

The original documents are located in Box 36, “7/14/76 - Filmed Message for the National Convention of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN . . .

TAPING: CONVENTION OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION
BUSINESS WOMEN'S CLUBS, JULY 14, 1976

I AM DELIGHTED TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO GREET YOU TODAY,
AS YOU ASSEMBLE FOR YOUR NATIONAL CONVENTION.

MY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S
CLUBS BEGAN DURING THE YEARS WHEN HAZEL MYERS USED TO INVITE
ME TO THE GRAND RAPIDS CLUB MEETINGS. RECENTLY I HAD AN
OPPORTUNITY TO MEET MANY OF YOU IN WASHINGTON AT YOUR
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE. I'VE ENJOYED EACH OCCASION
AND HOPE TO HAVE MANY MORE SUCH OPPORTUNITIES TO BE WITH
YOU IN THE FUTURE.

B.P.W. HAS A LONG HISTORY OF WORKING FOR EQUALITY OF
OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, AND MOST
RECENTLY, IN WORKING FOR RATIFICATION OF THE EQUAL RIGHTS
AMENDMENT.

AS YOU KNOW, WHEN I WAS A MEMBER OF CONGRESS, I WORKED WITH MARTHA GRIFFITHS TO GATHER ENOUGH SIGNATURES ON A DISCHARGE PETITION TO GET THE E.R.A. ON THE FLOOR OF THE HOUSE.

I AM CONFIDENT THAT WITH THE DEDICATION AND EFFORT YOU HAVE ALWAYS GIVEN, THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT WILL BECOME THE 27th AMENDMENT TO OUR CONSTITUTION. YOU CAN BE SURE THAT BETTY AND I WILL CONTINUE TO DO OUR PART TO SEE THAT THIS VITAL CAMPAIGN SUCCEEDS.

BUT INJUSTICE CANNOT AWAIT UPON POLITICS, NOR UPON THE LENGTHY PUBLIC DEBATE WHICH HAS ALREADY DELAYED RATIFICATION.

THEREFORE, I RECENTLY DIRECTED THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO REVIEW THE ENTIRE UNITED STATES CODE TO DETERMINE THE NEED FOR REVISING SEX-BASED PROVISIONS THAT ARE NOT JUSTIFIED IN LAW NOR SUPPORTED BY WISE POLICY.

AS THE UNITED STATES ENTERS ITS THIRD CENTURY, WE CAN ILL-AFFORD TO DISREGARD THE RIGHTS OR NEGLECT THE TALENTS OF ONE-HALF OF OUR POPULATION. THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS WOMEN'S RIGHTS. THERE ARE ONLY THE RIGHTS OF ALL AMERICANS TO LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS.

BY ELIMINATING THE REMAINING BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S FREEDOM, WE ARE DOING NO MORE THAN FULFILLING A PROMISE MADE IN PHILADELPHIA 200 YEARS AGO. LET US NOW GO FORWARD, TOGETHER, AND MAKE THAT PROMISE A REALITY.

BETTY JOINS ME IN WISHING YOU A MOST SUCCESSFUL

CONVENTION.

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