



425 13th Street, N.W. Suite 1070 Washington, D.C. 20004

October 12, 1977

Congratulations on your election as a delegate to the IWY Conference in Houston. Over 250 of the delegates are NOW members — the largest organizational representation to the Conference. We have found that NOW members all over the country are anxious for information from National so that NOW will have a highly visible and effective presence at the Conference. We believe that a positive NOW effort will help to facilitate passage of the IWY Commission's Plan of Action.

Since this is a national conference, we believe that it is imperative that NOW members coordinate their efforts. A coordinating structure has been formulated. An IWY/NOW work committee, chaired by Fran Kolb, in cooperation with Houston volunteers, will coordinate the following: Fran Kolb - Coordinator (Hospitality); Eve Norman - NOW Booth; Zelle Andrews - Troubleshooter; Carol Swain - NOW volunteers; Mary Jo Walsh - Press/Public Relations; Sandra Porter - Registration, Friday Night Reception/Information Meeting. Ellie Smeal, National President, will coordinate delegate action and floor strategy along with Arlie Scott, National Vice President - Action. Since Ellie is a National Commissioner, her ability to interface with other national groups will be vital. Martha Buck will help to coordinate NOW observer activities. All national officers will be at the conference.

NOW's Hospitality Suite and press rooms on the 8th floor of the Hyatt-Regency will serve as the internal and external communications center for NOW. All NOW delegates and NOW member observers should register at the headquarters. At that time, you will be given NOW identification buttons, badges, and armbands, which will only be worn by NOW members.

On Friday evening before the session, National NOW will host for its members (observers and delegates), an informational meeting which will include presentations from officers and volunteer workers, as well as visits from well-known NOW members. In addition to distributing the most recent information, we will review and discuss NOW strategy for the weekend.

NOW delegates in each state should choose a Delegate Coordinator to interface with National. The entire NOW delegation will caucus at various times throughout the Conference. Between caucuses, the State Delegate Coordinator information system will be enacted. On-the-spot decisions will be made by a Delegate Steering Committee composed of several NOW State Delegate Coordinators, the President, and the Vice President - Action. This committee must be appointed and have the approval of the National NOW Board at its meeting October 15-16, in Seattle.

The National IWY Plan of Action (to be presented at the Houston Conference for a vote of the delegates) will be approved by the IWY National Commission at the October 20-21 National Commission Meeting. Pro-women's rights resolutions were adopted in a majority of the states on all issues, and the plan will reflect this. NOW's position will probably, therefore, be in favor of the adoption of the National IWY Plan of Action. A pro-Plan caucus will undoubtedly emerge which will activate a cooperative effort of all the national groups supporting women's rights.

ELEANOR CUTRI SMEAL
President

MARTHA BUCK
Vice President-Executive

ARLIE C. SCOTT
Vice President-Action

SANDRA REEVES ROTH
Secretary

EVE NORMAN
Treasurer



This National Women's Conference will be a major media event. All networks (TV & radio), major papers, and wire services, will be treating it as front page news. The strategy of the opposition, since they do not have the delegate votes, is to make it appear that they are the grassroots majority. They will say the delegates represent NOW and feminists only, because the grassroots were closed out. We know this is not true, but they will try to have thousands of observers. Picture thousands of Mormons and other anti-women's rights groups booing passage of a pro-woman plan and picketing and demonstrating outside. Therefore, it is important that we get as many pro-women supporters as possible there. The reason that an overwhelming majority of the delegates support a pro-women's rights plan is because a majority of the people of the country do. We are the majority. Let us be sure to show that we are, by encouraging people to come to the Conference as observers. Do not fear the disruptions. There has never been a national women's rights conference that some have not sought to ridicule and divide. It is not women fighting women; it is a matter of divided political viewpoints. On one hand, the pro-woman movement is supported by most of the women and men in this country and is led by all major national women's groups and the largest and strongest feminist group (NOW). On the other hand, the anti-women reactionary social policies position is led by the all male-dominated Mormon hierarchy, the John Birch Society, the Klu Klux Klan, the American Nazi Party, the Conservative Caucus, the American Independent Party, the conservative wing of the Catholic hierarchy, pro-life groups (primarily funded by the Catholic hierarchy), women's auxiliaries of these groups, Birch Society inspired groups, e.g. "Women Who Want to be Women," "Hot Dog," and "HOW." Stop ERA, which appears to be woman led, draws many of its leaders from the conservative political movements -- the right wing of the Republican Party, the American Party, the Conservative Caucus, or the Birch Society.

Our job at Houston is to help the majority register its will, to help assure that minority rights are observed, that the process is fair, and that the majority viewpoint be presented to the TV and radio audience positively.

To help coordinate our effort, we are asking all observers (not delegates) to list their choice of hotels in the following order: (1) Lamar, (2) Whitehall, and (3) Ramada. We are asking all NOW delegates to stay at the Hyatt-Regency, the main delegate hotel, where many activities will be, and where the NOW headquarters will be. Although it is not a union hotel, most of the Sheraton is not unionized either. Houston simply is not a union city, and Texas is a right-to-work state. (As a Commissioner, I voted that the Conference should not be in Houston for these and other reasons. But it is, so we must be where the activity is.)

We believe these plans will insure a pro-woman conference. We are looking forward to seeing you in Houston.

For equality,

Eleanor Cutri Smeal
President

PS: Be sure to put NOW/8th floor on your housing form!