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Louisiana Federation of Business and Professional Women

Legislative Strategy 2009-Beyond

9-3-09

C. Moran/P. Wells

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BPW Foundation Legislative Priorities

- **Pay Equity**
- **Retirement Security**
- **Women Veterans**
- **Work/Life Balance**

**All worthy endeavors, but we need
to focus our efforts on the critical
few!**

BPW/LA Focus 2009-Beyond

- **Equal Rights Amendment**
- **Economic Equity**
- **Women's Violence Prevention**

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Legislative Priority #1

Equal Rights Amendment

What Does the ERA Say?

Louisiana is one of only 15 states (AL, AZ, AR, FL, GA, IL, LA, MS, MO, NV, NC, OK, SC, UT, VA) that has not yet adopted the Equal Rights Amendment, written by Alice Paul in 1923.

The ERA reads:

- **Section 1.** Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.
- **Section 2.** The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.
- **Section 3.** This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

Background Information – Educate Ourselves

- One reason that state ERA bills are not passing is the time limit (1982 expiration)
- 2 philosophies
- 'Start over' – ignore the 35 states that have already ratified and start over – Rep. Carolyn Maloney - *H.J.Res. 61*
- '3-state strategy' – just need 3 more states
 - Rep Andrews office will sponsor this but we have to pass the resolution first.

Legislative Priority #1 - ERA

- **2-pronged attack**
 - Nationally
 - State – contingent upon what happens nationally
- **National ERA Resolution - Eliminate time limit for ratification of ERA**
- **National 3-State Strategy Bill**
- **State ERA Ratification**

#1A - National ERA Resolution

- **Priority one**
- **Organized plan/unit to present to US Congress – ERA CAMPAIGN NETWORK (National ERA Coalition)**
- **The resolution will come through this entity**
- **Partners – AAUW LA, LA League of Women Voters, LA Movement, YWCA of Greater Baton Rouge**
- **League of Women Voters – ERA and Pay Equity (goes to all Americans for a small fee) will go in their voter guide for 2010**
- **\$500 rec'd from Michigan ERA to help LA and on national level.**

#1A – National ERA Resolution

- **Need to get sponsors in House and Senate**
 - Phone calls to get a sponsor ASAP – Peggy and Camille and other partners
 - BPW/TN, BPW/FL, BPW/WI, BPW/MI helping us by lobbying their representatives on the Judiciary Committee!
 - Rep. Andrews' Legislative Director also lobbying
- **Set a hearing date with the Secretary of Congress – in progress (need a sponsor)**
- **Resolution**
 - BPW/LA voted in support of the resolution
 - Help find co-sponsors before the hearing in November 2009; BPW/LA member involvement needed to contact Congressional reps – don't just focus on LA reps! Have a list of targeted vetted candidates.
- **Education of US Congressional Reps prior to hearing – House Judiciary Committee**

#1A – National ERA Resolution

- After it passes the House Judiciary Committee, goes to house floor Jan 2010
- Heavy lobbying efforts by all partners, all members – national effort – a list of vetted candidates exists; 535 House members
- After it passes the House, then it goes to the Senate Judiciary Committee February, 2010
- After it passes the Senate Judiciary Committee, goes to senate floor April, 2010
- Heavy lobbying efforts by all partners; 100 senators

CELEBRATE SUCCESS!

#1B – 3-State-Strategy Legislation

- After the resolution passes, Rep. Andrews introduces the bill
- After it passes the House Judiciary Committee, goes to house floor
- Heavy lobbying efforts by all partners, all members – national effort; 535 House members
- After it passes the House, then it goes to the Senate Judiciary Committee
- After it passes the Senate Judiciary Committee, goes to senate floor
- Heavy lobbying efforts by all partners; 100 senators

CELEBRATE SUCCESS!

#1C – ERA State Level

- **3rd priority – ERA State level**
- **Must have passed the 3-state national resolution and 3-state strategy bill prior to lobbying on state level**
- **Regular Session between March 29 – June 21 2010**
- **Prior to this session – awareness message to all LA legislators and all citizens – what the ERA is all about**
 - **Lobbying opportunity during State Conference 2010**
 - **Media blitz**
 - **Emails from members**
 - **Phone calls from members**
 - **Letters from members**

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Legislative Priority #2

Economic Equity

#2 – Economic Equity

- Paycheck Fairness Act has passed the U.S. House of Representatives
- Paycheck Fairness Act (S-182 is currently in Senate Committee since January 8, 2009)
- Need to get Senator Mary Landrieu on board as a co-sponsor
- Draft a letter from LA/BPW and EC to sign it and send to Senator Landrieu.
- Get our partners – AAUW, League of Women Voters, YWCA, Louisiana Movement – to send the same letter.
- Timing on letter is October 2009.
- At our two fall district meetings, we will be signing a petition from BPW/LA to be attached to this letter.

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Legislative Priority #3

Women's Violence Prevention

#3 – Women's Violence Prevention

- **Support US Legislation HR840**
 - **Military Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Act**
 - **Protect our soldiers from domestic and sexual violence**
 - **Preventing to, responding to, treating, and prosecuting cases of family violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking in the military and among military families**
- **Contact your LA US Representatives supporting this bill. Ask for co-sponsorship. It means more when they hear from their constituents.**
- **You will receive a letter draft to send in November 2009 – Veteran's Day**
- **BPW Foundation focus as well**

#3 – Women's Violence Prevention

- **Support legislation preventing Hate crimes**
- **Support legislation and funding of government services for survivors of such violence**
- **Support legislation which provides compensatory and punitive damage awards to victims**
- **Support strengthening of laws regarding assault of women and children, including mandatory intervention programs**
- **Support legislation which includes counseling services for to rape and assault victims in health care policies**
- **Promote violence prevention programs**

#3 – Women's Violence Prevention

- **There are increasing incidents of the workplace being impacted by domestic violence**
- **Recognizing signs of abuse and intervening**
 - **LO meeting focus**
 - **Outreach to local battered women's shelters**
 - **Donate to programs that seek to prevent abuse of any kind**

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HOW SERIOUS ARE WE?

HOW BADLY DO WE WANT IT?

Insanity = doing the same things over and over but expecting different results

- **We will not be successful if just a handful of people do all the work/calling/emailing/letter writing**
- **We will be successful if all of our members (and members of partnering organizations) contact their legal representatives – National and State levels – at critical junctures**
- **We will be successful if we partner with other like-minded organizations – we will do this again and again!**

Legislative Plan Strategy

- **Our members must be informed about this legislation – basic information**
- **Our members must contact legislators in support of this legislation at critical times**
- **We will provide specific letter templates and send to all our members via email**
- **We can provide legislators' names/emails/addresses/phone numbers and links to their websites**
- **We need to do some serious education on ERA and Equal Pay with our legislators and the public – in advance of voting on our bills**

Legislative Plan Strategy

- **Face-to-face is POWERFUL – 2010 State Conference Opportunity**
- **Relationships with every big newspaper in the state and as many TV and radio stations as possible – PR**
- **STATE MEDIA COVERAGE IS KEY!**
- **State legislation - Core group of BPW/LA volunteers to do interviews on TV, on radio stations, and with newspaper reporters**
- **State legislation - Core group of BPW/LA volunteers to handle followup (post-session) interviews**

**ARE YOU READY?
ALL HANDS ON DECK!**

