

S. J. RES. 25
EQUAL
RIGHTS

NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
1740 K STREET, N. W.
WASHINGTON 6, D. C.

REC'D JAN 16 1950

MARY ANDERSON, HONORARY CHAIRMAN

January 14, 1950

Honorable Lester C. Hunt
Senate Office Building
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Senator Hunt:

In view of the great importance of so much other legislation, the high priority given to consideration of the Equal Rights Amendment (S.J.Res. 25) by the Democratic Policy Committee comes as a surprise to the many groups opposing this Amendment, including a majority of the large women's organizations, all the major labor organizations, and various church groups. These groups believe that true equality of men and women would not be gained by an amendment to the Constitution, and while opposing such an amendment, have consistently worked for federal and state legislation, such as Minimum Wage and Equal Pay laws, that wipe out specific discriminations against women. Thus, in the 29 years since the Amendment was first introduced in Congress, great strides have been made in the status of women and will continue to be made by this positive action. We therefore question the urgency of passing an Equal Rights Amendment which at best would only be an enabling act for specific legislation which can be passed anyway. In addition, adoption of the Amendment will create legal chaos and may endanger legislation built up over the years and accepted as socially desirable.

We would like to call your attention to the enclosed statement, which gives our position more fully and lists the member organizations of this Committee, which opposes the Equal Rights Amendment. We are also enclosing a copy of an editorial from the Washington Post of April 1, 1949.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Anderson
Mary Anderson
Honorary Chairman

SEN. L. C. HUNT
ACC. NO. 270

The Washington Post

Saturday, April 2, 1949

Equal Rights

The National Woman's Party is assembled in convention in Washington this weekend to press its fight for passage of the so-called equal rights amendment to the Constitution. Its zeal and persistence are worthy of a better cause. For in seeking to eliminate all distinctions in legal treatment of men and women, the proposed amendment would sweep away a vast body of protective legislation applicable to women. For that reason all major labor organizations are on record as opposed to this amendment, and Secretary of Labor Tobin has likewise voiced opposition to it. Also included among the numerous and numerically strong organizations that regard the amendment as a threat to the welfare of women rather than a benefit are such outstanding women's organizations as the League of Women Voters, the American Association of University Women, the National Women's Trade Union League, the National Board of the YWCA, and the National Councils of Catholic, Jewish and Negro Women.

The foes of the equal rights amendment are not unmindful of the fact that women are the victims of discriminations rooted in custom and prejudice which are not justified by differences in sex. But they realize that this kind of discrimination cannot be

eradicated by legislation. Moreover, insofar as legislation is concerned, their aim is to revise or abolish only those laws that reflect an irrational sex bias. The Women's Status bill which was before the Eightieth Congress has been introduced again with that purpose in mind. It has the backing of 38 national organizations, with a membership of more than 25 million, composing the National Committee on the Status of Women. This bill declares that it is the policy of the Federal Government to abolish distinctions based on sex in Federal Government and its administration, "except such as are reasonably justified by differences in physical structure or by maternal function." It also recommends that the States declare a similar policy and review their own laws and practices with the intention of bringing them into line with this new policy. An especially important provision of the bill calls for establishment of a presidential commission to study and report on all phases of the legal, economic and social status of women and make recommendations for such legislative action as may be required.

The Women's Status bill outlines a practicable and rational method of dealing with problems of sex discrimination. That is shown by the fact that it is being actively supported by representative groups that have achieved notable victories over the years in battles to elevate the legal status and living conditions of women in industry and in the home.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
IN THE UNITED STATES

List of Member Organizations

American Association of Social Workers
American Civil Liberties Union
Americans for Democratic Action
Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America
American Federation of Hosiery Workers
American Federation of Labor
American Federation of Teachers
American Federation of Women's Auxiliaries of Labor
Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Shipbuilders and Helpers Union
Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen
Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen
Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks, Freight Handlers, Express and
Station Employees
Congress of Women's Auxiliaries of the CIO
Congress of Industrial Organizations
Communications Workers of America
Glass Bottle Blowers Association of the United States and Canada
International Ladies Garment Workers Union
League of Women Voters of the United States
Machinists Union
National Consumers League
National Council of Catholic Women
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of Negro Women
National Farmers Union
National Federation of Post Office Clerks
National Federation of Settlements, Inc.
National Womens Trade Union League
Textile Workers Union of America
United Automobile, Aircraft, Agricultural Implement Workers of America
United Hatters, Cap and Millinery Workers
United Packinghouse Workers of America
United Steel Workers of America
Womens National Homeopathic Medical Fraternity
Women's Society for Christian Service of the Methodist Episcopal Church (Eastern)
Young Womens Christian Association of the United States of America (National Board)

Organizations not members of Committee and opposed to Equal Rights Amendment:

American Association of University Women