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The Maine Commission for Women

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Inform

Published by The Maine Commission for Women

FROM THE CHAIR

This issue of Inform focuses on the Maine Commission for Women's successful Annual Meeting held in June. We were very proud to have a strong advocate of women's rights as the keynote speaker at our annual meeting, Congresswoman Olympia Snowe. As the Co-Chair of the Women's Congressional Caucus, as well as a long time supporter of the Equal Rights Amendment, Representative Snowe continues to serve as a role model for women in Maine.

The Commission was also fortunate to have Governor John R. McKernan give remarks at the beginning of the meeting. The Maine Commission for Women's efforts in advocating on behalf of women and girls in Maine over the past year in the form of legislation, education, and public relations were also highlighted.

A very special portion of the evening was the Commission's first Progress Awards. These were given to individuals or groups who have made an outstanding difference in improving the lives of women and girls in Maine.

On behalf of the Commission, I would like to thank the judges for their time and effort: Donna Leland, President, Maine Federation of Business and Professional Women; Sherry Huber, Gubernatorial Candidate, 1986; Kathy Urban, Executive Director, Family Planning Association; Karen Heck, President, Maine Women's Lobby; Stephanie Locke and Robert Dworak, Maine Commission for Women.

Also in this issue are the responses to questions asked by the Commission of candidates for the United States Congress. The Maine Commission for Women encourages all women and men to vote in the November election.

— Patricia C. Bourgoin

The Gender Gap is Alive – and Informed!

November 8th is Election Day! This year, experts are predicting that the women's vote will be more important than ever in electing federal, state, and local officials. Before you head to the polls, it's important to know where the candidates stand on issues of concern to women and their families.

On page 4 are the national candidates' responses to written questions from the MCW. Due to tight space, we eliminated the questions on Family Medical Leave and pay equity as every candidate said they supported the concept. The full texts of these questionnaires are available from the MCW office.

Please read the questions and answers, make your choices and **VOTE!** Women suffragists who gave their lives to win the right to vote always feared that women would not use this hard-won right of our democracy. Let's make sure they did not struggle in vain. Go to the polls on November 8 - and take a friend!

MAINE COMMISSION HOLDS FIRST ANNUAL MEETING

The Maine Commission for Women hosted its first annual meeting at the Civic Center in Augusta. Over 100 State and Regional Commissioners, MCW supporters and friends gathered for an evening program that reviewed MCW 1987-1988 activities. The evening got off to a great start with a warm welcome from Governor McKernan and then an excellent and informative keynote address by the Co-Chair of the U.S. Congressional Women's Caucus, Olympia Snowe. (Excerpts from her address in this issue, page 2.)



MCW PROGRESS AWARDS

The true highlight of the evening was the presentation of the first Maine Commission for Women Progress Awards. These special honors are given to those organizations and individuals who have, because of their extraordinary efforts, moved us closer to full equality for all Maine citizens. This year's recipients are:

Mary C. Skaggs of Stillwater, activist and member of the Associated Clerical, Office, Laboratory, and Technical staff of the University of Maine (ACSUM). Nominated by her

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(MCW Progress Awards continued)

teenaged daughter for her "determination, dedication, and hard work" as chief negotiator for ACSUM, Skaggs spearheaded the eight-year long struggle with the University administration to study, implement, and fund the \$2.7 million pay equity and job reclassification study for U.M.'s predominantly female clerical and office workers.

Lucille Poulin and Karen Saum, founders and leaders of H.O.M.E., Inc., in Orland, an alternative community devoted to the economic, spiritual, and social empowerment of low-income women and families. Based on its leaders' "extraordinary vision" and "commitment to enrich both the individual and society", the H.O.M.E. community is a self-sustaining, cooperative venture providing occupational training, educational opportunities, and housing to scores of Maine's poor and disenfranchised citizens.

Mabel Wadsworth of Bangor, a pioneer and activist for more than 40 years in the area of reproductive rights for Maine women. In addition to organizing the first Family Planning program in Maine and serving as the first Director of Family Planning in the central Maine area, Wadsworth helped in the development of the Women's Resource Center (forerunner of the Displaced Homemakers Project), led the fight for passage of legislation guaranteeing teens the right to confidential contraceptive services, and founded the Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center in Bangor, where she continues today to share her vision to "empower all women, through knowledge and advocacy, to control their lives."

The Maine Women's Lobby, which, since 1978, has guaranteed a full-time lobbyist at the Maine Legislature to work for enactment of laws protecting and enhancing economic opportunities, legal equality, and reproductive rights for Maine women. The MWL is recognized for its "significant impact on the quality of life for Maine women."

The Department of Community Programs, University of Southern Maine, for its sponsorship of the annual Maine Women in Management Conference since 1979. The conference, attended by more than 1,000 women each year, is widely recognized throughout New England as one of the most successful efforts to develop and foster an expansive support network for working women struggling to balance career and family.

Elvie H. Johnson (posthumously) of Stockholm, prominently respected and widely recognized activist and advocate, newspaper reporter, church and community leader, and farmer, for her "lifelong commitment to . . . the advancement of women

through personal example and leadership." Founder of the Aroostook County Action Program and the Policy Action Council for low-income people, Johnson spearheaded the development of the school lunch program in Stockholm, Maine; served in the senior community service program and developed its Mealsites program for the elderly; and established a merchant discount program to expand the purchasing power of Aroostook's low-income elders. During her 90 years, Johnson also presided over the Stockholm Historical Society, the 4-H Club, the American Legion Auxiliary, the Women's Extension, the Aroostook Conservation Commission, and the Northern Maine Council on Aging.

There are 91.5 million American women who are eligible to vote.

This compares with 82.4 million eligible men. Women are 53% of the electorate. Women outnumber men in all voting age groups except for 18 to 24, where the numbers are equal. Over age 65, women constitute 60% of eligible voters.

MCW ANNUAL REVIEW

The MCW had a busy and very productive year. Our programmatic highlights included our "Winning With Women" conference with Shirley Chisholm, our Women's History Month Essay competition, receiving a grant for the development of a Legal Rights Handbook and the successful effort to keep the "parental consent" referendum off the ballot.

Legislatively, we drafted and got passed the Family Medical Leave Act, legislation that will make it possible for workers to protect their job and care for their families. In addition, we continued our work with the Women's Legislative Agenda Coalition. We were successful in gaining increased Medicaid coverage for pregnant women, children, the disabled and elderly, Medicaid dental coverage, an increase in the minimum wage, an AFDC increase, the implementation of a job reclassification and a 3.5 million dollar appropriation for child care.

One of our proudest achievements this year was the establishment of three regional commissions. The Commissioners will be able to advocate for women and their families on the local level, as well as provide valuable insight to the statewide Commission.

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OLYMPIA SNOWE'S ADDRESS

Representative Olympia Snowe of Maine's Second Congressional District serves as Co-Chair of the U.S. Congressional Women's Caucus. What follows are excerpts from her address "Women's Issues: A National Perspective" at the MCW Annual Meeting.

"We're not just fighting last year's issues.

We're still fighting last century's issues."

Really, I don't know where to begin. There is so much to talk about — so much to talk about the issues that are so important to all of us. As the Governor indicated, you're on the proverbial front line when it comes to addressing so many of the issues that are critical to women here in the state of Maine as well as throughout this nation. As you can well imagine, advancing the cause of American women on Capitol Hill is not exactly an easy task and the process sometimes makes it even more difficult.

In any event, I know all the issues that you've been involved in; I think we share a common concern for advancing those right here in the State Legislature, as well as the United States Congress. In the Congress, as you can well imagine, when you have 435 members of the House of Representatives and 23 women in Congress, it makes it extraordinarily difficult in terms of the obstacles that we have to overcome. But fortunately, we do have a number of male colleagues who have joined us in our efforts. They have been friends on the issues that we support. But individual women's efforts over the years, although they've been consistent, haven't always been successful simply because we haven't had the numbers. And that realization led to the creation of the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues back in 1977. At that time, the women who served in the Congress decided that it was necessary to organize and create a focus on women's issues. The Caucus has been, since that time, an integral part of advancing a women's agenda in Congress.

I'd like to give you a little background on our group. I've been co-Chair of the Caucus since 1983, along with Congresswoman Pat Schroeder. We think that it has been very effective and useful in bringing to the fore the issues that we want enacted in the Congress.

Back in the 1970's, for the first time women's issues became prominent. They were finally appearing on everyone's agenda and I think that was in large part due to the debate on the Equal Rights Amendment. Although the Equal Rights Amendment has not been ratified, it did raise the social

consciousness of the American people concerning the inequities that women had to face in our society.

It also made us recognize the need to organize and it was shortly before my time, in 1977, that the Caucus was organized.

Notwithstanding our political, ideological, geographical, and regional differences, they decided to organize based on one key factor: that the Caucus had to speak with one voice, that we had to agree to positions on a unanimous basis so that everybody understood where the Caucus was on those particular issues.

The first issue they had to address was extension of the deadline for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1979. The approach the Caucus took was to mobilize support across the country. Of course, that effort was met with a great deal of skepticism, not only by our colleagues but by the press as well. In the end, however, against all odds, the extension was approved. It was that effort that I think first gave the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues considerable credibility.

We were able to capitalize on this success and to gain some early successes in some of the legislation that was introduced at that time. We were able to get, for example, assistance for displaced homemakers, for job counselling, flex-time, and so on. But as the Caucus grew, differences developed in terms of what direction the Caucus should take and a transformation occurred in the early 1980's. The first step we took was to admit our male colleagues. We did this for several important reasons. One, we needed the money. Two, many of our colleagues shared a strong commitment to women's issues and that was extremely important. Three, there was the realization that half the population in America was represented by women. Therefore, their interests couldn't be served by only 4% of the membership of the United States Congress. Finally, many of our male colleagues by virtue of their seniority, were now serving as chairmen of the key committees as well as in positions of leadership.

As a result, we did invite the male members into the Congressional Caucus and we have more than 100 male members of our Caucus. I should point out, however, we do not allow them to serve on the Executive Committee that makes all of the decisions. (I tend to file that in the "turnabout is fair play" category.) In any event, the Caucus has served two purposes. One is a clearinghouse for information on women's issues; two is to promote a platform for improving the status of women in our society.

I think that one of the most effective means for addressing the status of women in our society is to address the economic issues. As a result, the

Congressional Caucus decided to introduce on a biennial basis the "Economic Equity Act". Essentially it is a composite of all of the initiatives which have been introduced in the Congress that we have identified as important to women in American society. We don't depend on the passage of the entire bill. What we depend on is tracking the separate pieces of legislation in hopes that at least we will get parts of this package put into law. Once we pass legislation, we reintroduce other initiatives that already have been introduced in the Congress. That way we're able to show our colleagues exactly what initiatives we think are critical to improving the status of women today. It has worked out very well. In fact, in 1981 after we introduced the Economic Equity act we got the sliding scale for the dependent care tax credit as well as increasing the maximum deduction for individual retirement accounts.

In 1983, we reintroduced the Economic Equity Act with different provisions. Then along came the so-called "gender gap", (a phenomenon that became important to our male colleagues). That catapulted not only the Caucus but also the Economic Equity Act. Everybody was interested in the Economic Equity Act and its provisions. As a result, a number of issues were passed in the 98th Congress that were very important to women. Half of the dozen measures in the Economic Equity Act were enacted in that Congress, primary of which were pension reform and child support enforcement. With respect to pension reform, the first and foremost issue was to reduce the age for vesting and participation. The reason for that, of course, was to recognize the unique role women play in society and that is, of course, having childbearing as child-rearing responsibilities. Often times women enter the workforce at a younger age; they leave, have the children, raise the children and they come back into the workforce. Unfortunately, the pension system penalized women for that role. Secondly, the waiver of survivor benefits – how many women discovered that they didn't have survivor benefits because their spouse waived those benefits without telling his spouse. So, we included a provision that prohibited that waiver and also required notarization at that waiver as well.

We also had child support enforcement in 1983, very critical. I can't say that we've had 100% collection of child support payments in this country. We're still working, we're still fighting on it.

In the 100th Congress, we've had some legislative victories. Title IX, the Civil Rights Restoration Act – that was the most difficult, since the Supreme Court decision in Grove City. We had a

four year struggle essentially to overturn that decision and apply it broad-based to all institutions which receive federal funds.

We've also passed the Catastrophic Illness Bill. Included in that legislation is a provision concerning spousal impoverishment which I think is critical. A lot of couples, where one spouse has to go into a nursing home, have to spend down to the Medicaid eligibility standards. Inevitably it turns out to be the woman who ends up being impoverished. The Catastrophic Illness Bill includes a provision that allows the woman or the man to keep \$12,000 in savings, excluding the house, plus income that represents 150% of the poverty level.



Finally, we did include a provision in the Housing Authorization that would require public housing facilities to include child care facilities.

We have had many initiatives in this Congress. Obviously they create more opportunities and open more doors for women, but we need to do much, much more. The remaining two or three issues we'll attempt to address this year will be child care, parental leave and pay equity for federal agencies. I am the primary sponsor of the ABC bill – the Act for Better Child Care Services – which is a comprehensive piece of legislation to address child care in this country. There is opposition to this in the Congress, primarily because many individuals believe that we should require licensing. The legislation, as it has been drafted, would require states which participate in this program to have licensing standards in place.

The ABC bill costs about 2.5 billion dollars, so it's obvious we're not going to enact a bill at this point that costs that much, given the federal deficit problems. Nevertheless, I think we can make a beginning in addressing the child care problem and develop a more modest piece of legislation at least for starters, this year.

Secondly, we will consider parental leave, this fall hopefully. We will be talking to a number of different groups, women's groups, across this country to assist us in a grassroots effort. I was involved in developing the compromise

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Representative Joseph Brennan

#1. I feel that three of the most significant problems facing women and girls today are: obstacles to equal career opportunities, the lack of affordable, high-quality child care, and poverty. The federal government has an important role to play in addressing these problems and providing women with equal rights and opportunities so they can reach their full potential as equal citizens.

Today, some women enjoy career opportunities that, in earlier generations, were not available to them. However, far too many women do not have the opportunity to pursue their career goals. First, we still need to do more to raise the aspirations of girls and women and to encourage them to pursue educational and training opportunities. Secondly, women are often forced to make a choice between career and family.

The reality today is that most women have to work. They should not have to worry about reliable care for their children while they are at work. Child care is one of my top priorities in Congress. I am an original cosponsor of H.R. 3660, the "ABC" Act for Better Child Care Services bill which is currently pending in Congress.

In addition, mothers who are trying to get off welfare need child care to free them to work. A mother should not have to choose between living in poverty and worrying that her children are not being cared for properly, or even left alone.

Women and their children continue to represent the largest group of impoverished citizens in the country.

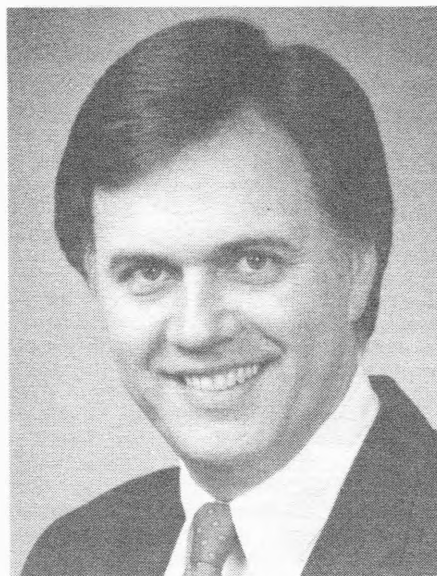
I am working in Congress to try to improve the lives of these families. Poverty affects all aspects of a person's life, including the home that they live and grow up in. Affordable housing is one of my priorities in Congress. The dream of owning a home is fading for many Americans especially women with children. We must ask

Get out the vote.

Putting your ballot in the ballot box on election day is an act of empowerment. It is also an act of responsible citizenship. Win or lose, you are a participant in the democratic process.

Call your city or county election board for:

- registration information
- location of your polling place
- transportation to the polls
- hours that the polls are open



Ted O'Meara

#1. It is not easy to identify three distinct issues affecting women and girls because the problems tend to be intricately interrelated. Economic equality, child care, and education are the areas that I would select as having the greatest impact on women and girls and therefore demanding utmost attention and consideration.

Economic equality for women has received legislative recognition and we must remain vigilant in our efforts to enforce existing equal employment and affirmative action laws. The U.S. Congress as an institution is guilty of tolerating economic disparities among men and women and its members should act swiftly to set an example for others in promoting economic advancements for women. Passage of the Economic Equality Act would also be an important step in that area.

Child care is a key issue this campaign year, as it should be. We have finally begun to acknowledge the dramatic changes in the makeup of our workforce and the need for quality child care options. With two young sons in day care, my wife and I know first-hand many of the concerns shared by other working parents.

While there are numerous child care proposals before Congress, our actions must be guided by the three basic goals of quality, accessibility, and affordability. The state of Maine has become a leader in child care and any new federal programs should help to promote the various types of state, local, private, and employer-assisted child care initiatives underway in Maine. Direct federal assistance must be targeted to those most in need of child care services in order to obtain employment, education, and job training.

In the area of education, there are a number of issues demanding our attention. I am concerned about lower test results among females in the areas of math and science. I am also concerned about appropriate career counseling and career awareness, about lack of self-esteem, and the subtle and sometimes not so subtle negative messages given to girls in our schools.

(continued on next page)



ourselves how women without a decent place to live or a decent place to leave their children can aspire to higher education or rewarding careers and pursuing their personal dreams. Education is one of the greatest forces for change in women's lives. Recently, Congress passed an Omnibus Education bill which included an innovative program called Even Start. The program is designed for both parents without high school degrees and their young children. The idea of educating parents so that they can both improve their own lives and become a positive educational force for their children is truly innovative. Maine will receive approximately \$250,000 to initiate this program. Parent to child reading ranks as the single most important activity for the ultimate literacy of a child.

NATIONAL CANDIDATES' RESPONSES TO MCW QUESTIONS

(Full text available upon request)

CANDIDATES:

George Mitchell v. Jasper Wyman (Senate)
Joseph Brennan v. Ted O'Meara (1st District)
Olympia Snowe v. Ken Hayes (2nd District)

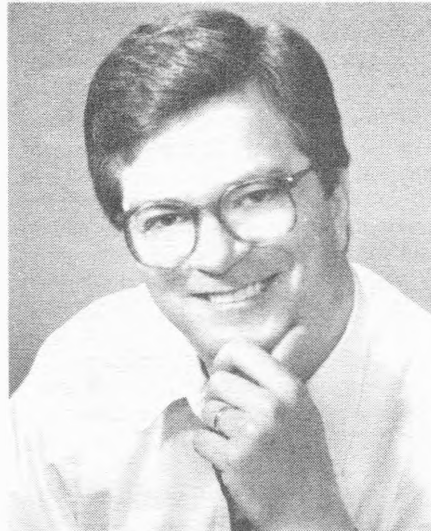


#1. What do you think are the three most significant problems facing women and girls today?

Senator George Mitchell

#1. Women and girls, as parents, workers and students, have the problems common to all people: maintaining their families' living standards in an economy where two incomes are often necessary to secure the decencies of life; obtaining good education and skills training whether for their own futures or those of their children; combining the demands of work and home without shortchanging either.

Because in our society the immediate day-to-day demands of home and family still most often fall to women, it is these issues that often comprise lists of so-called "women's issues". But I have found that women of all ages are equally concerned about environmental issues, international peace and the sustainability of American prosperity and living standards in future decades. In that respect, government policies which preserve peace, protect our natural environment and resources and invest in our people for a prosperous economic future best serve the interests of women and girls.



Jasper Wyman

#1. Three major problems facing women and girls.

A. Pay Equity and Gender Discrimination

Maine has made tremendous progress toward achieving the noble goal of equal opportunity and social and economic justice for all women.

However, there is much more that must be done. We have not yet reached pay equity for women, nor have we ended gender discrimination in this nation.

As a U.S. Senator from Maine, I will firmly support the rigorous and impartial enforcement of all existing state and federal laws prohibiting gender discrimination. I will also support every reasonable and effective attempt to end invidious discrimination against women, wherever it exists, including the U.S. Congress. There should be absolutely no exceptions to the principle of equal pay for equal work and equal opportunity for every woman in every field of endeavor.

Additionally, I will sponsor, co-sponsor, and support all reasonable and effective federal legislation designed to truly advance the essential cause of justice and equality for women in America.

B. Child Care

I have specifically outlined my ideas on improving child care for working women in letters to the editors of Maine's major daily newspapers. With today's dramatically changing workforce demographics, the federal government must give priority attention

to this need. In this age of growing national deficits, federal dollars must be targeted to low-income working women who are heads of households. These women should be the first in line under any federal child care program. Child care assistance, under such circumstances, can make the difference between gainful employment and improved economic position on the one hand and continued welfare dependency and despair on the other.

C. Teen-Age Pregnancy

Unwanted pregnancy robs young women and girls of precious opportunities and the dreams of a lifetime. I have supported, as a legislator and as head of the Christian Civic League, legislation designed to facilitate efforts to help young women avoid unplanned pregnancies. If teen-age girls decide to keep and raise their children, then society, including government, has an obligation to offer effective institutional, programmatic and personal support. This includes school-based services which encourage young women to complete their education while caring for their children. Government's efforts must also focus renewed attention on encouraging fathers to assume their moral and legal responsibilities for the children which are also their own. Educating teen-agers concerning the ethics as well as the mechanics of human sexuality must be a higher priority of parents, the church and the school. As young women and men learn proper values and gain a greater self-respect, they can more effectively resist popular, yet misleading, messages concerning sexuality and make the right choices for their lives.





Ken Hayes

#1. In my judgement, the three of the most significant problems faced by modern women are:

(1) Equality in the workplace, including the problems of wage differentials between men and women, the fact that women do not have a fair share of leadership positions in public and private sector employment and the problem of sexual harassment. These kinds of problems should be addressed by appropriate legislation providing for comparable worth laws, enforcing affirmative action criteria and the passage of legislation treating sexual harassment in the workplace as a civil rights issue.

(2) Impoverishment of women, including low salaries, difficulties in obtaining affordable housing and problems of aging and retirement. The problem of low salaries could be eased, but obviously not removed, by increasing the federal minimum wage. In Maine over 60 percent of those on minimum wage are women and for many the minimum wage is the maximum wage. I would favor a phased increase of the minimum wage to at least \$4.65 an hour. Secondly, our federal government must provide supports for lower income people to obtain housing and to share in the American dream. Thirdly, we are shamefully impoverishing our people as a prerequisite for health care support and placing huge financial and personal burdens on the many homebased caregivers (who are 70 percent women) by the failure of our lawgivers to provide health care support for families that want to care for loved ones at home.

(3) Technological literacy, including appropriate education for 21st century employment in a world of semi-conductors, word processors, information systems and satellite communications. The problem of developing technological education is certainly not unique to women, but there is considerable evidence that female students, K through G, need special encouragement and support in technological programs, including math, computer based learning and science. I personally believe in order for women to effectively compete globally in the 21st Century, our nation must consider technological literacy a very high priority.



Representative Olympia Snowe

1) By far the most significant challenge women face is the array of problems involved in balancing the competing demands of work and family, here in Maine and across the nation. Sixty percent of new participants in the workforce today are women, with more than half of new mothers remaining in the workforce. In addition, two thirds of the new workforce entrants in the next decade will be female. When this information is joined with the fact that the average American woman spends 17 years as the mother of a dependent child and another 18 years as the daughter of an elderly parent, it is clear that public policy must recognize the unique needs of the working woman.

I believe that the federal government must respond to the existing child care crisis facing American women and families. A first step is to enact basic parental leave policies that recognize family responsibilities faced by working Americans. And, as original, prime cosponsor of the ABC child care bill, enactment of that legislation will help address the real, complex issues facing families in Maine and the U.S.

Further, while women are entering the workforce in increasing numbers, they are not doing so at wages comparable to those of men. The median income for women who work year-round, full-time, is 64.2% of that of men. In order to avoid the poverty that accompanies aging for most women, and to eliminate a fundamental unfairness, it is necessary to provide economic empowerment. Legislation currently before Congress, which I have cosponsored, would provide an important first step, by establishing the importance of pay equity within the federal government.

In addition to family responsibilities and lower wages, women often are not able to participate in strong and fair pension programs. As Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues, I worked in the 98th Congress to lower the vesting and participation age to provide women with more opportunities for pension benefits. However, more needs to be done to alleviate the downward spiral toward poverty women experience as they get older. I am continuing to support measures to require more of the workforce to be covered, as well as to allow multi-employer vesting.

#2. Do you support a federal Equal Rights Amendment? What kind of leadership role will you play in carrying out your position?

Mitchell

#2. I have consistently supported and cosponsored an Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution. I will continue to do so and to speak out for it.

#2. I have not supported the E.R.A., as it has been written and presented, for two basic reasons: 1) I do not believe an E.R.A. is needed to achieve what effective statutes and their firm and impartial enforcement are already achieving for women and 2) I continue to hold serious reservations concerning the full and ultimate legal and social implications of a vaguely-worded E.R.A. If I could be convinced that the E.R.A. was truly necessary and would have an impact on advancing equality for women and that it would not intrude harmfully on family and personal prerogatives I would reconsider my position and enthusiastically endorse an E.R.A. I reject the simplistic notion that to oppose the E.R.A. specifically is to oppose women's rights generally.

Wyman

Since 1964 women have cast more ballots in presidential elections than men. In 1984, for the first time, a higher proportion of women than men voted.

#2. I am a supporter and a cosponsor of H.J. Res., a joint resolution proposing a federal Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution ensuring equal rights for both men and women and I will work hard for it in Congress. While I was the Democratic Floor Leader in the Maine State Senate, I successfully led the fight to secure passage of the state Equal Rights Amendment. To me, it is absolutely clear that the rights of American citizens should not be abridged by virtue of gender.

Brennan

#2. I strongly support a federal Equal Rights Amendment. While laws, attitudes, and perceptions affecting women in our society have changed for the better in recent years, more needs to be done to overcome years of discrimination. These changes and future progress must be secured by the guarantee of equal rights under the Constitution.

I will enthusiastically use the power and influence of the office of U.S. Representative to support the ERA. Furthermore, I believe the best leadership is by example. I am married to a successful woman who is an equal partner in every aspect of our lives and I will seek out talented women for key leadership positions on my staff.

O'Meara

Shove

Hayes

Mitchell

Wyman

2) As a strong supporter of the Equal Rights Amendment for many years, I am again a cosponsor of this resolution.

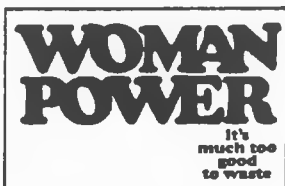
Although women have made significant gains over the past two decades, the fact is that sex discrimination is still commonplace in employment, education and particularly, wages. I believe the ERA is necessary if we are to finally rid our laws, policies, and societal practices of the gender bias that continues to stand in the way of full equity for women. As Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues, I expect to continue my efforts to see the Equal Rights Amendment be included in the U.S. Constitution.

#2. I most strongly support the passage of a federal Equal Rights Amendment and would conscientiously work for such legislation in Congress by sponsorship, personal persuasion and public advocacy.

#3. Since 1973 the U.S. Supreme Court has held that women have a constitutional right to govern their reproductive health, including the terminating of a pregnancy. Do you support the "right to choose"? Would you oppose a constitutional amendment to outlaw abortion? Do you support medicaid funding for abortion when the mother's life is in danger? For victims of rape? Incest?

#3. I have voted against a proposed Constitutional Amendment designed to recriminalize abortion. I have voted against Medicaid funding for abortion procedures except where maternal life is at stake, and except in instances of rape and incest, promptly reported, where it conforms with State law. In those instances (maternal life at stake, rape and incest) I have voted for such funding.

#3. I am opposed to medicaid funding for abortions. I also support a Human Life Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which would prohibit abortion except in the cases of rape, incest, or the life of the mother. I believe, however, that the public debate should move beyond abortion to a full consideration of compassionate alternatives. I support adoption. I also support an increased federal and state role in providing prenatal care for low-income women and services to assist poor women to properly care for their children. It is not enough to oppose abortion. We must seek and find acceptable alternatives.



Brennan

O'Meara

Shove

Hayes

#3. I support the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision regarding a woman's individual right to control her reproductive health. I oppose an amendment to the United States Constitution prohibiting abortion. I support Medicaid funding for abortion in cases of rape, incest or when the life of the mother is in danger.

#3. I believe that a woman has a fundamental and personal right to choose whether or not to terminate a pregnancy. I support Medicaid funding for abortion when a mother's life is in danger and when pregnancy is the result of rape and incest.

I also feel strongly that we must continue to address alternatives to abortion through such programs as family planning, education, and adoption services.

3) I have consistently opposed legislation that would reverse the 1973 Supreme Court decision protecting a woman's decision to terminate her pregnancy. I believe that the question of whether or not to have an abortion is a personal, moral and religious one which every woman should have the right to decide for herself. You may be interested to know that recent survey data has repeatedly found that a substantial majority of Americans support a woman's right to choose whether or not to carry a pregnancy to term.

#3. I support the Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade and the empowerment of women to unilaterally govern their bodies during the first three months of pregnancy. I oppose any proposal to deny the right of women to have such control over their reproductive health and I support medicaid funding for abortion when the mother's life is endangered or when rape or incest is involved.

The 1920 women's suffrage amendment consolidated women's right to vote.

Although it wasn't until 1920 that the 19th amendment guaranteed all women the right to vote, many states had passed their own suffrage laws over 80 years earlier.

- Between 1838 and 1910, 25 states passed laws allowing women to vote on school issues. By 1920, 30 states (almost all from the West and Midwest) guaranteed women full suffrage.
- In 1869 Wyoming became the first territory to give women the right to vote; it refused to join the Union in 1890 unless the women of Wyoming could retain their voting rights.
- In 1920 the federal suffrage amendment was ratified after decades of struggle; Susan B. Anthony, Carrie Chapman Catt, and Lucretia Mott led the fight for the women's vote.

(continued from page 2)

The Northern Maine Regional Commission had an enormously busy and successful Spring, having sponsored and participated in more than a dozen open forum and workshops in celebration of Women's History Month. Beginning with a regional "Winning with Women" political action conference in Presque Isle on March 9th, the opening of a transitional home for battered women in Caribou – the first of its kind in Maine (March 14th); and the opening of Maine's seventh domestic violence shelter in Houlton (March 1st), the NRCW also participated and/or co-sponsored a series of workshops, covering topics such as "Non-Traditional Aspirations for Women", "Women and Stress", "Mothers and Children in Poverty", and "Women and Chemical Dependency." The NRCW will spend its July meeting planning the '88-'89 annual agenda. NMRC Chair: Dale Ashby (764-3266-0); MCW Liaison: Marion Higgins (764-5124-0).

The Southern Regional Commission for Women, the newest RCW established this spring, is spending the summer defining its long-term agenda. Though it will not adopt its by-laws or program agenda until August or September, the SRCW has opted to expand its membership to 26, and, in order not to duplicate existing services, has agreed to conduct an assessment of programs available to women in southern Maine. The SRCW will be inviting community leaders to its "Open House" meeting slated for early Fall. Officers will be selected in September. M.C.W. Contact: Betsy Levenson (780-4380-0).

Women hold 25 – or 4.7% – of the 535 seats in the U.S. Congress in 1988.

- Since 1789 there have been 11,148 members elected to Congress; 140 have been women, 124 in the House and 16 in the Senate.

The Eastern Regional Commission for Women had a full slate of activities throughout the spring, including a Women's History Month window display in Bangor's West Market Square. The display, a collective effort of eight area women's groups, featured case histories of their organizations' beginnings and growth, as well as profiles of local women leaders. Also in March, the ERCW sponsored a reception with area legislators representing Penobscot, Hancock, and Piscataquis counties.

Members are now setting their sights on next year's program agenda, which includes development of a Speakers Bureau and addressing issues related to women and poverty. MCW Liaison: Mary Cathcart (945-5102-0); ERCW Chair: Bobbie Flynn (941-2840-0).

(Snowe's Addr. continued from page 3)

for parental leave. I had concerns with the original bill that Pat Schroeder introduced because of the impact it would have on small businesses. So rather than having eighteen weeks for parental leave, it's now ten weeks over two years for employers with over 50 employees for three years, then it drops down to 35 at which time a study will be conducted on the impact of this legislation.

All in all, those are the issues, that's our agenda.

In the final analysis, there's so much to be done. I think we have to be realistic about that. Because of the demographic trends in this country, women are entering the workforce at a greater pace than ever before. Today, about 65% of the new entrants into the workforce are female; by the end of the century it will be 75%, 80% or 85%. There's no question that women are primary providers of care. For 18 years, they're the parents of their children then for the next 17 or 18 years, they're the daughter of an elderly parent.

The other day I was talking to an advisor to a presidential candidate and we were discussing the gender gap. There's a certain understanding as to why it is there, but also this individual

was saying how he was mystified because the Bureau of Labor statistics indicate that women's unemployment is as low as men's. I said, "Well, you have to understand the gamut of issues here. If women become single heads of household, they usually end up poor. If they can get a job, it's usually at minimum wage, they probably can't find child care and even if they could they probably couldn't afford it. They're probably also battling to get their child support payments, if they're all successful in that regard. They get a little bit older - another category of women, having to take care of their elderly parents, they have to leave the workforce. Or they get older and retire and they have very modest pension benefits. I mean, women in retirement years have very modest pension benefits that men do".

We have to insure that older women do not end up in poverty. We have to insure that women are able to have access to affordable and quality child care in this country. That they're able to keep their jobs, they're able to have an equitable wage, and they're able to have a strong and fair pension system. That is the spectrum of issues that women face in this country.

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MAINE COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
STATE HOUSE STATION 93
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#54