



Iowa commission on the status of women  
www.women.iowa.gov

# Forward

## Legislative Progress for Health and Wellbeing of Women

The shortened time frame and ongoing budget limitations made for a 2010 session with long working hours for the General Assembly, the rise and fall of many hot button issues, and painful appropriations decisions. However, the budget constraints and smaller number of bills than typical may have put more attention on policy discussion, such as the sweeping successes achieved for veterans.

SF2357, the long awaited firearms ban for domestic abusers bill, was signed into law by Governor Culver on March 22. Iowa law at last conforms to federal law in prohibiting possession of firearms and other offensive weapons by a person convicted of a domestic abuse crime or a person who is subject to a civil protective order. Many thanks to Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller and his staff and to the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence for continuing to bring the bill forward for ten years! Other bills related to domestic violence made significant progress this year, but ultimately the clock ran out on bills relating to domestic abuse strangulation, dating violence, school policies and curriculum to prevent teen dating violence, and ensuring that domestic abuse 911 calls don't result in an eviction of the victims.

-continued on page 3

## friends connect

### A Summit to Advance Women & Girls

The Iowa Commission on the Status of Women (ICSW) and the Friends of the Iowa Commission of the Status of Women (Friends) will hold a statewide summit of organizations for women and girls on April 29-30, 2010, in West Des Moines to dialogue and collaboration and to build capacity of the participating organizations.

Do you belong to a women's group? Are you a board or staff member to an organization that serves women and girls? Or are you just plain interested in women's and girls' issues? If so, we need you to help us connect!

Rachel Scott, administrator of the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women said, "Friends is honored to have Marie Wilson address the inaugural Friends Connect! Summit as the keynote speaker." An advocate of women's issues for more than 30 years, Wilson is founder and President of The White House Project, co-creator of Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work<sup>®</sup> Day and author of Closing the Leadership Gap: Why Women Can and Must Help Run the World.

The Friends Connect Summit begins Thursday, April 29, 2010, at the Sheraton West Des Moines where participants will get a chance to mingle and network at a reception from 6:30 to 9 p.m. The summit, on April 30 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., will include the keynote address and interactive and energetic presentations and workshops covering topics as leadership, mentoring, board development, fundraising, activism and diversity.

"Friends Connect! is designed to help build capacity, grow collaboration and deepen relationships among organizations for women and girls who share a broad vision of growing Iowa's opportunities so that every woman and girl can reach her full potential", said Friends President, Michelle Durand-Adams. Anticipating an audience of 250, ICSW and Friends expect the Friends Connect Summit to spark valuable discussions, highlight what works and energize participants to better engage and serve women and girls.

The summit is open to all Iowa organizations for women and girls. Cost of participation is \$75. A limited number of partial scholarships are available to student and non-profit participants. Participants can register online at [www.FriendsofICSW.org](http://www.FriendsofICSW.org).

For more information, contact Lori SchraderBachar at (515) 281-4470 or [lori.schraderbachar@iowa.gov](mailto:lori.schraderbachar@iowa.gov).

## Students Celebrate Write Women Back Into History with Lt. Governor Patty Judge

Each year the month of March is observed as Women's History Month, an excellent opportunity to highlight the contributions, concerns, and importance of women in our society. In order to bring the accomplishments of women to the forefront, the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women, the Iowa Department of Education, and the State Historical Society cosponsor an essay contest, Write Women Back Into History.



As part of Women's History Month, Lt. Governor Patty Judge celebrated the accomplishments of nine student winners of the Write Women Back Into History statewide essay contest on Thursday, March 11. 6-7 Grade Category Essays: 1st Place, Gaby Baker; 2nd Place, Olivia Dawson; 3rd Place, Tess Van Den Hurk-Moran. 8-9 Grade Category Essays: 1st Place, Bethany Lehman; 2nd Place, Joy Gnade; 3rd Place, Michaela Hoffelmeyer. Best Essays on Women in Science and Engineering for 6-7 Grades: 1st Place: Emily Bonnstetter; 2nd Place, Alexander Erlandson. Best Essays on Women in Science and Engineering for 8-9 Grades: 1st Place, Kierstyn Feld.

To view the winning essays, go to [www.women.iowa.gov/about\\_women/womens\\_history/essay\\_contest.html](http://www.women.iowa.gov/about_women/womens_history/essay_contest.html).

## Inaugural Capitol Girls a Success

On February 10, 2010, seven young women from across Iowa participated in the inaugural Capitol Girls, sponsored by the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women, Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa, and Girl Scouts of Eastern Iowa & Western Illinois.

One of the participants, Katie Strickland, said Capitol Girls was "a place to learn about leadership, independence, and courage from true role models. These women have undoubtedly broken their walls around the legislature and have built so much for girls like us." She added, "I know that I will, forever in my life, remember this experience and use its teachings to become the strong woman that I see in my future. I will not be afraid of my own barriers and rely on my dreams to lead me."



The high school girls learned about the workings of the Iowa General Assembly while shadowing women legislators. The girls also heard from lobbyists and women leaders in the public sector. Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa also presented information on Relational Aggression.

Plans are underway for a similar event next year.

## Are You a WAC? Do you know a WAC?

The Fort Des Moines Museum is looking for women who trained as a part of the Women's Army Corps (WAC) during World War II or anyone who has a direct connection to someone who served as a WAC at Fort Des Moines. Through a grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the Fort Des Moines Museum, in an effort to preserve this history, will interview WAC women who trained at Des Moines. We are looking for those who collected memorabilia, uniforms, photographs, and other items that interpret the WAC story. With these items, we will create an exhibit based on the history of the WAC experience. For more information, contact Michael Kates at [katesedu@qwestoffice.net](mailto:katesedu@qwestoffice.net) or (515) 282-8060.

## ICSW Undergoes Changes

The ICSW, once a division in the Iowa Department of Human Rights (DHR), is now an office within the newly configured department.

DHR's new mission is "to ensure basic rights, freedoms, and opportunities for all by empowering under-represented Iowans and eliminating economic, social and cultural barriers." DHR's vision is to be the results-oriented leader in creating a more inclusive and productive Iowa and Iowa remains a vital piece in achieving the shared mission and vision.

As part of the recent government restructuring bill signed by Governor Culver, DHR has consolidated seven divisions (Status of African Americans, Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage, Deaf Services, Persons with Disabilities, Latino Affairs, Native Americans, and Status of Women) into one Division of Community Advocacy and Services, significantly broadening the span of control, increasing accountability for results, and decreasing administrative costs. "Offices," staffed with the appropriate expertise to continue to meet the needs of the population and the respective Commissions, will be established within the Division.

The reorganization does not change the department's core function of advocacy and includes the retention of individualized, responsive, culturally affirmative services and expertise. Services to the public will not be affected due to restructuring. The new structure for DHR will support a scope of work that focuses on cross-population initiatives in areas like education, justice, health and economic opportunity—"raising the tide for all boats," rather than supporting potentially duplicative "silos" narrowly focused on individual populations.

Our phone number and e-mail address will remain the same. With questions, please contact the ICSW at [women@iowa.gov](mailto:women@iowa.gov) or (515) 281-4461.

## Legislative Update *(continued from the front page)*

A major disappointment for the session was the loss by a single vote of passage of legislation that would require employers to permit workers who breastfeed to have break time to express milk and to make a "reasonable effort" to provide a place other than a toilet stall to do it. Twenty-four other states have such laws, and the recently passed Federal health care reform legislation includes this requirement for employers with 50 or more workers. The journal *Pediatrics* announced April 5, "The United States incurs \$13 billion in excess costs annually and suffers 911 preventable deaths per year because our breastfeeding rates fall far below medical recommendations." Iowa's rates of breastfeeding are full ten percent below the national average.

The Iowa Needs Nurses Now initiative promoted by a broad coalition of organizations establishes a system to coordinate data about the shortage of nurses and nurse educators and lays the foundation for planning and funding of an integrated approach to fill this critical health care and workforce need. Family planning services for low income women (and some men) will be expanded in future years through legislative approval of the Medicaid Family Planning Waiver.

For more information on the ICSW's legislative agenda, contact Rachel Scott at [rachel.scott@iowa.gov](mailto:rachel.scott@iowa.gov) or (515) 281-4461.

## Women, Work, and Poverty

Children and Family Policy Center recently released "Women, Work, and Poverty: The Twenty-First Century Challenge."

The report draws upon fifty years of national and Iowa data to track the disparities in poverty and income levels between men and women. It shows that, while there have been dramatic increases in women's employment rates, education levels, and earnings compared with men, the gender gap in poverty rates has remained consistent over this period.

The increase in single parenting rates has largely offset the gains in earnings that women have achieved, resulting in little overall change in the disparities in poverty rates.

Public policies – particularly around child support enforcement and comparable worth for Iowa employees – have helped equalize income levels by gender. At the same time, combined Iowa investments in welfare benefits and child care assistance have declined substantially over time, both in terms of real dollars and as a share of the state budget.

Women, Work, and Poverty indicates that addressing both gender and racial disparities in income and poverty should again become a source of public policy dialogue, as it was in the 1980's, when significant policy advances were made.

To download the full report, visit [www.cfpciowa.org](http://www.cfpciowa.org).

**Save the date! The Iowa Women's Hall of Fame Ceremony will take place on Saturday, August 28 at 10:30 a.m. at the State Historical Building in Des Moines.**

*Nominations will be accepted until May 1. Go to [www.women.iowa.gov](http://www.women.iowa.gov) for more information.*

## Bits & Pieces

- ♀ Staff changes at the ICSW: Joanne Parker has moved to another division within the Iowa Department of Human Rights and is no longer with the ICSW. The ICSW thanks Parker for her dedication to women and girls in Iowa.
- ♀ Training is available to women and minority males in highway construction Des Moines Area Community College Ankeny Campus. Participants will have the opportunity to obtain free National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) certification in core construction which includes basic skills in blueprint reading, safety, hand/power tools and introduction to the computer. Participants may also have the opportunity to obtain state/national certification in flagging and possibly a class A-Commercial Driver License for a reduced tuition cost. There are a limited number of CDL slots available and applicants are subject to evaluation of background and driving record to determine if enrollment in CDL training is appropriate. Training begins April 2010. For more information call Thea Holmon-Ellis at (563) 336-3412 or (800) 850-5440.
- ♀ Interested in interning at the ICSW? We welcome college students and recent graduates any time during the year. Contact us at [women@iowa.gov](mailto:women@iowa.gov), 515/281-4461 or 800/558-4427.
- ♀ April 20, 2010 is Equal Pay Day. To commemorate the work that still needs to be done for women's equality, please consider attending one of the upcoming Iowa events with internationally known speakers: Suze Orman will be speaking in Coralville on April 21, Lily Ledbetter will be speaking in Ames on April 24, and Marie Wilson will be the keynote at the Friends Connect! Summit on April 30. Go to [www.women.iowa.gov/calendar/](http://www.women.iowa.gov/calendar/) for details.
- ♀ Whispers & Screams Chapter 14 "Momentum: Girls on the Move" will be held May 27-28 in Ames. Visit [www.women.iowa.gov/girls/whisper\\_screams.html](http://www.women.iowa.gov/girls/whisper_screams.html) for details.



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**For more information, please contact:**

Rachel Scott, Division Administrator

Lori M. SchraderBachar, Editor

Iowa Commission on the Status of Women

Lucas State Office Building, 2nd floor

321 East 12th Street

Des Moines, IA 50319

515/281-4461 or 800/558-4427

[women@iowa.gov](mailto:women@iowa.gov)

[www.women.iowa.gov](http://www.women.iowa.gov)