



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

Forward

Welcome to *Forward*!

Forward is the new quarterly newsletter published by the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women. We are sure that you will continue to find information of use for Iowa's women and girls.

We welcome comments and potential articles from our readers. Please submit items to editor Lori SchraderBachar at lori.schraderbachar@iowa.gov.

Enjoy the newsletter!

Workplace Flexibility Works for All

"Workplace flexibility initiatives for hourly employees are as successful as those designed for professional staff," according to a new study by Corporate Voices for Working Families. Recent research about the value of workplace flexibility has focused primarily on management and professional workers. This study demonstrates that, when available, flexibility can be as beneficial or even more beneficial to hourly workers and the businesses that employ them.

Businesses that offer hourly employees flexible work options find that they are "critical management tools that enhance recruitment, retention, engagement, cost control, productivity and financial performance."

The study, *Innovative Workplace Flexibility Options for Hourly Workers*, was released May 7, 2009.

Legislative Success for Iowa's Women

The Iowa Commission on the Status of Women (ICSW) and our partners in advocacy had a very successful legislative session for Iowa's women. Of the Commission's four legislative priorities for 2009, three were passed by the Iowa General Assembly and signed into law by Governor Culver.

First, Iowa now has one of the nation's strongest laws to protect against wage discrimination.

Like the Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, SF137 enacts protections for those victims of discrimination who find out "too late," but also extends applicability to employers with 4 or more employees (federal law only applies to those with 15 or more employees). Iowa's new law utilizes the Iowa Civil Rights Commission's existing process to determine probable cause and sets penalties for employers who are found to have discriminated at twice the amount denied for the entire time that discrimination is proved, or three times that amount if the discrimination is found to be "willful." Federal law only allows up to two years of back pay differential—no matter how long discrimination is proved to have occurred.

Second, after January 1, 2012, the gender balance requirement for all appointive boards, commissions, committees and councils established by the Iowa Code shall also apply to those within political subdivisions of the state—not just statewide boards and commissions. Cities and counties who make a good faith effort but are unable to achieve gender balance after 90 days can fill positions with another candidate.

Last, \$3.8 million was appropriated for domestic violence and sexual assault victim services, and additional funds are available to centers through both the federal stimulus package and the Governor's I-JOBS infrastructure funding initiative. Most importantly, the Legislature and Governor worked together to ensure that victim assistance again has its own line item — not reliant upon transfer from funds intended for other purposes.

Thanks to all of you who contacted policymakers and to the many, many public and private partners ICSW is so fortunate to have!



Wage Discrimination Bill Signing with Governor Culver and Legislators: (left to right) Senator Staci Appel, Representative Wayne Ford, Senator Tom Courtney, Senator Jack Hatch and Representative Kevin Koester.

Women You Know

The Friends of the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women (Friends) hosted their 12th Annual Women You Know, Women You Want to Meet event on April 20 at the home of Christie Vilsack in Des Moines. The heavy rainfall earlier in the day didn't prevent almost 200 women from attending the highly successful event!

Guests enjoyed hors d'oeuvres, wine, soft drinks and, of course, delightful conversation! All proceeds from the event will be used to sponsor a Summit designed to bring individuals and organizations together who support, advocate for or simply strive to help women and girls in Iowa. The summit is scheduled to take place in March, 2010.

Sponsors included:

Christie Vilsack Host & Sponsor

Helen C. Adams

Roxanne Barton Conlin

Dr. Carol Belzer

Margaret Borgen

Dody Boswell

Chrysalis Foundation

Alicia Claypool

Joy Corning

Michelle Durand-Adams

The Iowa Initiative

Karen Grode

Kumari Henry

Dianne Liepa

Deb Madison-Levi

Dr. Andy McGuire

Holly Mennen Sagar

Charlotte Nelson

D.J. Newlin

Sally Pederson

Phyllis Peters

Mary Riche

Margaret Van Houten

Margi Weiss

Connie Wimer

Friends is the not-for-profit organization formed in 1987 to support and assist in the charitable and educational activities of the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women (ICSW). Learn more at www.friendsoficsw.org.

The Power of Advocacy

by Linda Bisgaard, Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa

Advocate comes from the Latin word for voice. To be an advocate is to raise your voice on behalf of others to achieve, or at least strive for, lasting change. Advocates get at the root of a problem.

Have you ever met an Advocacy Champion? March 29th-April 1st, 2009 I had the opportunity to attend the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE) and Women Work! Conference in Arlington, Virginia as a member of the State S.T.E.M. team for Iowa. March 30th our Woman of Vision Luncheon keynote speaker was Lilly Ledbetter, truly an Advocacy Champion for all girls and women in my eyes.

To meet this humble, kind woman face to face was such an honor. She is soft spoken and speaks from the heart as she tells her story of her employment as a supervisor with Goodyear and the pay disparity she suffered despite receiving a "Top Performance Award" in 1996 by her employer. She filed her complaint with the EEOC which was only the beginning of a very long journey standing up for justice all the way to the Supreme Court, which led to the bill that President Obama signed in January 2009 – the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act.

At the end of the trial, the jury found that Goodyear had discriminated and she was awarded \$3.8 million. This was reduced by the trial judge and then the Supreme Court took it all away, even the back pay. "I did not receive one dime, neither did my lawyer who took this all on pro bono." When someone asked her if she had it to do over again would she have done it? She said, "Yes, it wasn't right and if I knew it was going to help others by getting the law fixed at least that made it all worthwhile."

When I think of the hassle and challenges she faced over these 10 years, her prevailing perseverance which will help others get the justice she was denied. Lilly is a Champion Advocate for all women — giving voice to issues that needed change and making a difference for us all.

Thank you, Lilly — you are an American Icon who is awe-inspiring!



Lilly Ledbetter, Jeanette Thomas with the Iowa Department of Education, and Linda Bisgaard, Girl Scouts

Iowa New Choices Discontinued

The Iowa Commission on the Status of Women voted at its December meeting to discontinue the Iowans in Transition program, also known as the Iowa New Choices grants. The ICSW's administrative rules will be changed and the chapter accordingly.

Interested individuals may make written comments on the proposed changes on or before June 23, 2009, at 4:30 p.m. Comments should be directed to Lori SchraderBachar, Iowa Commission on the Status of Women, Lucas State Office Building, 321 East 12th Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319 or lori.schraderbachar@iowa.gov. Additionally, a public hearing to receive comments on the changes will be held on June 23, 2009 at 1 p.m. in Room 209 of the Lucas State Office Building.

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.

It is a celebration that is affirmed and supported by Governor Culver and by a concurrent resolution of the Iowa Senate and House of Representatives. It is a time to celebrate the achievements of women in the nation and Iowa.

Women's History Month is 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 six student winners of the Write Women Back Into History statewide essay contest on Thursday, March 26. 6-7 Grade Category Essays: 1st Place, Brandon Farr; 2nd Place, Madison Noble; 3rd Place, Maddie Fields. 8-9 Grade: Kelsiann Halbloom; Best Essays on Women in Science and Engineering for 6-7 Grades: 1st Place, Aaron Christensen; and 2nd Place, Morgan Exline. To view the winning essays, go to www.women.iowa.gov/about_women/womens_history/essay_contest.html.



Empower Yourself - Get the Facts about Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a medical condition characterized by diminished bone strength and increased risk of fracture. Most people think of their bones as being solid like a rock. Actually, bone is a living tissue, just like other parts of the body—your heart, brain, or skin for example. Bone just happens to be a harder type of tissue. Bone is always changing. Your body keeps your bones strong and healthy by replacing old bone with new bone. After menopause the body removes more bone than it replaces which in many women may lead to osteoporosis. Osteoporotic bones are weaker and are more likely to break. Postmenopausal osteoporosis can be prevented, and with proper therapy it can be treated.

An estimated 8 million women in the U.S. have osteoporosis. And 40% of women age 50 or older will experience an osteoporosis-related fracture in their lifetime. Osteoporosis also affects men, but to a lesser extent. For those at risk for or who have osteoporosis, prevention and treatment are the best defenses.

Because bone loss is gradual and without warning signs, women often do not seek medical treatment until they experience a bone fracture. That's why osteoporosis is often called a "silent disease." To prevent the complications caused by osteoporosis, postmenopausal women should undergo a bone density test to determine the condition of their bones.

Although it sounds somewhat intimidating, a bone density test is one of the safest, most accurate ways to measure bone density and provide information about your bone health. Since you can't see or feel bone loss, this test is a way to tell if you have or are at risk for osteoporosis. Knowing your bone mineral density test result (which is called a T-score), your doctor can tell if you have lost bone and if you are at increased risk for fracture.

Understanding your risk for osteoporosis is the first step to preventing fractures. With this knowledge you can develop a strategy with your doctor that may include a diet rich in calcium, dietary supplements, exercise, and in some cases, prescription medicines. Your bones will thank you for taking this small but important first step.

Striving to advance justice and equality for all people in Des Moines by creating an atmosphere of opportunity.

We're here to help you!

Know Your Fair Housing Rights!

Housing Discrimination can be:

- Advertisements saying "no kids allowed".
- Refusing to allow a service animal because of a "no pets" policy.
- Steering members of a protected class to live in certain areas.
- Charging a different amounts of rent to protected class members.
- Offering differing terms or conditions of a lease to protected class members.
- For profit, persuading home-owners to sell or rent (blockbusting).

The City of Des Moines prohibits housing discrimination based on: **race, religion, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, family status, physical and mental disability.**

If you've experienced discrimination in Des Moines, contact: 515-283-4284 or visit <http://www.dmgov.org/departments/hrt>

The City of Des Moines is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Bits & Pieces

- ♀ The Patsy Takemoto Mink Education Foundation for Low Income Women and Children will offer 5 grants of up to \$2000 each to low income mothers who are enrolled in education and/or training programs. Applications will be accepted from May 1, 2009 through July 1, 2009. Go to the foundation website, www.patsyminkfoundation.org, for eligibility criteria and application materials.
- ♀ The ICSW extends a thank you to intern Erin McBurney who worked during the spring semester. McBurney is a graduating senior at Grinnell College and worked primarily on child custody issues and assisting the Iowa Gender Specific Services Task Force with the Girls' Summit.
- ♀ The ICSW welcomes two new *ex officio* members: Senators Kim Reynolds and Mary Jo Wilhelm, who were appointed during the legislative session. Our appreciation goes to Senators Staci Appel and Pat Ward for their years of service to ICSW.
- ♀ The 2008 Annual Report, (February 2009, 37th Edition) is available. The annual report details the activities of the ICSW during calendar year 2008. If you wish to receive a report, contact the ICSW at 515/281-4461 or 800/558-4427, or e-mail women@iowa.gov. The publication is also available on-line at www.women.iowa.gov.
- ♀ The ICSW was saddened by the death of Iowa Women's Hall of Fame member Elaine Eisfelder Szymoniak. Szymoniak was formerly a member of the Des Moines City Council and Iowa State Senator. She also served on numerous professional and civic boards.



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For more information, please contact:

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