

The original documents are located in Box 3, folder “International Women’s Year Conference, Cleveland, Ohio, October 25, 1975” of the Frances K. Pullen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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GREATER CLEVELAND IYW CONGRESS

OCTOBER 25, 1975

ORIGINAL RETIRED TO
SPECIAL DOCUMENTS FILE

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,

(3)

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.

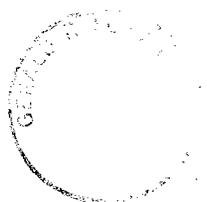
THESE DEFINITIONS OF BEHAVIOR AND ABILITY

INHIBIT MEN AND WOMEN ALIKE,

BUT THE LIMITS ON WOMEN

HAVE BEEN FORMALIZED INTO LAW

AND STRUCTURED INTO SOCIAL CUSTOM.

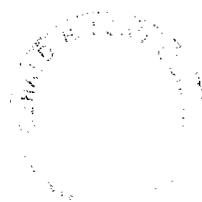


FOR THAT REASON,
THE FIRST IMPORTANT STEPS
HAVE BEEN TO UNDO THE LAWS
THAT HEM WOMEN IN AND LOCK THEM OUT OF
THE MAINSTREAM OF OPPORTUNITIES.

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.



IT WILL HELP KNOCK DOWN THOSE RESTRICTIONS

(6)

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

(7)

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

(8)

THE REMAINING FOUR STATES

RATIFY THE 27TH AMENDMENT.

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,
BECAUSE WE MUST VALUE OUR OWN TALENTS
BEFORE WE CAN EXPECT ACCEPTANCE FROM OTHERS.
THE HEART OF THE BATTLE IS WITHIN.

(9)

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

(10)

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"

(11)

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.

(12)

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

(13)

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 THIS CENTURY,

(14)

I HOPE THIS NATION WILL BE A PLACE

WHERE MEN AND WOMEN CAN FREELY CHOOSE THEIR LIFE'S WORK

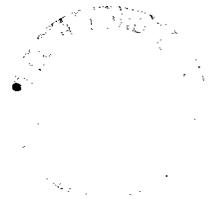
WITHOUT RESTRICTIONS OR WITHOUT RIDICULE.

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

(15)

TO NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR ALL PEOPLE.

MUCH HAS BEEN DONE,

MUCH REMAINS,

BUT WE MUST KEEP MOVING ON.