

"IoWoman"

An Occasionally Printed Newsletter

from the

Iowa Commission on the Status of Women

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Commission Seeks  
Executive Director

The Iowa Commission on the Status of Women has received an appropriation adequate for the hiring of a full-time executive director. It is now searching for such a person.

The job will require an individual who has good public relations skills and, preferably, experience. The executive director will be working directly with heads of state agencies and departments, the General Assembly, and members of the working press in order to effectively implement the programs and policies established by the Commission.

The position will demand research skills and experience. There is a great lack of and subsequent demand for information on the status of women. Some of this is being gathered by students at Iowa colleges and universities who are researching various areas of women's present status.

The executive director also must be willing to travel and meet with the wide variety of women's groups through-out Iowa in order to effectively coordinate efforts to improve the status of women in Iowa.

If you are interested in seeking the position of executive director of the Commission, please submit a resume of your education and employment background and a statement of your particular interest in the women's movement and how you believe you can improve the status of women in Iowa in the position of executive director. Send the resume and statement to:

Search Committee  
State Commission on the Status of Women  
State Capitol Building  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

The Commission hopes to fill the position by September 1, 1973, so please act swiftly if you are interested.

Legislative Report:  
--ADC

A change in ADC regulations which will allow payments in limited situations when the father remains in the home was passed by the Legislature and signed into law by the Governor. Hopefully this will help decrease the disruption of families with financial problems. Unfortunately there was no accompanying increase in appropriations so the prospective increased case load will have to be handled out of the budget that existed prior to the additional cases.

--Housing

A bill to ban sex discrimination in housing and retirement plans (SF 467) passed the Senate but is still pending in the House. At present, the Iowa Civil Rights law prohibits unfair or discriminatory practices in housing, but only on the basis of "race, color, creed, religion, national origin, or disability." SF 467 would add the word

"sex" to the housing section of the Civil Rights law, making it unlawful to discriminate in the area of housing on the basis of sex. The Commission on the Status of Women has strongly recommended passage of this bill as a means of eliminating present discriminatory practices against women who seek to rent, lease, or purchase housing for themselves and their families. Increasing numbers of Iowa women are becoming heads of households through death, divorce, or decision to remain single. These women are frequently being denied access to housing simply because they are female. Several Iowa municipalities, among them Des Moines, Sioux City, and Cedar Rapids, presently have effective city ordinances against housing discrimination on the basis of sex, but there is a need to have this incorporated into law on a statewide basis.

--School Standards

The School Standards Act, (SF 126), which includes provisions which will forbid sex discrimination in some areas of curriculum, has also passed the Senate and is awaiting action in the House.

--Child Care  
Licensing

A bill (SF 569) which deals with licensing of child care facilities has been special ordered for airing in the Senate January 29th in the next session. There is a similar bill, HF 729, pending in the House, but this is not a companion bill. The bill authorizes the Iowa Department of Social Services to license or register child care facilities in the state and defines the types of facilities over which the Department has jurisdiction. At present there is a great deal of confusion in the area of child care. Part of this confusion relates to federal funding and how proposed changes in eligibility for federal funding affect Iowa child care facilities. Some of the confusion is due to controversy over interpretation of Iowa law as to what agency or department in state government -- IF ANY -- has the authority to license and to set standards for child care facilities and how such state standards relate to eligibility for federal funding. These bills would help to clarify the resulting confusion.

--Civil Rights  
Commission

The Iowa Civil Rights Commission survived an effort to cut their budget and/or their powers for the coming year and received an appropriation of \$187,530 for the next year. This will allow the Commission to double its staff. However, rather than approving a budget for the biennium the Legislature limited the appropriation to one year and appointed an interim committee to study the Commission.

Iowa Women's Political  
Caucus

Since its emergence at an organizing convention of 300 women in July, 1971, the National Women's Political Caucus has developed from a conviction that women must unite to achieve political equality. The group now unites caucuses in 47 states and involves more than 30,000 women. "The function of the National Women's Political Caucus," stated Representative Shirley Chisholm, "is not to be the cutting edge of the women's liberation movement, but the big umbrella organization which provides the weight and the muscle for those issues which the majority of women in this country see as concerns."

On September 29-30 The Iowa Women's Political Caucus will hold its first statewide convention in Ames with Frances (Sissy) Farenthold as keynote speaker and with Jill Ruckelshaus also on the program. Workshops will cover such topics as Campaign Planning, Lobbying, Welfare, Legal and Financial Rights, Child Care, Health Care and Parliamentary Procedure. State dues are \$3.00 and may be addressed to:

Iowa Women's Political Caucus  
P. O. Box 1941  
Des Moines, Iowa 50316

There are currently six chapters of IWPC either existing or in the organizing stage: Des Moines, Ames, Iowa City, Dubuque, Cedar Rapids, Sioux City and Davenport. Local caucuses can be organized on any basis from a city or metropolitan area to county or multi-county Congressional District. If you are interested in establishing a local caucus, address your inquiry to Ms. Roxanne Barton Conlin at the address above. Ms. Conlin is the Iowa delegate to the National Steering Committee for NWPC. The Caucus is definitely a grass roots way to become politically effective. It seeks to promote the concerns and needs of all Iowa women, regardless of political affiliation or philosophy, by getting women informed about and involved in the political process at all levels of government.

#### Credit Equality

On Monday, July 23, the Senate passed SF 2101 (the Fair Credit Billing Act), on a 90 - 0 vote. Title III of the bill contains the following provision: "It shall be unlawful for any creditor or card issuer to discriminate on account of sex or marital status against any individual with respect to the approval or denial of any extension of consumer credit or with respect to the terms thereof or with respect to the approval, denial, renewal, continuation, or revocation of any open end consumer credit account or with respect to the terms thereof. Section 104 of this title does not apply with respect to any transactions subject to this section." (Section 104 referred to above deals with business, securities, and public utilities credit.)

However, the battle is only half won. We must begin a grass roots campaign for support of SF 2101 in the House of Representatives. The Chairperson of the House Sub-committee on Consumer Affairs, the body that will handle the bill, has previously announced her opposition to this type of legislation. She is Representative Leonor Sullivan (D. Mo.). You are urged to write to her and to your own Representative letting them know of your support of the Fair Credit Billing Act. You should also ask others in your community, especially retailers and bankers, to communicate their support for the bill. Also, let members of Congress know about any credit discrimination you or others have encountered due to sex or marital status. Hopefully, the sub-committee can be persuaded to hold hearings on the bill, and this type of information will be needed.

#### Appointments

Governor Robert D. Ray has appointed the following women to state boards and commissions in the past several weeks: Colleen Shearer, Des Moines, Employment Security Commissioner; Julie Anderson, Ames, Banking Board; Jolly Ann Davidson, Clarinda, State Board of Public Instruction; Colleen Shaw, Corning, Commission on the Aging and Louise Rosenfeld of Ames to the Commission on Aging. The Governor also appointed Lynne Brady of Cedar Rapids as Municipal Court Judge.

#### Pregnancy Case at Cedar Rapids

District Judge William R. Eads has ruled in favor of two women who challenged the maternity leave policy of the Cedar Rapids Community School district on the grounds of sex discrimination. Eads ruled the district must pay the women back pay and fringe benefits from March 10, 1972, to the end of that school year. Both teachers had been forced to quit teaching at the end of their fifth month of pregnancy under the district's former maternity policy. Eads also said the former policy of denying a maternity leave with its built-in right of re-employment unless a teacher had been in the system two years was discriminatory. On this basis he directed that one of the women be treated as though she had been on leave and be offered a contract for the next school year. Eads also ruled that other teachers affected by the policy could come to court within 20 days to claim similar benefits. Approximately 35 teachers apparently have

been similarly affected. Payments to the whole group could amount to more than \$100,000 in back wages plus the fringe benefits also included in Eads ruling.

#### Women and Poverty

Families headed by a woman constituted 11% of all families in 1970; they accounted for 37% of all poor families, and 57% of all poor black families. Out of every three families headed by a woman, one lived in poverty in 1970 compared with one out of fourteen families headed by a man. Yet the average woman worker is as well-educated as the average man worker with a median education of 12.4 years.

#### Household Workers

Congress has finally passed the Minimum Wage Bill which covers domestic workers for the first time. It will bring protection at last to the largest group of unorganized low paid female workers. The median yearly income of fulltime private household workers in 1969 was between \$1,400 and \$1,800. Fifty-seven percent of these workers had total cash incomes under \$1,000 a year. In only seven states is their median yearly income greater than \$2,000. Ninety-eight percent of all household workers are women and fifty percent are of minority groups. It is vital that we inform the White House of the urgent need to sign this bill into law.

#### Part-time Tuition

Iowa's three state universities are considering a proposal to lower part-time tuition fees. The move to lower fees would open the door for more part-time students at a time when all three universities are experiencing a drop in enrollment and a squeeze on their budgets. There seems to be a feeling among some administrators that the higher part-time rates could be discriminatory, particularly against women, because a large percent of part-time students are women. And the pool of potential part-time students, again particularly women, is a large one. At present, for example, a part-time student at the University of Iowa who takes a typical three-hour course pays \$41 per hour while the 15-hour student pays \$20.66 an hour for the same course.

#### Nurses File Complaint

The American Nurses' Association has filed charges against the nation's largest university pension underwriter for discrimination on the basis of sex. In three separate actions before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission the ANA alleged that the Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association discriminates against women by providing larger monthly payments to a male member than to a female member upon retirement at the same age, even though each has made equal contributions for an equal number of years. While paying women less "because they have a longer average life expectancy," the insurer simultaneously does not pay blacks more although blacks have a shorter average life expectancy. The conclusion put forth is that this is evidence that discrimination is on the basis of sex. The complaints are the first to be lodged by a national organization on the issue of discrimination in retirement benefits.

#### U of I Maids

The University of Iowa has agreed to pay an estimated \$350,000 in accumulated back pay to the university's maids in order to bring their pay scales up to the level of male custodians. The decision is believed to be the largest settlement involving an Iowa employer in a sex discrimination complaint in the state's history.

Recent court decisions and federal agency rulings have made it clear that in the case of custodial workers the formerly accepted separation of classes on the basis of "light" and "heavy" work is no longer permitted unless the custodians doing the heavier work do it on a sustained basis. At the U of I the "light" category was entirely female and the "heavy" category, which was nearly all male, was paid

higher wages.

In response to the action at the University of Iowa, University of Northern Iowa officials have asked for federal assistance to determine if women workers on the UNI campus are victims of wage discrimination. UNI officials contend that the circumstances are different, but the union that represents physical plant workers are the Cedar Falls campus claims the situation is similar.

#### Hughes & Abortion

Senator Harold E. Hughes is co-sponsoring a proposed constitutional amendment that would grant constitutional protection to the unborn fetus and make abortion murder.

The position of the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women is that the decision to terminate a pregnancy is a matter of conscience and health not of law. Laws are appropriate in this area only to assure the proper safeguards for such procedures and to assure the freedom of the individual. (One Commission member dissents and another abstains from this position statement.)

#### Interstate Meeting

Three hundred delegates representing state, county and municipal commissions on the status of women from 47 states, the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands gathered in Philadelphia June 15-17 to explore issues of concern to women throughout the nation. Primary among topics of discussion was the Equal Rights Amendment.

Nineteen workshops were held, including panels on Women in Politics, Special Women, Double Jeopardy (Older Women, Black and Minority Women, Women in Poverty), Affirmative Action Plans, Women Offenders, Current Economic Outlook, National Legislative Goals, Women and the Law, Health Care and Credit.

The Interstate Association, organized in 1970, has as its primary purpose furthering, through the activities of member Commissions, the equal legal, social, political, economic, and educational opportunity and advancement of all women and men. In addition to strong support of ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, the Association and its members have actively worked for national legislation including the extension of minimum wage coverage to domestic workers, the elimination of discrimination in credit policies and practices, child development and day care, and equal opportunity in education and employment.

#### Social Security

Both the present Social Security laws, and the current plans to change those laws, are allowing an inequitable system of benefit eligibility to continue. Two basic situations in which working wives are involved are especially inequitable.

In one case, the current provisions, which grant automatic benefits for wives of retiring male workers, have created a pattern in which working wives may not get extra benefits even though they have contributed to the system for many years. For example, a wife who has never worked under social security would get a wife's benefit of \$108.10, or half of her husband's benefits, at age 65 if her husband had the maximum possible benefits. However, if the same wife had worked at a salary entitling her to minimum benefits, as is the case with many working wives, she would be entitled at age 65 to her own benefit of \$70.40 plus the difference between that and the \$108.10 she would have received as a non-working wife. The result is that many working wives contribute to Social Security and get no benefits in return above what

they would have gotten had they never worked in the first place.

In the second case, a husband or widower of a woman worker is now entitled to a benefit only if he proves he received or is receiving one-half or more of his support from his wife. Statistics now show that nearly two-fifths of all families are deriving income from both the husband and the wife. It is time for Congress to revise the Social Security program so that it is properly adapted to this changing economic reality.

#### Older Women

According to figures compiled from the 1970 census there are 11.4 million elderly women in the nation compared with 8.4 million men over the age of 65 years. That works out to 722 men for every 1000 women. And looking ahead, the bureau predicted the ratio will decline so that by 1990 there will be 675 elderly men for every 1000 women. The report noted that in 1930 the number of men and women over 65 was about equal, but between 1960 and 1970 the population of elderly women increased twice as fast as that of elderly men.

Not only are women outnumbering men among the elderly; as they get older women tend to keep their wits about them longer than men according to a trio of researchers at the New York State Psychiatric Institute. The older women, on a series of tests, performed better at number reasoning, vocabular, general intelligence, and detection of similarities. The older men tended to be better at arithmetic but women outpointed them at verbal skills and overall intelligence.

Older women may be wiser, but they are also sadder than older men, according to Myrna Lewis, a social workers, and Dr. Robert Butler, a Washington psychiatrist. They claim women have two strikes against them as they get older - their age and their sex. The fairy tale children learn are filled with witches, hags and crones which appear to teach children that old women are likely to be villainous. Furthermore, women are less likely to work than men and, if they do work, they usually make less money than men. In retirement, therefore, their incomes are likely to be less than those of older men, especially if they outlive their husbands, as most married women do. About one-third of all older women live alone. As an additional complication society tends to approve of an older man marrying a younger woman, but frowns on an older woman who marries a younger man.

#### More Groups Support ERA

Two national women's organizations recently endorsed the Equal Rights Amendment. The Young Women's Christian Association adopted a supporting resolution at its national convention and similar action was taken by the Women's Division of the National Jewish Congress at its 40th anniversary convention.

Support for the amendment also was voiced in a recent statement by the American Home Economics Association. The association disputed the argument that the amendment would undermine the family. "We do not believe this to be the case," Dr. Marjorie East, president, said. "We believe ratification and implementation of the amendment will serve to remove inequities in attitude, as well as in law, which have penalized men and women."

#### Lichtenstein Denies Vote to Women

The all-male electorate of Lichtenstein have again voted to deny women equal political rights. Fifty-six percent voted to retain political rights for men alone, making that country the only one in the non-Arab world where women cannot vote or be elected to public office.