

HCWPC

HARRIS COUNTY WOMEN'S POLITICAL CAUCUS

3602 MILAM HOUSTON 77002 (713)524-5743

NEWSLETTER
FEBRUARY 1975

E.R.A. Update

by Barbara L. Williams

Texans for E.R.A., the state-wide coalition of individuals and groups who support the ratification of the proposed 27th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, met in Austin February 8. A press conference was called to show that there is strong organized support for the E.R.A. On February 12, a legislative alert went out from the Texans for ERA office. Representative George Preston from Paris, Texas introduced House Bill 666 which would put the ratification of the 27th Amendment on a public referendum April 22nd. Already scheduled on April 22 is a special state election dealing with legislators' pay raises and teacher retirement funds. Hermine Tobolowski of Dallas reported that adding another issue to an existing election would cost the state a minimum of \$45,000. (money which would pay for the required notifications and advertising). Texans for ERA co-coordinator Debbie Danburg said that the April 22nd election is expected to draw a small number of voters, most of whom oppose the issues.

House Bill 666 has been assigned to the State Affairs Committee. Members of that Committee are:

D.R. (Tom) Uher (Bay City)-- Chair
Richard S. Geiger (Dallas)-- vice chair
Latham Boone III (Navasota)-- vice chair
Ed Mayes (Granbury)
Ben Munson (Denison)
Ronald D. Earle (Austin)
L. De Witt Hale (Corpus Christi)
Tom Cartlidge (Henrietta)
Albert D. Brown, Jr. (San Antonio)
Felix McDonald (Edinburg)
Michael H. Ezzell (Snyder)
Robert (Bob) Simpson (Amarillo)
E.L. Short (Tahoka)
John Wilson (LaGrange)
Joe Spurlock II (Fort Worth)
R. L. (Bob) Vale (San Antonio)

***Raymond (Gene) Green (Houston--DISTRICT 95)

ERA UPDATE CONTD.

The HCWPC urges letters to the committee members (ESPECIALLY Gene Green, the only Houston Representative on the Committee) opposing HB 666. Texans for ERA suggests the following reasons for opposing HB 666 (a public referendum on the ERA):

1. A public referendum on a State ERA was held in 1972, a presidential election year with a high voter turnout (over 45%). In '72, the State ERA carried a 4-to-1 majority- (in Harris County the mandate was 8-to-1). Why should taxpayer money be wasted to hold another election when the principles behind the state and national ERA's are identical -- i.e. guaranteeing that all citizens be treated as individuals under the law.
2. The Texas legislature has already fulfilled its Constitutional obligations by ratifying the proposed 27th Amendment by an overwhelming majority in spring 1972. Any public referendums at this time would be non-binding. Any moves to rescind ratification are of highly questionable legality.
3. Texas legislators have openly proclaimed the ERA as "an issue too hot to handle." By calling for a public referendum are they not trying to "pass the buck"?

To date no resolution resembling HB 666 has been introduced in the Senate. If one is introduced, the State Affairs Committee of the Senate will have to be contacted. Senate Committee members are: William (Bill) Moore (Bryan) - Chair, Glenn Kothman (San Antonio), A.M. Aikin, Jr. (Paris), Peyton McKnight (Tyler), Ron Clower (Dallas), **Chet Brooks (Pasadena), Betty Andujar (Fort Worth), Lloyd Doggett (Austin), **Jack Ogg (Houston), Bill Braecklein (Dallas), Mike McKinnon (Corpus Christi), John Traeger (Seguin), Raul L. Longoria (Edinburg).

Public hearings on HB 666 are scheduled for Feb. 26 (starting about 6:30 or 7:30 PM). HCWPC will be forming carpools to leave Houston late in the afternoon and returning that night. Contact Barbara Lane-Farley (461-6075) if you would like to go to Austin on the 26th. Ironically, several anti-ERA groups also oppose HB 666 - perhaps they're afraid that they'd lose in a public referendum?

To date, there has been no resolution to rescind the ERA in either the House or the Senate. Legislators report, however, that they are receiving heavy mail urging them to do so. We need to increase our letter writing efforts to support the ERA. Write to your own representative and senator as well as to:

Lt. Governor Bill Hobby
 Speaker of the House Bill Clayton
 Constitutional Affairs Committee Chair Ray Hutchison
 Governor Dolph Briscoe

ERA UPDATE CONTD.

All letters to legislators should be addressed to
 Person
 Texas House of Representatives or Texas Senate
 Capitol Station
 Austin, Texas 78711
 Urge your friends to write, also.

Other ERA notes of interest

On Feb. 14th Kathy Whitmire, representing HCWPC, organized a press conference of organizations in support of the ERA. Thirteen organizations were represented (including LULAC, HTA, WEAL, League of Women Voters, Common Cause, ACLU, Women in Communications, B.P.W., HCWPC, AAUW CLUW). Barbara Williams represented the Caucus. The Conference was covered by the POST, Channel 13 and many radio stations. Many thanks to Kathy for organizing such a successful event on short notice.

PRO-ERA speakers have been traveling to the Young Republicans Club, KTRH Radio, Pasadena's Dobie High School and KIKK to debate the opposition. Thanks are due to Ruth Milburn, Kathy Whitmire, Ellen Mendoza (LWV) and Jan Wilbur (LWV). Requests for speakers keep rising. If you would like to help call Barbara Williams (528-4141 X734). Also, if you happen to tune in to a radio "talk show" discussing the ERA, do call in a question. Experience so far is that the opposition dominates the phone calls and the pro-speaker desperately needs to have some friendly voices and questions "for a breather".

Women on Channel 2

by Barbara Williams

Channel 2 (KTRH) will be airing a pilot program on women in a few weeks. The program is a "brain child" of the KTRH Women's Advisory Council (especially Caucus member Janice Blue). It will be aired on Friday evening (prime time) and deserves your attention. Watch the TV Guide for the exact time and date. After viewing this masterpiece, write your praises to the station.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

HCWPC co-chair Peggy Hall is sitting on the Interim Citizens Participation task force, responsible for developing a permanent mechanism for citizens' participation in Community Development. She reports that the task force intends to prolong its life so that it can become the on-going mechanism. A future program meeting on this subject will be scheduled; watch the newsletter for details.

HCWPC CONVENTION

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The annual Harris County Women's Political Caucus convention has been scheduled for Sat. April 5 at the University of Houston Continuing Education Center. Gertrude Barnstone will deliver the keynote address; also speaking will be national chair Sissy Farenthold, state chair Jane Macon, and Harris County chair Barbara Lane Farley, among others. The following areas are under consideration for workshops: women and city and county government; women in the media; what is the women's political caucus?; careers/credit/consumerism. The agenda will also include a panel of legislators speaking on current legislation, election of caucus officers, bylaws and resolutions.

Convention planners will meet each Sunday at the Women's Center between 3 and 6pm, through March 30; if you have ideas and want input, or if you're a willing worker, join in. Let's make this the most informative, best-attended convention yet!

COALITION OF LABOR UNION WOMEN

CLUW will sponsor a celebration of International Women's Day and inaugurate its national campaign against unemployment, layoffs and depression on Saturday, March 8, at 1815 Walker. The celebration will begin at 8pm with union women speakers, and a social hour will commence at 9pm. CLUW is asking a \$2 cash donation. Everyone's invited, especially union women and working women.

FEMINIST THEATER

by J.J. Hendricks

There's still time to join in on Feminist Theater, "Honor Thy Womanself"--be at the Unitarian Fellowship, 1321 Wirt Rd., Saturday Feb. 22 at 1:30pm. All you women, ages 12 to 100 years, all shapes, hues, talents (especially musical; we particularly need autoharp-, guitar-, harmonica- and recorder-players)--come and sing, dance, march, read, and make music.

For more details, call J.J. Hendricks, 467-5595.

*****QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CAUCUS? CALL AND ASK*****

Chair: Barbara Lane Farley, 461-6075

Co-chair: Peggy Hall, 528-3424

Vice-chair internal: Suzanne Marshall, 523-9024; 224-5441x61

" " external: Kathy Whitmire, 521-0649; 228-9531 (bus.)

Secretary: Susan Heavey, 528-5168; 691-2283 x 40

Treasurer: Sylvia Garcia, 529-7860; 225-0521 (bus.)

RAPE CRISIS COALITION

- The coalition needs people to do the following tasks:
- 1) speakers are needed so that the Coalition can solicit speaking engagements; to volunteer, call Susan Carlman 524-5531.
 - 2) people are needed to organize a system for filing and following up on complaints of rape victims.
 - 3) everyone should write state reps. Weddington, Bailey and Andujar about their recently-introduced rape bill. It represents some improvement over present law, but still has serious drawbacks. For example, there is a question about the constitutionality of the provision which would allow the judge to clear the courtroom during the victim's testimony. This measure also deprives the victim of the moral support of her friends and advocate, and perpetuates the myth that the victim should be "ashamed" of being raped. The rape bill also provides that the victim's previous sex conduct for one year is inadmissible as evidence, but the ideal would be a provision which completely disallows all past sex conduct. Write the sponsoring reps. with suggestions on how to improve this bill!

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

TWPC comptroller Sharon Macha told the last policy council meeting that State finances look fairly grim. As you know, a lobbyist has been hired at \$750 per month. About \$4500 is needed in order to pay her and leave a slim operating margin, but the State treasury is down to about \$2000. Both local caucuses and individual members are being asked to help fund this important action. The next State newsletter will contain lobbyist Gretchen Raatz's report especially on the rape bill and the bill on the status of women. Checks can be made payable to TWPC and sent to Sharon Macha, in care of her business address: Geocom, PO Box 94049, Houston 77018. Be sure to note on your check that the money is to go for the lobby fund.

WHAT'S NEWS?

There will be one more newsletter before the convention. To get your news in print, send it to the editor, Suzanne Marshall, 1842 Kipling; Hou 77006, 523-9024, 224-5441x61 (w). Or put it in the HCWPC vice-chair internal/newsletter box at the Women's Center.

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If you haven't renewed yours yet for '75, time is running out. Don't delay--renew today!!!

CALENDAR

- 2-19 Policy council meeting. 7:30pm, Women's Center.
 2-22 Feminist theater practice session. 1:30pm,
 Unitarian Fellowship, 1321 Wirt Rd.
 2-23 and every subsequent Sun. through March 30:
 meetings to plan the convention. 3-6pm,
 Women's Center.
 2-26 ERA hearings in Austin--see ERA update in this
 newsletter for more information.
 3-4 Rape Crisis Coalition program meeting. 7:30
 pm, Women's Center. Speaker on post-rape
 trauma.
 3-7/8/9 Texas NOW state convention. Sheraton-Crest
 Inn, 1st and Congress, Austin 78701.
 3-8 CLUW celebration of International Women's Day.
 8pm, 1815 Walker. \$2 donation.
 3-12 Joan Andersson, partner in the Legal Collective,
 Andersson, Litt, Livezey, Lund & Taylor,
 speaking on "Alternative Law Practice." 8pm,
 Krost Auditorium, Houston.
 3-18 Rape Crisis Coalition business meeting. 7:30pm,
 Women's Center.
 3-19 Policy council meeting. 7:30pm, Women's Center.
 3-26 Program meeting--come and enjoy some sisterly
 conviviality as you work on packets, etc. for
 the convention. 7:30pm, Women's Center.
 4-5 HCWPC convention. Continuing Education Center,
 University of Houston. More details in the
 next newsletter!

JEFF LAVIS NURSES

Four of the Jefferson Davis Hospital nurses fired for participating in a protest sick-out have won a partial victory in their struggle to be reinstated by the hospital board. Arbitrator Dean A.A. White of U. of H. recommended that the Harris Co. Hospital District board of managers reinstate Nancy Roberts, Ethel Francois, Barbara Williams, and Loris Garrett. White recommended consideration of reinstatement for fifth nurse Judy Sterling.

Although it falls short of completely exonerating the nurses of blame for the sick-out, the decision represents an acknowledgement that the hospital administration was at fault for failing to deal with the grievances which triggered last May's sick-out: dangerous conditions in the labor and delivery room, and low pay and benefits for employees. Although reinstatement will mean that the nurses will return to their jobs with seniority and pay raises which may have accumulated, they will receive no back pay.

cont. on p.7

CLIP AND MAIL FORM TO: MEMBERSHIP, HCWPC, 3602 MILAM,
HOUSTON 77002. Make checks payable to HCWPC.

NAME _____ PRECINCT NO. _____
ADDRESS & CITY _____ ZIP _____
HOME PHONE _____ OFFICE PHONE _____

_____ Enclosed is \$12.50 for state (TWPC) and local (HCWPC) membership through all of 1975.

_____ Enclosed is \$17.50 for national (NWPC), state (TWPC) and local (HCWPC) membership through all of 1975.

_____ Enclosed is \$7.50. I need to waive \$5 of my 1975 state dues.

_____ I need to waive all dues. Attached statement gives my reason.

_____ I am interested in the following committees: ___ funding; ___ political action; ___ affirmative action; ___ lobbying and candidate rating; ___ sexuality and reproduction; ___ membership

Send HCWPC information to the following names. (Please enclose 30¢ or three 10¢ stamps for each to cover the cost of sending three newsletters, if possible.)

NAME _____ ADDRESS, ZIP _____
NAME _____ ADDRESS, ZIP _____
NAME _____ ADDRESS, ZIP _____

Harris County Women's Political Caucus
3602 Milam
Houston, TX 77002

JEFF DAVIS NURSES continued

HCWPC was one of the organizations participating in the Coalition to Support the Nurses, an ad hoc group which helped to draw public attention and raise funds for the nurses. Last fall a blue ribbon commission, formed at least partly as a result of public attention which the coalition focused on the situation at Jeff Davis, investigated conditions in labor and delivery. Its report bore out a number of the nurses' complaints, and recommended the building of a new facility for labor and delivery.

Neither the findings of the commission nor the rein-statement decision vindicate the nurses' actions as completely as they deserve, but a partial victory is better than none at all; in some quarters even the partial victory came as a surprise. And perhaps, now that public attention has been focused on the situation, conditions won't be quite so bad at Jeff Davis.

NEWS FLASH: North Dakota and Nevada became the 34th and 35th states to ratify the ERA. Thirty-five down and three to go!!

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CLIP AND MAIL FORM FOR MEMBERSHIP, NOWPC, 3602 MILAM
HOUSTON 77002, take checks payable to NOWPC.

Name _____
 ADDRESS & CITY _____
 HOME PHONE _____ OFFICE PHONE _____
 Enclosed is \$12.50 for state (TWPC) and local (NOWPC) membership through all of 1975.
 Enclosed is \$17.50 for national (NOWPC), state (TWPC) and local (NOWPC) membership through all of 1975.
 Enclosed is \$7.50. I need to waive 2 of my 1975 state dues.
 I need to waive all dues. Attached statement gives my reason.
 I am interested in the following committee findings: _____
 political action; _____ affirmative action; _____ lobbying; _____ and candidate rating; _____ equality and reproduction; _____ membership.
 Send NOWPC information to the following names, please enclose 30¢ or three 10¢ stamps for each to cover the cost of sending three newsletters, if possible.
 NAME _____ ADDRESS, ZIP _____
 NAME _____ ADDRESS, ZIP _____
 NAME _____ ADDRESS, ZIP _____

Harris County Women's Political Caucus
3602 Milam
Houston, Tx 77002



The organization participating in the Coalition to support the nurses, an ad hoc group which helped to draw public attention and raise funds for the nurses. Last fall a high level commission, formed at least partly as a result of public attention which the coalition focused on the situation at left, investigated conditions in labor and delivery. Its report bore out a number of the nurses' complaints, and recommended the building of a new facility.

Neither the Coalition nor the nurses' union has taken any action as completely as they deserve as they deserve. In some ways, the Coalition's victory came as a surprise. The Coalition's attention has been focused on the situation, conditions won't be quite so bad at left.



NEWS FLASH: North Dakota and Nevada became the 34th and 35th states to ratify the ERA. Thirty-five down and three to go!