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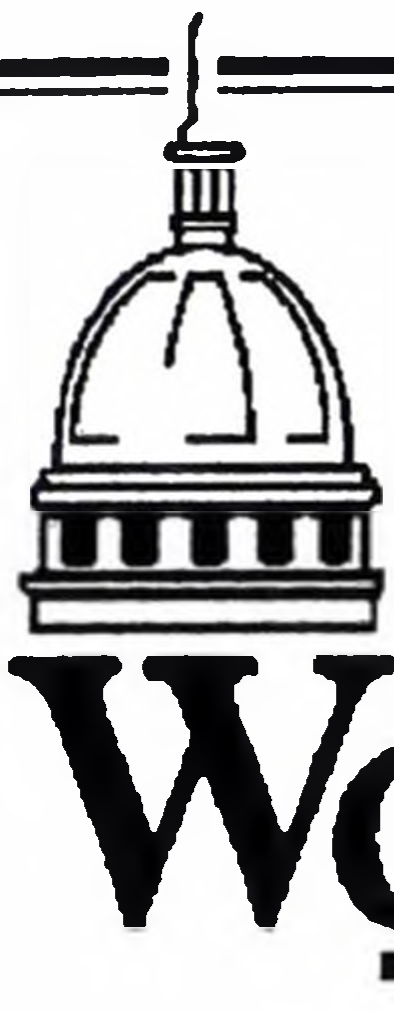
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Maine Women's Lobby

P.O. Box 15 • Hallowell, Maine 04347
Telephone 622-0851

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April 1993

NEWSLETTER

Number 3

Legislative Update

RPA passes; Act to Prevent Discrimination is in trouble

by **LAURA FORTMAN**
MWL Lobbyist

As I'm sure you already know, **LD 318: An Act to Preserve Reproductive Privacy in Maine** has passed in the House and the Senate and has been signed by the Governor. This is a wonderful victory for all of us and is due in large part to your dedication, hard work and numerous phone calls to the legislators. Congratulations! Unfortunately, **LD 246: An Act to Prevent Discrimination** is not faring as well.

LD 246 has received final approval in the House and the vote in the Senate was 21-13. This bill has been before the Legislature NINE times. One year the Senate approved it but it was defeated in the House. On another occasion it received House approval but didn't have the necessary votes in the Senate. It is distressing this year, when support from the Senate and House has been achieved, that the Governor has stated he will veto the bill. A "candelabra vigil" is being held nightly from 6-8 p.m. in front of the Blaine House. It is hoped that this action will encourage the Governor to reconsider his position.

The following is a summary of other bills that the Maine Women's Lobby is

either actively lobbying or monitoring this session:

LD 593: An Act Relating to Parenting Education. This bill requires school administrative units to offer an elective parenting education course beginning in the fall of 1994.

LD 791: An Act to Eliminate the Prescription for Hypodermic Syringes. This bill would remove the prescription requirement for hypodermic needles and syringes and so reduce the risk of HIV transmission among IV drug users. A recent national report indicated that 71% of female AIDS cases were linked directly or indirectly to IV drug use. Additionally, 70% of pediatric AIDS cases were linked to maternal exposure to HIV either through IV drug use or sex with an IV drug user. Studies show that making clean needles legally available can reduce the risk of HIV/AIDS.

LD 854: An Act to Ensure the Timely Resolution of Complaints Under the Maine Human Rights Act. This bill, by funding additional personnel, would help the Maine Human Rights Commission to resolve discrimination complaints in a more timely

fashion and to reduce the backlog of unresolved cases. Revenue would be raised by increasing the \$60 corporate filing fee by \$5. Currently, 97% of discrimination complaints are against entities subject to the filing fee.

LD 902: An Act to Clarify the Role of the Child Abuse and Neglect Councils. The purpose of this bill is to maintain community-based child abuse and neglect prevention in every county in Maine and to ensure a statewide coordinated effort to prevent child abuse and neglect.

LD 999: An Act to Establish a Pilot Child Assistance Program to Help Reduce Welfare Costs. This legislation requires the Department of Human Services to develop a pilot program available to families currently receiving AFDC that would enable them to work their way out of poverty. Principal features include: greater work incentives, more emphasis on child support collections, longer transitional periods during which child care and medical care would be available, and a stronger case management component.

see **UPDATE** on page 2

Universal Health Care public hearing schedule

Statewide public hearings on **LD 1285: An Act To Provide Family Security Through Quality, Affordable Health Care** will be held at the following times and locations. Please attend. This is an opportunity for your voice to be heard.

AUGUSTA

Monday, April 26, 1 p.m.,
Rm 156, Jewett Hall
University of Maine, Augusta

BANGOR

Wednesday, April 28, 7 p.m.,
Bangor City Hall

LEWISTON

Saturday, May 1, 1 p.m.,
Senior Room
Lewiston Multi-Purpose Center

SANFORD

Monday, May 3, 7 p.m.
Sanford Town Hall

PORTLAND

Wednesday, May 5, 7 p.m.
City Council Chambers
Portland City Hall

PRESQUE ISLE

Sunday, May 16, 1 p.m.
Christie Building lecture hall
No. Maine Technical College

UPDATE (continued)

LD 1109: An Act to Amend the Sexual Assault Statute. This bill recognizes the act of forced digital penetration as violent and intrusive, and places it under Gross Sexual Assault. The bill also makes offenders adequately accountable for their violent actions by classifying Unlawful Sexual Contact as a felony whenever "compulsion" is a factor.

LD 1178: Resolve, To Foster the Development of a Range of Alternatives in Long-Term Care. This resolve requires the Department of Human Resources to develop a plan for assisted-living facilities for use by low-income people. It also directs the department to pursue Medicaid waivers for assisted-living facilities and to develop programs to serve people with Alzheimer's.

LD 1185: An Act to Define Nurses in Advanced Practice. This bill increases access to primary, preventive health care by removing restrictions to practice currently in effect. Between 60 and 80 percent of the basic health care performed by physicians can be done by Nurses in Advanced Practice. Nurses in Advanced Practice spend an average of 24.9 minutes per patient visit versus 16.5 minutes per patient for physicians. Passage of this bill would

allow time for physicians to treat more complex illnesses and would provide cost effective, quality health care to many more Maine citizens.

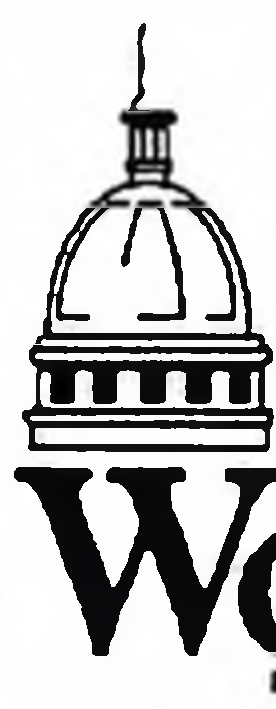
LD 1285: An Act to Provide Family Security Through Quality Health Care. This bill establishes a universal-access health care system. It reorganizes Maine's current system so that everyone has access to comprehensive health care that follows them whether they are working or not, and whether they live in rural areas or cities. Key components are: access for all citizens to comprehensive health care; cost control with improved quality of care; administration by a single, publicly-accountable, non-profit agency; freedom to choose physicians; and financing based on ability to pay.

Stalking Legislation. Four bills have been submitted that address stalking. A public hearing and a work session have been held. The Judiciary committee has asked a subcommittee to review the bills and report back to the entire Judiciary committee. It seems likely that the committee will be supporting legislation that would provide protection to people who are victims of stalking.

Bills not yet printed

An Act Regarding Custody and Visitation In Cases of Domestic Abuse. This act will prevent violent parents from using custody and visitation as a way to abuse children and/or the other parent. In cases where the parent has a history of family violence the court shall only allow supervised child visitation, at least until the violent parent has successfully completed a treatment program.

An Act to Amend Requirements of Licensing for Nurses. This bill brings education into line with Maine's health care needs, and it provides future nurses with a clearly articulated path to technical and professional accomplishment.



The **Maine Women's Lobby Newsletter** is the official publication of the Maine Women's Lobby.

**Maine
Women's
Lobby**

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Reproductive Privacy Affirmed by Legislature!

by JOANNE D'ARCANGELO
Chair, Maine Choice Coalition

On April 12th, the Legislature passed into law the Reproductive Privacy Act, introduced by Governor McKernan and sponsored by Sen. Pam Cahill (R-Sagadahoc) and Rep. Susan Farnsworth (D-Hallowell). This made Maine the fifth state in the nation to support affirmatively a woman's right to choose as defined by Roe v. Wade!

Initiated by the Maine Choice Coalition, this measure makes three simple but key changes in Maine law. It: 1) repeals a never-enforced 48-hour waiting period for all women seeking abortion; 2) formally eliminates a mandatory parental notification law, enjoined in 1979 and made obsolete by Maine's 1989 Adult Involvement law; and 3) places in statute explicit language that "the state shall not interfere in the exercise of a woman's private decision to terminate a pregnancy."

In the Senate, the measure was swiftly approved by a whopping 24-11 bipartisan majority -- thanks to the leadership of Sen. Cahill and Sen. Gerry Conley, Senate Chair of the Judiciary Committee.

Similarly, the House, after vigorous debate, finally passed the bill by an impressive 97-44 vote.

Technically, the law codifies current practice and policy governing abortion services in Maine. Symbolically, its passage sends a clear and powerful message that our legislature does not welcome the types of restrictions permitted by the 1992 Casey decision rendered by the U.S. Supreme Court, which granted states greater latitude in limiting access to abortion.

The Choice Coalition, representing 17 organizations, is indebted to the

Governor and to all 67 legislative sponsors, most notably Rep. Susan Farnsworth, who eloquently led pro-choice House members in a protracted battle against 13 anti-choice amendments and two anti-choice bills sponsored by Rep. Ralph Coffman (D-Old Town).

Thanks to their tireless efforts, each and every anti-choice amendment -- aimed only at making abortions more difficult and dangerous to obtain --

*"Symbolically, its
passage sends a
clear and powerful
message . . ."*

were beaten back by significant margins. Also defeated were three amendments that would have sent the question of reproductive choice to public referendum, as well as Rep. Coffman's bills seeking to reinstate mandatory parental notification and impose a 24-hour waiting period.

Despite the extreme tactics employed by the opposition -- which included hostile outbursts by anti-choice activists in the House gallery -- lawmakers courageously reaffirmed Maine's tradition as a state that recognizes the limits of government interferences in our lives and respects a woman's right to privacy in this intensely personal decision.

Major kudos are also extended to the dozens of pro-choice supporters who worked our phone banks through the final four weeks of the legislative campaign. For five hours, five nights a week, volunteers led by coordinator Fauna Yarrow contacted the Choice

Coalition's 4,000 members, urging them to call and write their legislators in support of L.D.318. There is no question the personal contact made by MWL members and all our key activists made the critical difference. Thank you!

One key component of our successful campaign remains to be done: PLEASE -- if your legislator(s) voted to support the RPA, call and/or write them to extend your thanks. This was a difficult campaign. Many legislators were strenuously pressured by their anti-choice constituents. They need to know their work and commitment are deeply appreciated -- and will not be forgotten -- by Maine's pro-choice majority!

The Maine Choice Coalition will soon mail you the final House and Senate roll calls. If you would like additional information about how your representative voted on anti-choice amendments (not included in the MCC mailing), write the Maine Choice Coalition, P.O. Box 309, Hallowell 04347; or call the Family Planning Association of Maine (622-7524) or Planned Parenthood of Northern New England (874-1100).

Finally, in spite of this victory, we should take nothing for granted. Opponents of choice, stung by this legislative defeat, have vowed to take an anti-choice initiative to referendum vote in 1994. Stay tuned and stay alert...

But for now, Maine women have great cause to celebrate our continued right to privacy and choice in Maine!

*Joanne D'Arcangelo,
a former MWL Lobbyist, serves as
Director of Public Affairs for the Family
Planning Association of Maine.*

IN WHOSE INTEREST?

It's a Secret: (Economics is All About Values)

by ELLEN TENINTY

You never took a class in economics because:

- a) it has numbers in it.
- b) it looks boring.
- c) it doesn't seem relevant to you.

That's OK, you didn't miss much.

In the U.S., economics is taught as a math-based science, which makes it boring, kind of scary, and mostly irrelevant. Many economists won't admit it, but economic theories and policies are founded on debatable beliefs about human nature and what's important in life.

The economy is a daily human creation. Although economists talk about it like it follows the natural laws of some Higher Power (you know, the one with the invisible hands), interest rates don't fall like rain. Unemployment doesn't just happen to go up. People make the decisions which drive the economy, and those decisions are based on their beliefs, values and prejudices.

Economics is how we arrange ourselves in relationship to one another. What are our rights and responsibilities? Who benefits? Who pays? How much is enough for whom? Who gets to participate in decisions? How does it affect our ability to live together in a community?

*Reprinted with permission from **Equal Means: Women Organizing Economic Solutions**, a tri-annual journal published by the Ms. Foundation for Women. Subscriptions available for \$24/four issues from: Equal Means, 2512 Ninth St. #3, Berkeley, CA 94710. (510) 549-9931.*

"Our competitive economy has produced millions of homeless people. How's that for efficient?"

The Myths We Live By

The U.S. economic system is part of our culture, and it's built on our myths. For example, we have *the myth of the level playing field* that tells us that we all have the same chance at success. "You get what you deserve." "You reap what you sow." "You made your bed, you lie in it." Jim Hightower, an organizer from Texas, jokes, "Some people are born on third base, but they think they hit a triple!"

The concept of the level playing field couples with the fundamental myth of our economic system, that there's not enough to go around. This is the *myth of scarcity*. True, there is a limited amount of oil in the ground, but there need not be a limited amount of energy, if resources and technology were applied to develop alternatives to oil. There is a lack of food in parts of the world, but we pour out milk and burn wheat right here in the U.S.

That brings us to beliefs about human nature. The system assumes that people are basically lazy and that if we weren't afraid of starving, we probably wouldn't get up in the morning. This is the "logic" behind the idea that cutting welfare will reduce poverty, and that unemployment insurance will ruin your motivation to get another job.

Our society seems obsessed that no one should get something for nothing. We hear so much about "the undeserving poor," and get fed daily images of "welfare cheats." But no one is insulting homeowners who got a

whole lot richer as the value of housing has gone up. A person who bought a \$100,000 house in northern California five years ago could sell it for \$250,000 today, even if they never mowed the lawn. Is that getting something for nothing? Are we worried about how this will negatively affect their incentives? No. That's called "return on investment."

Economic Facts To Get Mad About

The homeowner's interest tax deduction will cost the federal government \$47 billion in 1991 — more than five times President Bush's Housing and Urban Development budget for low-income housing.

Why?

Because since 1980, housing assistance has been slashed by 73% — from \$33 billion to \$9 billion — the largest cut of any domestic program. At the same time, the homeowner tax deduction more than doubled — from \$22 billion to \$47 billion.

The Result?

Fewer than one-fifth of all low-income Americans now receive federal housing subsidies. Meanwhile, more than three-quarters of wealthy Americans — many living in mansions — get housing aid from Washington.

Compete or Cooperate for Survival?

Competition does motivate some people to excel, but it also intimidates others from even trying things at which they might be good. There are arenas for healthy competition, but competing for basic survival in the form of food, shelter and income is not the least bit healthy for people trying to live together. While economies around the world are being restructured on the belief that without competition, they can't be productive and efficient, our competitive economy has recently produced millions of homeless people. How's that for efficient?

Some people argue that it's our nature to be competitive and greedy, and others say that society molds us to those values. As you can see, this is hardly a scientific discussion, but a religious and philosophical one.

While our local Talk Radio station DJ says that welfare is bad because the only route to dignity is to help yourself, most of us have other traditions that shape our values.

Many religions and cultures teach that each individual has inherent worth, but that dignity comes from your relationships with others--family, friends and community. Labor unions say that "An injury to one is an injury to all." The myth of the "self-made man" is a crock. Not even the caveman (or woman) survived on his or her own.

Skip the Numbers Game

Economics can be a numbers game manipulated to prove your political point of view. Incomes are up and wages are down. Come again? Well, it's true. "Income" includes the earnings of every member of your family, so incomes are up because more of us are working per household these days. The "wage" that each job pays is down. If you want to paint a rosy picture, you say, "Incomes are up." If you want to communicate that the times are hard, you say, "Wages are down."

How you present the numbers de-

What's Happening Across the State

April 27 • "Rape as a War Crime" • 7:30 - 9 p.m.

YWCA, Spring St., Portland

Co-sponsored by the Rape Crisis Center and the Greater Portland NOW

April 30 • Take Back the Night March, Rally, Candlelight Vigil

in recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Bangor, Portland, Farmington, Augusta, Waterville

For information on times and locations, contact your local Rape Crisis Ctr

April 30-May 2 • League of Women Voters Annual Convention

Cliff House, Ogunquit

Conference registration \$10

May 1 • Fourth Annual Union Women's Conference • 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Lewiston/Auburn campus of USM

Registration \$10 • Sponsored by AFL-CIO

May 7 • "Meeting the Challenge of the Midlife Woman" • 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Howard Johnson's, Waterville (Exit 34 off I-95)

Registration \$35

Sponsored by Kennebec Valley Community Action Program

May 8 • "Menopause, Naturally" • 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Expressive Therapy Center, Portland

Registration \$50 (can be paid in installments)

Sponsored by Fabulous Functions

May 28-31 • "Building Unity, Celebrating Diversity" —

— Maine Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Symposium XX

Unity College, Unity • Registration \$25

pends on your politics and your biases.

Even those of us who agree that we want justice in the economy probably don't agree on what "fair" looks like. Take pay for work as an example. Should we each get paid the same, as in equality? Or should those of us who have more dependents get paid more, defining justice according to need? Or since I often stay late and work harder, should I get paid more, as in the merit system? Or should we get paid by years of service, like seniority or rank? Or maybe we should all get minimum wage, because it's the law? Or should we be paid depending on how much work we produce, as in per keystroke or number of skirts sewn?

It requires thinking and discussion. Your definition of justice may change depending on the circumstances. And it will certainly evolve from your values.

Learning economics need not be one more confusing task on your "Things To Do" list. Instead, learning to think about economics in real-world language can provide a framework which reveals the systems that cause our problems, and helps us develop strategies beyond mopping up the messes.

Right now our economic futures are in the hands of people who call low wages "efficient," and measure the value of a forest as "boards for cash." Yet we know that solutions are available to even the biggest problems. It's a question of organizing the political power to use them. And our political power will grow as we claim economics as our territory and base our debate on values.

Ellen Teninty is Training Coordinator for the Center for Ethics and Economic Policy in Berkeley, CA.

Items From Our Catalog



NOTE CARDS

Striking and colorful "Many Strong and Beautiful Women" design by Kiki. 5x7-inch greeting card printed on recycled gloss stock using vegetable-based inks.

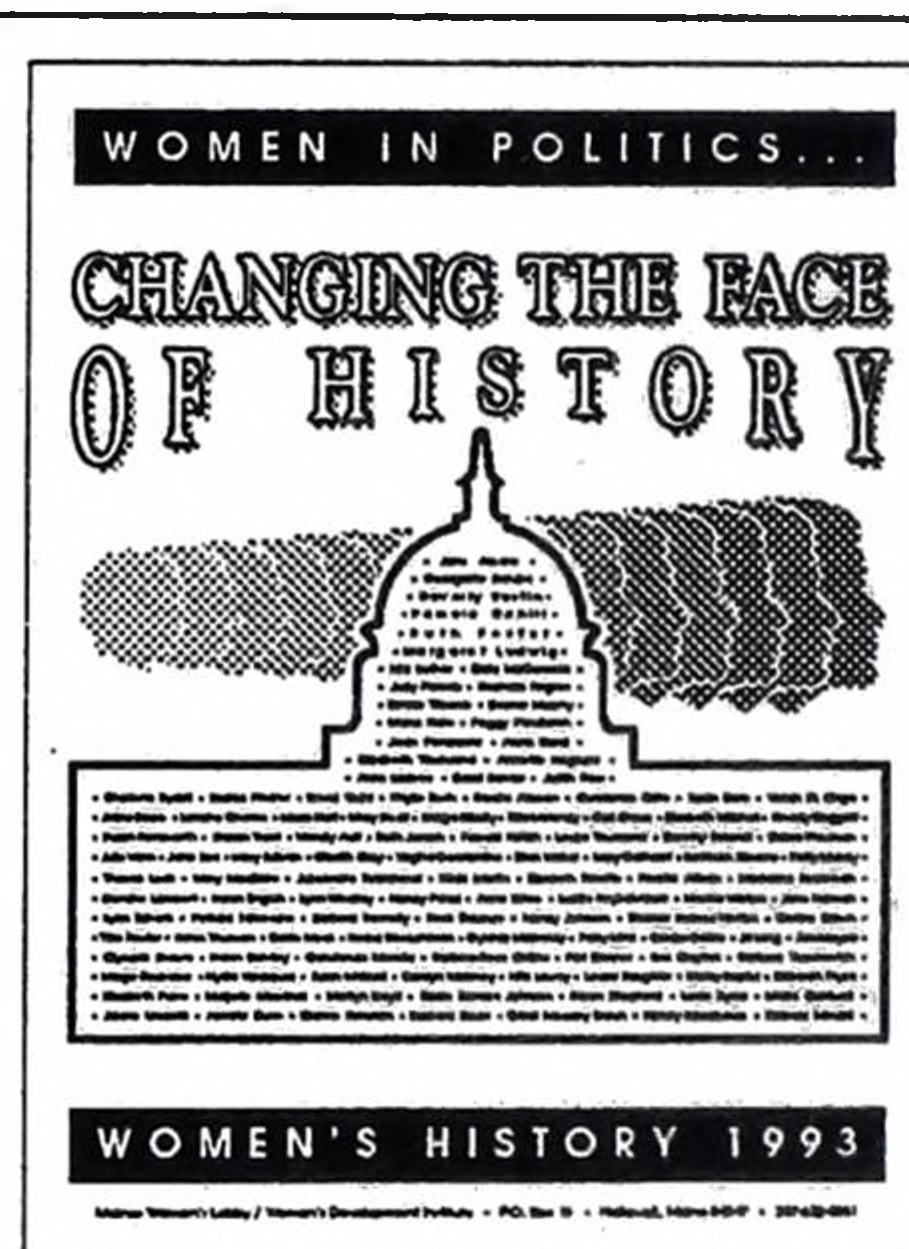
MWL price: \$1 ea.; 6 for \$5

T-SHIRTS

Heavy 100% pre-shrunk cotton featuring the colorful, multi-cultural designs "Many Strong and Beautiful Women" (pictured) or "Women Help Women" (not shown.) Sizes M, L, XL

\$15 each

BUMPER STICKERS • \$1 EACH



POSTERS

The 3-color 1993 poster — "Changing The Face of History" — lists all the women elected to Congress and the Maine Legislature. Get yours . . .

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3 — \$25.00

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Call 622-0851 for ordering information.

MWL members will meet in Waterville

The Maine Women's Lobby will hold its first regional membership meeting on Monday, May 3, at 7 p.m. at the Unitarian-Universalist Church in Waterville. "We encourage all Waterville area members to come and bring friends who might like to learn more about the Lobby," said Marty McIntyre, MWL's Director of Program Development. Coffee and dessert will be served.

"The meeting will provide an opportunity for members to meet MWL staff and board members and to receive an update on our legislative initiatives," said McIntyre. "It will also give members a chance to share information about issues they would like to see addressed by the Lobby."

All MWL members, regardless of where they live, are welcome to attend this meeting. More information about the meeting is available by calling Marty at the Lobby office (622-0851).

WELFARE FRAY — (continued from back page)

the debate about Maine's welfare philosophy and program, the Lobby organized the Campaign for Economic Security for Maine Families. Members of the Campaign have extensive experience designing and implementing education and training programs for women trying to leave welfare. In addition to the Lobby, the Campaign includes representatives of women on AFDC, the Displaced Homemakers Program, the Maine Association of Interdependent Neighborhoods, Coastal Enterprises, Inc., the AFDC Advisory Council, and the Maine Adult Education Association.

The Campaign believes strongly that the goal of a welfare program should be to lift a family out of poverty. Therefore, it developed a set of principles by which the proposals in the Legislature could be judged. These principles include:

- Low income parents are like other parents. Most of them are moti-

vated to do what is best for themselves and their children.

- Low income families do not choose to be poor. Poverty is the result of an economy that does not produce enough good jobs and of life circumstances often beyond a family's control.
- Everyone in this country is a welfare recipient, i.e. a recipient of some kind of government benefit. A stigma should not be attached to benefits for low income families.
- All families must be able to meet their basic needs. Advancement beyond reliance on public assistance is impossible without adequate food, shelter, clothing, health care, and transportation.
- Quality child care, education, training, and transportation must be available to the extent necessary to remove barriers to jobs that pay a living wage.
- Parents who work full time should not be in poverty. Additional income in the form of dependable child support and an adequate earned-income tax credit should be available to working families in poverty. Child care, health insurance, and opportunities for additional education and training may also be necessary to lift a family permanently out of poverty.
- Providing real opportunities to move toward economic independence is a far better motivator than coercion, i.e. threatening to reduce the AFDC benefit if families do not behave in certain ways.

The Campaign has presented testimony on four welfare reform proposals before the Legislature's Human Resources Committee and is drafting its own bill incorporating the provisions from all four proposals consistent with these principles.

For copies of the M.A.I.N. publication, "41,000 Children: The Realities of AFDC in Maine," or the full set of Campaign principles, call the Lobby at 622-0851.



**Maine
Women's
Lobby**

Membership Form

*I want to help improve the lives of
Maine women and their families!*

- ☐ Here's my \$25 individual membership
☐ I prefer to join at the level below:

REGULAR

- ☐ \$500 Life
☐ \$250 Sustaining
☐ \$100 Sponsoring
☐ \$ 50 Supporting
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I prefer to pay:
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Phone _____

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Biz phone _____

Town _____

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- ☐ I do not want my name given to other groups.

The Maine Women's Lobby is committed to representing women of all economic means. Any contribution you are able to make will entitle you to membership. Please make your check payable to: MAINE WOMEN'S LOBBY and return it with this form.

From the Chair:

The Lobby joins the welfare reform fray

by LINDA WILCOX
MWL Chair

In the *Equal Means* article reprinted on page 4, Ellen Teninty describes how economics in this country is based on myths and values. There is no better example of the need to counter myth with fact than in the current legislative debate over welfare.

Thanks to the work of the Maine Association of Interdependent Neighborhoods (M.A.I.N.), an advocacy group for low income people, we can refute the myths about the AFDC program.

One myth is that Maine's AFDC benefits (the grants paid to families with dependent children to meet their basic needs) are too generous. The reality is that the payments are less than half of the federal poverty level and are

the lowest in New England.

Another myth is that women on AFDC have many children and keep on having them to increase their benefits. In fact, the average number of children in a Maine AFDC family is 1.8, and 80% of families have only one or two children.

A third myth is that welfare is a way of life. The reality is that over half of families are on welfare less than two years, and that only one out of five have been receiving welfare over five years.

A fourth myth is that AFDC recipients cheat. Yet, in 1990, the Department of Human Services found recipient error in less than two percent of the cases, and only a dozen cases of AFDC fraud were prosecuted (out of a caseload of approximately 20,000) that year.

The final myth is that women on

AFDC are able to work but are too lazy to do so. The reality is over half of AFDC families are working (but not earning enough to leave welfare), are in a job training or education program, or are waiting to get in.

Triggered by the looming state budget deficit, the McKernan Administration and the Legislature are looking at ways to reduce the number of families on AFDC through increased education, training and job placement opportunities.

The Lobby believes the kind of opportunities provided women on welfare will make the difference between their leaving poverty permanently and their simply moving on and of welfare and in and out of low-paying and unskilled jobs. In order to participate in

see CHAIR on page 7

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