

HCWPC

Harris County Women's Political Caucus
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NEWSLETTER, AUGUST
1974

SUPPORT FOR JEFF DAVIS NURSES PAYS OFF

Commissioner Tom Bass recently notified the hospital board, the caucus, and the other commissioners that research he has conducted has convinced him that "There have been some rather serious problems at Jeff Davis that have not been properly handled." Commissioner Bass went on to say that he was not interested in taking "pot shots" at anybody, but rather in "seeing that the citizens of Harris County get the finest health care service possible from our expenditure of tax funds."

In a letter to hospital board chair Quentin Mease the commissioner also lamented the fact that "some administrators are more interested in rationalizing and defending their own position than they are in rectifying an obviously bad situation." Commissioner Bass also placed himself and Nancy Gehman of his staff at the disposal of the committee investigating Jeff Davis. He further urged the hospital board to invite the American Public Health Association to assist in the investigation of problems at Jeff Davis.

Surely our coalition's efforts can take some credit for inspiring Commissioner Bass and his able staff person Nancy Gehman to research the situation. The following were among their findings:

Nov. 3, 1973: I understand that Dr. Peter Norton (OB-GYN) submitted reports documenting inadequate care of three separate patients. I have been unable to either locate or find out what happened to these reports.

Nov. 8, 1973: "We are running into a very critical situation with the lack of adequate numbers of personnel...I don't think there's any area in the city of Houston that compares with the activity, tensions and stress under which persons are forced to work in this area...I can almost promise you that we are going to run into repeated catastrophes unless the current situation is corrected." Excerpts of a memo-

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randum from Dr. Raymond H. Kaufman, OB-GYN, to Mr. N.J. Vaughan, administrator.

Nov. 19, 1973: "You will note that the data substantiates our hypothesis that the major staffing problems in Labor and Delivery stem from the acute lack of professional personnel...the lack of...personnel jeopardizes quality patient care." Excerpts of letter from Ms. Cook, RN, Labor and Delivery supervisor, to Ms. Englishbee, RN, Director of Nursing Services.

Dec. 14, 1973: Work sheet (24 hr. time schedule) showing only one RN even scheduled by administration for Labor and Delivery for the evening shift, and no RNs scheduled for the night shift.

Dec. 17, 1973: "The situation with the Nursing Service at Jefferson Davis Hospital has become critical. We feel that it is again time to inform you...deplorable working conditions...when our labor and delivery areas and recovery rooms are uncovered by the Nursing Service, it places a tremendous responsibility upon the physician who must care for patients without adequate nursing support." Excerpts of letter from Drs. George B. Jackson and Clark M. Hinkley (OB-GYN staff) to Dr. Kaufman.

Dec. 18, 1973: "I very much agree with their comments. This is a matter which can no longer be simply ignored." Excerpts of memorandum from Dr. Kaufman, accompanying above letter of Dec. 17, to Mr. Vaughan.

March 14, 1974: "...A critical situation exists there (Labor and Delivery) regarding nursing care...just not enough personnel... there is absolutely no excuse for not immediately taking steps to remedy this situation." Excerpts of memorandum from Dr. Kaufman to Mr. Vaughan.

May 24, 1974: "Sick out" by 9 RNs.

Get the picture?!

WHAT THE COALITION TO SUPPORT THE NURSES IS DOING:

The nurses recently decided that it is no longer appropriate to accept support from political parties, such as the Socialist Workers' Party. New guidelines for participation in the coalition are being drawn, since many civic associations may still want to join.

Members of the coalition got a good sunburn collecting money for the nurses' legal fees outside radio station KCOH. With the help of broadcast calls for donations, they were able to collect \$470.

Coalition organizations and individuals are writing to the American Public Health Association to request an independent investigation, since the Association's professionals specialize in such studies. Other plans include a petition drive, a mass meeting, and whatever else it takes to get the nurses back their jobs and the conditions at Jeff Davis improved!

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

1) Come and help the Nurses for Improvement Coalition, which meets at 7:30 Tuesday nights at the Women's Center. Much work still needs doing.

2) Write letters to the members of Commissioners' Court (who have ultimate authority over the hospital board) expressing your

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concern about the firing of the nurses and inadequate patient care at Jeff Davis, and urging them to seek solutions to the problems at the hospital. Write to

Judge of Harris Co.:	Bill Elliot	Address:
Commissioner, Pct. 1:	Tom Bass	Family Law Center
"	"	1115 Congress Ave.
"	2: Jamie H. Bray	Houston, Tx
"	3: Bob Eckels	
"	4: E. A. (Squatty) Lyons	77002

3) Write to Commissioner Tom Bass praising him for the stand he has taken.

4) Write to the American Public Health Association urging that they conduct an independent investigation of conditions at Jeff Davis. Write to

Dr. William McBeath, Executive Director
American Public Health Association
1015 18th St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

--report by Susan Hearey

TWPC CONVENTION

If you weren't in Austin July 26-28, you missed it all: an emergency trip to the Capitol to lobby constitutional convention delegates; the election of new officers for state; announcement of the woman of the year; passage of a whole series of resolutions dealing with caucus concerns; release of the TWPC constitutional convention report; a fierce and eloquent keynote address by C. Delores Tucker, Pennsylvania secretary of state, and a surprise visit by Sissy; and a variety of well-planned and successful workshops.

Acting on information Saturday afternoon that deadlocked constitutional convention delegates were considering a trade of the exclusion of a right-to-work provision for reintroduction of a welfare ceiling in the new constitution, caucus members surged over to the Capitol to call their legislators off the floor. Removal of a welfare ceiling was a top priority item during the convention, and feminists reemphasized TWPC's opposition to its restoration--in effect, trading the well-being of women and children for the rights of workers. The proposal failed; maybe caucus members' promptness in raising a little (expletive deleted) helped!

Named Woman of the Year at the convention was Ernestine Glossbrenner of Alice, Jim Wells County Caucus, in recognition of her efforts on behalf of women in the caucus. New TWPC officers are Jane Macon, chair; Maria Angela Flores, vice-chair for communication/organization; Ernestine Glossbrenner, vice-chair for political action; Loretta Jo Shaw, vice-chair for membership; Olga DeLeon, vice-chair for legislation; Elaine Wheeler, vice-chair for finance; and comptroller, Sharon Macha (of Harris County--our special congratulations, Sharon!). The two latter offices were created by a by-laws change from the original office of vice-chair for finance; from now on, the finance vice-chair will deal particularly with fund-raising, and the comptroller with budget and disbursements.

Delegates voted to change the by-laws to the effect that the Policy Council, by a four-fifths vote of its members, may change the by-laws; this power had previously been vested only in the State Convention.

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The convention deferred action on endorsement of statewide candidates until the next meeting of the state policy council.

The TWPC constitutional convention report includes an explanation of the caucus position and a record of the actions of the convention delegates on eight areas of caucus concern: sexist language, homestead protection and consent to abandon, non-discrimination in appointments, garnishment of wages, compulsory pregnancy, proposal 260 ("traditional family structure"--this one has to be read to be believed), non-discrimination in education, and the welfare ceiling. A copy of the report will be available at the Women's Center for your perusal.

As usual, the passage of resolutions indicated directions for the caucus in the next year. Among other things, the convention resolved: to reaffirm TWPC's commitment to women's issues and to the involvement of women in politics; to make efforts to recognize and deal with the problems of older women; to urge the establishment of statewide commissions on housing/public accommodations and on utility regulation; to establish a task force to study the ramifications of the Hatch Act for federal employees and employees of federally funded programs; to support a rape reform bill (such as the one promised for the next legislative session by Texas' women legislators); to urge the impeachment and conviction, if evidence warrants, of Richard Nixon; to support legislation and programs to aid the handicapped, and to make efforts to provide facilities for handicapped women at future TWPC conventions; to support legislation on behalf of children and youth, emphasizing the importance of quality child care; to oppose any extension of the current three-year FCC licensing periods; to make available TWPC by-laws and information on tape in Spanish and English; to support action to strike from Texas law any statutes defining homosexuality or homosexual acts between consenting persons as criminal; to encourage local and special interest caucuses to work with school boards on the implementation of Title IX; to urge the Democratic Party to send a half-female delegation to the Kansas City convention, and to support the ACLU suit against that party on the conflict between the date set for the state convention and a religious holiday; to support the boycott of Van Heusen imported shirts. Other resolutions expressed gratitude to the Austin caucus for their efforts in hosting the convention, and to departing chair Jane Mickie for her time, energy, and leadership. The 1975 TWPC convention will be held in Corpus Christi, and the '76 in Dallas.

RAPE CRISIS COALITION

report by Alice Shrader

The recently-formed Houston Rape Crisis Coalition on July 16 elected Bette Anne Knoll coordinator and Susan Watkins secretary-treasurer.

The coalition officers and representatives from HCWPC and NOW have completed a first draft of an informational brochure on rape and "what to do if..." They hope that the finalized version will be ready for publication within the next few weeks.

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Rape speakers bureau: Bette Anne Knoll spoke on the "Call M for Marvin" (Marvin Zindler) show July 27. She was on a panel with District Attorney Allen Stilley and a rape victim. Knoll said she had good feelings about the presentation. However, as might be expected, Marvin Zindler seems to have all the preconceived notions about rape that have kept rape victims from any kind of justice for centuries. He asked the victim if her attackers climaxed and commented that she was very pretty and he wondered if that had anything to do with her being raped. Contact person for speakers is Alice Shrader, 926-5809.

Police research: The two women detectives in the homicide division (where rape cases are investigated) have been interviewed. Coalition members are trying to arrange interviews with detectives in juvenile division where victims under 17 are taken. Women's advocate Poppy Northcutt recently informed Houston police of House Bill 858 which requires the police department to pay the medical expenses incurred by a rape victim who reports the rape to the police. They, of course, were not familiar with the law, and allowances for this payment have not yet been made in the city budget.

Discussion group for victims: This group, which meets on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, is open to any victim of sexual assault. People interested in attending are requested to call Sharon Moline-Vincent, 661-3231, so the organizers will have an idea whom and how many to expect at each session.

Self-defense: The coalition and the student government at University of Houston will offer a self-defense course at U of H in the fall. Anyone may participate. For more information on this course call Joan Ritter at 749-1366.

TITLE IX

The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, as you all know, has come out with a set of proposed regulations under Title IX of the 1972 Education Acts Amendment, banning sex discrimination in education. Title IX leaves much unsaid regarding sex discrimination which feminists would like to have plainly stated, as in the areas of textbook sexism and athletics; however, it does represent progress in some areas, such as school admissions, scholarships, treatment of students and school employees.

HEW is accepting written comments on Title IX provisions through Oct. 15, after which a final draft will be prepared, signed by the President (whoever that may be at that point in time), and put into effect 30 days after publication. The individuals, groups, vested interests, and other troglodytes who want to go back to the days when men were men and ladies were ladies and knew their place (or else!) won't let pass this chance to attack the anti-sex discrimination guidelines. This means that HEW needs FEMINIST comments, criticisms, and suggestions. At the July HCWPC program meeting, NOW member Jan Cunningham asked for caucus support for efforts to communicate feminists' concern with the implementation of Title IX to the director of the University Scholastic League. In addition, some members of NOW are gathering and formulating comments to be sent in to HEW. Caucus members especially interested in offering input on the athletics guidelines can contact Jan Cunningham at 522-7164. Those who want to comment on the general education provisions should call Kay Whyburn, 667-8556.

REVENUE SHARING--HOUSTON

Merylyn S. Whited, administrative aide in Leonel Castillo's office, spoke to the HCWPC policy council meeting on July 17 about the Houston Revenue Sharing Coalition, of which the caucus is a member. The coalition, which was formed in October 1973, comprises a number of individuals and organizations who are working to get revenue sharing funds allocated for human care needs, rather than simply for capital expenses.

The revenue sharing budget for the 4th entitlement period (July 1973-June 30, 1974) recently passed by City Council marked some progress in this endeavor: the budget allocated \$1.8 million for the construction of multi-functional neighborhood service centers, to be staffed by public and private agencies, following the pattern of two Model Cities centers already being constructed. This represents an improvement, in the area of revenue sharing money and human needs, over the record of the last administration, but unfortunately the money allocated will cover only construction, not staffing or running expenses.

The HRSC, Ms. Whited said, hopes to encourage the city to construct some mechanism for citizen input into the decisions on where these centers will be built, and what services and personnel will go into them. Ms. Whited told the policy council that no other Houston group seems to be monitoring the allocation of the funds with these priorities in mind. Houston will receive \$16 million in revenue sharing monies during the 5th entitlement period, which began July 1.

The Houston Revenue Sharing Coalition will meet sometime in early August, but a date has not yet been set. All caucus members who are interested in working with the coalition can contact Merylyn Whited at 222-4435 (bus.) or 723-8462.

REVENUE SHARING--TEXAS

Texas United Community Services, an agency funded by the United Fund, has scheduled a statewide meeting on Sept. 24 to discuss revenue sharing and its appropriation for support of social services. The meeting will take place in the Old Supreme Court Room at the Capitol, Austin; tentative time is between 10 am and 3 pm. People presently involved in revenue sharing will attend to answer questions about how the money is being spent.

No state-wide monitoring of how Texas spends its approximately \$300 million in revenue sharing monies is presently being done, so it's especially important for all persons--and more especially feminists with projects in mind--interested in revenue sharing expenditure to participate in this effort. The coordinator of the State Conference on Uses and Allocation of General Revenue Sharing Funds, Jim Wimberley of TUCS, wants the names of everyone who will attend the statewide meeting in Austin, in order to make arrangements for attendance. If you want to go, contact Merylyn Whited at 222-4435 (bus.) or 723-8462; she will pass on the names of those planning to attend the meeting to the coordinator.

WOMEN IN ACTION/COUNTY JAIL

Caucus members Clara Willing and Barbara Runge accompanied WIA volunteers on one of their visits to women prisoners in the Harris County jail, and shared with the policy council meeting July 17 their personal observations of its inhumane and degrading conditions. Clara reported that, as a result of a near-riot in Tank 2 (where two women prisoners had had miscarriages in a week's time), the WIA visits have been temporarily halted by jail administrators. All the women in the jail are being punished by depriving them of their one hour a week of contact with the outside world--one more item to add to the long list of brutalities inflicted on these women.

The council discussed various possibilities for action in this area, though no specific proposal was voted on--watch this space for developments! And remember, we should all be writing our county commissioners to deplore conditions and treatment of prisoners in the jail. (See p.3 for their names and where to address your letter.)

WIA VOLUNTEER SERVICE

Women in Action maintains a volunteer service at the four food stamp certification centers in Houston helping the applicants fill out the long complicated form. Hours are from 8:30 to noon. For more information, call Astrid Collins at 465-0100.

WOMANPOWER, INC.

Womanpower, Inc., a tax-exempt educational fund, has been established to funnel foundation money, as well as donations, into educational projects to benefit women. It will give financial assistance to organizations throughout Texas for specific programs in such areas as credit, law of domestic relations, employment opportunity, investment and financial planning, women in politics, women in the arts, etc. Organizations requesting funding for projects must send specific statements and requests to Womanpower, Inc. Donations and inquiries may be directed to:

Board of Directors
Womanpower, Inc.
P.O. Box 4897, Wonderland Station
San Antonio, Tx 78285

There is no direct link between the caucus and Womanpower, Inc., but local caucus nominees are needed to sit on the board of directors. Nominations for the board of directors from Harris County will be discussed at the August policy council meeting (Aug. 21), so if you're interested, plan to be there!

JULY PROGRAM MEETING: WOMEN'S ADVOCATE

At the program meeting, Poppy Northcutt spoke on some of the achievements to date of the Office of the Women's Advocate, and outlined some future plans.

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Among recent city happenings that bode well (or at least better) for women in city government, the city council passed a resolution, written up by the affirmative action commission, on equal employment and economic opportunity. In the latest chapter of the Great Library Card Dispute, the Houston Public Library continues to insist that it needs the names of would-be card-carrying borrowers as listed in the Criss-Cross Directory, but has agreed to request that all married persons, not just married women, list their spouse's name. The Women's Advocate's Office is currently doing research on city insurance benefits, especially maternity.

Poppy reported that the most promising openings for women in city government have occurred in the police department, although the police chief still refuses to assign women officers to certain tasks. Job titles have been changed from policemen and patrolmen to police officers. Because of lack of turnover, women will probably not be seen on all levels of city employment for years. However, department heads will be required to report more promptly and in more detail, with respect to goals and timetables for hiring, to Civil Service.

Among future projects the Women's Advocate mentioned is a TV show on channel 8, "Women's Advocate," which Poppy will host. Broadcasting starts Tuesday August 6 at 9:45 pm and continues every Tuesday thereafter. The show will advise on problems such as filing complaints with EEOC, legislative reform, rape, etc. Don't miss it!

Poppy told the caucus that she felt her office was also important as a vehicle for communication and referral. For example, when there are openings on boards and commissions or for department head positions in the city, her office can supply resumes of qualified women. She requested that women who have experience or expertise and who are interested in being considered for such positions send resumes to her office.

HARRIS COUNTY: OUGHT IT AUDIT?

The policy council voted not to participate in a suit seeking to compel Harris County to allow an independent, complete audit of its funds, on the grounds that the information provided on the situation was not specific enough, and the legal status of the suit insufficiently established, to warrant caucus participation. The consensus of the group was that further information would be sought and the question considered again.

Frederick Kay, caucus-endorsed former candidate for the position of county clerk, asked for HCWPC participation in this suit. He told the policy council that he has joined with two other individuals in the suit, which accuses the county of failure to comply with Article 164ld, calling for an annual independent audit, and which demands that such an audit be implemented. Kay charged that the county has not allowed the sort of audit which he said is required by law in twelve years, but in answer to members' questions, he supported his charges only with rather vague and disjointed documentation.

COMMITTEES COMMITTEES COMMITTEES COMMITTEES COMMITTEES COMMITTEES

PRIORITIES COMMITTEES

FULFILLMENT OF CITY ADMINISTRATION PLEDGES

The committee reports action in the following areas:

1) Dr. care: Committee members have been working with the Ad Hoc Task Force for Children on a proposal for an office for children and youth in city government. According to Task Force chair Marie Oser, the proposal, which recommends the establishment of an advisory committee to the mayor on children and youth for the purpose of establishing such an office, has been completed and should be submitted to the city sometime around Labor Day. The advisory committee would assess the structure of the proposed office, determine its role in the city, and secure funding for it. Ms. Oser said that the action suggested by the proposal would represent an initial step in fulfilling the mayor's pledge to have the city of Houston recognize and meet the needs of children and families.

2) Women in city government: As of press time, committee member Cilia Estrada, who serves on the city's Affirmative Action Commission, reported that the Commission would probably not meet its July 31 deadline for the formulation of an affirmative action proposal for the city. At a recent Commission meeting, Cilia brought up the problem of discrimination against homosexuals, and was met with shock and derision by many of the other members, especially the white males. Evidently some Commission members believe in affirmative action only up to a point; when it comes to discrimination against women and men on the basis of their sexual preference, affirmative action somehow becomes negative reaction. Here's hoping Cilia's courage in introducing the subject will perhaps open some closed minds just a crack.

3) Women's Advocate: As of press time, committee members had scheduled a meeting with Poppy Northcutt to discuss her office and its relationship with HCWPC for August 2.

Anyone interested in working with the priorities committee in the above areas can contact Olga Soliz at 524-5005, or 748-7573 (bus.).

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

Chair: Barbara Lane Farley, 461-6075

Co-chair: Sharon Moline Vincent, 661-3231

Vice-chair internal: Suzanne Marshall, 523-9024; 224-5441 x61
" external: Kathy Whitire, 521-0649, 228-9531 (bus.)

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

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

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

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

Political action: Peggy Kress, 772-8559

Affirmative action: Patty Payne, 668-4600

Lobbying and candidate rating: Diane Richards, 664-4929

Sexuality and reproduction: Deanie Murphy, 668-4600

Membership and information: Susan Carlman, 524-5531

Funding: Harla Kaplan, 772-4987

Cilia Estrada, 682-3575, 222-8949

STANDING COMMITTEES

MEMBERSHIP AND INFORMATION

The committee met July 11 to discuss and define its purposes and functions. These include keeping membership records, assisting the vice-chair internal (who needs all the help she can get!--Editor's note.) to get out the newsletter, and gathering and organizing information about the caucus and for caucus members. Members agreed that the last function should include compiling and keeping up to date a history of the caucus; but the consensus was that the present small membership precluded already over-extended members from proceeding further with this project, at least at present. All of you who'd like to help us spread the Word/or record it for posterity, get in touch with Memb.&Info. chair, Susan Carlman, 524-5531.

LOBBYING AND CANDIDATE RATING

Due to the resignation of chair Bebe Bruce, former vice-chair Diane Richards will chair this committee. With the November election coming up, there's lots of work to do. If you want to help, call Diane at 664-4929, or 226-4851 (bus.).

WHAT'S NEWS?

Deadline for the Sept. newsletter is Wednesday August 28. Please help us meet it by turning in all news items on time.

Brief announcements (meeting times, etc.) may be phoned in to BARBARA MARCUS at 528-2525, or 229-9585 x7. 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.

We need people to help in coordinating news items, typing, and getting the newsletter out. If you can help, call Suzanne at 523-9024, or 224-5441 x61.

CALENDAR

August 6: "Women's Advocate," channel 8, 9:45pm, and each Tues. thereafter.

August 21: Policy council meeting. 7:30pm, Women's Center.

August 28: Newsletter deadline.

Sept. 24: TUCS revenue sharing meeting, Austin. See article for details.

REMEMBER: NURSES FOR IMPROVEMENT COALITION MEETS EACH TUES. NIGHT AT THE WOMEN'S CENTER, 7:30.
NO PROGRAM MEETING FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST (ONLY).

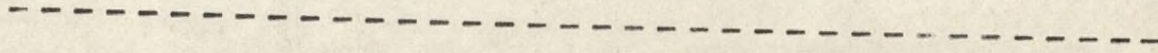
Chicana Caucus Report

For the first time in the History of Harris County, four Spanish-Speaking Feminists were heard and seen:

Elma Barrera has a 30-minute show every Saturday at 6:15 P.M. on Channel 8 for the first time. Gloria Guardiola, Cilia Estrada, Elma Barrera, and Olga Soliz spoke on The Emerging of the Spanish-Speaking Woman. Glorio Guardiola's remarks concerning dating younger men - and adding to it - that she preferred them to older men, has caused quite a !!

The results of the T. V. show have been: new members for the Chicana Caucus, and guess from where?... An Educator, A Student, and a Secretary for a public official.

Chicana Caucus will have a meeting on August 20, 1974 at the home of Olga Y. Soliz, 2102 Wroxton Rd. Phone nos. 524-5005/748-7574.



CLIP AND MAIL FORM TO: MEMBERSHIP, HCWPC, 3602 Milam, Houston, 7006
Make checks payable to HCWPC.

NAME _____ PRECINCT NUMBER _____
ADDRESS & CITY _____ ZIP _____
HOME PHONE _____ OFFICE PHONE _____

___ Enclosed is \$12.50 for full HCWPC membership through all of 1974.

___ Enclosed is \$7.50. I need to waive \$5 of my 1974 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 3 10 ¢ stamps for each to cover the cost of sending 3 newsletters, if possible.

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

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

