally, agricultural information meetings have mostly targeted men and have taken the “top down” approach in which “experts” talk for several hours about their programs, production methods, leases, and a whole host of other farm topics. Agricultural women have mostly felt excluded from these meetings and have not seen this teaching method as very effective for them. Through the Women, Land and Legacy project, women are being asked what is needed for effective education and what is needed to help them make the decisions on their farms that fit their values and goals.

Women, Land and Legacy’s pilot is targeting Lyon, Howard, Wapello, Marshall, and Cass counties. To date, two of the counties have held Women, Land and Legacy events. Howard County held a meeting for 61 women on September 21st and Lyon County held an event for 55 women on November 30th. The women who attended each event were enthusiastic and participated actively in small group dialogues and large group focused conversations.

Some of the best idea strategies that women are identifying include: 1) frequent meetings for women on specific topics that also include time for small group dialogue and sharing; 2) phone and/or email chat groups; 3) tours of ag-related facilities for women; 4) newsletters; 5) programs on Iowa Public Television; 6) conducting farm program practice sign-ups for women; 7) developing a farm decision calendar; and 8) working together on small projects. The key to all of these ideas is that they need to be exclusive to women, allow discussion time, and also utilize as much as possible women who have expertise in specific topics.

One of the values of Women, Land and Legacy is that the women will determine their own destiny rather than an expert. The ultimate goal of Women, Land and Legacy is to leave behind a web of local networks of women that are able to provide support, information and resources for each other. These local networks then will eventually connect to expand the web over the entire state.

For more information, contact Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen at 319/668-8110 or <Tanya.meyer@ia.usda.gov>.

***Women You Know, Women You Want to Meet is coming in March!***

## Save the Date: Whispers & Screams

Mark your calendars now and plan to attend *Whispers & Screams are hard to hear: creating an audience for girls’ voices* Chapter 9: Outside In. The conference, sponsored by Iowa Gender Specific-Services Task Force, will be held on May 12-13 at The Hotel at Gateway Center in Ames.

The conference brings together key stakeholders in Iowa’s juvenile justice system, professionals involved with at-risk girls, and other forward-thinking individuals who are committed to comprehensive system change that makes gender equity for girls a priority.

Young women are powerfully impacted by societal and personal influences, often to their detriment. We, who care about young women, need to act as champions on their behalf – contesting complacency and advocating change - while fortifying young women to themselves challenge that which would harm them.

Keynote speakers are Dr. Meda Chesney-Lind and Dr. Jessica Henderson Daniel. Chesney-Lind is Professor of Women’s Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. She is an outspoken advocate for girls and women, particularly those who find their way into the criminal justice system. Her work on the problem of sexism in the treatment of girls in the juvenile justice system was partially responsible for the recent national attention devoted to services to girls in that system.

Henderson Daniel, associate director of the LEAH (Leadership Education in Adolescent Health) training program at Boston’s Children’s Hospital and coeditor of the recently published *Complete Guide to Mental Health for Women*, emphasizes the crucial role that race and ethnicity play in adolescent girls’ mental health.

Registration will be available in February. Go to <[www.state.ia.us/dhr/sw/girls-conference.html](http://www.state.ia.us/dhr/sw/girls-conference.html)> for more information or contact Kathy NESTEBY at 515/281-6915, 800/558-4427 or <[kathy.nesteby@iowa.gov](mailto:kathy.nesteby@iowa.gov)>.

## Women in General Assembly

Susan B. Anthony once said, “there never will be complete equality until women themselves help to make laws and elect lawmakers.”

Iowa’s path to equality hit a stumbling block with regard to women in the legislature. The overall count of females serving in the Iowa General Assembly is down to thirty after the November election. Five women will serve in the Senate and twenty-five women in the House of Representatives. Last year, a total of thirty-two women served in the 150 person General Assembly.

Iowa continues to be one of two states in the nation that has not ever elected a female to be governor or a member of the U.S. Congress. The other state to share the shame of inequity is Mississippi.

## Tax Credits for Individuals and Families

Tax time is coming soon. Before you prepare your taxes this year, find out for which credits you may be eligible. Below is information provided by the National Women's Law Center and the Child & Family Policy Center.

**The Earned Income Tax Credit.** The federal Earned Income Credit and the Iowa Earned Income Credit increased for tax year 2004. In general, the lower your income and the larger your family, the larger your credits will be.

You may be eligible for: up to \$4,300 in federal tax benefits, and up to \$280 in Iowa tax benefits if you have two or more qualifying children and in 2004 you earned \$34,458 or less (if you are single), or \$35,458 or less (together with your spouse, if you are married); or up to \$2,604 in federal tax benefits, and up to \$169 in Iowa tax benefits if you have one qualifying child and in 2004 you earned \$30,338 or less (if you are single), or \$31,338 or less (together with your spouse, if you are married).

Even if you don't owe federal income taxes, you may be able to get your federal credit as a substantial tax refund. But you can't get more from the Iowa credit than you owe in Iowa income taxes. The Earned Income Credits are also available to taxpayers with no qualifying children. Different eligibility requirements apply.

**The Child Tax Credit.** You may be eligible for a federal Child Tax Credit of as much as \$1,000 per child if:

- You have a child or stepchild who was under age 17, who is a U.S. citizen or resident alien, and whom you are claiming as a dependent on your federal income tax return; and

- In 2004 you had income of \$94,000 or less, if single, or \$129,000 or less, together with your spouse, if married. There are special rules for siblings, nieces and nephews, and married, adopted and foster children.

Even if you owe little or nothing in

federal income taxes, you may be able to get a refund of some or all of your federal Child Tax Credit if you earned at least \$10,750 in 2004.

**The Child and Dependent Care Expenses Credit.** If your family had work-related child or dependent care expenses in 2004, you may be able to lower your taxes or increase your refund on your federal and state tax returns by thousands of dollars if:

- You paid for child or dependent care so that you (and your spouse, if you are married) could work or look for work in 2004; and

- The care was for a child under age 13 whom you claim as a dependent, a disabled individual whom you claim as a dependent, or a disabled spouse.

In general, the lower your income and the higher your expenses, the higher your credits will be. You may be eligible for: up to \$2,100 in federal tax benefits, and up to \$1,575 in Iowa tax benefits if you have two or more children or dependents; or up to \$1,050 in federal tax benefits, and up to \$788 in Iowa tax benefits if you have one child or dependent.

The federal credit is offered to tax filers at all income levels. The Iowa credit is available to tax filers with incomes below \$40,000 (together with a spouse, if married) in 2004. At the federal level, you cannot get more from the federal credit than you owe in federal income taxes. In Iowa, even if you don't owe state income taxes, you may be able to get a refund of your state credit amount.

For more information and to find the location, dates and hours of free tax preparation sites, call the Internal Revenue Service toll-free at 800/TAX-1040 or 800/829-1040, or dial 211.

## Voting Rights

The ICSW has for several years proposed to automatically restore voting rights for felons upon completion of sentence and parole.

The State of Iowa currently prohibits felons currently on probation, in prison, or on parole from voting. In addition, all former felons remain disfranchised permanently after the completion of their sentence.

According to information from Right to Vote, there are 100,631 people disfranchised in Iowa, or 4.7% of the population. Almost 25% of Iowa's African-American population is disfranchised (11,192 persons).

Iowa is one of six states with the harshest penalty to citizens convicted of a felony, which is permanent disfranchisement. The other states are Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, Nebraska, and Virginia.

Any former felon seeking to regain their right to vote may either apply for a pardon or seek the restoration of their civil rights from the Governor.

According to the form that can be found on the Governor's web site at <[www.governor.state.ia.us/requests/App\\_Citizenship.doc](http://www.governor.state.ia.us/requests/App_Citizenship.doc)>, "all persons convicted of an aggravated misdemeanor or a felony have lost their citizenship rights including the right to vote and hold public office."

In Iowa, the Board of Parole must first review an application to restore citizenship rights and make a recommendation for action to the Governor. The processing time is estimated between four and six months.

For more information regarding voting rights in other states, visit Right to Vote at <[www.righttovote.org/state.asp](http://www.righttovote.org/state.asp)>.

**Appointment resumes** for women who are interested in serving on a state board or commission are available through the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women, 515/281-4461, 800/558-4427, or <[hdr.icsw@iowa.gov](mailto:hdr.icsw@iowa.gov)>. You may also visit the information page of our website, <[www.state.ia.us/dhr/sw](http://www.state.ia.us/dhr/sw)> and click on the state boards and commissions link.



## Low Interest Ag Loans Available

If you are interested in starting an agricultural operation, expanding a current operation or transferring the farm to the next generation, the USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) has loan programs available which offer low interest rates and longer terms to make sure you have every opportunity for success.

Loans are available to help you begin or continue a farming operation, including niche farming. Loans are available for operating and/or the purchase or improvement of farms or ranches.

FSA also has priority funding for members of Socially Disadvantaged Groups including women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Latinos, and Asian-Pacific Islanders.

Youth loans, for those ranging in age from 10-20, are available to help beginning farming enterprises in rural Iowa.

For more information contact the FSA in your county or go to the website <[www.usda.fsa.gov](http://www.usda.fsa.gov)>.

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## Asthma Increasing in Women

According to Bev Kaduce, an asthma educator with Visiting Nurse Services in Des Moines, there has been a 100 percent increase in asthma in women since 1990.

Asthma is a complex, but treatable, chronic respiratory disease characterized by recurrent wheezing, breathlessness, coughing, and chest tightness.

The symptoms of asthma are caused by two underlying conditions: airway inflammation and airway hyperresponsiveness. Airway inflammation is an immune response that produces redness, swelling, excessive fluid and sticky mucus in the bronchial tubes. Airway or bronchial hyperresponsiveness is the over-constriction of the smooth muscles of the bronchial tubes.

The recurrent, intermittent symptoms or 'attacks,' can vary in severity, duration and frequency and are usually worse in the early morning and at night, often causing sleep disturbances. For about half of patients, symptoms are most severe four to eight hours after initial airway constriction. About half of all asthma cases begin in childhood and between 50 and 80 percent of childhood cases of asthma begin before age five.

About 140 deaths each year are attributable to asthma, about two-thirds of which occurred in females. Females are about twice as likely as males to die from asthma.

Females had hospitalization rates more than 90 percent higher than males during 1998 to 2000.

Information on asthma was provided by the Iowa Department of Public Health. To learn more, visit <[www.idph.state.ia.us/hpcdp/asthma\\_content/default.htm](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/hpcdp/asthma_content/default.htm)>.

## Abstinence-Only Curricula Report

On December 1, U.S. Representative Henry Waxman (CA) released the report, "The Content of Federally Funded Abstinence-Only Education Programs." The report found that over two-thirds of the most frequently used abstinence-only curricula "contain false, misleading, or distorted information about reproductive health."

The distorted information falls into five broad categories: 1) contain false information about the effectiveness of contraceptives, 2) contain false information about the risks of abortion, 3) blur religion and science, 4) treat stereotypes about girls and boys as scientific fact, and 5) contain scientific errors.

Eleven of the top thirteen abstinence-only curricula have "major errors and distortions of public health information." Of those eleven, four are used by grantees in Iowa, at this time: A.C. Green's Game Plan, WAIT Training, Navigator, Choosing the Best (Path, Life, and Way).

The report also includes specifics regarding the distortions in the various curricula. One such example demonstrates the reinforcement of harmful female/male stereotypes: "The father gives the bride to the groom because he is the one man who has had the responsibility of protecting her throughout her life. He is now giving his daughter to the only other man who will take over this protective role."

Many other examples are given as well, including the following: "Another curriculum states that 'twenty-four chromosomes from the mother and twenty-four chromosomes from the father join to create this new individual'; the correct number is 23."

"...research cited in the curriculum found an association between heart disease and a type of Chlamydia (called Chlamydia pneumoniae) that is not sexually transmitted."

In addition to these examples, the report states, "These curricula also say nothing about the importance of Pap smears." However, the report did find that curricula indicate that sexual activity can lead to cancer. Human papilloma virus (HPV) can rarely lead to cervical cancer and is highly preventable if young women are aware that getting regular Pap smears is the best way to detect HPV early.

To contrast the false information in the examined curricula, the report provides the accurate information on select examples as well.

Although these curricula are funded by the federal government (\$170 million in 2005 – more than double the funding level of 2001), they are "not reviewed for accuracy by the federal government."

To download the complete 26 page report, go to <[www.democrats.reform.house.gov](http://www.democrats.reform.house.gov)>.

# Status of Iowa Women Report Released

The 2004 Edition of the *Status of Iowa Women Report* reveals many positive changes toward women's full participation in all aspects of society. Still, old and new challenges to women's equity are also revealed in the ninth edition of the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women (ICSW) report.

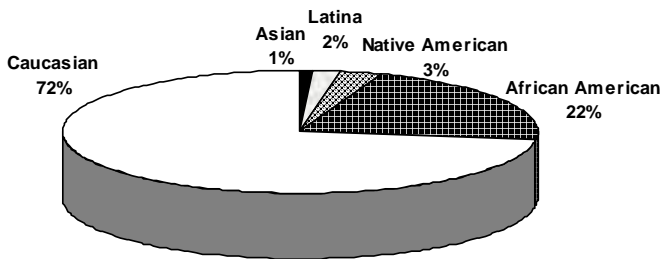
As an advocacy agency, the ICSW studies changing needs and problems facing women of Iowa and recommends and develops programs and constructive action. The status report is an effort in that direction, reporting on the status of women and identifying needs in reference to education, health, economics, justice, and politics.

The 2004 report shows that more women than ever are getting post-secondary education, more women than men, in fact, and women have made significant inroads into some traditionally male-dominated work domains.

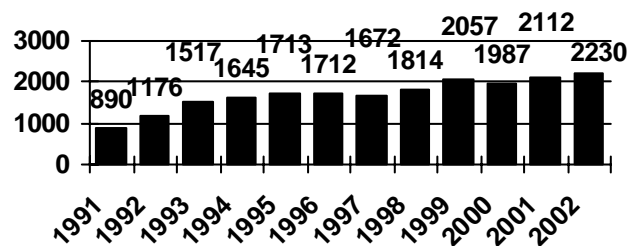
Still, much remains to be done. The report also reveals that girls, by and large, are not enrolling in upper-level high-school computer courses; the number of females in prison is rising; gender-wage disparity is a reality; and women continue to be raped, beaten, and battered at staggering rates. Much work needs to be done at the community and state levels to address those and other challenges addressed in this publication.

For a free copy of the report, go to [www.state.ia.us/dhr/sw](http://www.state.ia.us/dhr/sw) and click on information or call the ICSW at 515/281-4461 or 800/558-4427.

## RACIAL/ETHNIC MAKE-UP FOR WOMEN INCARCERATED IN IOWA PRISONS, JUNE 30, 2004



## REPORTED SEXUAL ASSAULTS IOWA, 1991-2002



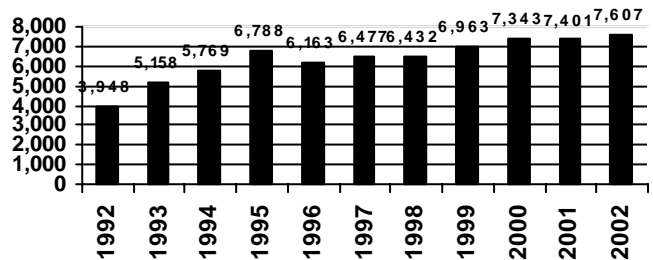
SOURCE: Iowa Department of Public Safety

**Figure 2.9**  
PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL COURSE ENROLLMENT IN COMPUTER & INFORMATION SCIENCES, BY GENDER, IOWA, 2002-2003

COURSE	MALES	FEMALES
Basic Computer	53.6%	46.4%
General Computer App.	52.2%	47.8%
Business Computer App.	53.4%	46.6%
Business Programming	45.1%	54.9%
Data Processing	53.2%	46.8%
Computer Graphics	59.7%	40.3%
Computing System	70.4%	29.6%
Computer Technology	69.8%	30.2%
Network Technology	83.4%	16.6%
Computer Programming	71.3%	28.7%
Basic Programming	79.8%	20.2%
Pascal Programming	70.2%	29.8%
Other Programming	72.2%	27.8%
AP Computer Science	77.5%	22.5%
Computer-related Subject	63.2%	36.8%
Computer-Independent	71.2%	28.8%
Computer-Other	58.4%	41.6%

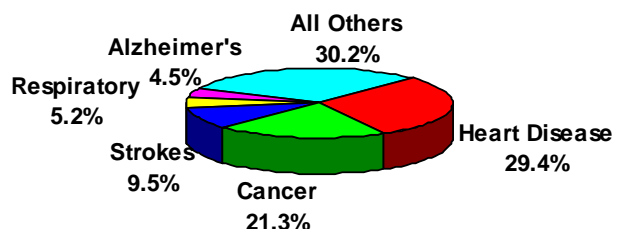
SOURCE: Iowa Department of Education

## REPORTED DOMESTIC ABUSE ASSAULT CASES, IOWA, 1992-2002



SOURCE: Iowa Department of Public Safety

## LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH FOR FEMALES, IOWA, 2002



SOURCE: Iowa Department of Public Health

# Calendar of Events

## January

- 6 ICSW Priorities Lunch and Learn.** 12 noon - 1 p.m., Legislative Dining Room, State Capitol, Des Moines. Free and open to the public. ICSW, 800/558-4427, 515/281-4461 or [hdr.icsw@iowa.gov](mailto:hdr.icsw@iowa.gov).
- 7 Iowa Gender-Specific Services Task Force.** 10 a.m.-12 noon, Urbandale Public Library, Urbandale. Kathy Nesteby, ICSW, 515/281-6915, 800/558-4427, or [kathy.nesteby@iowa.gov](mailto:kathy.nesteby@iowa.gov).
- 7 Iowa Human Needs Advocates.** Meets weekly at 9 a.m. in the Legislative Dining Room, State Capitol, Des Moines. Matt Russell, [mrrussell@Iowacan.org](mailto:mrrussell@Iowacan.org).
- 12 From Object to Subject: A Sex-Positive Approach to Educating About Female Sexuality.** 1 - 4:30 p.m., Plymouth Congregational Church, Des Moines. \$15. RSVP by January 2 to Planned Parenthood of Great Iowa Education & Resource Center, 800/874-2025.
- 12 Uncommon Network.** 1-3 p.m., St. Catherine of Sienna Catholic Student Center, Des Moines. Cece Arnold, National Catholic Rural Life Conference, 515/270-2634 or [ncrlcca@mchsi.com](mailto:ncrlcca@mchsi.com).
- 14-15 Women in Denim: Celebrating Women of Rural America.** Buena Vista College, Storm Lake. Fee varies. [www.womenindenim.com](http://www.womenindenim.com).
- 17 16th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Ceremony, "Remember the Dream, Celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup>, and Act."** 10:45 a.m. to 12 p.m., State Historical Building, Des Moines. Free and open to the public. Kim Cheeks, Iowa Commission on the Status of African Americans, 515/281-3274 or [kim.cheeks@iowa.gov](mailto:kim.cheeks@iowa.gov).
- 18 Friends of Iowa Women Prisoners.** 12 noon. Wesley United Methodist Church, Des Moines. Bring a brown bag lunch and your concerns about women in the Iowa correctional system. Anyone interested is welcome. 515/283-1911.
- 20-21 In Their Shoes Diversity Training.** Hotel Fort Des Moines, Des Moines. Fee varies. Jennifer Smyser, Iowa Council for International Understanding, 515/282-8269 x. 15 or [www.iciu.org](http://www.iciu.org).
- 21-22 Overall Women: A Conference for Today's Rural Woman.** Marriott Hotel, Cedar Rapids. Fee varies. 515/294-6222, [ucs-info@iastate.edu](mailto:ucs-info@iastate.edu) or [www.ucs.iastate.edu/mnet/overallwomen/home.html](http://www.ucs.iastate.edu/mnet/overallwomen/home.html).

- 22 Emma Goldman Clinic Choice Dinner.** 6 p.m., Iowa Memorial Union, University of Iowa, Iowa City. For tickets, contact 800/848-7684 or [www.emmagoldman.com](http://www.emmagoldman.com).
- 27 Bullying and Harassment in Our Schools: Power and Empowerment.** Scheman Building, Iowa State University, Ames. Fee varies. 319/273-6899, 800/782-9519, [conf-events@uni.edu](mailto:conf-events@uni.edu) or [www.uni.edu/contined/ces/bullying/](http://www.uni.edu/contined/ces/bullying/).
- 28 Write Women Back Into History Essay Contest postmark deadline.**
- 29 I'll Make Me A World in Iowa Celebration Day.** 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. State Historical Building, Des Moines. Free. For more information, call 515/707-1692 or visit [www.worldiniowa.org](http://www.worldiniowa.org).

## February

### African American History Month

- 4 Iowa Gender-Specific Services Task Force.** 10 a.m.-12 noon, Urbandale Public Library, Urbandale. Kathy Nesteby, ICSW, 515/281-6915, 800/558-4427, or [kathy.nesteby@iowa.gov](mailto:kathy.nesteby@iowa.gov).
- 7 Open House for Women Legislators.** 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. Location TBA. Chrysalis Foundation and Iowa Women in Public Policy, 515/255.1853 or [info@chrysalisfdn.org](mailto:info@chrysalisfdn.org).
- 8 Iowa Commission on the Status of Women Meeting.** 9:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. Lucas State Office Building, Room 418, Des Moines. Free and open to the public. Call or write for special accommodations, 800/558-4427, 515/281-4461 or [hdr.icsw@iowa.gov](mailto:hdr.icsw@iowa.gov).
- 19 In 1855, the University of Iowa becomes the first state school to admit women.**
- 25 Third Annual Hip-Hop Summit & Step Show.** 1 p.m. - 2 a.m., Central College, Pella. Fee varies. For more information, call 641/682-5656 or [hillc1@central.edu](mailto:hillc1@central.edu).

## Upcoming

- March 15 Women of Excellence Banquet.** 5:30 p.m., Sioux City Convention Center, Sioux City. \$30. Silent auction available. Speaker: Diane Kay. RSVP by March 11 to Women Aware, 712/258-4174 or 800/465- 6165.

**The deadline for Iowa Women's Hall of Fame nominations is May 2, 2005.**



# Bits and Pieces

The ICSW extends a thank you to *ex officio* commissioner Senator Jack Holveck. Holveck served on the ICSW both as a Representative and as a Senator.



The *Write Women Back Into History Essay Contest* guidelines have been e-mailed to several middle school teachers. Ask your school to get involved! Guidelines can be found at <[www.state.ia.us/dhr/sw](http://www.state.ia.us/dhr/sw)>. Deadline is January 28, 2005.



With the passage of the ordinance, Bettendorf became the sixth city in Iowa to add sexual orientation to its civil rights code, joining Davenport, Iowa City, Des Moines, Cedar Rapids and Ames. Dubuque is currently considering a similar ordinance.



The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

seeks nominations for the Gates Millennium Scholars Program for low-income students of color. The deadline for submission of nomination materials is January 14, 2005, 12:00 midnight (EST). For eligibility requirements or more information, call 877/690-4677 or visit <[www.gmsp.org](http://www.gmsp.org)>.



The Iowa High School **Youth Leadership Forum** for students with disabilities is designed to reinforce and teach skills towards transition from high school to work and/or college. Iowa high school juniors and seniors with any type of disability who are interested in preparing for post secondary education and/or employment are urged to apply. Applications for the forum on the ISU campus in Ames from July 17-22<sup>nd</sup> are on-line at <[www.state.ia.us/dhr/pd](http://www.state.ia.us/dhr/pd)> or contact the Iowa Commission of

Persons with Disabilities at 888/219-0471. Applications are due February 18, 2005.



The Principal Financial Group is offering an internship and scholarship program to deserving minority students from Iowa and currently attending an Iowa college or university. Applicants must complete the on-line application by Sunday, February 1, 2005. For the on-line application and detailed information on the qualifications and expectations of the program can be found at <[www.principal.com/careers/scholarship.htm](http://www.principal.com/careers/scholarship.htm)>.

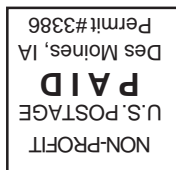


Correction: The **National Hall of Fame** nominees will be inducted in October 2005, not 2004, as the last *IoWoman* reported. We apologize for any confusion this error may have caused.

Help save printing/postage costs!  
If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please write or call the ICSW office. You may also send your e-mail address. Thank you!

**Friends of the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women**  
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Des Moines, IA 50319  
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**Fax:** 515/242-6119  
**E-mail address:** [dhr.icsw@iowa.gov](mailto:dhr.icsw@iowa.gov)  
**Website:** <http://www.state.ia.us/dhr/sw>

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Enclosure of items in the newsletter does not necessarily connote endorsement by the Friends of the ICSW. All information must be mailed or faxed to the ICSW no later than the 15th day of all even numbered months. The use of any submitted material is at the discretion of the editor. The *IoWoman* is mailed six times per year to 8,600 persons or organizations.

Janis Anderson, President

Charlotte Nelson, ICSW Executive Director

Lori M. SchraderBachar, Editor

