



Io Woman

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Iowa Legislation

HF760, strengthening and enhancing Iowa's laws on the abuse of vulnerable individuals passed the House and has been recommended for passage by the Senate Human Resources Committee.

HF781, directing the Department of Public Health to convene a direct care worker task force, was passed by the House and the Senate.

SF409, provides that a lender shall not contract for or receive a finance fee exceeding 21 percent per year on the unpaid balance of the amount financed for a loan of money secured by a certificate of title to a motor vehicle.

HF420, the only mental health parity bill to survive, provides benefits for treatment of a biologically based mental illness only. It passed the House and is on the Senate calendar.

HF819, establishing a long-term care asset disregard incentive program to provide incentives for individuals to insure against the costs of their long-term care needs, was introduced and put on the Appropriations calendar.

SCR9, creating a criminal code revisions legislative study committee, was adopted.

SF387 and **HF815**, increasing the percentage of real estate transfer tax receipts to the housing trust fund to 25 percent and increasing the percentage each fiscal year, would secure a permanent, dedicated source of funding for the state housing trust fund. It is stalled in the Ways & Means committees.

Appropriation bills are changing daily. Review the updated 2005 Legislative Report on the ICSW website or check the General Assembly website for the latest information.

College Women's Attitudes Surveyed

Three hundred eight college-aged women from 14 colleges across Iowa were surveyed in an attempt to evaluate attitudes, as well degrees of knowledge regarding the current status of women. Participation in this research involved the anonymous completion of a thirty-item questionnaire that asked female students to respond to questions regarding a number of women's issues. Respondents in this study included first year students, sophomores, juniors, seniors and graduate students, ranged in age from 17 to 41 (median age 20), and were representative of all major political parties. Ninety-four percent of participants indicated that they were registered to vote, while 84% claimed to have voted in the most recent election.

One section of the questionnaire asked participants to rate the importance of a number of specified women's issues using a scale ranging from (1) *Not important* to (5) *Of major importance*. Women found the most crucial issue to be domestic violence, followed by sexual assault, employment, and educational issues. Those rated as least important were political involvement, poverty, and reproductive freedoms. It is important to note that while some of the issues were rated as less important than others, each of the issues was rated considerably high.

The questionnaire also presented twelve factual statements regarding the status of women. Statements addressed issues such as the gender wage gap, educational attainment, incidence of domestic violence and sexual assault, political representation and conditions of health. Respondents were given the choice to agree or disagree with whether or not each statement was in fact true. Correct answers were then compiled to obtain overall scores, which ranged from one to eleven, with an average score of six. When asked to rate their own level of knowledge regarding women's issues, 16% said low, 71% said moderate and 11% claimed to possess a high level of knowledge.

The findings from this study indicate a healthy level of concern among college women regarding a number of issues, but a lacking degree of overall knowledge. While female college students strongly believe in the importance of women's issues, they lack an understanding of the actual status of women. In short, college women are somewhat unaware of the oppression that they and their sisters are currently experiencing or are likely to experience as a result of gender inequity.

Following a conclusion of the study, three focus groups among female college students were conducted. Women in these discussions agreed that this population does in fact fail to understand the extent to which discrimination among women currently exists. The students offered a lot of valuable feedback, suggesting that the most important route to recruit participation among younger women is to provide education, both in the classroom and through word of mouth. While women have come a long way, a great distance lies ahead- so let's spread the word!

Let Your Voice Be Heard

The ICSW is asking readers to contact their Members of Congress regarding items in the President's FY06 budget, such as:

- ✘ Cuts in justice program funding would negatively impact Therapeutic Community treatment at the Iowa Correctional Institution for Women (whose recent report is that currently only nine percent of that program's high-risk inmates re-offend).
- ✘ Deep cuts to programs such as Medicaid, child care, and food assistance would hurt women and children in particular.
- ✘ Elimination of Preventive Health and Human Services block grant funds would eliminate such programs as chlamydia screening; sexual violence prevention services; Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Farmers Market Nutrition Program and WIC administrative funds; and elimination of the Community Services Block Grant would mean closing nearly 90 of the 120 outreach centers for Community Action Agencies.
- ✘ Moving all reserves in the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) fund (entirely funded with criminal fines and penalties, not taxes) to General Fund for the federal debt would cut in half the federal funds for victim service programs and cause many to close.
- ✘ Zero-funding for the Women's Educational Equity Act would reduce aid to schools to eradicate sex discrimination in their programs and practices.

The Iowa Department of Public Safety is seeking men and women with exemplary personal ethics and superior physical and mental capabilities for challenging and rewarding careers as: Troopers, State Patrol Officers (State Capitol Complex), Gaming Enforcement Officers (Riverboat Officers), Fire Inspectors, and Division of Narcotics Enforcement Special Agents. Applications are now being accepted until May 31st for a fall 2005 academy. To obtain an application for employment, or to learn more about the selection process, please visit the website at <www.dps.state.ia.us> or call 515/281-5639.

Polk County Opportunities

The Minority Enterprise Construction Council is accepting applications for minority business owners interested in growing their residential construction businesses. The council will conduct 12 weekly sessions focusing on business development and marketing, financial management and planning, code and regulatory issues, accessing financial credit, human resources management, and procurement opportunities. Each weekly session will also include a chance for members, key local business owners, and policy makers to discuss opportunities and challenges facing minority contractors, and a chance to form potential partnerships.

Weekly sessions will be held from 7-10 p.m on Tuesdays beginning May 3rd, 2005. There is no cost for businesses to participate. For more information, or to request an application, please contact Tom Slater at <tslater@sppg.com> or call 515/243-2000.

Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity is sponsoring a Women Build, in which Central Iowa women will plan, fundraise, organize, and construct a house for a single mother and her four children. Construction will begin May 3 and be completed in early fall. Other sponsors include the Chrysalis Foundation and Junior League of Des Moines. If you are interested in helping with this project, please call the Habitat office at 515/471-8686.

Educational Grants

Friends of ICSW will be accepting applications until July 1, 2005 for assistance grants to low-income women to improve job skills, update professional licensing, enroll in English as a second language class, or attend occupational seminars leading to increased employment opportunities.

Other educational programs that improve employment opportunities will also be considered. Tuition, fees, books, and supplies for post-secondary education are not a priority for awards. Preference will be made for training for occupations with higher paying wages.

The Endowment Fund's grants are intended to be used to fund a portion of an educational program with the balance being paid by the applicant or another source.

A total of \$990 in grants will be awarded on August 27. Applicants must demonstrate financial need and that other funding sources are not available to them or are insufficient to meet a critical educational need.

A simple application form is available from the ICSW, Lucas State Office Building, Des Moines IA 50319; phone, 515/281-4461 or 800-558-4427; or web site, <www.state.ia.us/dhr/sw>.

Bucharest Express

Bucharest Express, a 90-minute feature film about sexual trafficking in the former Soviet Union, is available to borrow from the ICSW free of charge. The film, available in both VHS and DVD, was given to the ICSW by Mary Ellen Kimball.

The film uses a fictional story to highlight a true human rights violation: human trafficking. Although it focuses on trafficking in the former Soviet Union and eastern Europe, the discussion of sexual trafficking is a worldwide problem.

To request the film, contact the ICSW at 515/281-4461, 800/558-4427 or <dhr.icsw@iowa.gov>.

Calendar of Events

May

Asian and Pacific Islander Americans Awareness and Older Americans Month

Through May 29 Joan Liffing-Zug Bourret: From a

Life of Poetry Exhibit. Cedar Rapids Museum of Art. Fee varies. <www.crma.org>.

2 Iowa Women's Hall of Fame nomination deadline.

3 19th Annual Des Moines Human Rights Symposium. 8:25 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Hotel Fort Des Moines, Des Moines. Fee varies. For more information, contact Floyd A. Jones, Des Moines Human Rights Commission, 515/283-4284 or <fajones@dm.gov>

3 Risky Business 2005: Be the Change. 9 a.m.-4:15 p.m., Scheman Building, Iowa State University, Ames. Fee varies. Youth and Shelter Services, Inc. 515/232-4332 x.470 or <www.yss.ames.ia.us/riskybusiness>.

7 Terrace Hill Lecture Series: Lisa West Norwood. 7 p.m., Carriage House of Terrace Hill, Des Moines. \$10. For more information, contact Carla Herling at 515/281-3604.

6 Coffee with Chrysalis -- Tending Your Inner Garden 7:30-8:30 a.m., Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, Des Moines. Free. RSVP to Chrysalis Foundation, 515/255-1853.

6 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>.

7 Take Control of Your Diabetes Conference and Health Fair. 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m., Polk County Convention Complex, Des Moines. Fee varies. Iowa Diabetes and Endocrinology Center, 888/755-5683 or <www.tcoyd.org>.

12-13 Whispers & Screams are hard the hear: creating an audience for girls' voices. Chapter 9: Outside In. The Hotel at Gateway Center, Ames. Fee varies. Registration materials available at <www.state.ia.us/government/dhr/sw/girls/whisper_screams.html> or by contacting Kathy Nesteby, ICSW, 515/281-6915, 800/558-4427, or <kathy.nesteby@iowa.gov>.

12-13 2005 Governor's Conference on Aging: Resilience in Aging. Sheraton West Des Moines, West Des Moines. Fee varies. Iowa Department of Elder Affairs, <www.state.ia.us/elderaffairs/living/conferences.html#GCOA>.

14 Global Village. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Blank Park Zoo, Des Moines. Fee varies. Iowa Council for International Understanding, 515/282-8269 x.12 or visit <www.iciu.org>.

20 Emma Goldman Clinic Spring Benefit. 5-8 p.m., Galleries Downtown, Iowa City. \$25. Toni-Ann Serio, Emma Goldman Clinic, 319/337-2111, 800/848-7684 or <ec_egc@yahoo.com>.

June

3 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>.

6 2005 Iowa Caregivers Month Celebration: What Would We Do Without Ants? Serving a Purpose. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., Iowa Methodist Medical Center, Des Moines. Iowa CareGivers Association, 515/241-8697 or <information@iowacaregivers.org>.

6 Explosive Child Conference. 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Sheraton Hotel of West Des Moines. Fee varies. Iowa Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, 319/462-2187, or <Lori@iffcmh.org>.

7 Terrace Hill Lecture Series: Eric Saylor. 7 p.m., Carriage House of Terrace Hill, Des Moines. \$10. For more information, contact Carla Herling at 515/281-3604.

14 Iowa Commission on the Status of Women Meeting. 10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Location TBA. Free and open to the public. Call or write for special accommodations, 800/558-4427, 515/281-4461 or <dhr.icsw@iowa.gov>.

Iowa Great Places Forums 4-6 p.m. (unless otherwise noted)

May 17: Clear Lake - Surf Ballroom

May 18: Spencer - Spencer Community Playhouse

May 19: Council Bluffs - Western Historic Trails Center, 4:15 - 6:15 p.m.

May 23: Dubuque - Mississippi River Museum

May 24: Pella - Opera House

May 25: Cedar Falls - Oster Regent Theater

May 26: Muscatine - Stanley Auditorium, 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.

June 1: Cedar Rapids - CSPA, 4-6 p.m.

June 2: Des Moines - Meredith Campus

June 9: Sioux City - Martin Ballroom

<www.iowagreatplaces.gov>

Bits and Pieces

The ICSW extends a thank you to intern **Tiffany Bandow**, who has worked during the fall and spring semesters. Bandow who will graduate with a Master's of Social Work from the University in Iowa in May, primarily worked on the young women's attitudes survey and focus groups.



The ICSW was saddened to learn of the deaths of two Iowa Women's Hall of Fame members. **Betty Jean "Beje" Walker Clark**, a longtime public servant, was inducted in 2000. She passed away on April 10, 2005. **Phyllis Josephine Hughes, J.D.**, community volunteer and attorney, was inducted in 2001. She passed away on April 17, 2005.



Save the date! The **Iowa Women's Hall of Fame Ceremony** will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, August 27 at the

State Historical Building in Des Moines. The Friends of the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women Luncheon will be held following the ceremony at Embassy Suites (please note location change). Joyce Keen, Ph.D., will be the featured presenter.



On March 24, 2005, the website search engine Google had 86,200,000 hits for **Title IX**.



Diversity Conference 2005 -- Iowa's Mosaic: Families, Workers & Neighbors Discovering Our Hidden Assets has called for workshop proposals. The conference will be held on October 17 at Iowa State University Schemen Center. Experts in a broad range of disciplines are encouraged to submit workshop proposals. Each topic should be consistent with one of the following theme elements: Business, Community, Family, or Youth.

To receive an RFP or for more information, contact Alice Vinsand at alice@avinsandinc.com or visit www.iowadiversity.org/conference/index.html.



Have you gotten your free **credit report**? On March 1, Iowans have access to an annual free credit report. The three nationwide consumer reporting companies have set up one central website and toll-free telephone number through which you can order your free annual report. To order, click on www.annualcreditreport.com or call 877-322-8228.



Do you have a website? If so, please consider linking to the ICSW website, www.state.ia.us/dhr/sw. With your help, we can introduce more Iowans to our resources.



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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!

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Enclosure of items in the newsletter does not necessarily connote endorsement by the Friends of the ICSW or by 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 *Iowa Woman* is mailed six times per year to 8,600 persons or organizations.

Janis Anderson, President • Charlotte Nelson, ICSW Executive Director • Lori M. SchraderBachar, Editor

