

2006 Proposals to the Governor and 81st General Assembly

January 2006

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IOWA
COMMISSION
ON THE
STATUS
OF WOMEN

*Making a difference in
the lives of Iowa women*

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The Iowa Commission on the Status of Women (ICSW) has formulated a program that it deems necessary to meet important human needs and to eliminate inequities for women, which will benefit all citizens of Iowa.

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NOTE: The proposals are not in order of importance.

2006 Priorities

As **priority areas** being proposed to the Governor and General Assembly for 2006, the ICSW supports:

- Allocation of a percentage of Civil Money Penalties annually to be used for direct care worker recruitment and retention initiatives. (Aging Issues and Long-Term Care)
- Maintaining matching funds to allow Iowa Department of Human Services to draw down from the Child Care Development Fund. (Child Care)
- Increase in the minimum wage. (Economics)
- Legislative proposals addressing predatory lending, including predatory home mortgage lending, payday loans, tax refund anticipation loans and car title loans. (Economics)
- Enactment of a bill requiring all school districts to adopt anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, and anti-bullying policies to protect all students. (Equality)
- \$1 tobacco fee increase. (Health)
- State legislation to a) provide a penalty; b) provide protections for victims of trafficking, and immunity from illegal activities related to human trafficking; and c) establish training standards for state and local law enforcement agencies on human trafficking. (Justice)
- Restoration of stable funding for domestic violence and sexual assault programs in the state budget to a minimum of 2.25 million dollars. (Violence Against Women)

Legislative Proposals

Aging Issues and Long-Term Care

In 2004, Iowa ranked first in the percentage of population over 85 years of age and fifth in the percentage of population over 65 years of age and older. Additionally in 2004, 57 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 2004 ICSW study on CNA wages and benefits found that 82 percent earn under \$12 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. Allocation of a percentage of Civil Money Penalties annually to be used for direct care worker recruitment and retention initiatives. (2006 Priority)**
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.
4. Maintaining Iowa CareGivers Association funding through Elder Affairs.
5. Appropriation to support the maintenance and expansion of the Iowa Nurse Aide Registry/ Direct Care Worker Registry.

Child Care

The percent of Iowa mothers with children under age six in the labor force is 78.8, and 84.8 percent of mothers with children ages six to seventeen only are in the labor force. According to the 2004 American

Community Survey, Iowa has the highest percentage of women in the workforce with children under six. 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. **Maintaining matching funds to allow Iowa Department of Human Services to draw down from the Child Care Development Fund. (2006 Priority)**
2. An increase in funding levels for the Iowa Community Empowerment school-ready and early childhood programs for zero to five.
3. A child care and/or preschool subsidy for every Iowa family below 85% of the state median income.
4. Adequate compensation, including benefits, for childcare workers.
5. A professional development system for child care/preschool workers of prerequisite and on-going training, and a process for credentialing workers.
6. Requirement that all child care/preschool settings be licensed and adhere to standards that ensure quality care and experiences.
7. Additional quality early childhood programs through:
 - a. provision of resources for the TEACH 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 (AHIC) program.

Economics

In 2004, 64 percent of Iowa women age 16 and older were in the workforce, which represented 47 percent of the total workforce. The 2004 American Community Survey found that Iowa women earned 73.7% of what Iowa men earn. According to the Iowa wage study released in 2000, 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. (2006 Priority)**
- 2. Legislative proposals addressing predatory lending, including predatory home mortgage lending, payday loans, tax refund anticipation loans and car title loans. (2006 Priority)**
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Continued financial assistance to targeted small businesses.

7. Legislation to outlaw the unfair employment practice of discrimination based on a person's use of Family Medical Leave.
8. A legislative resolution to study the economic, fiscal, and social impact of the establishment of a living wage in Iowa.
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.

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. **Enactment of a bill requiring all school districts to adopt anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, and anti-bullying policies to protect all students. (2006 Priority)**
2. 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.
3. 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.

4. Gender balance on boards and commissions of political subdivisions of the state.
5. Amending the Iowa Civil Rights Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and identity.
6. Increased funding for the Iowa Civil Rights Commission.

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. **\$1 tobacco fee increase. (2006 Priority)**
2. Focusing on health care reform until health care coverage is accessible to all Iowans.
3. Full funding and implementation of the State Children's Health Care Initiative (*hawk-i*), with consideration of available options including coverage of parents.
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. Increased funding for comprehensive adolescent pregnancy prevention programs.
11. Requirements that sexuality education be science-based and accurate.
12. Funding for services for pregnant and parenting teens at the current level.
13. Increased reimbursement rate under Title XIX for dentists to care for children in WIC and Head Start programs.
14. Increased funding to programs for quality substance abuse treatment, including treatment tailored specifically for methamphetamine use.
15. Opposition to any legislative language defining when life begins.
16. Full funding for Medicaid per Iowa Department of Human Services request rather than utilizing the supplemental strategy.
17. Open access to psychiatric medications that are most effective in treating mental illness.
18. Mandate that maternal depression be screened for during perinatal visits and pediatrician visits with new mothers and insure that treatment for the disease is covered by insurance.
19. Separate appropriation to Iowa Department of Public Health for screening for perinatal depression.
20. Increased provider rates for Medicaid services.

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. Equality for substance abuse treatment coverage.
2. 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.
3. Continuing to reform health insurance coverage for the uninsured and underinsured.
4. Expansion of relationship definition for family coverage health insurance to include members in the same household.
5. 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.
6. Tax credits for long-term care insurance.

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 558 at midyear 2005. The ICSW supports:

1. **State legislation to a) provide a penalty; b) provide protections for victims of trafficking, and immunity from illegal activities related to human trafficking; and c) establish training standards for state and**

local law enforcement agencies on human trafficking. (2006 Priority)

2. Continuation of stable funding for Legal Aid.
3. State appropriation for infrastructure improvements at the Iowa Juvenile Home.
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.
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 in the community based correction facilities.
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 re-entry programming to reduce recidivism.
12. Establishing and funding additional restorative justice programs.
13. Continuation of no-fault dissolution of marriage.

14. State funding for the Star Therapeutic Community Program at the Iowa Correctional Institution for Women.
15. Opposition to reinstatement of the death penalty.
16. Changes in the *Code of Iowa* Chapter 729A.2 to add the words “actual or perceived” to the definition of a hate crime.

Violence Against Women

Since 1995, 92 Iowa women and 14 Iowa men have been killed by their partners. In fiscal year 2005, 22,331 victims of domestic violence were served by programs receiving state dollars. That same year, 5,304 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 to a minimum of 2.25 million dollars. (2006 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. 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.
4. Repeal of or change in *Code of Iowa* Chapter 708.2A(5)a that limits the time frame for counting previous domestic violence convictions.
5. 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.

6. Establish affirmative defense for victims of domestic violence to the crime of child endangerment for a) knowingly permitting a child or minor to be present at a location where Methamphetamine is manufactured or a precursor is possessed with an intent to manufacture and b) cohabitating with a person after knowing the person is required to register or is on the sex offender registry.
7. Amending *Code of Iowa* Chapter 915.20A, so that state law is the same as the federal law that will clarify confidentiality provisions and prohibit the entrance of any personally identifying victim information into a database and instead provide that only aggregate data is input.
8. Mandate sexual harassment prevention training of supervisors for private employers with 50 or more employees.

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. 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.
7. Change in reports on earnings by FIP families from monthly to quarterly.
8. Expansion of PROMISE JOBS/Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services pilot to statewide program in order to better serve persons with disabilities.
9. Restoration of the Emergency Assistance Program for housing and utilities when Iowans are threatened with homelessness.
10. Restoration of \$400,000 appropriation to the Homeless Shelters Operations Grant (HSOG) through the Department of Economic Development.
11. Dedication of revenue from real estate transfer tax to fund homeless shelters, low income housing, and housing rehabilitation.
12. Establishing a permanent source of funding for the State Housing Trust Fund.
13. Continued investment to the Transitional Housing Revolving Loan Fund so that it may become self-perpetuating.

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.
9. Remove the ban on access to cable television by offenders in our prisons.
10. A 16-bed unit for enhanced programming for girls who are behaviorally and mentally challenged at the Iowa Juvenile Home.
11. A 40-bed unit for Child in Need of Assistance (CINA) males on a separate campus 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.

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.
17. Study of positive pharmacy bill, which includes
 - a) mandatory stocking of emergency contraception so all Iowa women have access to this effective second chance at birth control;
 - b) defining the ownership of a prescription to be that of the woman, so that if an individual pharmacist refused to fill a particular prescription, they will be compelled to return it to its rightful owner, the woman; and
 - c) allowing the individual pharmacist to refuse to fill a prescription, allowing them to live out their conscience, while at the same time compelling the pharmacy (business regulated by the State of Iowa) to have a back up system during their regular business hours, so that the consumer can still be served in a timely manner.

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