

COUNCIL for the ECONOMIC

STATUS of WOMEN

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NEWSLETTER #29

JUNE 1979

IN THIS ISSUE

LEGISLATION '79, summarizing the status of the Council's legislative proposals at the close of the 1979 session. Ten of those proposals passed and six were introduced in this first session of the biennium. Another eight have not yet been introduced.

DISPLACED HOMEMAKERS: PROGRAM SUMMARY, with data on participants and placements at the two state-funded centers.

calendar

Four hearings are tentatively planned for the months ahead. Council members will travel to Mankato in late summer or early fall, and a series of three hearings is planned for October. An open hearing with special attention to battered women is planned for Fairmont on October 11, followed by an open hearing in Worthington on October 12 and a Minneapolis hearing on barriers to social services for Black, Hispanic, American Indian, and Asian women on October 13. Final plans will be announced in the next newsletter.

Gertrude Buckanaga from Cass Lake was recently appointed to the Council. She will serve as a public member replacing Mary Hofbauer, also from Cass Lake.

legislation '79

STATUS OF THE COUNCIL'S LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS FOR 1979-1980

PASSED IN
79 SESSION

Battered Women: (Omnibus appropriation for health, welfare, and corrections) Provides funds for shelters and related services to victims of domestic violence. Appropriates \$2,995,700 to provide at least fifteen shelters; five in the Twin Cities area and 10 in the balance of the state. Provides for advocacy programs for victims of domestic abuse and counseling programs for the violent or assaultive family member. (Chapter 336)

Order for Protection, Spouse Abuse: HF 521/SF 214 (Clark/Lewis) Provides for an order of protection for victims of domestic violence by restraining the abusive spouse. Removes requirement that abused spouse must file for separation or divorce prior to the order. (Chapter 214)

Sexual Assault: (Omnibus appropriation for health, welfare, and corrections) Provides for the continued funding of coordinated statewide services for victims of sexual assault. Appropriates \$70,600 for central coordination and education, and \$500,000 for grants to cities, counties, and non-profit agencies. (Chapter 336)

Displaced Homemakers: (Omnibus appropriation for health, welfare, and corrections) Continues the funding of pilot centers to provide job counseling and placement services to displaced homemakers. Appropriates \$486,000 for the continuation of the two current centers and an additional center in an unserved part of the state. (Chapter 336)

Inheritance Taxes: (Omnibus tax bill) Abolishes the inheritance tax and establishes an estate tax. Exempts a surviving spouse from paying estate tax on more than one-half of the value of property which was held with her/his spouse in a qualified joint interest. (Chapter 303)

State Employees Training Rider: (Omnibus state departments appropriation) Continues the requirement that a proportional amount of training funds be used for Schedule C employees. Requires the distribution of a career advancement handbook. (Chapter 333)

Child Care Sliding Fee: HF 272/SF 266 (Norton/Spear) Appropriates \$1.5 million to provide a sliding scale subsidy for child care services for families whose: a) income is above the maximum allowable for Title XX fully-subsidized child care but less than 70% of the state median income (e.g., an income between \$10,782 and \$12,579 for a family of four); and b) parents are unable to care for the child because of employment, school attendance or other circumstances. (Chapter 307)

PASSED
(continued)

Spouse of Nursing Home Resident: HF 588/SF 755 (Weaver/Anderson) Modifies the assets test for Medical Assistance eligibility for those above age 65. Exempts the homestead and one automobile and allows cash and liquid assets of \$10,000 per couple. (Chapter 309)

Gift Tax: (Omnibus tax bill) Abolishes gift tax and replaces it with an estate tax. Equalizes the amount of tax paid on gifts between spouses. (Chapter 303)

Council Refunding: (Omnibus state departments appropriation) Appropriates \$153,800 to continue the Council until June 1981. (Chapter 333)

NOTE: Appropriations listed are for the biennium, the period from July 1, 1979 through June 30, 1981.

INTRODUCED
NOT PASSED

Probable Cause Arrest, Spouse Abuse: SF 82 (Lewis) Removes restrictions on probable cause arrests in cases of domestic assault including clause requiring that the arrest take place in the offender's place of residence, within four hours of the assault, and that the victim have visible signs of physical injury.

Insurance Discrimination: HF 1609 (Wynia) Prohibits unfair discriminatory practices in the sale, underwriting and rating of insurance policies, on the basis of sex, marital status, or occupation as homemaker.

Pension Notification: HF 1006/SF 536 (Anderson, B./Staples) requires that spouses of employees covered by public or private pension plans receive prior notification of benefit options which may be chosen under a pension plan.

Child Care Tax Credit: HF 1117/SF 1154 (Berglin/Dieterich) Provides for increased tax credit amounts for dependent care costs and for higher income eligibility limits.

Pre-natal Care: HF 137 (Berglin) Expands the definition of qualified health care plan as stated in the Minnesota Comprehensive Health Care Insurance Act to include certain pregnancy-related services and pre-natal medical care.

Housing Discrimination: HF 1012 (Clark) and HF 888/SF 1352 (Kahn/Keefe, S.) Amends the Minnesota Human Rights Law to prohibit discrimination on the basis of the presence of children in advertising, renting, or terminating the lease of rental housing units.

NO BILLS
INTRODUCED

AVTI Tuition and Preference, Displaced Homemakers: Provides admissions preference on waiting lists and financial assistance at area vocational technical institutes for persons who qualify for the Displaced Homemaker Program.

State Employees Work Schedules: Encourages the use of part-time employment, shared jobs, and more flexible work hours in state government employment.

AFDC Unemployed Father: Changes the term AFDC-Unemployed Father to AFDC-Unemployed Parent to allow that either a father or a mother can fulfill work requirements under the aid to Families of Dependent Children program.

AVTI Tuition and Preference, AFDC Recipients: Provides admissions preference on waiting lists and financial assistance at area vocational technical institutes for persons who are recipients of Aid to Families of Dependent Children (AFDC).

Medical Assistance Eligibility, Post-AFDC: Provides an additional two months of eligibility for Medical Assistance after termination of a maintenance grant on Aid to Families of Dependent Children (AFDC).

Non-WIN Employment Programs: Provides that Non-WIN employability programs are available to all eligible welfare recipients by requiring county welfare departments to inform recipients of availability and appropriate money for such programs.

Marriage Booklet: Provides legal and economic information to marriage license applicants through a booklet to be distributed at the time of license application.

Divorce Statistics Reporting: Appropriates \$20,000 to the Vital Statistics section of the Minnesota Department of Health to participate in the divorce registry system of the National Center for Health Statistics.

NOTE: The legislature has two sessions during a biennium. In the first year of the biennium the focus is on major taxing and spending bills. In the second year of the biennium, bills not requiring major expenditures or not requiring an appropriation are considered. In this second session, the legislature may consider bills previously introduced or new legislation.

DISPLACED
HOMEMAKERS:
PROGRAM
SUMMARY

A new displaced homemaker program will be established in northern Minnesota with funds appropriated in the 1979 legislative session, and two programs funded by the 1977 legislature as pilot projects will be able to continue providing services. The following is a summary of services and a profile of participants enrolled on or before April 30 of this year in one of the two centers currently operating: the Metropolitan Center for Displaced Homemakers, with offices in St. Paul and Minneapolis; and the rural program, South Central Minnesota Displaced Homemaker Program, with offices in Mankato, Fairmont, and New Ulm.

Displaced homemakers are persons who have spent the majority of their adult lives as homemakers, and who suddenly need to become economically self-sufficient because of divorce, separation, death or disability of a spouse. Both programs assist them in the transition from home to paid employment through counseling, workshops, information, referral and placement services. Participants explore vocational interests, identify skills they already have, develop job-seeking skills and self-confidence.

At the end of April, a total of 490 displaced homemakers had been served -- 389 at the metro center which opened in April of last year and 101 through the rural program since its opening in August. In the metropolitan area, 57% have found employment and the majority earn more than \$4.00 an hour in their new jobs. An additional 28% are enrolled in training programs to develop marketable skills. Placement data for the South Central program are not yet available. Program costs for both centers are low in comparison to similar programs, amounting to \$305 per enrolled participant.

A profile of the displaced homemaker emerges from data collected by the two programs. The average age of participants is 39 for the rural program and 40 for the metro program. Participants in both programs had been homemakers for an average of 14 years, some for as many as 40 years. Most had at least one dependent at home. About one-third of persons served in the metropolitan area and almost two-thirds of those in the rural program were on AFDC or some other form of public assistance.

There was almost no difference in the data on marital status of participants in the two programs. More than three-fourths were separated or divorced, about 11% were widowed, and about 3% were single; less than 7% were married. Neither program found that displaced homemakers were lacking in education: only 6% of the metropolitan participants and only 24% of rural participants did not have a high school diploma. Almost half in the metro area and almost one-fourth in the rural area had some college training or were college graduates. Their difficulties in obtaining employment seem to be more closely related to the fact that their education was not recent.

Both programs are engaged in a variety of outreach and public education activities. For more information, contact State Coordinator Joline Gitis at 612/296-8006, or one of the program offices: the Metropolitan Center in St. Paul (612/227-8401) or Minneapolis (612/874-6636); the South Central program at Mankato (507/389-6073), Fairmont (507/238-4214), or New Ulm (507/359-2031).