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1626 Rhode Island Avenue,
Washington, D. C.,
June 4, 1917.

Dear Madam President:

In Mrs. Catt's letter to you of April 30, you were asked to cooperate in a program for the protection of women workers. Since that date, as you know, the National Board has created a special Department for the Protection of Women's Labor, and has named me as chairman. Some of the states have already been in correspondence with Washington headquarters on this subject, and through the newspapers you will have learned, no doubt, something of the progress of our campaign. A full report of the results to date will also be found in the next issue of "The Woman Citizen."

Our program, you will recall, as outlined in Mrs. Catt's letter of the 30th of April, called for (1) efforts by state and local suffrage organizations to put the chambers of commerce on record as cooperating in the movement to prevent long hours and under pay; and (2) appointment by state presidents of vigilance committees to report to the state and to national headquarters at Washington local instances of violation of accepted industrial standards.

I. Securing Cooperation of Employers.

Let me urge all state presidents who have not yet taken this matter up to do so at the first possible opportunity. We sent you a list of a few cities in your state to which Mrs. Catt had written. Please do not limit your own work to these, but write to or visit the officers of all the other chambers of commerce you can reach. And please give fullest newspaper publicity to your letter and to the reply you receive. A number of states are already doing this, and by the clippings that have come in to this office it is evident that we have started a very effective propaganda, especially for "equal pay for equal work." We are getting results both in news space and editorials.

Enclosed is a suggested form of resolution for adoption by chambers of commerce. If you can induce your local business men to declare themselves in this way, it will undoubtedly help both in actual results and in publicity.

As a further extension of this work, please write special letters to large business concerns in your state, and put them on record if possible. The Woman Suffrage Party of New York has had splendid success with the United Cigar Stores Company, for example, having secured a promise to pay their saleswomen at men's rates. The company has started a school of salesmanship for girls, and is paying the students during the training period. The Pennsylvania Railroad, in response to a letter from our headquarters, has given assurance that it will give equal pay for equal work. Our press story about this was mailed to you a few days ago.

II. Suffrage Vigilance Committees.

A number of the states have appointed their vigilance committees and sent in the name of the chairman. If you have not done this, will you please give it attention at the first possible moment? In all cases, of course, try to keep the identity of "suffrage vigilance committees," but make it a point to work in cooperation with other agencies interested in this campaign. You will find that labor organizations, especially, will welcome your efforts. The work of these vigilance committees should be --

- (1) To inform themselves as to local industrial conditions and report back to Washington headquarters, either through the state or direct, as the state may wish.
- (2) To spread propoganda, through meetings and the newspapers, in behalf of reasonable working hours for women and equal pay for equal work.
- (3) If state protective laws for women or children are threatened, to bring to bear all possible pressure upon the legislatures to prevent the lowering of existing standards.
- (4) If, as has been rumored, attempt is made to modify or repeal the National Child Labor Law, to turn pressure upon Congress to preserve that law.

We are anxious to send all our press bulletins on industrial questions to the vigilance committee chairmen, and for this additional reason shall be glad to have their names as soon as possible.

Under separate cover you will receive copies of two special bulletins issued, respectively, by the American Association for Labor Legislation and the National Child Labor Committee. Additional copies of "Labor Laws in War Time" can be obtained from the American Association for Labor Legislation at the rate of \$7.85 per thousand.

I shall be grateful if you will keep me informed as to the progress of this industrial campaign in your state, particularly of the action of chambers of commerce or large business establishments.

Very sincerely yours,

EMS
Enclosure

Ethel M. Smith

Chairman Committee on Protection of Women's Labor.

RESOLUTIONS SUGGESTED FOR ADOPTION BY CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE.

WHEREAS, Millions of women are employed in the industries of this country, and it is apparent that with the progress of the war many more will be employed, taking men's places in business offices, stores, factories, and other occupations; and

WHEREAS, Because of the unusual pressure for increased output of industrial establishments it has been proposed in some instances that the working hours be lengthened, notwithstanding English experience during the war which has demonstrated that excessive overtime diminishes the output; and

WHEREAS, Justice demands that the work performed, not the sex of the worker, should determine the pay; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That it is the sense of this body that public health and national efficiency demand conservation of the strength of the women workers, and we hereby declare our opposition to the lengthening of their working hours; and

RESOLVED FURTHER, That it is the sense of this body that where women are employed at the same work that men are or have been doing, they should be paid the same, and we hereby urge our members to maintain this principle in their respective business establishments.

OR

If the state has an eight-hour law for women, or other restrictive legislation, the following:

WHEREAS, It is apparent that the military requirements of the country will make it necessary in many instances to employ women in men's places in business offices, stores, factories, and other occupations; and

WHEREAS, Justice demands that the work performed, not the sex of the worker, should determine the pay; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That it is the sense of this body that where women are employed at the same work that men are or have been doing they should be paid the same, and we hereby urge our members to maintain this principle in their respective business establishments.