

June 18, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR:

FRED MALEK

FROM:

BARBARA FRANKLIN

I had an interesting experience today.

I was one of the speakers at the opening session of the first annual conference of the Interstate Association of Commissions on the Status of Women in St. Louis. About 100 women were there, representing the 50 state commissions. These are "establishment" women appointed by the Governors of each state.

Each of the following scheduled speakers spoke briefly:

Kathryn Clarenbach - President of IACSW; Virginia Allen - Chairman of President Nixon's task Force on Women's Rights and Responsibilities; Mary Hilton - Deputy Director, Women's Bureau, Department of Labor; Myself (I gave an account of our progress to date, where we are going, etc.); Jean Spencer - Special Assistant to the Vice President.

Then, Betty Friedan, author of Feminine Mystique and founder of the National Organization for Women, spoke. She said in essence:

- o Women are outside the political power structure. "What women need is political power." (Much applause)
- o Women are tired of working to elect men to office -- men who don't represent them. Women are tired of "looking up zip codes, ringing doorbells, having coffees, and writing speeches" for men. (More applause)
- o President Nixon has "done nothing" with the report of the Task Force on Women's Rights and Responsibilities. It's in some "second-level staff man's bottom drawer. And that's where it will stay." (More applause)
- o "And appointing 38 women to high-level positions. . . out of how many thousand positions? It's nothing!" (Lots of applause)

o "Having a party in the Rose Garden when a woman is appointed -- that's also nothing." (More applause)

o Women need political power. The men in the political parties won't give it to us, so we'll do it ourselves. That's what the Women's Caucus for '72 is all about. We're organizing now, bringing together women frustrated and alienated by the Republican and Democratic parties. "Our goal is to elect significant numbers of women in '72. . . We need government by and for all people, including women." (STANDING OVATION)

The reaction to Betty's remarks is significant. These women are not radical feminists. They are "establishment" women who are deeply concerned and very restless. The "political power for women" idea is extremely appealing. A large number of the women there flocked to Betty's room afterward to learn more.

The Caucus is having a major meeting July 10 in Washington. It has already begun to organize chapters throughout the country and to raise money. A group like this could hurt a party candidate and could build itself a bargaining position much like the Conservative Party has in New York State.

I'm absolutely convinced that the "women's issue" is gathering momentum. We should be listening and thinking!!

cc: Jeb Magruder