

NEWSLETTER

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**SECOND
ISSUE**
vol 1 no 2

CHAPTER
at
the University of **HOUSTON**

NOTE

This newsletter is part of our effort to disseminate information about equality problems. We plan to publish this newsletter monthly. Please note:

If the label on this newsletter has CC by your name, you have received a Courtesy Copy. People receive a courtesy copy if they a) attend a meeting, b) sign an ERA or reproductive rights permission card at one of our information tables, c) are recommended by a friend d) hold a position described in the faculty/staff directory that makes us think they should know about us or e) are a departmental secretary/administrative secretary who can circulate this newsletter within a department.

Anyone with a U of H mailing address can continue to receive courtesy copies by letting us know (see form attached). We would rather you join, of course. Since we must pay postage on off campus addresses, we cannot continue to send courtesy copies indefinitely. The best way to keep receiving our newsletter is, of course, to join us. When you join NOW you will also receive the National NOW Times.

Members should note that their label has a date above their names. This is the date of your membership expiration. (by Kathy Kimler Altobelli)

ANY ADDRESS CHANGES OR CORRECTIONS SHOULD BE REPORTED TO JOANN EVANS GARDNER. USE THE FORM OR CALL 741 4009.

MEMBERSHIP AND NEWSLETTER REQUEST FORM

1. I wish to join National Organization for Women, NOW at University of Houston. Dues for NOW are on a sliding scale from \$11.00 to \$35.00. This amount is divided among Local, State, and National Chapters. Please send an amount for your dues according to your circumstances.

I enclose \$ _____

Make your check payable to NOW at University of Houston, and send to NOW at University of Houston, Cullen Blvd., Box 509, Student Activities, University Center, Houston, TX 77004.

2. I would like to continue receiving a Courtesy Copy of the Newsletter. (U of H address only)
3. I would like to talk to someone to get more information.

PLEASE PRINT:

NAME _____

HOME ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

PRECINCT NUMBER _____ (from voter registration)

HOME PHONE _____ OTHER PHONE _____ (hours)

Please mail this form to NOW at University of Houston, Box 509, Student Activities, University Center, Houston, TX 77004

ON LETTERS TO OUR SENATORS

kathy Kimler Altobelli

As did many of our members, I wrote Senators Bentsen and Tower in May regarding the proposed Human Life Amendment (such as Helms' S.158). I stressed that I was opposed to any and all federal legislation restricting a woman's right to choose to terminate a pregnancy. As their replies (see below) make clear, we must keep writing. And we must respond to their responses so that they know we won't go away!

Their addresses are Senator Lloyd Bentsen
 142 Russell Bldg.
 Washington, D. C. 20515

Senator John Tower
 240 Russell Bldg.
 Washington, D. C. 20515

Their responses to me were

Dear Ms. Altobelli:

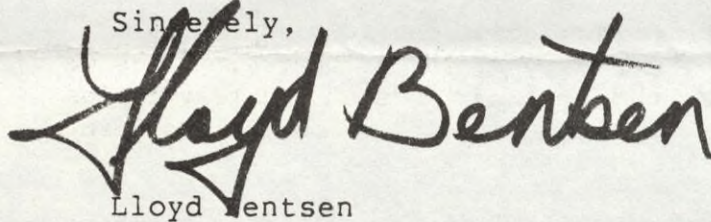
Thank you for your recent correspondence.

The question of abortion involves fundamental religious and ethical questions, and has divided the American people as few issues have.

My position on this issue is clear. I will not support a Constitutional amendment to prohibit abortion.

Again, I appreciate your taking the time to contact me.

Sincerely,



Lloyd Bentsen

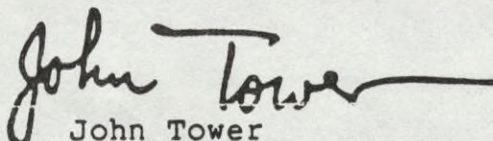
Dear Mrs. Altobelli:

Thank you very much for contacting me.

In 1973 the Supreme Court removed the flexibility of determination for abortions from the states, thus questioning the extent of federal intervention in such related matters. I do not think the United States Constitution is the proper vehicle for national acceptance of a Human Life Amendment. However, I will support a States Rights Amendment bill to allow the individual states to make their determination of abortion availability.

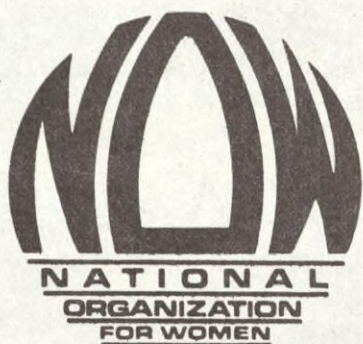
With best wishes, I remain

Sincerely yours,



John Tower

Please note that neither Senator responds adequately—to say the least. If you have not yet written, don't these replies make it obvious that you need to write! NOW!



National Organization for Women, Inc.

425 13th Street, N.W. Suite 1048 Washington, D.C. 20004 • (202) 347-2279

Dear NOW Activists,

This year's ERA walkathon is the Last Walk for ERA. Think big. The movement for women's equality, in this final year of the ERA extension, deserves the very best in fundraising, in visibility, in effort.

The June 30, 1982 deadline for ratification is now just over a year away, and in this final year we will mount an ERA campaign of unparalleled scope and intensity. Despite the odds against us, we will fight as we never have before to bring women into the Constitution of the United States.

If we win, we will have brought to a successful conclusion the 69-year struggle to establish equality for women as a fundamental principle in the law of the land -- indeed, a 141-year struggle, if we include the 72 years it took to win the vote.

If we lose, we lose the ERA for the remainder of this century, given the reactionary forces that now dominate the federal government. Just remember, to pass a Constitutional amendment in Congress takes a 2/3 vote of the Senate and of the House -- and remember that the Republican Right now dominates the Senate and crucial committees in the Senate, through which a newly introduced ERA would have to pass.

But if we lose, we will continue to organize at such an intense pace that we will be stronger than ever before for the 1982 and 1984 elections. We will hit those elections with the full force of a movement that does not falter and that will ultimately not be denied.

The final year's campaign will be fueled by our rapidly increasing numbers and our unyielding determination to succeed. But it will also take money -- money to send people into the field, to fund the media campaign, to buy supplies, to rent office space -- in short, to provide the financial base to make it all possible.

The Last Walk for ERA is a vital part of that financial support. Each step you walk, every dollar you take in, brings us just that much closer to victory. Moreover, the walkathons increase the visibility for the issue, in this last year when visibility is particularly critical.

I know you will do everything you can to make the Last Walk for ERA outstandingly successful and memorable. Please tell all your friends and supporters that this is their last year to walk, their last year to pledge, their last opportunity to be a part of this special and historical event.

This year, let's give it everything we've got. The Equal Rights Amendment, equality under the law for the women of this nation, is worth the very best effort we can make.

For Equality,

Ellie Smeal

Ellie Smeal

Equal pay ⁴ for



AT LARGE/Ellen Goodman

comparable work

BOSTON — Once it was an utterly radical idea. Only the most wild-eyed souls in the early 1900s thought that a woman who was doing the same job as a man ought to be paid the same amount.

But by the mid-1960s, the notion was mainstream enough to be made into law in both the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. By 1980, even the most conservative candidate said that equal pay for equal work was just plain American fair play.

Well, the irony is that this massive change in attitudes didn't actually change paychecks very much. In the late 1930s, the average working woman was earning about 58 cents for every dollar the average working man earned. In 1980, she was earning 59 cents.

Women have been catching up roughly at the rate of two cents a century.

THE CONCEPT of equal pay for the same work doesn't help women, because few of them actually do the same work. About 80 percent of the working women in this country — 33 million of them — work in jobs that are largely "women's jobs."

A full 99.5 percent of secretaries, 94 percent of telephone operators, and 96 percent of registered nurses are female. About 96 percent of all career ladders are segregated by sex, and so are the paychecks.

The wages of these jobs are not primarily ruled on such economic niceties as supply and demand, or the mysterious workings of the free economy. One quick look at the Help Wanted pages makes that obvious. Despite the much-heralded secretarial shortage, wages in that field have gone up no faster than wages in the shrinking manufacturing market.

The wages of these jobs are kept low traditionally and arbitrarily because women do these jobs.

IN RESPONSE to this reality, the debate about women's work has changed focus. The question now being asked is whether women should get equal pay for "comparable work" or for work that is "equally valuable." The AFL-CIO has adopted this idea and so have many women's groups.

Until now, the concept has had an uncertain legal basis. Not long ago, nurses in Denver tried to sue for sex discrimination because they were paid less than tree-trimmers or parking-meter repairers. Their case was turned down by the circuit court.

Last week, in a careful, limited decision that virtually quivered with anxiety, the Supreme Court ruled 5-4 that, yes, employees can sue for discrimination under Title 7 of the Civil Rights Act even if they are not doing identical work.

THE CASE in point was a classic.

In Oregon, a group of jail matrons who guarded female inmates was paid \$200 less per month than a group of deputy sheriffs who guarded males. The matrons didn't claim they held the same jobs. The women had fewer inmates and more clerical work. But an outside evaluator had shown the employer that the women were doing 95 percent of what the men were doing.

As Judith Lichtman, head of the Women's Legal Defense Fund, put it: "They were discounting the job because women did it."

Now these women, and millions of others, have won the right to sue.

"This is the first step," says Karen Nussbaum, president of Working Women — A National Association of Office Workers. "It's saying, let's look at the job, and if your job is paid less because women do it, that's discrimination. Common sense tells us that. Now the Supreme Court backs it up."

ALL OF THIS new talk makes employers break out in hives. They talk about a flood of new cases. They talk about the cost of evaluating the relative work of a secretary and a truck driver. They warn us all about the dangers of a regulated economy. They even remind us about the Invisible Hand of the free marketplace, and how it works wonders for all of us.

But I suspect this Invisible Hand is the same one that sewed the Emperor's New Clothes. Working women already live in an economy that's regulated against them, a world in which parking-lot attendants make more than child-care workers.

With a little help from the courts and a lot of organizing, the concept of equal pay for comparable work may soon seem like just plain American fair play.

Ellen Goodman is a columnist for the Boston Globe

The following is a letter from Yvonne Broach, Task Force Chairperson for Reproductive Rights for Houston Area NOW.

NOTICE THE INVITATION TO CHAPTER MEMBERS FOR LUNCH SATURDAY, JULY 11, 1PM at the Black-Eyed Pea.

June 19, 1981

John,

Now that the legislative session has ended and no anti-abortion laws were passed, I want to thank you for all you've done for this issue this year.

Your support of our Reproductive Rights Task Force and your involvement and actions with your own chapter and the Alliance were much needed and appreciated by us all.

From time to time we should pat each others' backs. This is such a time.

Please join me and others who have toiled for this issue for lunch Saturday, July 11, 1 p.m. at the Black-eyed Pea (Shepherd at West Gray). And please do pass this invitation along to other members of your chapter.

We look forward to seeing you and continuing the struggle with you during the coming months.

Yvonne

Tunnel-Vision Morality on Abortion

By ELLEN WILLIS
Los Angeles Times

Leaves No Room for Another View

The right-to-life movement and the new right's "pro-family" crusaders have subjected their opponents to a relentless moral attack. For supporting feminism and gay rights, we are condemned as selfish, irresponsible, sinful and decadent; for defending abortion rights, we are accused of callous indifference to human life.

This attack equates morality with a set of absolute values rooted in sectarian religious beliefs. The Moral Majority and like-minded religious groups claim that the traditional male-dominated family is divinely ordained. It is God's will that women stay in the home, that sex be strictly confined to marriage and linked with procreation. Abortion is murder because Catholic and fundamentalist Christian doctrines decree that the fetus is a human being from the moment of conception.

This moral position leaves no room for concepts such as honorable disagreement, freedom of conscience or cultural pluralism. On the contrary, the right argues, the demand for freedom of choice is the antithesis of morality, the rejection of any value beyond our own selfish interests.

This accusation is entirely false. Those of us who cherish freedom do not reject morality. Rather we have a moral vision of our own, based on very different concepts of the good society and of human rights. It is these moral values that lead us to support individual freedom, sexual privacy, feminism in general and legal abortion in particular.

The case for a feminist, libertarian morality rests on democratic premises. The belief in liberty and equality as fundamental moral principles is deeply rooted in Western thought. It is based on the assumption that the best kind of society consists of free people taking responsibility for their lives and cooperating on an equal basis for the common good. A society that divides people into rulers and ruled, and allows the former to impose their religious views and moral norms on the latter, violates human dignity. Furthermore, arbitrarily assigning groups of people to certain roles, regardless of their individual desires and talents, means stifling human potential and depriving society of human resources.

Feminism is the application of democratic principles to the relations between the sexes. The reason abortion is such an explosive issue is that conceding women full control over our fertility implies that we are equal, self-determining human beings, not passive "vehicles for life" (in the words of one anti-abortion congressman).

Since there is no such thing as a foolproof contraceptive, only the right to abortion can ensure that we, not our reproductive organs, determine our futures. Legal abortion protects a woman's right to be sexual without the constant fear that at any moment her life may be traumatically disrupted and permanently transformed. This is, of course, a right men take for granted.

Saying that the fetus has a right to life automatically dictates that the pregnant woman has an obligation to sustain the developing fetus within her own body, no matter what emotional or physical consequences she may suffer. This is a gross violation of the democratic moral principle that no one may be forced to put his or her body at the service of another. No law requires a person to give blood or donate a kidney, even to save someone else's life. Yet the right-to-lifers would force women to use their bodies for childbearing. What anti-abortionists see as a moral defense of fetal life, feminists see as an immoral denial of women's humanity.

Another moral value underlying the feminist, libertarian viewpoint is the belief that sexual pleasure is a positive good—indeed, central to human happiness. Sexual intimacy is an integral part of love—surely a high priority in any moral system—and the right to love includes the right to freely express one's sexuality with a consenting partner. The new right's attempt to make the state police our sex lives is an intolerable intrusion into the privacy of our most intimate relationships. If these puritans have their way, women's enjoyment of sex will always be shadowed by fear of pregnancy; homosexuals will always have to deny their sexual feelings or risk the loss of basic civil rights, and everyone will suffer because sexual frustration, fear and guilt make satisfying love relationships impossible.

Feminist morality stresses compassion—a virtue the pro-family and anti-abortion forces conspicuously lack. Their moral code is brutally punitive, self-righteous, and, for all their pious rhetoric about the sanctity of life, indifferent to the painful realities of people's actual lives. Right-to-lifers continually refer to abortion as a matter of "convenience," as if unwanted pregnancy were a trivial annoyance. The fact that, before abortion was legalized, millions of desperate women risked death, prosecution and humiliating indignities to obtain this "convenience" moves the anti-abortionists not at all. They do not flinch at the statistics on

deaths and serious injuries from illegal abortions. They do not care about the devastating consequences of having to bear and rear an unwanted child. In their view, no woman is too poor, too young, too alone, too sick, too burdened with other responsibilities to be forced to carry her pregnancy to term.

The right's attitude toward teen-age women is even harsher. It seeks to deny adolescents not only abortion but contraception and any form of sex education or counseling. Again, a puritanical zeal to stamp out unmarried sex, or at least punish it as severely as possible, outweighs any concern for the welfare of teen-agers or their unwanted children. Never mind that ignorance and lack of birth control do not keep teen-agers from having sex, but only ensure that it will lead to disaster. Never mind that teen-age mothers and their babies have special health problems; that most adolescent girls are not emotionally equipped to be parents, that pregnancy can end a teen-ager's education and trap her in a life of welfare dependence and poverty; that even if a pregnant teen-ager gives away her baby, the experience may leave permanent psychic scars.

Finally, I would count as a feminist moral value the courage to face the uncertainties and risks of freedom. The right's rigid demand for conformity is a product of fear. Diversity cannot be tolerated because it implies the existence of choices about how to live and the need to make decisions. How much easier to insist on a God-given blueprint for living. These are people who have never grown up, who still crave the childish security of being told what to do. Anyone who challenges their blueprint threatens their security and must be crushed.

At this point, it is no exaggeration to say that the values of a free society are under siege. Yet the new right is a small minority, whose power has grown out of all proportion to its numbers. Its secret weapon, I believe, is moral intimidation. By claiming a monopoly on goodness, the right has made millions of good people feel guilty and hesitant about asserting their opposition. Before it's too late, the real moral majority had better stand up—and fight back.

Ellen Willis, a staff writer on the Village Voice, is the author of "Beginning to See the Light."

Tuesday, June 2, 1981

WANTED NEEDED

FEMINIST WRITER-EDITOR URGENTLY NEEDED FOR THIS NEWSLETTER!!!!!!!!

VOLUNTEER JOB WITH LOW PAY - HIGH REWARDS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Call and leave message for Benj. Feld at Phone No. 747-1503 !!!!!

The pen is mightier than the sword. Use yours for equality!!!!!!!!



Some steps
you can take...

The Last ERA Walk

National Organization for Women
NOW, at the University of Houston
Box 509, University Center
Cullen Boulevard, Houston 77004

THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT
Section 1: Equality of Rights under the Law
shall not be denied or abridged by the United
States or by any state on account of sex.
Section 2: The Congress shall have the power
to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the
provisions of this article.
Section 3: This amendment shall take effect
two years after the date of ratification

FROM THE CONVENOR:

In this, the last year for ratifying the Equal Rights Amendment, everyone's effort, large and/or small, is urgently needed. WE can recruit, get petitions signed, participate in THE LAST ERA WALKATHON, or go to Salt Lake City and be a missionary for the ERA to Mormons!

Regarding the walkathon, it has never been held in the Houston area, since it is so hot on August 26th, the traditional time for holding it. (August 26th this year will be the 61st anniversary of the ratification of the suffrage for women amendment, which feminists worked 72 years to achieve.) Currently, there is talk of "going underground" and holding it in the tunnels under downtown Houston. In addition to being out of the heat, any number of walkers trekking through those tunnels will be very visible, and add to the public knowledge about the ERA. If you can participate in planning, or in walking, call me at 741-4009.

On a larger scale, you can be an ERA missionary to the Mormons in Salt Lake City. The missionaries who carried out the pilot project report enthusiastically on their successes and urgently request more work on this "turn-the-tables" project. In the two weeks of the pilot project, 9 people visited 750 households. There are 340,000 more to go. Sounds like a large task — but it is not too ambitious for the organization that got the extension through Congress. We can do it.

At least two groups are planning to go, on the dates starred in the list below. If you can spend two weeks in this way, call me.

Training Sessions for Missionaries in Salt Lake City:

July 11-12 July 25-26* August 8-9*

Finally, you should, if you are a member, be getting your National NOW Times soon. We are getting chapter mail from the National Office NOW. If you don't receive a copy in the next 30 days, please let me know.

For feminism, Jo Ann Evansgardner

NATIONAL ERA PETITION CAMPAIGN

President Reagan:

We believe ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) is essential for women to have full rights under the laws of the United States, its various states and local governments. Today countless governmental programs and policies treat women unfairly. For example, women on the average take home 55% of what men do under Social Security, a federal program. We believe you were right in 1972 when you supported the ERA and described it as "morally unassailable" and urge you to reconsider your current position in opposition. If the ERA fails to be ratified by June 30, 1982, during your term, you as President and the Republican Party which dropped support of the ERA in 1980, will bear the burden for generations to come of having denied constitutional equality for women.

Signature	Name (Print)	Address	City, State & Zip	Phone

THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT TO THE U.S. CONSTITUTION (full text)

- Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.
- Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.
- Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

Sponsored by the National Organization for Women (NOW), 425 13th St., NW, #1048, Washington, DC 20004
as part of the National ERA Petition Campaign coordinated by NOW and ERAmerica.

Please return this petition to NOW at University of Houston, Cullen Blvd., Box 509, Student Activities, Univ. Center,
Houston, Texas 77004