



VENTURA COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

February-March, 1984

(805) 654-3109

WOMEN'S VOTE 1984: THE GENDER GAP

WOMEN IN HISTORY COME ALIVE

The highlight of preparations for National Women's History Week this year in Ventura County was the workshop for teachers offered by California Lutheran College. Held at the County Schools Conference Facility at Camarillo Airport, this fifteen-hour intensive experience took place Friday, January 27th, and Saturday, January 28th. The thirty attendees included teachers, librarians, classroom aides, and WHW Task Force members.

Two of the founders of the National Women's History Week Project, Molly MacGregor and Bette Morgan, were the workshop leaders. With backgrounds in history and education, they are presently consultants to the Title IX Assistance Office of the California State Department of Education. Their presentation included a multi-cultural overview of women in history, an introduction of recommended curriculum and resource materials, a complete set of lesson plans and chronologies, and demonstrations of the integration of the study of women into all areas of the K-12 curriculum.

The Women's Equity Coalition hosted a reception at the conclusion of the workshop, celebrating the growing involvement of teachers in Ventura County in this valuable enhancement to the educational curriculum.

(The following is an excerpt from the newly published book, Why and How Women Will Elect the Next President, by Eleanor Smeal, Harper & Row, 1984.)

You've seen it in countless newspaper headlines; you've heard about it on radio and television. Republicans alternately deny its existence or worriedly announce plan after plan for "closing" it. And Democrats, slow to recognize it as a political reality, are nevertheless counting on it to provide a windfall of votes for their party.

It's the gender gap--the measurable difference in the way women and men vote for candidates and in the way they view political issues. The "women's vote," a powerful new voting bloc, will make the difference in political contests. There is no doubt. The gender gap is the new wild card in political sweepstakes.

Women will elect the next president of the United States. We've already put governors in power in New York, Texas, and Michigan, and sent a dozen senators and Congress people to Washington. Remarkable victories--and not just for the officeholders.

For women everywhere, these victories are a means to better salaries, more economic equity in divorce for homemakers, more job programs and training for single-parent families (usually headed by women), and a change in the spending priorities of our nation--goals that
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directly and personally affect each of us. These are just some of the issues the women's vote supports, and that support transcends party lines and political ideologies.

Until now, women have lacked the political bargaining power to affect public policy. Until now, our state and federal governments have literally been "of men, by men, and for men." Until now, the men who have dominated the political structure have not had to worry about being held accountable at the polls by women whose needs have not been adequately addressed. The result has been the enactment of legal and social decisions that worked against us, individually and as a group.

But today, women have a newfound power to elect the next president of the United States and to determine our country's political leadership and national agenda. The widespread perception of the gender gap offers a new tool for political power for American women and has the potential for being a catalyst for social change in 1984 and beyond. Where does this new political power come from? Here are the facts:

Women's voting strength, in sheer numbers has been increasing steadily, so that women currently comprise approximately 53 percent of the voting-age population. Moreover, since the election of Lyndon Johnson, women have been casting more votes than men in national elections. In 1980, 55.6 million women and 49.3 million men were registered to vote and 6 million more women than men cast ballots in the general election. By 1982, 700,000 women, compared to 400,000 men, had been added to the voting rolls. Today a higher percentage of women than men are registered to vote (64.4 percent versus 63.7 percent). Since 1976, the percentage of women registered has been increasing while the percentage of men has been decreasing.

Yet, ever since winning the suffrage amendment in 1920, women have been an invisible mass of voters.

Initially, the experts dismissed women voters as an unimportant part of the electorate. Their excuse was that women did not vote in such large numbers as men--a fact the experts were comfortable with, since it was entirely in keeping with their belief that politics was a man's world.

Even when women began to outnumber men in voting, the experts were quick to point out that a lower percentage of all potential women voters were registered. Their explanation, again, was that politics was "a man's world" and most women were simply not as interested in it. The experts also asserted that women voted as the men in their lives did--that is, men made the voting decisions, and women simply followed their lead. With a sigh of relief, the experts went on ignoring any impact women were having in elections....

The elections of 1980 and 1982 shattered this narrow view of women and politics. These elections proved that women were registered and were voting in roughly the same percentages as men. Far more important, these elections showed that women could and did vote differently from their male counterparts. In fact, women voted differently from men across all age, race, income, job-status, and political-party lines.

Today, all the experts agree that women and men have been voting differently since 1980 and that this difference has affected the outcome of many elections nationwide. Indeed, women's votes were found to be the deciding factor for most political officeholders than men's votes....

The message is clear: The 1984 elections--and all other presidential, statewide, and congressional races in the future--could be determined by the women's vote. As women's votes increasingly come to constitute the margin of difference, women's political power will continue to grow.

(For further reading, this book is highly recommended. Also see MS Magazine, March 1984, "Vote Now! Change History.")

VENTURA COUNTY WOMEN'S VOTE PROJECT

Representative of women's and community service organizations from all areas of Ventura County are planning to meet on Wednesday, March 14th, to organize a county-wide effort to register women vote. Adopting the slogan of the National Organization for Women:

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STATE COMMISSION FREE TO ACT

On Friday, Feb. 3, 1984, the Third District Court of Appeal in Sacramento reversed a Sacramento Superior Court ruling which enjoined the California Commission on the Status of Women from advocating any particular point of view. The appellate court's opinion, authored by Associate Justice Coleman Blease, rejected both statutory and constitutional challenges to the commission's "promotional" activities.

The court held that Government Code Section 8246, enacted in 1982, expressly authorized the commission "to speak its mind." The court further held that this statutory authority does not violate any constitutional guarantees.

Attorney General John Van de Kamp praised the appellate court decision upholding the right of the state women's commission to express its views.

"The court recognized that the establishment of the commission serves to remedy gender bias and promote equality," Van de Kamp said. "Further, it recognized that government may express its own view on controversial issues, even though some members of the public may disagree with these views."

"This is an extremely important decision," Van de Kamp added, "because it overturns a lower court action which essentially prevented the commission from exercising a major part of its statutory function - to represent the rights of women, and to serve as an advocate for women."

Van de Kamp agreed with the court's analysis that, "Controversial or not, it is too late in the day to contend that the economic and social status of women is not a legitimate topic of governmental concern."

Carole Ward-Allen, chairperson of the California Commission on the Status of Women, issued the following statement:

"I'm ecstatic! There is a tremendous sense of relief that this eight year battle appears to be over at last. We have believed from the beginning that the Legislature's intention in creating a

Commission on the Status of Women was clear. We were never meant to be a passive agency, 'relegated to the status of a librarian, a collector and indexer of data and opinions of others' in the words of the Court of Appeal. Now we can put the lawsuit behind us and get on with the business for which we were established -- working in partnership with the Governor, the Legislature, and women's organizations around the state to improve the quality of life for the women of California."

NEW COMMISSIONERS

We have recently welcomed three new appointees to the Commission for Women.

Appointed by Supervisor Maggie Erickson, Dr. Alicia Ramirez-Brewer, Fillmore, has extensive experience in education on the secondary school, community college and university level. She was a legislative analyst in the office of the Chancellor of the California Community College system in Sacramento, a program officer for the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education in Washington, D.C. and is currently working with specially funded programs as resource instructor at Fillmore High School. Dr. Ramirez-Brewer has a doctorate in higher education and administration and a post-doctorate in policy analysis and research.

Raymond Clayton, Thousand Oaks, is an attorney in private practice in Thousand Oaks. He deals primarily with cases involving public law, business and corporation law. He began his 23-year law career as a public attorney, an assistant District Attorney, in another county in California. He was appointed to the Commission by Supervisor Ed Jones.

Also appointed by Supervisor Jones, Louise Grethel is the current Chair of the Thousand Oaks Arts Commission and is active in the American Association of University Women as the Thousand Oaks Branch Program Vice-President. She is a homemaker, a concerned citizen and a much involved community volunteer.

PROGRESS REPORT ON COUNTY EMPLOYEES
CHILD CARE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

APPRENTICESHIPS AVAILABLE

As a result of the Ventura County Board of Supervisors request for information from county employees, a Child Care Needs Assessment Committee, chaired by Clinton Tatum, administrative assistant to the CAO, has prepared a survey form and a procedure for gathering this information.

At the County Department heads' meeting scheduled for February 22, 1984, the following plan was presented:

- o each County agency will designate a coordinator to collect survey forms by February 29th.
- o all employees will receive survey form with paychecks on March 15th with a cover letter naming the coordinator to whom they may return the form by March 23rd.
- o notices will be posted in agency offices announcing issuance of the survey.
- o survey results will be tabulated and reviewed by the Child Care Needs Assessment Committee and a report made to the Board of Supervisors in April.

While this survey is being conducted, the Committee will be meeting to prepare other information for the Board report. In addition, plans are being discussed to visit the San Diego County Child Care program and the Simi Valley Adventist Hospital child care program.

Members of the Needs Assessment Committee in addition to Chairperson Clinton Tatum are: Mary Baird, Dot Engel, Brook Hubbell - members of the Commission for Women; B. J. Fitzgerald, PSSA, Manager of Agency Fiscal Services, and Robi Klein, Assistant County Clerk/Recorder.

For more information on the progress of this survey, please call Clinton Tatum at 654-2886.

Apprenticeship programs can be the ticket to an interesting, well-paid career. And there is now plenty of room for women in apprenticeable occupations.

Apprenticeship programs are a combination of on-the-job training and classroom-related instruction. Length of training differs with each occupation, but most take two to four years to complete.

An apprenticeship program offers today's woman:

- .. Paid employment while training for a career.
- .. Opportunity to become proficient in an occupation by attending classes that are integrated with the work.
- .. Opportunity to become uniquely qualified with state-issued credentials recognized throughout the industry or occupation for the skills involved in the apprenticeship program.
- .. Opportunity to break out of the traditional career mold and to start earning.

Learn how to qualify and enter apprenticeship. The Division of Apprenticeship Standards, through the California Department of Industrial Relations, is located at 5810 Ralston Street, Room C, Ventura, telephone 654-4569.

FREE PUBLICATION

"Women's Rights Handbook" contains a summary of laws of concern to women, with detailed sections on employment, rape, domestic relations, health care, housing, and education. Free copies can be obtained by writing the Attorney General's Public Inquiry Unit, 1515 K St., Suite 511, Sacramento, CA 95814.

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"It's a man's world unless women vote!"

and recognizing the growing significance of "The Gender Gap," these delegates will develop strategies for reaching women of all ages, races, and ethnic groups who are not yet registered.

One group assisting in the plans for this meeting which has already begun to register women is the Simi/Conejo Chapter of NOW. Commissioner Mary Baird and other NOW members appear weekly at supermarkets, shopping malls, and college campuses encouraging the women of Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks to fill in voter registration cards if they have not already done so.

The organizational meeting on Wednesday, March 14th, will be held at All Saint's Episcopal Church, 144 South C Street, Oxnard, at 7:30 p.m.

FIREFIGHTING AS A CAREER

Have you always wanted to be a firefighter? The City of Ventura is currently conducting a recruitment outreach program to inform women and minorities of the positions open and the requirements for hiring.

The steps to be followed are:

- o Apply in person during the open filing period. (Dates to be published).
- o Successfully complete a written exam.
- o Pass a physical agility test.
- o Oral interview, conducted by a panel of representatives of the fire department, civil service, and community.
- o Background check.

The salary for a firefighter trainee is \$1,730 - \$2,102 per month. For further information, contact the City of Ventura Personnel Office, Virginia Aguirre, 654-7800.

COMMISSION TO ASSIST IN MONITORING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FUNDS

The Ventura County Board of Supervisors has approved a proposal whereby the Commission for Women will aid county Public Social Services Agency (PSSA) and Chief Administrative Office (CAO) personnel in administering state funds intended to provide services to victims of domestic violence and their children. The solicitation of proposals from local private non-profit corporations to provide such services is carried out in accordance with the Welfare and Institutions Code, Sections 18294, 18295, 18296, 18297 and 18298.

Commonly referred to as the Presley Bill, this legislation encourages counties to establish local programs. Commissioners Mary Jane Johns (Oxnard) and Louise Grethel (Thousand Oaks) will work with PSSA, under the direction of Nancy Steinhelper, Social Services Program Manager, to monitor the use of Presley funds in Ventura County. This procedure will include drafting requests for proposal, evaluating proposals, making recommendations for award of contract, conducting on-site inspections and doing on-going evaluations of project effectiveness.

K.I.S.S. BROCHURE

The K.I.S.S. brochure (Kids and Industry - Success Story) was developed by two of the Ventura County Commission for Women members, Mary Baird and Brook Hubbell. It offers a comprehensive insight into the development of the employer provided child care concept, and has received an increasing amount of interest by government agencies as well as private industry.

Due to the increasing amount of interest, this publication will now be available to the public. There will be no charge to government agencies; and others may purchase copies as follows:

single copy	\$1.50
10-49 copies	10% discount
50 or more copies	20% discount

CALENDAR

March 14 Women's Vote Project organiza-
tional meeting for Ventura County
area, All Saint's Episcopal
Church, 144 South C St., Oxnard,
7:30 p.m.

March 17 Commission for Women meeting,
California Federal Savings &
Loan, 739 W. Channel Islands
Blvd., Port Hueneme, 9:00 a.m.
Open to the public.

March 17 "Women and Work: Breadmaking &
Breadwinning," 9:00 a.m. - 3:00
p.m. La Canada Presbyterian
Church, Keynote: Ann Follis,
founder of Homemakers for ERA.

March 31 Women's Legal Rights Forum, Buena
High School, Victoria Ave., &
Telegraph Rd., Ventura, 9:30 -
2:30. Panel discussions.
Sponsored by Women's Rights
Committee. Brown bag lunch.

April 10 Incorporation Kickoff Luncheon
for Friends of the Ventura County
Commission for Women. 12 Noon,
Mercury Savings & Loan, 2797
Agoura Rd., Westlake Village, \$9
per reservation. Send check to
1174 Guinda Ct., Camarillo, CA
93010. Speaker: Margarita
Corral.

April 14 Ventura County Women's Vote Project.
Community based voter registration
drive throughout the county. More
volunteers are welcome. Call 654-
3109.

April 27 "Expanding Your Horizons in Math
& Science - A Conference for 7th
- 12th Grade Young Women." 3:45
p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Christian
Church School, Camarillo
Sponsored by AAUW, Camarillo
Branch. Call 482-3242 or
482-2954.

April 28 Commission for Women meeting.
Simi Valley City Hall, 3200
Cochran, 9:00 a.m. Open to the
public.

Call the Commission office, 654-3109,
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. for information on
these events.

The Commission hopes this newsletter will
be self-supporting by and for the women
of the County. Please send your contri-
butions to the Commission Office if you
want to be a sponsor.

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