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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

**Briefing papers prepared for the
President's Press Conference
from the Women's Office.**



Question:

Since you have recently reaffirmed your support of the Equal Rights Amendment, what are your thoughts about the women's movement in general?

Answer:

Women participate and contribute to our Nation's economic, social and political well-being in a variety of ways--through paid employment, volunteer work outside the home, and as homemakers and mothers. I believe that women should have equal legal status and that women and men should be given the opportunity to choose any career they wish--homemaker, lawyer, doctor, nurse, volunteer, plumber, etc.

My Administration is pledged to removing those discriminatory barriers which prohibit women from realizing and achieving their full potential.

Background:

Since women comprise 53% of the population, the issues of concern to women are numerous. Additionally, in today's changing society the roles women are assuming vary. Women comprise about 40% of today's labor market; of this group 41% have husbands present in the home.

The issues of greatest concern to women, which also divide women, are the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion, admittance of women to military academies, day care, regulations covering Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and drafting of women.

Other issues of concern to women on which controversy is at a minimum are International Women's Year, appointment of women to top policy-making positions in the government, elimination of credit discrimination, and equal pay for equal work.

The goal of the women's rights movement is to elevate the status of all women and to make it possible for women and men to choose whatever role they prefer--be it homemaker, volunteer, career outside the home, or any combination of these.

Those women who oppose the women's movement relate the women working toward equality for women as the radical women who first made the news in 1968 protesting the "Miss America" pageant dubbed by the press as "women's libbers."



WOMEN

Q: Many women's organizations are concerned about your reference to women's liberationists and male chauvinists. Does this mean you do not take seriously the concerns of women?

A: Absolutely not. I am deeply dedicated to achieving full Equality for women. As I stated when signing the Women's Equality Day Proclamation, it has been my observation that women over the years in politics, as well as otherwise, have to do things twice as well as men in order to get half the credit, and I think we have got to change that.



Q: Do you plan to appoint a woman to your Cabinet?

A: Of course, you know Anne Armstrong is serving as Counsellor to the President with Cabinet rank, and she is the first woman to hold that position. I placed a woman, Gwen Anderson, in a high-level staff slot when I was Vice President. I am currently reviewing White House and Department staffs and I do intend to increase the number of women in top level positions.



Q: I understand Reverend Patricia Park took part in your church services Sunday. What do you think about the recent ordination of women in the Episcopal Church?

A: I have stated that women must be free to participate in all areas and at all levels of our society, including the church. However, it is my understanding that the ordination of these women took place without full ecclesiastical approval. I feel that it is inappropriate for me as President to comment upon the internal affairs of the Church.



Q: You've recently reaffirmed your support of the ERA, but what are you going to do to insure full equality for women?

A: I will use all the prestige of the Presidency to push for true equality for women including more appointments.

I want all women, whether homemaker, career woman or a combination of both, to be able to use their talents to the utmost without any barrier of discrimination.



Q: What is your stand on the Equal Rights Amendment?

A: As you know, I reaffirmed my personal commitment to that Amendment when I signed the Women's Equality Day Proclamation on August 22nd. In 1970 I assisted Congresswoman Griffiths in bringing the ERA to the floor of the House by obtaining 15 of the 16 signatures.



Q: What about the arguments against ERA --will it weaken family life and put women in the front lines in combat?

A: I think these fears are groundless, otherwise I would not support the ERA. As President Eisenhower said, "ERA is a matter of simple justice". It will guarantee legal equality for all Americans -- men and women alike.



Q: Isn't the Equal Rights Amendment in trouble?

A: To the contrary, I am encouraged about its prospects. To date, 33 States have ratified the Amendment. As you know, 38 States must ratify by 1979 to make this part of our Constitution.



Q: As President, do you plan to push for the passage of the credit legislation now pending in Congress?

A: Last Wednesday, August 22, I signed the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 which prohibits sex discrimination in housing and mortgage credit lending. Ensuring that credit is extended to all persons on an equitable basis, without regard to their sex or marital status, has been an initiative of the Nixon Administration and I urge prompt action on the Congressional proposals now pending.



Q: What is your position on Day Care?

A: I believe there is a need for quality day care services and understand that a bill has recently been introduced. Day care services are presently included in several Federally supported programs. I will be consulting with Secretary Weinberger and members of my staff on current needs for day care and how these programs are meeting those needs before commenting on the proposed legislation.



Q: Now that you have become the President of the United States, has your position on abortion changed?

A: I am sure you are aware there is a wide division of opinion on this issue. I will abide by the Supreme Court's decision.



Q: Since population and family planning are of prime concern to women, why weren't there more women delegates representing the U.S. at the World Population Conference now being held in Bucharest?

A: It is my understanding that Patricia Hutar, the U.S. delegate to the U.N. Commission of the Status of Women, was one of the five principal delegates. All I can say is that I will do everything possible to insure that all delegations be representative of those people concerned with the issues to be discussed.



Q: Do you think women should be admitted to the Service Academies?

A: As you know, military experts are divided on this issue. One Service Academy, the U.S. Merchant Marine, has recently admitted women. As there is a bill currently pending in Congress, I have asked my staff to review this issue.



Q: As a sportsman, what do you think of HEW's coverage of intercollegiate athletics in the proposed Title IX Regulations of the Education Amendments of 1972?

A: It is my understanding that the Regulation would neither exempt nor disrupt intercollegiate athletics as some have feared; rather the Regulation moves in the direction of insuring better opportunities for women in athletic programs.

Athletics is one of many complex issues included in these regulations and that is why interested parties have been given 120 days as compared with the usual 30 days to send their comments to HEW. That means groups have until October 15 to comment.



Q: In January of this year, 1975 was proclaimed International Women's Year by President Nixon. What are your plans for it?

A: I am proud that our Nation was the first to proclaim 1975 as International Women's Year. We will be actively involved in plans for the IWY World Conference being sponsored by the U.N. to be held in Bogota, Columbia early next summer.



Q: You recently signed the Education Amendments of 1974 and stated that you hoped the Congress would exercise restraint in appropriating funds authorized under this legislation. Women are concerned that the Women's Educational Equity Act included in that bill will not be funded. What are your thoughts?

A: When appropriations are considered, I hope that the Congress will avoid increasing the budget. My intention is not to eliminate any one program but to hold down Federal spending.



Q: American women have been the most vocal critics of the World Population Conference charging that women are not being heard at the conference. What are your views on the population policy that should be followed by the U. S. ?

A: I understand that the U. S. delegation lead by Secretary Weinberger has recognized a link between population growth and economic development. The amendment being proposed as a result of the women's criticism is to urge governments to take "particular steps to achieve integration of women in all walks of life, on an equal basis with men. This is in keeping with my previous statements in my Women's Equality Day Proclamation issued last Thursady. At that time I urged Americans to consider the essential role of women in our society and their contribution to our economic, social and political well-being...this Nation cannot deny equal status to women.

