

# HCWPC

Harris County Women's Political Caucus  
3602 milam houston 77002 (713)524-5743



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NEWSLETTER  
DECEMBER 1974

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## THE E.R.A. AND YOU

by Barbara Williams

"Article 1, Section 3a. Equality under the law shall not be denied or abridged because of sex, race, color, creed or national origin. This amendment is self-operative."

Equal Legal Rights Amendment to the Texas Constitution. Ratified by Texas citizens in November, 1972.

"Equality of rights under the law shall not be abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation the provisions of this article. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification."

Proposed 27th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. To date, ratified by 33 states, including Texas. Five more states must ratify before it becomes law.

What's an article on the Equal Rights Amendment doing in the HCWPC newsletter, you ask. Texas ratified the Amendment to the U.S. constitution in the spring of 1972 at a special session of the legislature. Then Texas voters approved the addition of an Equal Legal Rights Amendment to the Texas constitution that fall by a four to one majority. Clearly the ERA is a closed issue in Texas. Or is it? Not if you've been to a drive-in bank in Beaumont, to a beauty parlor in Sherman or to a PTAmeeeting in League City. If you had been in any of these places, you'd have a pink sheet titled "Ladies, Have You Heard?" That one piece of paper contains a multitude of half truths, misleading quotes and slanderous statements about the Equal Rights Amendment and some of its supporters. Inaccurate emotional propaganda, it is--BUT, it is also effective: effective at raising doubts in the minds of the public and at producing enough emotional fervor that thousands of Texas citizens are sending off messages to their legislators pleading for a reconsideration of the ERA ratification in the upcoming legislative session.

Where did the "Ladies, Have You Heard?" literature come from and who is behind it? The anti-ERA propoganda originates from an ad hoc group called

Women Who Want to be Women (WWWW), 'one of several groups formed in order to rescind ratification of the ERA in Texas. Rescission of the ERA is not a legal procedure; J. William Heckman, Counsel to the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments, responded to the question of whether a state may rescind its ratification of a constitutional amendment as follows:

"Briefly the judicial opinions and, more importantly, the precedents established by the Congress itself make it clear that once a state has ratified an amendment, it has exhausted the only power conferred on it by Article V of the Constitution, and may not, therefore, rescind such action."

Rescission is, however, a POLITICAL procedure. If the anti-ERA forces can show that the ratified states are re-thinking the issue and are changing their minds about ratification, then ratification in the remaining states will be all the harder to achieve. Texas is a prime target for rescission efforts because:

1. it is large and carries a considerable amount of political influence;
2. it is located in the South and has a substantial rural and agricultural population, like many of the remaining unratified states;
3. it has a well-developed church communications network and John Birch Society organization, both of which can easily be co-opted for anti-ERA and other political issue campaigns.

The rescission campaign is well underway. It is well-financed and politically sophisticated. Tactics and strategies were pre-tested in Nebraska and Tennessee. Financing has been traced to insurance firms and right-wing political organizations. Though the supporters may not be as experienced or as wealthy as the opposition, we have one major asset--we are promoting the creation of a greater range of opportunities for women and men, and we are presenting facts, not half truths.

What can you do? Perhaps the most important thing you can do to counteract the rescission campaign is to become informed about the ERA. Specifically, the ERA will:

1. create equal educational opportunities in publicly supported schools for both women and men students, and strengthen laws against sex discrimination in education;
2. strengthen laws against sex discrimination in employment of public officials so that workers will be hired and judged on the basis of individual merit;
3. make all credit backed by federal funds or insurance available on the basis of ability to pay, not on the basis of sex;
4. provide equal access to military service for men and women, and guarantee equal eligibility for benefits;
5. insure that women and men get the same social security benefits;
6. erase laws that prohibit women from controlling property, mortgages or insurance.

An amendment to the U.S. Constitution is necessary because:

1. the federal government is a major employer; though legislation already exists preventing sex discrimination in public employment, enforcement is slow, and a quick change in political climate could reverse the steps that have already been taken. Just consider the environmental protection legislation: enforcement was quickly delayed by executive orders and Congressional action. Constitutional amendments are not so easily put aside or repealed;
2. the amendment would establish uniformity across the states: at a point in history when many Americans are increasingly mobile, moving from one state to another can result in the loss of many legal rights for women. Restriction of basic rights and responsibilities because of sex is unconscionable in our democratic system.

Read up on the ERA. You'll find that its history and legal implications are fascinating. Literature is available at the Women's Center and through various organizations supporting its ratification--Common Cause, League of Women Voters, Business

and Professional Women, Women's Political Caucus, National Organization for Women, etc. Familiarize yourself with the benefits of the ERA and the facts to counter the misleading allegations made by the opposition.

Next, support the campaign to reaffirm the ERA in Texas. Your support is necessary if the campaign is to be a success. Send letters to your legislators affirming your support for the ERA; remind them that Texans supported the ERA by an overwhelming majority in 1972 and that re-opening the issue would only slow down the legislative session and take energy away from more important matters. Send a copy of your correspondence to Rep. Sarah Weddington in Austin so that she can document the extent of ERA support (Rep. Larry Vick has been collecting anti-ERA correspondence from all over the state, so we also need to centralize our efforts).

In addition, support the Coalition to Reaffirm the ERA in Texas. Monetary contributions can be sent to:

**Coalition to Support the ERA in Texas**

Veta Winick, Chair  
Dickinson Plaza Shopping Center  
Dickinson, Texas 77539

Participate in the Coalition. Join the Speakers Bureau. A series of workshops are being planned to prepare speakers to present ERA facts, answer questions on the ERA, and debate the opposition. Improve your speaking skills and gain valuable experience and self-confidence by participating in the workshops. For further information call: Barbara Williams at 665-0510 (h), 528-4141 x734 (w) or Jan Wilbur at 529-3171 (w). Become an active advocate of the ERA by wearing an ERA bracelet, symbolizing the shackles of sex discrimination. Bracelets may be obtained by sending \$3.00 to League of Women Voters, 11313 Frederick Ave., Beltsville, Maryland 20705; proceeds from bracelet sales go to the ERA fund.

Pam Pitt is the ERA coordinator for HCWPC. She needs volunteers to contact local legislators to promote the ERA and lobby against rescission.

THERE WILL BE AN ERA WORKSHOP ON SUN. AFTERNOON DEC. 8TH AT 1:30PM, WOMEN'S CENTER. At that time we will sign up for lobbying legislators and pool information about the ERA. Every friend of the ERA, female and male, is urged to come. Volunteer your help to Pam by calling her at 523-9647.

Encourage your friends to voice their support for the ERA. Remember, you need to ERA to guarantee individual treatment under the law. Now, the ERA needs you--to reaffirm its ratification in Texas and promote its ratification in the remaining five states.

KAREY'S CAMPAIGN: FINAL REPORT

by Carolyn Nichols

(Ed.'s note: Karey Bresenhan, caucus member, was endorsed by HCWPC in her state representative race. Carolyn Nichols, also a caucus member, was Bresenhan's coordinator of volunteers for the election.)

A determined Republican party organization beat Karey Bresenhan in the race for state representative in district 90. Republicans of Harris County were determined that Kay Bailey would not lose her seat in Austin, despite nationwide Democratic victories.

The vote was Bailey 10,235 (62.4%), Bresenhan 6,189 (37.6%).

Members of the Republican party were Bailey's principal workers. I worked three polls on election day, the first with Bailey's brother, the other two with Republicans who told me how they had worked for Goldwater and Nixon. Most of the volunteers for

Bresenhan were friends and neighbors.

Bailey outspent Bresenhan two to one, or about \$16,000 to \$8,000. Although the financial statements of the campaign appeared to show that the two candidates had spent equal amounts, it was not clear that Karey's primary race expenditures were included in the tally. The primary election cost for Bresenhan was \$8,000; Bailey had no opponent and no expenses in the May primary.

What the Bresenhan forces didn't have in money, we compensated for in volunteers. Numerous volunteers leafleted apartments with a flyer we couldn't afford to mail. Bailey, along with several other Republican candidates, paid, we believe, to have literature delivered door-to-door.

Bresenhan headquarters was open every day from 3:30 til 10 pm., and by noon on weekends. Near the end of the campaign, several persons volunteered to open at 9am. Bailey's posted headquarters hours were 10am-2pm Mon. through Fri.

Karey's campaign attracted a dozen students who needed hours of political work for government courses and felt that they could "make a difference" in her race. We also appealed to retired persons who rejected Bailey's voting record.

There were days of good news and bad news:

- bad news, like the day we realized Bailey was going to avoid appearing publicly with Bresenhan anywhere, thus keeping Karey from getting much-needed media exposure.
- good news, like the feminist who stormed into headquarters irate that a Bailey worker had solicited her vote because "Kay is the pretty one running" and told us she would definitely vote for Karey because of the sexist remark.
- bad news, when a postal official called after the election to say 5,500 pieces of Bresenhan literature were "lost" in the post office and never delivered.
- good news, when Bailey Republicans charged that Bresenhan was not to be taken lightly because she had a "frighteningly efficient" campaign organization.

The question everyone keeps asking me is, "Will Karey run again?" I don't know. Karey has said she won't run again unless substantial financial backing comes early in the campaign. Karey has also said that she is convinced that district 90 is Republican territory. I disagree. I believe district 90 is Kay Bailey territory, for now. But not forever.

#### RAPE CRISIS COALITION

by Alice Shrader

The self-protection course for city employees that was sponsored by the Coalition and the Office of the Women's Advocate during October was a great success. Over 100 people signed up for the course and only 4 or 5 dropped out. The rest completed six lessons, which is a far better completion rate than we've had in the others. Plans are now in progress to get more classes of this sort downtown in the early evening hours. The session ran two evenings a week for three weeks. Some basic karate instruction was given by George Minshew of the Black Belt Academy, and members of the Coalition Speakers Bureau gave three short talks.

The discussion group for victims is still on-going. Kathy

Parker is arranging transportation for women who wish to participate but don't have transportation or don't want to go out alone at night. If you know someone who needs/wants this service, call Kathy at 795-5350.

The last word I got from Washington was that Congress will reconvene Nov. 18. The Mathias Rape Bill, Title 8 of the 1974 Kennedy Health Services Act, is still not a certainty. Keep those letters flowing to the local reps and Texas senators asking them to ask the conference committee to retain the rape bill. For more info on that call Alice Shrader at 926-5809 or days 523-2521.

(Ed.'s note: On Nov. 20 the policy council elected Peggy Hall as caucus liaison with the Rape Crisis Coalition, and Susan Carlman as alternate. For further information on what the Coalition is doing, call Peggy at 528-3424, or Susan at 524-5531. The Coalition holds a business meeting the first Tuesday of each month, and a program meeting the 3d Tuesday. At the policy council meeting, Coalition member Alice Shrader reported that the Coalition is also working to improve the quality of treatment given rape victims by police and hospitals. From each victim who feels she has been badly treated, the Coalition is requesting a written, specific statement of complaint. It then forwards the letter to the appropriate person. If no improvement results, copies of the letter are sent to the appropriate supervisors--hospital boards, supervisors, etc., or Chief Lynn, the office of the mayor and of the Women's Advocate.)

COALITION OF LABOR UNION WOMEN

by Peggy Hall, HCWPC co-chair; AFSCME

Thursday, Nov. 14, the Coalition of Labor Union Women met at the Communications Workers of America. The group is primarily concerned with the problems of union women, unorganized women, and working women in general.

The January public meeting (time and place to be announced) will be based on a film and discussion by Joan Suarez of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers contracts that provide day care.

At the CLUW meeting Marjon Bryan made a motion to join the ERA coalition. She was instructed to report to the December meeting about what would be involved in CLUW membership in the Coalition. National CLUW is on record in support of the ERA.

FEMINISCELLANEA

--The next program meeting (there will be none in December) has been scheduled for January 22, 7:30pm, at the Women's Center. Speakers will be feminist candidates Karey Bresenhan and Jo Ann Gerhardt, and other caucus women who worked in their campaigns, sharing what they learned from the experience. This is a chance for all of us to take notes--for next time!

--The Ad Hoc Task Force for Children is soliciting endorsements from as many groups as possible for its proposal requesting city funds to plan an office for children. The Task Force will take its proposal to the mayor's office around the first of December. For more information, call Barbara Marcus, 528-2525, or Olga Soliz, 524-5005, or 748-7573 (w).

--Caucus members in the Spring Branch Independent School District are needed for a special project on sexism in education. If you want to help, call Barbara Lane Farley at 461-6075, or 468-7737 (w).

--Cilia Estrada will take orders for the 1975 Liberated Woman's Appointment Calendar, which the caucus is selling for \$3.50 as a fundraiser (the best price in town!). To place your order, call Cilia at 222-8949 and leave a message. Don't delay: the supply is limited. HCWPC is also selling magnificent Susan B. Anthony posters (\$1.00), Women's Political Caucus bumper stickers (50¢), and smaller graphics featuring the inspiring words of our foremothers (50¢ apiece, or 3 for \$1.25). This year, make your holiday gifts consciousness-raising ones!

526-8811  
12  
Chill  
John  
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461-  
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City  
Adrian  
Assert  
Government  
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Senfr.  
Thompson  
Rice  
Council

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

by Kathy Whitmire

Bob Bullock, the newly elected state Comptroller who will take office Jan. 1, has expressed an interest in hiring more women for responsible positions within the Comptroller's office. He has asked TWPC for assistance in locating women to fill these positions. Applicants should have experience and/or education in the following areas: management, statistics, accounting, law, personnel, and computer science. The Comptroller's department has offices in all of the major cities, including Houston.

Anyone interested in being considered for one of these positions should send a resume to: Bob Bullock, P.O. Box 12787, Austin, Tx 78711. For more information call Glenn Castleberry at 512-476-4321.

The Comptroller's office has long been a haven for sex discrimination under the former Comptroller, who stated publicly that he felt the work in his department was too complicated for women to handle!! Therefore it is especially gratifying to see a new office holder who is willing to seek out women applicants.

MEMBERSHIP AND DUES CHANGES 1975

It's that old membership-renewing time again! Be sure to send in your renewal and '75 dues by the end of Jan., to keep your name current in our membership records--and to avoid missing a single issue of your newsletter!

As you may have heard, the administrative committee of the National Women's Political Caucus voted to increase dues for 1975 to \$10.00 per member. With this dues increase the national office assures us that a monthly newsletter will be mailed to each member instead of just to local chairs.

In response to the dues increase the TWPC Administrative Committee has voted to make national membership optional for TWPC members. Membership in TWPC (without national dues) will be \$10.00, and membership in both state and national will be \$15.00. All this is, of course, in addition to our local Harris County dues of \$2.50.

In case you think this is confusing, all the members of the Administrative Committee agree with you! However, this was felt to be the best compromise to avoid losing members on account of a dues increase, but to retain as much delegate strength as possible for the national convention next June.

To summarize, dues for 1975 are as follows:

state and local: \$12.50

national, state and local: \$17.50

All or part of state and local dues can still be waived for persons unable to pay.

WHAT'S NEWS?

No, you didn't miss it--there was no Nov. newsletter. Publication was delayed to allow for a report on the election, and the original delay just prolonged itself a bit. Hopefully next year's schedule will be back to normal. As of right now, the deadline for the January newsletter will be Dec. 28. Brief announcements (meeting times, etc.) may be phoned to Barbara Marcus at 528-2525. Longer news items should be written out and either (a) mailed to the editor, Suzanne Marshall, at 1842 Kipling, Houston 77006; (b) handed to Suzanne; (c) put in the HCWPC vice-chair internal/newsletter box at the Women's Center.

If you know of any event or action that is not presently being covered in the newsletter, but should be; if you have a brilliant article you're itching to write; if you want to help get the newsletter out--call Suzanne at 523-9024, or 224-5441, x61. Communication among caucus members still isn't what it should be, and we need all the help we can get. Many thanks to the women whose excellent articles and reports have been helping to keep us informed. Season's greetings!

\*\*\*\*\*LATE NOTICE!\*\*\*\*\*STOP THE PRESSES\*\*\*\*\*PARTY\*\*\*\*\*PARTY\*\*\*PARTY

Did that get your attention? Read on: there will be a party with free beer for supporters of the ERA at the Women's Center, Sat. Dec. 7, 8pm. To be admitted, just write 10 letters supporting the ERA to state legislators, and bring your letters with you to the party. (There will be a list of legislators at the Center for you to consult, if needed.)

Good company and good beer for a good cause--an unbeatable combination! Let's all start composing those letters...

\*\*\*\*\*QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CAUCUS? CALL ONE OF THESE PEOPLE\*\*\*\*\*

Chair: Barbara Lane Farley, 461-6075.

Co-chair: Peggy Hall, 528-3424.

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

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

Secretary: Susan Heavey, 528-5168; 691-2283 x40.

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

Committee chairs: Election of feminist candidates: Pam Pitt, 523-9647.

City pledges: Olga Soliz, 524-5005; 748-7573 (w).

Political action: Peggy Kress, 772-8559.

Affirmative action: Patty Payne, 668-4600.

Lobbying and candidate rating: Dianne Richards, 664-4929.

Membership and information: Susan Carlman, 524-5531.

Sexuality and reproduction: open

Funding: Harla Kaplan, 772-4987.

Cilia Estrada, 682-3575; 222-8949 (w).

CHICANA CAUCUS REPORT

by Olga Y. Soliz

Cilia Estrada, Gloria Guardiola, Sylvia Garcia, and Susan Heavy all took active part the weekend of November 15th and 16th, at the Harlingen Women's Political Caucus. Cilia Estrada was one of the two Key-Note Speakers. Gloria Guardiola taped 4 to 6 hours of T.V. and Radio time on the Women's Movement.

The Chicana Caucus has been busy with their input into various committees. Gloria Guardiola held a 30-minute T.V. show with the first Mexican-American Women Scout Leaders and the Scouts involvement with the Mexican-American Community an "Experience in Understanding" on November 14, 1974.

Susan Heavy and Cilia Estrada were Convenors for a group of Social Workers from South America for the Planned Parenthood Conference of Spanish Speaking Social Workers. The Spanish-Speaking Social Workers, all Women, are very much into the Feminist Movement. Their various governments have set Women's Issues as a priority.

Olga Soliz is to serve on the H.I.S.D. Mexican-American Conference: An Affirmative Response. Purpose: To conceptualize and identify recruiting strategies for qualified bilingual educators who are sensitive to the needs of the Mexican-American youngsters.

We are pleased to report that two major institutions are about to adopt their Affirmative Action Plan - the City of Houston and the Harris County Community Action Association. Spanish-Speaking Women who have participated are: Cilia Estrada with the City of Houston and Olga Soliz with Labor-AFSCME.

Lydia Saenz has taken an active part in Women in Religion with the Methodist Church. The last 30 to 45 days have been busy ones. She is the lone voice on a National level, but has proven most effective. A Spanish-Speaking Conference has just taken place in San Antonio due to her efforts.

Many members of the Chicana Caucus are members of Paso. It is our hope to see Paso with some Women at the Policy level of Paso. It is also our hope that Paso will support and groom Mexican-American Women for political office in the near future.

This observation was most blatant a few weeks ago when Paso sponsored a Breakfast for Mayor Fred Hofheinz. The head table was completely and totally dominated by Mexican-American, White, and Black Males. This fact was brought to the attention of Ralph Moreno, Paso Chairman, and John Castillo, Paso Padrino - (Godfather). Their answer was: Where are the elected Women?

Observation: Throughout the county and in our state of Texas, Women were elected to political offices. This is a breakthrough, but we the Chicana Caucus will not stop here. We must help elect Mexican-American Women to Office. We are a part of this system as as such will groom our Women for this role.

Olga Y. Soliz  
Chicana Caucus Chairperson

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CLIP AND MAIL FORM TO: MEMBERSHIP, HCWPC, 3602 MILAM, HOUSTON 77006  
 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 3 newsletters, if possible.)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

#### CALENDAR

Note: No Dec. program meeting

Dec. 7: Reaffirm-the-ERA party. Women's Center, 8pm; admission 10 letters supporting the ERA to legislators (bring them to the party with you).

Dec. 7: TWPC policy council. State Capitol, Austin.

Dec. 8: ERA workshop. Women's Center, 1:30pm.

Dec. 18: Policy council meeting. Women's Center, 7:30pm.

Jan. 15: Policy council meeting. Women's Center, 7:30pm.

Jan. 22: Program meeting. Women's Center, 7:30pm. Feminist candidates and campaign workers.

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