

Women's Rights Project

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION

November 4, 1977

Re: IWY Conference

Dear ACLU Member:

Nearly 2,000 delegates from the 50 states and the territories will represent the nation's women at the upcoming National Women's Conference in Houston. While only elected delegates may vote, supporters throughout the country are coming to Houston to attend workshops and special events and to lend support to their delegates. The importance of the IWY Conference must be underscored for the public visibility it will give to the credence and solidarity of the women's movement.

Many groups and several state delegations - both from the right and from the women's movement - are contemplating further refinement of the National Plan of Action, the resolutions adopted by the state conference and by the IWY Commission. Because there are 38 resolutions on the floor at present and because of the wide political spectrum of debate on these issues, we would urge you individually and through your state delegation to weigh carefully the advisability of further amendments. In fact, it is our current thinking - supported by the Pro-Plan Caucus - that the most effective way of dealing with anticipated political diversity is to have a united position to endorse the National Plan of action in its entirety.

We have evaluated each resolution and find each to be consistent with the mutual goals of equal rights for women and of civil liberties concerns. Clearly, we may have wished further refinement on some of the issues, but feel that attempts in this regard will simply entangle the process and jeopardize the passage of the National Plan.

To support you and give you access to information, several of us from the ACLU national offices will be in Houston:

Pat Beyea, Director, ACLU Campaign for Choice  
Betsy Brinson, Southern Women's Rights Organizer  
Dorothy Davidson, Director, Mountain States Regional Office

Norman Dorsen, Chairperson, Board of Directors • Ramsey Clark, Chairperson, National Advisory Council  
Aryeh Neier, Executive Director • Alan Reitman, Associate Director • Joel Gora, Acting Legal Director  
Sharon Krager, Membership Director • John H. F. Shattuck, Director, Washington D.C. Office

Kathy Miller, Washington Legislative Office, Women's Rights  
Trudi Schutz, Director of Public Information

The ACLU Women's Rights Project will display materials in Booth #302 in the East Hall of the Albert Thomas Convention Center. Because none of us are delegates and, thereby, relegated to the Center City Hotel, you can reach us through messages at the booth if not at the hotel.

Our specific calendar of events sponsored directly or supported by ACLU is as follows:

Friday

- 9-4 pm: Business & Professional Women session: session on ERA
- 4 pm: Rally at City Hall to support Equal Rights
- 5:30-7:30 pm: ERAmerica Fundraiser, Hyatt Regency Hotel (this costs \$15.00 per person but if you can manage it, we feel important contacts and presence can be established).
- 7:30-9 pm: ACLU Caucus, Holiday Inn Downtown, Longhorn Room. (Coffee and tidbits available: purpose is to discuss National Plan and solidify our delegates behind it).
- 10-12 midnight: Pro-Plan Caucus  
Ramada Inn-Civic Center

Saturday

- 6-8 pm: ACLU Open House  
Convention Center, Room 211  
Open to ACLU delegates and observers - cash bar - purpose is to update events to date and to outline strategy for plenary sessions.

Sunday

- 10-12 noon: Come for Brunch.  
We will need some fun by this point! Open to ACLU delegates, observers, volunteers, Houston Chapter Office, 905 Richmond.
- 6-7 pm: ACLU Caucus  
Holiday Inn Downtown, Longhorn Room (again)  
Purpose to discuss pending resolutions and also, as ACLU, how to implement effectively women's rights program.

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Communication among all of us is the critical phase of this entire effort. You can reach us directly or through messages at the ACLU Booth #302. We are staying at the Center City Hotel (224-4511). In emergency situations you can leave a telephone message at a private Houston law firm which has volunteered its services (651-9111).

This has been a report on what we are doing. There are things we would ask you to do for us, if you can:

1. As soon as you register, please leave a message as to which hotel and room number you are in;
2. Leave this information with Suzy Post, ACLU delegate from Kentucky, at the Hyatt-Regency, or with Michelle Pailthorp, ACLU delegate from Washington, at the Sheraton.
3. Please come to the Friday night ACLU caucus to meet us, get ACLU buttons and map our strategy;
4. If you know of local press attending the Houston conference, please let Trudi Schutz know, so she can supplement your state information with national literature ... and give you any assistance you might require.

If you're tired by this letter, imagine how you will feel on November 21st!

We'll see you in Houston.

Sincerely,

Patricia Beyea  
Women's Rights Project

Kathy Miller  
Washington Legislative Office