
STATISTICS

We believe that in order to cut the cost of Government and thus help reduce taxes and inflation, Federal statistical recordkeeping should be reduced rather than increased.

WELFARE

We cannot in any way support a socialistic policy such as a guaranteed income for all Americans. To further burden the hard-working American taxpayer to pay for such a scheme is unconscionable.

We support the concept of helping those who truly cannot help themselves but see churches and community services organizations, State and Local government, as more proper agencies than the Federal Government.

We urge training and guidance for individuals receiving welfare so that they can break the cycle and become productive citizens.

WOMEN'S DEPARTMENT

We strongly oppose the creation of a Cabinet-level Women's Department as unnecessary, inflationary, and creating more Government bureaucracy.

Signed,

State Senator Joan Gubbins, Indiana
Ann Patterson, Oklahoma
Frances Weidman, Alabama
State Senator Georgia Peterson, Utah
Carmie Richeson, Hawaii
Ruth Waite, Florida
Laurentia Allen, Massachusetts
Kay Regan, Washington
Betty Hanicke, Kansas
Vivian Adams, Illinois
State Representative Norma Russell,
South Carolina
Eddie Myrtle Moore, Mississippi
Betty Babcock, Montana
Beverly Adams, Georgia

BLACK WOMEN'S PLAN OF ACTION

(See Minority Women Plank in
National Plan)

PURPOSE

The entire world is focusing attention on women during these days of the International Women's Year (IWY) Conference. Women, as they are defining themselves, their needs, their problems, their aspirations, and their political and social challenges, are being assessed, explored, and, perhaps for the first time in the history of our planet, given the impact of a tremendous, unified consensus and through the Conference a vehicle for communicating to the world.

Within this impressive representation of women, one comparatively small segment richly deserves the special attention and scrutiny of the Conference. This small segment, black American women, has a long, harsh history of vital concern for civil liberties, and each generation of black American women has contributed mightily to the long struggle for the rights of women.

Since the social, political, and cultural background of black American women differs greatly from that of white women, and since, as a consequence, black American women view the world differently from white women, we present this position paper—not only as a representation of our views, to be recognized by the Conference and forgotten—but as a proposal that these views be considered and included in the total IWY program.

PERSPECTIVE

For more than a century American women have struggled against sexist denial of their rights as citizens. For almost 200 years black American women have struggled against a double deterrent to full citizenship—racist and sexist denial of their rights. The circumstance of being a double victim has cast black women into a role where they view prejudicial treatment, not from its cause, be it sexist or racist, as much as from its results—a violation of human rights. Thus the militancy of black women such as Sojourner Truth, Frances E. W. Harper, Sarah Remond, and Ida B. Wells Barnett was expressed from the context of human rights rather than from a limited focus on the rights of women or blacks.

Human rights has been the traditional political posture of black women leaders, from Harriet Tubman leading a band of black soldiers through South Carolina, burning plantations and freeing almost a thousand slaves, to a black Congresswoman of today, serving on a committee investigating equal employment opportunities.

Black women and white women have significantly different historical and cultural backgrounds and experiences, despite their common experience of oppression. Black women have endured a dual burden of racism and sexism. The entire range of assumptions, attitudes, stereotypes, and prejudices regarding women, the customs and arrangements affecting women which have served as obstacles to the full participation of women as equals with men, and the various processes of exclusion, rejection, and subjugation based upon race and color and built into the major aspects of the society have had the effect of maintaining special privileges and power for the benefit of the white ma-

majority. Further, these attitudes have reinforced each other. There have been occasions when the advantage and usefulness of racism to the fundamental working order of American society have interfered with the beneficial and positive alliance of minority and majority women in the United States. The particular manifestations of the unique dual burden, carried with remarkable strength, courage, and effectiveness by our forebears, have been disproportionately felt and are the source of continued double victimization. Additionally, common but also unique to the black female experience in the United States has been a history of necessary participation in the labor force which has had a particular impact upon relationships with one another and with black men. Generally, this involvement in the economic realm resulted in a sharp contrast between the social-economic relations of the majority female *vis-a-vis* the majority male and the black female *vis-a-vis* the black male. Because black women have a different past, a different present and, as a consequence of institutionalized racism, a different future from that of white women, it is doubtful that anyone in the United States can or should speak for them. Therefore, black women members of IWY assume the responsibility of their own interpretation of women's mission, believing that it is only on the basis of sound, historically correct analysis that women of the minority and majority in

the Nation may organize effectively around their specific experiences as women and press for not only women's rights, but more importantly, human rights.

UNIQUE NEEDS

Statistical evidence gives further evidence of the urgent need to consider human rights as a platform. Black women comprise 50 percent of the total population of black youth and 54 percent of the total population of adults. Historically, striving to maintain the integrity and dignity of their families, black women have carried heavy responsibilities as heads of households. Clearly, the fate of black Americans as a racial minority group and the development of black women in the United States are inextricably bound together. Just as clearly, inferior status as victims of oppression based upon race and sex impinges upon relations with males and other females. By examining primary indicators—employment, income, and education, the status of black women can be seen readily.

A review of the statistical evidence in the appendix shows that unemployment among blacks is twice as high as that of whites; black males and females have the highest rate of unemployment, the difference between the two sexes being negligible. In the labor market black women are in greater proportions than white women and for longer periods. A related significant fact is that black working mothers are more heavily represented than white mothers in the labor force (see table 5).

An important factor in the status of black females is concentration at the bottom rungs of the employment ladder (see table 6). Most begin participation at a low entry level and remain, with other minorities such as Native Americans and Hispanics, at the bottom. Females are concentrated in the service and clerical occupational categories. In addition to over-representation in service occupations,

black women are disproportionately represented both among those employed as private household workers and among those in non-union employment, thereby receiving fewer benefits from organized labor or social legislation. Scrutiny of wages earned by males and females reveals a disparity between the earnings of the two sexes.

Educational opportunity has long been perceived as not only a primary means to upward mobility and employment security but also the major focal point for both the removal of barriers to higher rungs of the occupational ladder and obstacles to increased social and/or professional capacities. Such opportunities for minorities generally and black females particularly have been limited historically by racism, sexism, institutional practices, and personal attitudes. Despite the attempt to close some educational gaps through affirmative action programs, the black female still suffers as a result of inadequate education and/or training in addition to sex and race barriers. Recent data indicate that the median school years completed by all black females were 10.9 as compared with 12.3 for white females. Moreover, college education statistics for the same period, show a major discrepancy between not only black and white females but also blacks and whites generally in regard to the completion of college: white males graduate at three times the rate of black females (see table 8). Furthermore, data from 1970-71 reveal that in the area of postbaccalaureate education, only 40 percent of all masters degrees are women's and only 14 percent of all Ph.D.'s have been earned by women.

CONCLUSION

An ethnocentric women's movement which minimizes, misconstrues, or demonstrates no serious regard for the interests and views of other disadvantaged groups and minorities sows the seeds of its own destruction, in the wake, eventually, of decreasing allies and mounting hostility. Most important, it will ultimately fail to achieve the crucial goal of the movement—recognition of all people regardless of sex, race, or creed on a basis of equality and human dignity and the improvement of the quality of life for all. Communication among women—across ethnic and racial lines—is the *sine qua non* of an effective women's movement and is necessary to militate against incorrect assessments of socioeconomic and political realities, ill-conceived analyses of women's issues, improper identification of enemies and allies, misdirection of energies and efforts, and inappropriate definitions of the women's liberation task.

As black women informed by our particular past experiences, we stress the danger of a distorted analysis which points to a lingering central conflict of the women's movement as one between women of the minority and the majority. The white male power structure has been adept, historically, at shifting arenas of competition, limiting opportunities, and assuming the power of definition in an effort to misrepresent divisions of greatest import in fundamental social change, such as that between advantaged white males as a group and all other groups in the society, who by comparison are significantly disadvantaged. Moreover, as black women informed by our past we must eschew a view of the women's struggle which takes as its basic assumption opposition to men, as distinguished from organizing around the principle of opposition to the white male power structure's perpetuation of exploitation, subjugation, inequality, and limited opportunities based upon sex or race. In this regard

TABLE 1¹

1972 Civilian Labor Force & Unemployment in the Census Region by Color

	Total	Black & Other Race
Total	5.6	10.0
Northeast	6.3	9.4
North Central	5.0	12.0
South	4.8	9.1
West	7.1	11.2
Mid-Atlantic	6.1	8.9

TABLE 2

Unemployment Rates by Race & Sex

	Sex		
	Male	Female	Sex Differentials
Race			
White	4.3	5.6	— 1.3
Black	10.0	9.5	.5
Race Differentials	— 5.7	— 3.9	

TABLE 3

Characteristics of Female-Headed Families, 1973

Female Head	White	Black
Percent of all families	9.6	34.6
Marital Status of Female Head		
Married, husband absent	19.0	36.2
Separated	14.6	32.6
Other	4.4	3.7
Widowed	41.0	28.1
Divorced	30.0	16.1
Single	10.0	19.5

¹The assistance of Dr. Linda F. Williams with statistical data is gratefully acknowledged.

All statistics for this statement on the status of black women are taken from the United States Census Reports, *The Monthly Labor Review* (March, 1975) and the Bureau of Labor Statistics' *Special Labor Force Report* no. 175. The reader should note that the available data have been challenged by minorities with respect to reliability and there is a probability of understatement in regard to the life conditions of minority women which in fact may be more desperate than statistics indicate.

TABLE 4

Wife's Contribution to Family Income—Families With Husband and Wife Working by Race of Husband

	Mean Family Income	Earnings Average of Wife	Percent of Family Income
All White	\$17,983	\$4,483	24.9
All Black	\$14,317	\$4,645	32.4

TABLE 5

Working Mothers With Children Under 18 by Low Income Status and Race, 1973

	All Races Below Low- Income Level (%)	White Below Low- Income Level (%)	Blacks Below Low- Income Level (%)
All Women with Children	11.1	8.1	32.8
Female Headed Families	41.7	34.3	56.6

TABLE 6

Occupational Distributions of the 4 Race-Sex Groups, 1974

Occupation	White Males	Black Males	White Females	Black Females
Professional, Technical	14.5	9.4	15.4	11.7
Managers & Administrators	14.8	5.4	5.3	2.4
Sales Workers	6.4	2.8	7.4	7.7
Clerical	6.3	7.4	36.4	24.9
Craftsmen, Foremen	21.4	15.8	1.5	1.4
Operatives, except Transport	11.8	10.5	11.8	16.8
Transport Equipment Operatives	5.6	9.1	.5	.4
Laborers, except Farm	6.9	15.1	1.0	1.2
Farmers & Farm Managers	3.1	1.2	.3	—
Farm Laborers & Foremen	1.8	2.8	1.2	1.1
Service Workers, except Private Household	7.2	15.2	16.7	26.1
Private Household Workers	—	.1	2.5	11.3

one permanent issue of a vigilant, progressive women's movement must be, "who shall, in what manner, frame the issues to which women are to address themselves in a society whose majority is culturally conditioned to operate upon the basis of racist and sexist assumptions?"

Finally, in that the national IWY conference delegates have an advisory function with respect to the Federal Government and have not been invested with power to directly effect changes in the material conditions of women, it must be recognized as a vehicle for communication and political organization. With respect to this function, consciousness raising is the key, for it will be through correct, adroit analyses of societal realities, specific conditions of women, and the nature of the struggle that women can become a significant force for the eradication of oppression.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As black women we endorse the goal of eradicating racism and sexism from our society. We call for the united action of women in support of the improvement of the quality of life for all. In particular, the following concerns pertinent to the plight of black women are presented for support as part and parcel of those women's issues to be forwarded to the President and the Congress.

Education Recognizing the political, socioeconomic, and human costs of discriminatory education and educational opportunities limited by racism and sexism, we recommend that:

1. A concerted effort be made by the Federal Government and State governments via Federal funding to broaden educational opportunities for black women on an equitable basis.

2. Federal funds be made available to implement programs for (a) adult and continuing education; (b) extension curricula in rural areas; (c) literacy; and (d) alternative schools to meet the needs of black women aspiring to obtain basic skills or to resume their education.
3. Recognition be given to the problems and possible solutions to the plight of black female heads of households with respect to educational goals, and funding be allocated for training and education opportunities, financial aid, career counseling, child care, and other support services.
4. Efforts be launched to support scholarly research of black women subsequent to identification of such scholars.
5. Elimination of sex-role stereotyping in school systems be incorporated into training programs for educational administrators and decisionmakers and funding be made available for special programs.

Employment In response to the problems of unemployment and underutilization of black females as a resource in the labor force at all levels, policies and positions which either focus upon employment of women at the expense of black men or identify black women as threats to qualified non-minority females merely because the former fulfill minority and female affirmative action criteria must be exposed as fallacious and counterproductive. We recommend that:

1. Full employment and full utilization of black females at upper as well as entry levels of the labor force be implemented through enlargement of the job pool and nondiscriminatory consideration of black females for career advancement and upgrading.
2. Federal support of enforceable equal pay for work of equal value laws be intensified.

TABLE 7

Economic Status of Women: 1971

Major Occupational Group	Income	As percent of Men's Income (%)
Professional & Technical Workers	\$8,346	69
Nonfarm Managers & Administrators	\$7,312	56
Clerical Workers	\$5,718	62
Sales Workers	\$4,349	43
Operatives including Transport	\$4,798	61
Service Workers, except Private Household	\$4,280	60

TABLE 8

Years of School Completed by Race & Sex: 1974

	College		Median School Years Completed
	1-3 years	4 years or more	
Total all races	11.9	13.3	12.3
White			
Male	12.9	17.7	12.4
Female	11.7	10.6	12.3
Black			
Male	8.6	5.7	10.5
Female	8.0	5.3	10.9

3. Recognition be made of the value of homemaking as well as of the inequities in employment as related to social security.
4. Opposition be stated to the downgrading of positions as a response to black and female workers' demands for equal treatment and protection of the wages for those whose jobs are downgraded.
5. Eradication of discriminatory social security practices be undertaken.
6. Recognition be made of employment inequities connected with service occupations and particularly as they relate to workers in private households.
7. Legislation which provides for alternative work patterns, flexible hours, part-time jobs and adequate child care facilities for black females who are working parents should be enacted.

Political Participation Believing that reform must be pressed through the political system, we recommend that:

1. Support be given to black women running for political office.
2. Black women on all levels of government work together on matters of mutual concern and that such efforts be supported by groups of black women within the constituencies of such officials.
3. Black women establish a viable network for exchange of information and action on issues affecting black women in particular and the black community in general. Also, that they vigorously pursue the advancement of the common interests of women through a network that crosses racial and ethnic lines.

Socially Progressive Services

With an uncompromising belief that our concern must be for the improvement of the quality of human life in order that full human development may be fostered in this society, we recommend that:

1. The Federal Government provide support for the development of programs for (a) adequate income maintenance and comprehensive care for the aged, the poor, and the dependent; (b) a viable national health care assistance system; (c) reliable and comprehensive child care services; (d) maternity benefits as part of a system of health or social insurance; and (e) extension of labor standards relevant to the health and welfare of workers now excluded.
2. The Federal Government and States make available by legislation and funding in conjunction with ability-to-pay schemata (a) public legal services and (b) hospital and mental institution care unencumbered by racist, sexist, or elitist institutional barriers.
3. Comprehensive rehabilitation programs for black female prisoners be developed and implemented in Federal, State, and local correctional facilities.

Statutory and Constitutional Law

We affirm rights basic to a free, humane society and recommend that the Federal Government be called on to use its full power to protect and support these human rights:

1. The right to equitable treatment under law to be construed as including (a) the eradication of discrimination based upon race, color, ethnicity, sex, or creed and support of ERA as part of this broad task, and (b) the full implementation of affirmative action programs as a means of remedying past deprivation of blacks victimized by a previous condition of servitude and/or quasi freedom.
2. The right to procedural due process, i.e., fair and impartial treatment by officials under law.
3. Rights of political expression—freedom of speech, press, assembly; freedom from surveillance, harassment and interception of private conversations; freedom to petition for redress of grievances. ■