The original documents are located in Box 19, folder “10/25/75 - Cleveland, Ohio (2)” of the Sheila Weidenfeld Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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Thank you for inviting me. I am here because I believe the best way to celebrate International Women's Year is to examine the very real problems women face today, not the progress of yesterday.

While many new opportunities are open to women, too many are available only to the lucky few. Many barriers continue to block the paths of most women, even on the most basic issue of equal pay for equal work. And the contributions of women as wives and mothers continue to be underrated. (Applause)

This year is not the time to cheer the visible few, but to work for the invisible many, whose lives are still restricted by custom and code. (Applause)

In working sessions of this conference, you will explore many of the formal and informal restrictions that confine women.

Many of these restrictions spring directly from those emotional ideas about what women can do and should do. These
definitions of behavior and ability inhibit men and women alike, but the limits on women have been formalized into law and structured into social custom.

For that reason, the first important steps have been made to undo the laws that hem women in and lock them out of the mainstream of opportunities.

But my own support of the Equal Rights Amendment has shown what happens when a definition of proper behavior collides with the right of an individual to personal opinions. I do not believe that being First Lady should prevent me from expressing my views. (laughter) (applause)

I spoke out on this important issue because of my deep personal convictions. Why should my husband's job or yours prevent us from being ourselves? Being ladylike does not require silence. (applause/laughter)

The Equal Rights amendment when ratified will not be an instant solution to women's problems. It will not alter the fabric of the Constitution -- or force women away from their families. It will help knock down those restrictions that have locked women into old stereotypes of behavior and opportunity. It will help open up more options for women.
But it is only a beginning.

The debate over ERA has become too emotional, because of the fears of some -- both men and women -- about the changes already taking place in America.

And part of the job of those of us who support ERA is to help remove this cloud of fear and confusion.

Change by its very nature is threatening, but it is also often productive. And the fight of women to become more productive, accepted human beings is important to all people of either sex and whatever nationality.

I hope 1976 will be the year the remaining four states ratify the 27th Amendment. It will be an important symbolic event during our 200th birthday to show the American experiment in human freedom continues to expand.

But changing laws, more job opportunities, less financial discrimination and more possibilities for the use of our minds and bodies will only partially change the place of American women in this country.

By themselves they will never be enough, because we must value our own talents before we can expect acceptance from others. The heart of the battle is within.
I have been distressed that one unfortunate outgrowth of the debate has been a lack of appreciation of the role of wives and mothers.

In trying to open up new choices and opportunities, women must not underestimate their accomplishments in the home.

Fortunately, I have had the best of two worlds -- that of a career woman earning my own living, and that of a homemaker and mother raising four individual and delightful youngsters. I find most unusual the idea that I am equally proud of both periods in my life.

We have to take that "just" out of "just a housewife" and show our pride in having made the home and family our life's work.

Downgrading this work has been part of the pattern in our society that has undervalued women's talents in all areas.

We have come a long way, but we have a long way to go. Part of that distance is within our own mind.

ERA will help open some doors, changing our own attitudes as women will open even more. But legal help and self-help will not be enough.

The long road to equality rests on achievements of women and men in altering how women are treated in every area of everyday life.
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Freedom for women to be what they want to be will help complete the circle of freedom American has been striving for during 200 years. As the barriers against freedom for Americans because of race or religion have fallen -- the freedom of all has expanded. The search for human freedom can never be complete without freedom for women.
I am delighted to join you this morning. It's refreshing to see so many women of varied interests and backgrounds together for a common purpose.

It's so important for women to realize there is more than unites us -- than divides us. Because in unity there can be a diversity, but in division there can never be strength.

I would like to share some thoughts and experiences with you about trying to be an individual instead of a stereotype.

And I believe this is what the women's movement is about.

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MRS. FORD'S SPEECH, GREATER CLEVELAND IWY CONGRESS, OCTOBER 25, 1975

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# # #
January 22, 1976

Dear Mr. Meissner:

Thank you for your letter to Mrs. Ford and your thoughts. I appreciate the concern which prompts you to write.

Mrs. Ford decided to address the Cleveland group on the general subject of women's rights—what has been done, and what is left to do. She did not get into all the specific issues that involve women and their family or working life.

Prior to the speech, Mrs. Ford went to the auditorium with the idea of going to several different booths. As anyone there would confirm, the large crowd of both press and public that very quickly gathered turned the "tour" into something less than orderly; and frankly, there was not much of an opportunity to visit with anyone at any booth. It was unfortunate. Mrs. Ford did, however, enjoy the visit to Cleveland very much.

I enclose a copy of her speech, which might be helpful in seeing the types of things she addressed herself to.

Again, Mr. Meissner, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

Sheila Rabb Weidenfeld
Press Secretary to Mrs. Ford

M$ Joseph P. Meissner
Attorneys at Law
Ohio Right to Life Society
3555 Northvale Blvd.
Cleveland, Ohio 44112

Enclosure

PM/saq/Central File/ENPress:cron/subject/alpha
January 19, 1976

Dear Bill:

Thanks so much for the article on my visit to Cleveland. The trip was especially interesting, and I enjoyed reading Margaret Josten's observations on the conference. As you know, it's sometimes hard to gauge reaction from the podium, so the audience comments in the article were especially interesting to me.

I hope you are enjoying your new career and getting a chance to spend more time with your family. But I want you to know — you are missed in Congress.

The very best to you from both Jerry and me.

Sincerely,

BF

Honorable William J. Keating
President, The Cincinnati Enquirer
Cincinnati, Ohio
THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME.
I AM HERE BECAUSE I BELIEVE
THE BEST WAY TO CELEBRATE
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S YEAR
IS TO EXAMINE THE VERY REAL PROBLEMS
WOMEN FACE TODAY,
NOT THE IMPORTANT PROGRESS OF YESTERDAY.

WHILE MANY NEW OPPORTUNITIES
ARE OPEN TO WOMEN,
TOO MANY ARE AVAILABLE
ONLY TO THE LUCKY FEW.
MANY BARRIERS CONTINUE TO BLOCK
THE PATHS OF MOST WOMEN,
EVEN ON THE MOST BASIC ISSUE
OF EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK,
AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF WOMEN
AS WIVES AND MOTHERS
CONTINUE TO BE UNDERRATED.

THIS YEAR IS NOT THE TIME
TO CHEER THE VISIBLE FEW,
BUT TO WORK FOR THE INVISIBLE MANY,
WHOSE LIVES ARE STILL RESTRICTED
BY CUSTOM AND CODE.
IN THE WORKING SESSIONS OF THIS CONFERENCE,
YOU WILL EXPLORE
MANY OF THE FORMAL AND INFORMAL RESTRICTIONS
THAT CONFINE WOMEN.

MANY OF THESE RESTRICTIONS
SPRING DIRECTLY FROM THOSE EMOTIONAL IDEAS
ABOUT WHAT WOMEN CAN AND SHOULD DO.

THESE DEFINITIONS OF BEHAVIOR AND ABILITY
INHIBIT MEN AND WOMEN ALIKE;
BUT THE LIMITS ON WOMEN
HAVE BEEN FORMALIZED INTO LAW
AND STRUCTURED INTO SOCIAL CUSTOM.
FOR THAT REASON,
THE FIRST IMPORTANT STEPS
HAVE BEEN TO UNDO THE LAWS
THAT HEM WOMEN IN AND LOCK THEM OUT
OF THE MAINSTREAM OF OPPORTUNITIES.

BUT MY OWN SUPPORT OF THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT
HAS SHOWN WHAT HAPPENS
WHEN A DEFINITION OF PROPER BEHAVIOR
COLLIDES WITH THE RIGHT OF AN INDIVIDUAL
TO PERSONAL OPINIONS.
I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT BEING FIRST LADY
SHOULD PREVENT ME
FROM EXPRESSING MY VIEWS.
I spoke out on this important issue,
because of my deep personal convictions.
Why should my husband's job or yours
prevent us from being ourselves?
Being ladylike does not require silence.

The equal rights amendment when ratified
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to women's problems.
It will not alter the fabric
of the constitution --
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from their families.
IT WILL HELP KNOCK DOWN THOSE RESTRICTIONS
THAT HAVE LOCKED WOMEN IN
TO OLD STEREOTYPES
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IT WILL HELP OPEN UP
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BUT IT IS ONLY A BEGINNING.

THE DEBATE OVER ERA
HAS BECOME TOO EMOTIONAL,
BECAUSE OF THE FEARS OF SOME --
BOTH MEN AND WOMEN --
ABOUT THE CHANGES
ALREADY TAKING PLACE IN AMERICA.
AND PART OF THE JOB
OF THOSE OF US WHO SUPPORT ERA
IS TO HELP REMOVE THIS CLOUD
OF FEAR AND CONFUSION.

CHANGE BY ITS VERY NATURE IS THREATENING,
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AND THE FIGHT OF WOMEN
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BEFORE WE CAN EXPECT ACCEPTANCE FROM OTHERS.
THE HEART OF THE BATTLE IS WITHIN.

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THAT ONE UNFORTUNATE OUTGROWTH OF THE DEBATE
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IN TRYING TO OPEN UP
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TO BE WHAT THEY WANT TO BE
WILL HELP COMPLETE THE CIRCLE OF FREEDOM
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BECAUSE OF RACE OR RELIGION HAVE FALLEN --
THE FREEDOM OF ALL HAS EXPANDED.
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-13-

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I HOPE THIS NATION WILL BE A PLACE
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ON THE EVE OF THE NATION'S THIRD CENTURY,
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Change by its very nature is threatening, but it is also often productive. And the fight of women to become more productive, accepted human beings is important to all people of either sex and whatever nationality.

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But changing laws, more job opportunities, less financial discrimination and more possibilities for the use of our minds and bodies will only partially change the place of American women.

By themselves they will never be enough, because we must value our own talents before we can expect acceptance from others. The heart of the battle is within.
I have been distressed that one unfortunate outgrowth of the debate has been a lack of appreciation of the role of women as wives and mothers.

In trying to open up new choices and opportunities, women must not underestimate their accomplishments in the home.

Fortunately, I have had the best of two worlds -- that of a career woman earning my own living, and that of a homemaker and mother raising four individual and delightful youngsters. I am equally proud of both periods in my life.

We have to take that "just" out of "just a housewife" and show our pride in having made the home and family our life's work.

Downgrading this work has been part of the pattern in our society that has undervalued women's talents in all areas.

We have come a long way, but we have a long way to go -- part of that distance is within our own mind.

ERA will help open some doors, changing our own attitudes as women will open even more. But legal help and self-help will not be enough.

The long road to equality rests on achievements of women and men in altering how women are treated in every area of everyday life.
That is why this conference is so important, because you are looking at the patterns of discrimination which must be ended before women are truly free.

Freedom for women to be what they want to be will help complete the circle of freedom American has been striving for during 200 years. As the barriers against freedom for Americans because of race or religion have fallen -- the freedom of all has expanded. The search for human freedom can never be complete without freedom for women.

# # #
THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME.
I AM HERE BECAUSE I BELIEVE
THE BEST WAY TO CELEBRATE
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR
IS TO EXAMINE THE VERY REAL PROBLEMS
WOMEN FACE TODAY,
NOT THE PROGRESS OF YESTERDAY.

WHILE MANY NEW OPPORTUNITIES
ARE OPEN TO WOMEN,
TOO MANY ARE AVAILABLE ONLY
TO THE LUCKY FEW.
MANY BARRIERS CONTINUE TO BLOCK THE PATHS OF MOST WOMEN, EVEN ON THE MOST BASIC ISSUE OF EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK. AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF WOMEN AS WIVES AND MOTHERS CONTINUE TO BE UNDERRATED.

THIS YEAR IS NOT THE TIME TO CHEER THE VISIBLE FEW, BUT TO WORK FOR THE INVISIBLE MANY, WHOSE LIVES ARE STILL RESTRICTED BY CUSTOM AND CODE.
In working sessions of this conference, you will explore many of the formal and informal restrictions that confine women.

Many of these restrictions spring directly from those emotional ideas about what women can do and should do. These definitions of behavior and ability inhibit men and women alike, but the limits on women have been formalized into law and structured into social custom.
FOR THAT REASON, (4)

THE FIRST IMPORTANT STEPS
HAVE BEEN TO UNDO THE LAWS
THAT HEM WOMEN IN AND LOCK THEM OUT OF
THE MAINSTREAM OF OPPORTUNITIES.

BUT, MY OWN SUPPORT OF THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT
HAS SHOWN WHAT HAPPENS
WHEN A DEFINITION OF PROPER BEHAVIOR
COLLIDES WITH THE RIGHT OF AN INDIVIDUAL
TO PERSONAL OPINIONS.
I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT BEING FIRST LADY SHOULD PREVENT ME
FROM EXPRESSING MY VIEWS.
I SPOKE OUT ON THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE, BECAUSE OF MY DEEP PERSONAL CONVICTIONS.
WHY SHOULD MY HUSBAND'S JOB OR YOURS PREVENT US FROM BEING OURSELVES?
BEING LADYLIKE DOES NOT REQUIRE SILENCE.

THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT WHEN RATIFIED WILL NOT BE AN INSTANT SOLUTION TO WOMEN'S PROBLEMS.
IT WILL NOT ALTER THE FABRIC OF THE CONSTITUTION -- OR FORCE WOMEN AWAY FROM THEIR FAMILIES.

Women demand jobs.
IT WILL HELP KNOCK DOWN THOSE RESTRICTIONS THAT HAVE LOCKED WOMEN IN TO OLD STEREOTYPES OF BEHAVIOR AND OPPORTUNITY. IT WILL HELP OPEN UP MORE OPTIONS FOR WOMEN.

BUT IT IS ONLY A BEGINNING.

THE DEBATE OVER ERA HAS BECOME TOO EMOTIONAL, BECAUSE OF THE FEARS OF SOME -- BOTH MEN AND WOMEN -- ABOUT THE CHANGES ALREADY TAKING PLACE IN AMERICA,
AND PART OF THE JOB OF THOSE OF US WHO SUPPORT ERA IS TO HELP REMOVE THIS CLOUD OF FEAR AND CONFUSION.

CHANGE BY ITS VERY NATURE IS THREATENING, BUT IT IS ALSO OFTEN PRODUCTIVE.

AND THE FIGHT OF WOMEN TO BECOME MORE PRODUCTIVE, ACCEPTED HUMAN BEINGS IS IMPORTANT TO ALL PEOPLE OF EITHER SEX AND WHATEVER NATIONALITY.
I HOPE 1976 WILL BE THE YEAR
THE REMAINING FOUR STATES
RATIFY THE 27TH AMENDMENT. APPLAUSE.
IT WILL BE AN IMPORTANT SYMBOLIC EVENT
DURING OUR 200TH BIRTHDAY
TO SHOW THAT THE GREAT AMERICAN EXPERIMENT
IN HUMAN FREEDOM CONTINUES TO EXPAND.

BUT CHANGING LAWS,
MORE JOB OPPORTUNITIES
LESS FINANCIAL DISCRIMINATION
AND MORE POSSIBILITIES
FOR THE USE OF OUR MINDS AND BODIES
WILL ONLY PARTIALLY CHANGE THE PLACE OF AMERICAN WOMEN.
BY THEMSELVES THEY WILL NEVER BE ENOUGH, (9)
BECAUSE WE MUST VALUE OUR OWN TALENTS
BEFORE WE CAN EXPECT ACCEPTANCE FROM OTHERS.
THE HEART OF THE BATTLE IS WITHIN.

I HAVE BEEN DISTRESSED
THAT ONE UNFORTUNATE OUTGROWTH OF THE DEBATE
HAS BEEN A LACK OF APPRECIATION
OF THE ROLE OF WOMEN AS WIVES AND MOTHERS.

IN TRYING TO OPEN UP
NEW CHOICES AND OPPORTUNITIES,
WOMEN MUST NOT UNDERESTIMATE
THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE HOME.
Fortunately, I have had the best of two worlds --
that of a career woman earning my own living,
and that of a homemaker and mother
raising four individual
and delightful youngsters, who I find the most unusual and delightful.
I am equally proud of both periods in my life of these opportunities.
WE HAVE TO TAKE THAT "JUST"
OUT OF "JUST A HOUSEWIFE"
AND SHOW OUR PRIDE
IN HAVING MADE THE HOME AND FAMILY
OUR LIFE'S WORK.

DOWNGRADING THIS WORK
HAS BEEN PART OF THE PATTERN IN OUR SOCIETY
THAT HAS UNDervalued WOMEN'S TALENTS IN ALL AREAS.

WE HAVE COME A LONG WAY,
BUT WE HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO --
AND PART OF THAT DISTANCE IS WITHIN OUR OWN MIND.
ERA WILL HELP OPEN SOME DOORS.
CHANGING OUR OWN ATTITUDES AS WOMEN
WILL OPEN EVEN MORE.
BUT LEGAL HELP AND SELF-HELP
WILL NOT BE ENOUGH.

THE LONG ROAD TO EQUALITY
RESTS ON ACHIEVEMENTS OF WOMEN AND MEN
IN ALTERING HOW WOMEN ARE TREATED
IN EVERY AREA OF EVERYDAY LIFE.

THAT IS WHY THIS CONFERENCE IS SO IMPORTANT,
BECAUSE YOU ARE LOOKING AT
THE PATTERNS OF DISCRIMINATION
WHICH MUST BE ENDED BEFORE WOMEN ARE TRULY FREE.
FREEDOM FOR WOMEN

TO BE WHAT THEY WANT TO BE

WILL HELP COMPLETE THE CIRCLE OF FREEDOM

AMERICA HAS BEEN STRIVING FOR DURING 200 YEARS.

AS THE BARRIERS AGAINST FREEDOM FOR AMERICANS

BECAUSE OF RACE OR RELIGION HAVE FALLEN --

THE FREEDOM OF ALL HAS EXPANDED.

THE SEARCH FOR HUMAN FREEDOM

CAN NEVER BE COMPLETE

WITHOUT FREEDOM FOR WOMEN.
By the end of the century
I hope it will be
be a country

much has been done - much
remains but we must keep
moving on.
Thank you for inviting me. I am here because I believe the best way to celebrate International Women's Year is to examine the very real problems women face today, not the important progress of yesterday.

While many new opportunities are open to women, too many are available only to the lucky few. Many barriers continue to block the paths of most women, even on the most basic issue of equal pay for equal work. And the contributions of women, as wives and mothers, continue to be undervalued.

This year is not the time to cheer the visible few, but to work for the invisible many, whose lives are still restricted by custom and code.

In the working sessions of this conference, you will explore many of the formal and informal restrictions that confine women.
Many of these restrictions spring directly from those emotional ideas about what women can and should do. These definitions of behavior and ability inhibit men and women alike, but the limits on women have been formalized into law and structured into social custom.

For that reason, the first important steps have been to undo the laws that hem women in and lock them out of the mainstream of opportunities.

But my own support of the Equal Rights Amendment has shown what happens when a definition of proper behavior collides with the right of an individual to personal opinions. I do not believe that being First Lady should prevent me from expressing my views.

I spoke out on this important issue, because of my deep personal convictions. Why should my husband’s job or yours prevent us from being ourselves? Being ladylike does not require silence.

The Equal Rights Amendment, when ratified, will not be an instant solution to women’s problems. It will not alter the fabric of the Constitution — nor force women away from their families. It will help
knock down those restrictions that have locked women into old 
of behavior and opportunity.

It will help open up more options for women.

But it is only a beginning.

The debate over ERA has become too emotional because 
of the fears of some -- both men and women -- about the changes 

already taking place in America.

And part of the job of those who support ERA is to 

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ERA will help open some doors. Changing our own attitudes, women will open even more. But legal help and self-help will not be enough.

The long road to equality rests on achievements of women and men in altering how women are treated in every area of everyday life.

That is why this Conference is so important, because you are looking at the patterns of discrimination which must be ended before women are truly free.

Freedom for women to be what they want to be will help complete the circle of freedom America has been striving for during 200 years. As the barriers against freedom for Americans because
of race or religion have fallen -- the freedom of all has expanded.

The search for human freedom can never be complete without freedom for women.

And if By the end of this century, I hope this Nation will be a place where men and women can freely choose their life's work without restrictions or ridicule.

And if On the eve of the Nation's third century, let us work to end the laws and remove the labels that limit the imaginations and the options of men and women alike.

And if Success will open hearts and minds to new possibilities for all people. Much has been done. Much remains. But we are moving along.

# # #
Friday

Sheila,

Will be at work in the morning - home rest of weekend - call me when you have time for more work on this.
I am delighted to join you this morning. It's refreshing to see so many women of varied interests and backgrounds together for a common purpose.

It's so important for women to realize there is more than unites us -- than divides us. Because in unity there can be a diversity, but in division there can never be strength.

I would like to share some thoughts and experiences with you about trying to be an individual instead of a stereotype.

And I believe this is what the women's movement is about.

All of us live with labels and stereotypes imposed on us by others or by our own thinking. We categorize ourselves and others and lock ourselves into certain roles and attitudes.

These restrictions limit men as well as women, but the major difference has been that the restrictions on women have been
formalized into laws and strengthened by custom.

For that reason, the first important steps have been to undo the laws that hem women in and locked them out of the mainstream of opportunities.

My own support of the Equal Rights Amendment has shown me what happens when a stereotype collides with the individual. I do not believe that being First Lady should prevent me from having personal opinions.

I spoke out on this important issue, because of my deep personal convictions. Why should my husband's job or yours prevent you from being yourself.

The Equal Rights Amendment when ratified will not be an instant solution to women's problems. It will not alter the fabric of the Constitution -- or force women away from their families. It will help
knock down those restrictions that have locked women in to old stereotypes. It will help open up more options for women.

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In trying to open up new choices and opportunities, women must not underestimate their accomplishments in the home.

We have to take that "just" out of "just a housewife" and show our pride in having made the home and family our life's work.
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of race or religion have fallen -- the freedom of all has expanded.

The search for human freedom can never be complete without freedom for women.

By the end of this century, I hope this Nation will be a place where men and women can freely choose their life's work without restrictions or ridicule.

On the eve of the Nation's third century, let us work to end the laws and remove the labels that limit the imaginations and the options of men and women alike.

Success will open hearts and minds to new possibilities for all people. Much has been done. Much remains. But we are moving along.

# # #
It is a great privilege and a great delight to be here and have this opportunity to say a few words to all of you wonderful people who are making this Conference such a successful Conference.

I really thank you for inviting me, and I am here because I believe the best way to celebrate International Women's Year is to examine the very real problems women face today -- not the progress of yesterday.

While many new opportunities are open to women, too many are available to the lucky few. Many barriers continue to block the paths of most women, even on the most basic issue of equal pay for equal work, and the contributions of women as wives and mothers continue to be underrated.

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For that reason the first important steps have been made to undo the laws that hem women in and lock them out of the mainstream of opportunities. But my own support of the Equal Rights Amendment has shown what happens when a definition of proper behavior collides with the right of an individual to personal opinions.
I do not believe that being First Lady should prevent me from expressing my ideas. I spoke out on this important issue because of my deep personal convictions. Why should my husband's job, or yours, prevent us from being ourselves. Being ladylike does not require silence.

The Equal Rights Amendment, when ratified, will not be an instant solution to women's problems, will not alter the fabric of the Constitution or force women away from their families. It will help knock down those restrictions that have locked women into the old stereotypes of behavior and opportunity. It will help open up more options for women. But it is only a beginning. The debate over ERA has become too emotional because of the fears of some, both men and women, about the changes already taking place in America. And part of the job of those of us who support ERA is to help remove this cloud of fear and confusion.

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I have been distressed that one unfortunate outgrowth of the debate has been a lack of appreciation of the role of wives and mothers. In trying to open up new choices and opportunities, women must not undervalue their accomplishments in the home. Fortunately, I have had the best of two worlds -- that of a career woman earning my own living, and that of a homemaker and a mother raising four individual youngsters who I find most unusual and delightful, but I am equally proud of both of these opportunities.
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Thank you very much.