

Commission on the Economic Status of Women

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Biennial Report

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COMMISSION ON THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN

The Commission gathers information and advises the legislature through the following activities:

- * Public hearings are conducted at the State Capitol and throughout the state. The hearings may be focused on a particular topic or they may be open as to topic.
- * Task forces are established when more intensive study is needed on a particular topic.
- * Research includes data gathered and analyzed by the staff from a variety of sources, including surveys, state agencies, the U.S. Bureau of the Census and the U.S. Department of Labor.
- * Reports are provided to the legislature and the governor, including recommendations for legislative and administrative actions to improve the economic status of women.
- * Legislative proposals are developed each legislative session. The Commission provides information and assistance to the legislature as it considers proposals affecting women.
- * Public information is provided through the Commission's publications and by responding to requests for information from a variety of individuals and organizations. Commission staff can provide basic information about women's legal and economic rights as well as statistical data about women in Minnesota.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION 1993-94

Representatives

Karen Clark
Tim Commers
Steve Kelley
Becky Lourey
Betty McCollum, vice chair

Staff

Aviva Breen, Executive Director
Christine Halvorson, Assistant Director
Cheryl Hoium, Assistant Director

Senators

Linda Berglin
Kevin Chandler
Janet Johnson, chair
Sheila Kiscaden
Pat Piper

ON-GOING ACTIVITIES & SPECIAL PROJECTS

In addition to data collection, preparation of reports, publication of information and testimony in support of Commission-endorsed legislation, the following activities are conducted on an on-going basis.

Assistance to legislators and legislative staff. The Commission provides statistical information about women, background information on legislative issues and information about women's resources and organizations on request from legislators and legislative staff.

Interaction with executive branch agencies. The Commission provides information to state agencies and works with agencies in monitoring areas of concern, avoiding duplication of effort in data gathering and providing assistance in implementing programs serving women's needs and following the implementation of legislative proposals.

Public hearings. Public hearings, in conjunction with statistical research, form the basis for Commission reports and recommendations. Hearings may be on a particular topic or open to any concern from participants about the economic status of women. Each year the Commission holds hearings in various locations throughout the state.

Public information. The commission receives many requests for information from the press, private corporations and foundations, women's organizations and the general public. Information is provided by:

- * Making newsletters, brochures and other publications and reports available;
- * Preparing and distributing press releases about legislation, reports and hearings;
- * Participating in seminars, panels, workshops and advisory committees;
- * Reviewing grant proposals related to the economic status of women; and
- * Providing information on a wide variety of topics relating to the economic status of women.

A toll-free number is available to callers outside the metro area. Resource and referral information is offered. Requests break down into the following categories:

- * Marriage dissolution, child support, spousal maintenance, domestic violence, welfare, housing, education;
- * Credit, insurance, starting a business and other financial matters;
- * Employment discrimination, parental leave and rights of pregnant employees, labor laws and other employment related questions; and
- * Data, including poverty and labor force statistics, demographics and requests for statistical reports.

Special Project. Participation in Working Women Count, a national survey of the working women initiated by the U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, May-September 1994.

Meetings and Hearings

January 25, 1993 St. Paul, MN	Public hearing. Welfare reform.
March 16, 1993 St. Paul, MN	Commission meeting.
June 23, 1993 St. Paul, MN	Commission meeting.
September 30, 1993 Staples, MN	Public hearing. Testimony on family law, public assistance, vocational education.
November 1, 1993 Duluth, MN	Public hearing. Health care issues for women. Testimony on welfare system problems.
November 23, 1993 St. Paul, MN	Public hearing. Review of Minnesota's welfare reform initiatives to date.
December 17, 1993 St. Paul, MN	Public hearing. Welfare reform.
January 25, 1994 St. Paul, MN	Public hearing. Welfare reform.
February 9, 1994 St. Paul, MN	Commission meeting. Legislative agenda.
February 14, 1994 St. Paul, MN	Commission meeting.
June 28, 1994 Rochester, MN	Public hearing. Open testimony taken on health care, job development, public assistance.
September 20, 1994 St. Paul, MN	Public hearing. Legal system and higher education. Review implementation of local government pay equity
December 9, 1994 St. Paul, MN	Commission meeting. Review of legislative issues.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

Each session the Commission endorses legislative proposals designed to improve the economic status of women in the state. Summaries of the 1993 and 1994 proposals and action on the proposals are included in the appendix of this report.

PUBLICATIONS

The Commission published the following materials in 1993 and 1994:

The Legal Right to Child Support, brochure; printed January 1993, April 1993, December 1993, September 1994

This brochure is re-printed frequently. Over 10,000 were distributed in this biennium. The brochure was completely revised in 1994 to reflect changes in Minnesota law.

Women and Finances, brochure; printed February 1993, November 1994

Employment Rights for Women, brochure; printed February 1993, November 1994

Marriage Dissolution and the Law, brochure; printed April 1993, November 1994

Women's Rights in Marriage, brochure, May 1993

Women and Pay Equity, brochure, June 1993

Commission on the Economic Status of Women, brochure; printed July 1993, April 1994
Describes the work of the commission and provides a list of members and publications.

Are You Entitled to Family Leave?, poster, September 1993
This poster was funded by the U.S. Dept. of Labor, Women's Bureau. It compares the federal Family and Medical Leave Act with Minnesota's parental leave law.

Pay Equity: The Minnesota Experience, report, June 1994
Chronicles the history of Minnesota's pay equity legislation.

A Guide to Child Support Cost-of Living-Adjustments
A workbook with forms for parents to use in determining their biennial child support increases. This workbook is continually updated.

Public Assistance in Minnesota: Facts About Programs and Recipients, report, July 1993

Minnesota Women 1990: Employment Tables

Minnesota Women 1990: Household and Marital Status Tables

Minnesota Women 1990: Poverty Tables

These publications are the first compilations based on available 1990 U.S. Census data.

Monthly Newsletter. The monthly newsletter provides announcements of Commission meetings and publications as well as summaries of legislative proposals, report summaries, statistical information and other information on the economic status of women. Newsletters are mailed to a list of approximately 2,000 readers. Every member of the legislature receives the newsletter. Newsletter topics for the last two years are listed below.

1993

January	Legislative Agenda
February	Low Wage Earners
March	Minnesota Vital Statistics
April	The Elderly in 1993
May	<i>no issue</i>
June	1993 Session Wrap-up
July	Marriage and Divorce Statistics in the U. S.
August	Education, Income and Jobs in the U.S.
September	Fertility of Women in the U.S; Employment in Minnesota
October	Employment and Occupational Segregation in Minnesota
November	Women in the U.S. Labor Force
December	Child Support Collections in Minnesota

1994

January	Women's Educational Levels in Minnesota
February	Legislative Principles/Women in Nursing Homes/Veterans
March	Poverty in the U.S.
April	Wives' Contributions to Family Income in the U.S.
May	1994 Legislative Summary & Working Women Count Survey
June	Labor Force, Poverty, and Households and Families in Minnesota
July	Single Parents in Minnesota
August	Working Women Survey Highlights
September	U.S. Labor Force in 1993
October	Income of Households and Families in Minnesota and Counties
November	Employment in Minnesota and Counties
December	Women in Elective Office

BIENNIAL BUDGET

EXPENSE CATEGORY	FY 94	FY 95	TOTAL
Salaries	121,900	121,900	243,800
Fringe	27,600	28,880	56,480
Total Salary & Fringe	149,500	150,780	300,280
Repairs & Maintenance	1,200	1,200	2,400
Printing	6,000	5,000	11,000
Data Processing	2,500	0	2,500
Purchased Services	300	300	600
Postage	3,200	5,200	8,400
Telephone	6,000	4,200	10,200
Total Communications	9,200	9,400	18,600
Members' Per Diem	900	1,400	2,300
Members' Travel	2,000	2,000	4,000
Staff Travel	1,000	1,000	2,000
Total In-State Travel	3,900	4,400	8,300
Members' Per Diem	0	0	0
Members' Travel	0	0	0
Staff Travel	2,000	2,000	4,000
Total Out-of-State Travel	2,000	2,000	4,000
Fees	0	0	0
Supplies	1,200	1,000	2,200
Publications	500	700	1,200
Total Supplies/Publications	1,700	1,700	3,400
Equipment	700	220	920
TOTAL	177,000	175,000	352,000

APPENDIX I. 1993 LEGISLATION

1993 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The Commission will be following the issues and supporting the goals listed below during the legislative session that runs from January to May of this year.

COMMISSION ON THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN

The Commission is mandated to study: the economic security of homemakers and women in the labor force; opportunities for educational and vocational training; employment opportunities and contributions of women to the economy; women's access to benefits and services in Minnesota; and barriers to full participation in the economy.

The Commission publishes: a monthly newsletter which provides data relating to the status of women; several brochures explaining women's legal rights; and several in-depth reports.

The Commission staff provides information and analysis on a variety of legislative issues related to the economic status of women. The Commission staff complement is 2.75 employees.

GOAL OF LEGISLATION

1. Provide continued funding for the Commission on the Economic Status of Women.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Escalating episodes of violence against women in Minnesota in recent years prompted the 1992 legislature to pass landmark legislation not only to increase penalties for offenders but to create new programs that may help prevent violence in our society. This balance of punishment and prevention needs to continue as state policy develops to address this problem.

Violence Prevention Grants

In 1992, two grant programs were developed to help communities and schools begin to address violence prevention. The state's Office of Drug Policy was expanded to include violence prevention responsibilities and renamed the Office of Drug Policy and Violence Prevention. This office in collaboration with the Departments of Education,

Human Services and Health, awarded violence prevention grants totaling \$1.45 million to 80 school districts for such projects as curriculum development, parent education and community collaboration. More school districts should be able to participate in this grant program. Another \$250,000 in grants have been awarded to 52 community groups to identify needs and develop services and collaborative efforts to prevent violence at the local level. This grant program should be continued.

Juvenile Treatment

One way to address the prevalence of violent crime among adults is to identify and treat violent behavior in juveniles. Juvenile perpetrators of violence may have their own history of abuse. Early treatment is shown to be effective, whereas delaying treatment until adulthood is far less promising.

Stalking and harassment

Minnesota law has addressed the problem of "stalking" since 1987 under trespassing and harassment provisions and has recently strengthened penalties for repeat offenses. Stalking includes willful, malicious and repeated following or harassing of another. Although

stalking affects a variety of people, it frequently involves women as victims. Existing state laws need to be expanded to include more specific behaviors that constitute harassment and to increase penalties for repeat violations. Perpetrators should be required to undergo mental health assessment and treatment.

GOALS OF LEGISLATION

1. Continue the collaboration between the Departments of Education, Human Services, Health and Public Safety in awarding school and community violence prevention grants.
2. Continue funding grants for violence prevention programs in the schools and for local communities.

Continued on next page

Evaluate and, where appropriate, expand treatment programs for juvenile sex offenders.

5. Strengthen laws addressing the problem of stalking and similar harassment.

BATTERED WOMEN

In Minnesota, an estimated 383,000 to 566,000 women may be battered—experiencing violence at the hands of a husband, partner or family member. Over 11,000 Orders for Protection against abusers were filed in 1990.

Minnesota funds a network of 17 battered women's shelters, advocacy programs and domestic abuse intervention projects. These services provide a safe place for women and their children and provide advocacy and support to victims throughout the judicial process.

Currently, programs specifically for battered women receive \$3.4 million in state funding. County, federal and private funding also support these programs. In 1991, 4,800 women and 6,000 children were sheltered. More than half of the requests for shelter were denied because of lack of space. In total, 18,000 women received some kind of help through the battered women's network. Fifty-one of Minnesota's 87 counties have no advocacy or shelter services.

The 1992 legislature required the development of arrest policies to be used by law enforcement units in establishing procedures for domestic abuse arrests. Training is needed to ensure that each unit properly implements its own policy.

GOALS OF LEGISLATION

1. Increase state funding for battered women's shelters and advocacy services.
2. Continue funding for domestic abuse intervention projects.
3. Fund training for law enforcement officers to implement arrest policies.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual assault is a violent crime. It includes forced sexual activity—rape, same-sex sexual assault, child sex abuse and incest. In 1991, 1,791 rapes were reported in Minnesota and another 1,273 arrests for sexual assault were made. Currently 40 programs for sexual assault victims receive state funding. These programs helped an estimated 43,380 victims in 1991. Programs provide services to victims including crisis intervention, medical and legal information and support groups. Current state funding for sexual assault programs and other crime victim programs totals just less than \$1 million. Not all areas of the state are being served with this level of funding.

GOALS OF LEGISLATION

1. Expand funding of programs for victims of sexual assault to serve all areas of the state.

CHILD CARE

For many women access to affordable child care services may mean the difference between welfare dependency and economic self-sufficiency. The state has helped with child care fees for low-income families and AFDC recipients since 1976.

The combination of federal, state and local spending on child care subsidies in 'FY 93 is expected to serve about 28 percent of the families who are eligible. Waiting lists statewide include about 5,000 low-income working families. Fully funding the Basic Sliding Fee program should be the ultimate goal of the legislature.

AFDC participants in the STRIDE program have all their work or training child care costs paid. Some AFDC recipients who are ineligible for STRIDE can get child care assistance through the ACCESS program, but only 2,000 families statewide can be enrolled at any given time. Both groups are entitled to one year of "transition" assistance after leaving AFDC. These former AFDC recipients face losing their child care when their year is up if they are put on the waiting list for Basic Sliding Fee assistance.

In the 1991-92 school year, 1,367 students in Minnesota's post-secondary schools received child care assistance through a \$5 million fund administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB). More students should be served in this program.

Another \$150,000 program administered by HECB provides grants to child care programs serving post-secondary students in an innovative way. Grants have not produced new models for providing child care and the program has become duplicative of other child care programs. The \$300,000 biennial appropriation for this program would better serve post-secondary students by being put into the post-secondary child care subsidy fund.

GOALS OF LEGISLATION

1. Fully fund the Basic Sliding Fee program so all eligible families can be served.
2. Ensure that all former AFDC clients who have received transition year child care subsidies continue to receive child care subsidy assistance after their 1-year of guaranteed subsidy if they are income eligible.
3. Increase the \$5 million child care subsidy fund administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Board to serve more eligible post-secondary students.
4. Eliminate the Child Care Innovative Grants program administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Board and transfer the funds to the post-secondary child care subsidy fund.

CHILD SUPPORT

More than half of female-headed families with young children live in poverty. Two-fifths of female-headed families with

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children in Minnesota live in poverty. Many of these families live in poverty, many because they receive inadequate or no support from the absent father.

A Minnesota study showed child support was ordered in 76 percent of divorces and the median child support award was \$195.50 monthly. In 32 percent of the cases the court deviated downward from the state's guidelines. The study also showed almost half of custodial mothers received an average of \$25.75 less a week than was ordered. The children of divorced families would be better off economically if Minnesota's child support guidelines were strictly followed. However, even if the guidelines were strictly followed the children are not likely to have adequate income. The Minnesota child support guidelines do not take into account the custodial parent's work-related child care costs or children's extraordinary medical expenses not covered by insurance. In addition, the guidelines are used by the court as a *maximum* amount rather than the *minimum* to be awarded.

The most recent Census Bureau report on child support shows little progress is being made in attempts to have child support ordered and enforced. In 1988, 59 percent of women with custody were awarded child support. Of these women, only 51 percent received the full amount awarded, 25 percent received less than they were due and 24 percent received no child support payments. Of the women without child support awards, 64 percent wanted support but were unable to obtain it because of an inability to locate the father, establish paternity or inability of the father to pay.

State educational grants for post-secondary education can be denied if the applicant owes past due child support. Applicants should be allowed to appeal these denials.

GOALS OF LEGISLATION

1. Revise the Minnesota Child Support Guidelines to improve the adequacy of income available to custodial parents and their children and include the health care and work-related child care costs.
2. Improve enforcement procedures to enhance collections of court-ordered child support.
3. Establish an appeal procedure for cases when education grants are discontinued because of non-payment of child support.

PATERNITY

Nearly one-third of children living in single-parent families are living with a parent who has never been married. It is estimated paternity is established for only 1 in 3 out-of-wedlock births.

Both the child and the mother benefit from the establishment of paternity and the potential support of the child by both parents. Currently the process for establishing paternity is cumbersome, requiring the use of the courts even when there is no contest. A court action for paternity can be intimidating,

expensive and time-consuming and may seem like a criminal proceeding.

GOAL OF LEGISLATION

1. Create a method of establishing paternity which protects the interests of alleged fathers and does not require a court action when paternity is not contested.

AFDC

Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) is the primary program providing assistance to needy dependent children and their caretakers. Eighty-five percent of the caretakers of needy dependent children in Minnesota are women.

Minnesota AFDC payment levels have fallen further and further below the rate of inflation. AFDC has not increased since 1986. In 1976, AFDC and food stamps combined provided a family income of approximately 99 percent of the poverty level. Today families receiving AFDC and food stamps live at 75 percent of the poverty level.

Welfare Reform

The Minnesota Family Investment Plan will allow families on AFDC to retain more income if they become employed. A test of this concept will begin in 7 counties in 1994.

Housing Subsidies

A study in 1989 by the Legislative Auditor showed some AFDC families can rise above the poverty level if they receive a housing subsidy. Housing subsidies are in short supply and waiting lists are often as long as two years. At the time of the Auditor's study only 38 percent of AFDC families lived in subsidized housing.

Under Federal law, AFDC families can own a car valued at no more than \$1,500. In today's market, this cannot provide a family with reliable transportation that can help them find and keep employment and transport children to child care.

GOALS OF LEGISLATION

1. Increase income for AFDC families.
2. Seek federal waivers to allow increased value of a car in determining AFDC eligibility.
3. Fund MFIP adequately to provide all the services in the plan.
4. Insure that public assistance electronic benefit transfer programs protect client rights.

MINIMUM WAGE

Minimum wage in Minnesota is \$4 an hour for smaller companies and \$4.25 for larger companies. At the \$4.25 rate, an employee working full-time, year-round would make a

gross annual income of \$8,840 and for two persons is \$9,190. A minimum wage worker with one child, therefore, lives below the poverty level.

GOAL OF LEGISLATION

1. Increase the state's minimum wage.

TAXES

Minnesota has a Working Family Tax Credit that provides a refundable income tax credit for low-income wage earners who are heads of households. The credit lowers the tax liability of these families and provides a refund if they owe no taxes. The credit, ranging from \$18 to \$202 per year, is available to families earning less than \$21,250 annually and with at least one child. The credit is the same regardless of the number of children in the family.

GOAL OF LEGISLATION

1. Expand Minnesota's Working Family Tax Credit.

DISPLACED HOMEMAKER PROGRAMS

An estimated 207,000 full-time homemakers live in Minnesota. These are women who are not in the paid labor force, but who provide child care and household management services for their families. Each year, many of these women lose their jobs as homemakers because of the death or disability of their spouse or because of divorce. These women have difficulty finding employment because of inadequate training, lack of recent paid work experience, and age and sex discrimination.

Twelve Displaced Homemaker Programs currently operate throughout Minnesota. Four counties have no program serving their area. Services offered by the programs include career exploration, counseling, testing, support, referral and placement. Funding for fiscal year 1993 is \$1.36 million.

GOAL OF LEGISLATION

1. Provide continued funding for displaced homemaker programs throughout the state.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Women are often faced with a lack of opportunities to participate in the mainstream economy. The options of self-employment and entrepreneurship are critical additions to current employment and training choices. Business ownership offers women the potential for economic independence.

Economic development efforts in the state have not provided a noticeable benefit to women or women-owned businesses. It is virtually impossible to monitor the effect of economic development efforts of the Department of Trade and Economic Development. Access to capitol is a major concern of women who historically have had limited access to bank loans.

GOAL OF LEGISLATION 1. Insure that state economic development capitol access funds and seed capitol are available to women on an equitable basis.

HEALTH CARE

Women's access and ability to afford health insurance has been limited in the past by gender-based insurance ratings. In 1992, the legislature enacted MinnesotaCare (formerly HealthRight), which will ultimately eliminate gender discrimination in insurance and provide affordable health insurance to underinsured families and individuals.

GOAL OF LEGISLATION

1. Support the implementation of MinnesotaCare to benefit women.

EDUCATION

Learning Readiness; Headstart; ECFE

The state funds an \$8 million Learning Readiness Program that offers health, education and social services to eligible four-year-olds through local school districts. Priority is given to developmentally disadvantaged or other children who may be at risk of not being prepared for success in kindergarten. With 365 school districts participating, an average of \$130 is spent per child. This program should serve more children.

In Minnesota, 34 percent of children eligible for Head Start are actually receiving services. Head Start, primarily funded by the federal government, is for low-income families and offers education, social services, health, nutrition and transportation services. Minnesota spends \$18 million for Head Start programs in the state. The cost for full-day, full-year Head Start is \$5,000 per child. More eligible families should be served in this program.

Minnesota's Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) program provides education and support to parents and young children from birth to kindergarten. Parents learn how to support their child's learning and development. ECFE is run by school districts which have community education programs. Currently 398 districts offer the program to any parents in their districts and 230,668 parents and children were served in 1992.

GOALS OF LEGISLATION

1. Expand funding, school aids and the levy authority of school districts in order to serve more families and children in Learning Readiness, ECFE and other early childhood programs.
2. Increase state funding to allow Head Start to serve a greater share of the eligible families.

FAMILY PLANNING

Women's health, including the timing and number of pregnancies, is directly linked to their socioeconomic status. Subsidized family planning method services are available to low income women who are at high risk of unintended pregnancy in 68 of the state's 87 counties through several funding sources.

Since 1978 the Minnesota Legislature has funded Family Planning Special Projects to provide family planning services grants. During the current biennium slightly more than \$4.2 million in grants were awarded to 43 agencies including cities, counties and non-profit corporations. These monies also fund a statewide family planning hotline operated by the Department of Health.

Minnesota receives funds from the federal Maternal and Child Health Block Grant. Of this grant, \$3.2 million for family planning is allocated to 37 local community health boards. Funds are also used at the state level for a family planning consultant and a nurse consultant. They provide technical assistance and training throughout the state.

GOAL OF LEGISLATION

1. Continue state supported family planning services and expand the Family Planning Special Projects program to meet the needs of unserved women.

WOMEN, INFANT, CHILDREN (WIC)

The supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) provides nutritious foods and nutrition education to low-income, nutritionally-at-risk pregnant and post-partum women, infants and children under age 5. A 1991 federal study including Minnesota's WIC program found that for every \$1 spent during pregnancy, \$4.21 was saved in lower Medicaid expenses as a result of fewer premature births and increased birthweights of babies.

In 1992, Minnesota received \$36.5 million in federal dollars. The legislature appropriated \$850,000 of state revenues each year of this biennium.

WIC is available on a priority basis to eligible applicants. The total monthly caseload in 1992 was about 82,000. The monthly waiting list averaged 3,000.

GOAL OF LEGISLATION

1. Continue and increase funding for the WIC program.

CAREGIVER SUPPORT SERVICES

A caregiver provides daily care that enables a person to remain at home despite illness or disability. This frequently avoids or postpones costly institutionalization. Eighty percent of care for the elderly in the community comes from family members - mainly their wives and daughters.

There are 23 caregiver support projects funded with state dollars. Eight are coordinated through SAIL (Senior Agenda for Independent Living) and 15 are independent projects. Two-thirds of Minnesota counties have a caregiver project.

GOAL OF LEGISLATION

1. Continue funding to maintain and expand caregiver support services.

ADOLESCENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Adolescent health needs are changing as society and teen's lives change. Behavioral and environmental factors affect health. Poverty affects children's health and the number of children living in poverty continues to increase. Also, unhealthy sexual behaviors pose a significant threat. Health programs for adolescents need to focus on prevention and early intervention. One way to provide both is through school-based health care centers. These programs include assessment, diagnosis and treatment, especially for students who might not otherwise receive it. In addition, they can provide health education, counseling, referral and information.

Adolescent health can also be enhanced by school health and wellness programs using parents, students, community leaders and organizations to develop programs to promote healthy physical, mental and social development.

Teen pregnancies are another health concern in Minnesota's schools. Half of all teens who give birth drop out of school before graduating. Pregnant teens and teen parents need to be supported to stay in school during a pregnancy or be helped to return to school after delivery.

GOALS OF LEGISLATION

1. Support the establishment of school-based health care centers in Minnesota's secondary schools.
2. Support the development of comprehensive school/community health and wellness programs.
3. Continue the availability of alternative education for pregnant teens to insure that they stay in school while pregnant and return to school after pregnancy.

EQUITY IN EDUCATION

Schools have reflected and reinforced societal stereotypes about appropriate roles for women and men. Instruction, counseling and staff assignments have been based on traditional views of female and male roles.

Over the past several decades there have been a number of initiatives to address sex equity. However, recent studies of school staff, textbooks, student enrollment and achievement confirm that bias and stereotyping continue. The Minnesota Board of Education has passed a rule requiring school districts to develop inclusive education plans.

GOALS OF LEGISLATION

1. Support efforts to increase the representation of women in K-12 administration.
2. Support funding for model projects to implement the Inclusive Education Rule of the Minnesota Board of Education.

LEGISLATION APPROVED IN 1993

13

PROGRAMS FOR WOMEN

Commission on the Economic Status of Women

Appropriates \$355,000 for the Legislative Commission on the Economic Status of Women. *CHAP 192*

Battered women's programs

Appropriates \$400,000 for additional battered women's shelters and \$1.3 million for operation of the existing battered women's programs and shelters. *CHAP 146*

FAMILY LAW

Appropriates \$1.6 million to improve access of low income clients to legal representation in family law matters. *CHAP 192*

Provides for withholding of income tax refunds for delinquent spousal maintenance. Allows occupational licenses to be reviewed for suspension in cases of delinquency on spousal maintenance. Provides for notices to be included in all court orders for child support, spousal maintenance, custody and visitation regarding: payment methods, visitation violations, laws governing payments, parental rights of each party, change of addresses, late payment notices and judgments and medical and dental insurance requirements.

Requires district court clerks to make forms for applying for a cost-of-living adjustment in spousal maintenance and/or child support available. *CHAP 322*

VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Stalking and harassment

Expands the definition of harassment. Allows owners registering motor vehicles with the state to keep their residence address private for safety purposes by written request. *CHAP 326*

Post-secondary training

Appropriates \$400,000 to the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) to design a program for training students on violence issues. Creates a higher education center on violence and abuse at one public or private post-secondary school chosen by HECB. *CHAP 326*

Violence prevention grants

Appropriates \$400,000 for community violence prevention councils and \$1 million for violence prevention grants that can be used for curriculum development in the schools. Appropriates an additional \$3 million for violence prevention education grants. *CHAPS 224 & 326*

Judicial education

Adds harassment and stalking laws to the Supreme Court's judicial education program of ongoing training for district court judges. Requires training for county and city attorneys. *CHAP 326*

CHILD CARE

Appropriates an additional \$3.5 million for the Basic Sliding Fee Child Care program. Re-allocates \$600,000 of federal child care funds to counties with insufficient Basic Sliding Fee Child Care funds to serve all enrolled families. *SS CHAP 1*

Makes public certain data on criminal convictions of applicants for child care licenses. *CHAP 171*

Prohibits smoking during business hours in family child care homes licensed by the state. *CHAP 14*

Appropriates \$54,000 from the Early Childhood Care and Education Council to be used for a pilot child care workers' training program, including an apprenticeship component. *SS CHAP 1*

Appropriates \$7.1 million to the post-secondary child care program which subsidizes child care costs of students. Provides funding to the Higher Education Coordinating Board to provide technical support to post-secondary schools in providing innovative child care options for students. *SS CHAP 2*

Allows jurors in court to be reimbursed for any additional child care expenses incurred as a result of jury duty, at rates determined by the Supreme Court. *CHAP 192*

PATERNITY

Allows the paternity of a child born to unmarried parents to be established by signing a "recognition of parentage" form, rather than having to go to court. *SS CHAP 2*

AFDC

Allows the state to seek waivers from the federal government to raise the maximum allowable value of a car to \$4,500 in determining eligibility for AFDC and to allow dependent children and minor caretakers attending school at least half-time in AFDC families to save any earned income and maintain eligibility for AFDC.

Appropriates \$200,000 for supplementary grants to AFDC recipients for such expenses as major home and appliance repair, utilities, supplementary dietary needs or furniture or appliance replacements. *SS CHAP 1*

CHILD SUPPORT

Income withholding

Allows for automatic income withholding for child support payments to occur at the written request of the obligor or by the custodial parent's motion in court. *SS CHAP 1*

Medical and child care expenses

Provides that new child support and maintenance orders require obligors to inform the public authority of their current employer and availability of any employment-related health insurance coverage. *SS CHAP 1*

Makes improvements in medical support provisions. Gives employers more responsibility for determining child support status of employees. Allows apportionment of work and education related child care expenses between the parents.

Guidelines

Raises the minimum income used in establishing child support to \$550 per month and raises the maximum income to which guidelines are applied to \$5,000 per month. Allows for adjustment of the upper limit every two years with the cost of living. Prohibits courts from deviating downward from the guidelines when the custodial parent is on AFDC, unless an extreme hardship for the obligor.

Penalties for non-payment

Strengthens penalties for wilful failure to pay child support and changes felony non-payment of support to

a gross misdemeanor with a penalty of one year in prison or a fine of \$3,000.

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County child support enforcement offices

Expands authority of counties to obtain information to locate absent parents, to establish paternity or child support or to enforce a child support order. Provides financial incentives to counties for establishing paternity and for reviewing and obtaining necessary adjustments to child support orders.

Collections at the state level

Creates an arrearage collection project in the Department of Revenue for child support that is more than \$100 and 90 days past due.

Requires the Department of Human Services to study a variety of ways to increase child support collections and improve child support awards. *CHAP 340*

Appropriates \$5.8 million for a child support restructuring initiative in the Department of Human Services. Includes funding for Project Fair Share which provides job training and support services for non-custodial parents who owe back child support. *SS CHAP. 1*

EDUCATION

Appropriates \$400,000 for a statewide children's Data Base.

Appropriates \$130,000 for staff for the Legislative Commission on Children, Youth & Families.

Appropriates \$4.47 million for a grant program for projects designed to increase local collaboration among counties, school districts and social service organizations. An additional \$3.5 million is appropriated to these grants in SS CHAP 1, the Health and Human Services bill.

Appropriates \$18.9 million for Learning Readiness, a pre-kindergarten program for four-year-olds.

Appropriates \$950,000 to Way to Grow programs. *CHAP 244*

Appropriates \$23 million to HeadStart programs statewide, a \$6 million increase. *CHAP 369*

Appropriates \$1 million to establish a youth apprenticeship program. Requires any program to actively encourage women and minority students to participate. *CHAP 335*

WORKPLACE ISSUES

Unemployment Compensation

Requires the Dept. of Jobs & Training to develop and implement a policy regarding employees forced to leave work due to domestic abuse and to study problems of employees leaving work because of child care or domestic abuse problems. *CHAP 270*

Economic development

Appropriates \$380,000 to WomenVenture, Inc., a non-profit organization based in St. Paul helping women start and maintain small businesses. *CHAP 369*

HOUSING

Appropriates \$880,000 to the transitional housing program, providing temporary shelter for homeless persons and families.

Appropriates \$1.2 million for the food shelf program.

Appropriates \$400,000 for youth employment and housing for the homeless.

Appropriates \$1.1 million for acquisition, rehabilitation or construction of transitional housing units.

Appropriates \$3 million for rent assistance in the family stabilization program.

Appropriates \$3.8 million for grants to counties for the family homeless prevention and assistance program to prevent homelessness and secure permanent or transitional housing for homeless families.

Appropriates \$366,000 for an emergency mortgage foreclosure prevention and emergency rental assistance program for low or moderate income persons in danger of losing their housing. *CHAP 39*

HEALTH CARE

Appropriates \$500,000 for grants to nursing programs to recruit persons of color and to provide grants to students who are persons of color and seeking a degree as registered nurses. *SS CHAP 2*

Appropriates an additional \$4.2 million to the WIC program in the Department of Health.

Appropriates an additional \$3.6 million to the family planning grants. *SS CHAP 1*

OTHER

Taxes

Expands the Working Family Tax Credit from 10 percent to 15 percent of the allowable federal Earned Income Tax Credit. *CHAP 375*

Women in athletics

Appropriates \$30,000 for an international ringette (a type of hockey played by women) tournament in St. Paul and Rosemount in 1994.

Appropriates \$300,000 for promoting the Women's Final Four basketball tournament in 1995. *CHAP 369*

Appropriates \$30,000 to the Amateur Sports Commission to promote women's sports. *CHAP 192*

Requires the High School League to adopt rules and policy requiring the equal employment of women as referees for high school activities and sports contests.

Requires the High School League to analyze opportunities for women as referees. *CHAP 224*

Nurse veterans statue

Appropriates \$50,000 for a nurse statue to be located in the Minneapolis Veteran's Affairs Medical Center. *CHAP 369*

LEGISLATION VETOED BY THE GOVERNOR

Gender balance on boards

Required gender balance in multi-member state agency appointments and recommended racial, ethnic, geographic and socioeconomic diversity in these appointments. *(HF31/SF17)*

Commission on the Economic Status of Women

Biennial Report 1994

APPENDIX II. 1994 LEGISLATION

IN THIS ISSUE

During the 1994 legislative session the Commission will be monitoring legislation that deals with welfare reform, housing, child support, child care, economic development, displaced homemakers and women's health. A summary of the 1994 legislative principles appears below.

COMMISSION'S 1994 LEGISLATIVE PRINCIPLES

WELFARE REFORM

1. Conduct a study to determine what the standard of need in the AFDC program should be.
2. Change provisions in the AFDC program which limit the ability of recipients to retain more of their earned income before becoming ineligible.
4. Expand employment and training opportunities in SDE to more of the AFDC population.
5. Provide supplemental benefits to AFDC recipients who lose benefits when they begin or end employment.

CHILD SUPPORT

1. Create an administrative process for the establishment,

modification and enforcement of child support that is efficient, streamlined and uniform throughout the state, that is accessible to either party and that protects the rights of the participants.

2. Simplify the child support guidelines.
3. Adopt procedures which improve the ability to enforce child support orders in other states.
4. Improve employer reporting of new employees who have child support obligations so that income withholding can begin promptly.

HOUSING

Provide a housing supplement to AFDC recipients who are not currently receiving a housing subsidy.

CHILD CARE

Reserve additional revenues for the Basic Sliding Fee child care subsidy program to serve low income working families on statewide waiting lists.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Conduct a survey of women business owners in the state to determine the demographics and the kind of assistance which will improve the potential for success.

DISPLACED HOMEMAKER PROGRAMS

Expand funding to displaced homemaker programs.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Improve and expand the availability of sex education and family planning, including programs focusing on male responsibility and adolescent health care educational programs.

LEGISLATION PASSED IN 1994

K-12 EDUCATION

Staff Development

Requires district plans for staff development to include activities to promote: equal educational opportunities; conflict resolution; and violence prevention, including sexual harassment. *CHAP 647*

Sexual, Religious and Racial Harassment and Violence Policy

Expands the coverage of the harassment and violence policy required in each district to require that the policy be given to new employees and independent contractors. *CHAP 647*

FAMILY LIFE AND SEXUALITY

Male responsibility and fathering

Allocates \$500,000 to establish a grant program focusing on male responsibility and fathering to reduce teenage pregnancy and prevent crime. *CHAP 647*

Sexuality and family life education survey

Requires the Department of Education to survey the extent of family life education in Minnesota's schools with results used to develop effective programs to prevent teen pregnancy. *CHAP 647*

Teen pregnancy reduction

Appropriates \$80,000 for ENABL, a pregnancy reduction program for 8th and 9th graders. *CHAP 636*

CHILD CARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Child care

Changes eligibility for the post-secondary child care program to a household income basis. Limits the grant amount to \$1,500 per child per academic year and the number of child care hours to 40 per week. Provides additional grants for students enrolled outside the regular academic year. *CHAP 532*

Dependent care tax credit

Extends the dependent care tax credit (up to \$720) to married couples without out-of-pocket child care expenses for a child age 1 or less. The credit decreases as family income increases. *CHAP 587*

Learning Readiness

Appropriates \$1.5 million for learning readiness programs. *CHAP 576*

FAMILY LAW AND CHILD SUPPORT *CHAP 630*

Makes establishment, modification and enforcement of out of state awards easier. Expands jurisdiction over someone who no longer resides in the state but who owes child support to a child living in the state.

Administrative process

Establishes an administrative process to establish, modify and enforce child and medical support orders, and maintenance when part of a child support order in uncontested and default cases.

Child Support Administration and Enforcement

Authorizes the attorney general's office to begin a public service campaign about child support.

Improves the process for suspending occupational licenses of persons owing past due child support.

Allows private collection agencies to assess fees against an obligor when collecting child support.

Clarifies how child care expenses are allocated between the parties. Clarifies that child care costs are the amount paid to the provider by the obligee and any public agency.

Creates a presumption of substantial unfairness if the noncustodial parent's income is below 100 percent of the poverty level after child support, spousal maintenance and child care costs.

Authorizes the Department of Human Services to publish a list of those who owe more than \$3,000 in child support and have not made any payments for the previous 12 months.

Reestablishes a felony charge if child support is more than 180 days past due, but allows dismissal of the charges if the obligee consents to an automatic income withholding order or other payment arrangements.

Authorizes the Commissioner of Human Services to design a child support assurance program using state funds to pay a minimum level of support to a family and collect the support from the obligor. The state should determine the actual cost of adequately meeting a child's basic needs.

Post-nuptial contracts

Allows spouses to enter into a post-nuptial contract when each spouse is represented by an attorney and has marital property valued over \$1.2 million in their own name. The contract determines each party's rights in non-marital property when divided at divorce, legal separation or death. No separation or dissolution process can begin within two years of the agreement. *CHAP 545*

PROSTITUTION

Creates a civil cause of action for persons coerced into prostitution. Allows a suit against anyone who has: 1) solicited an individual to practice prostitution; 2) promoted the prostitution of the individual; 3) collected or received the individual's earnings from prostitution; or 4) hired, offered to hire or agreed to hire the individual to engage in prostitution. *CHAP 624*

BATTERED WOMEN AND DOMESTIC ABUSE

Advocacy services

Appropriates \$200,000 for domestic abuse advocacy services in unserved areas. *CHAP 636*

Battered Women's Shelter

Provides \$1 million to acquire and improve five battered women's shelters in the state. *CHAP 643*

Appropriates \$180,000 for crime victims reparations and the crime victim ombudsman. Provides \$10,000 for training judges to handle child and adolescent sexual abuse cases. *CHAP 636*

Amends the domestic abuse act to allow the order to exclude an abusing party from a reasonable area surrounding the dwelling or residence. Allows a court referee to sign an order for protection. *CHAP 636*

Makes violation of an order for protection and several kinds of assault gross misdemeanors. *CHAP 636*

Female Genital Mutilation

Makes female genital mutilation a felony. Allows the procedure to be performed by a licensed physician if necessary for the health of a person or for medical purposes on a person in labor. *CHAP 636*

Female Genital Mutilation

Would have required the Department of Health to conduct education, prevention and outreach activities regarding the practice of female genital mutilation.

JUVENILE CRIME

Appropriated \$100,000 in mini-grants for programs for juvenile female offenders.

Appropriated \$50,000 for male responsibility and fathering program grants.

Appropriated \$10,000 for a violence prevention study and report from the chemical abuse and violence prevention council. *CHAP 576*

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS**Study of Women-Owned Business**

Allocated \$25,000 for a study of women-owned businesses and their access to credit. *CHAP 632*

Displaced Homemaker Program

Would have allocated an additional \$165,000 for the displaced homemaker program. *CHAP 632*

OTHER LEGISLATION OF INTEREST**Ice arenas**

Ice arenas used by the public must provide prime ice time to women and girls. By the 1996-97 season they must be allowed up to half of prime ice time. Excludes revenue producing events. *CHAP 632*

Restroom Facilities

New buildings (major renovations of old buildings) used for public events for 200 or more people must have a ratio of at least three women's for every two men's restroom facilities. *CHAP 632*

Gambling

Requires that charitable gambling organizations which give most of their funding to benefit programs serving mostly one sex to consider funding request from the under-represented group. The organizations cannot deny a reasonable request for funding for a facility or activity for the under-represented gender. Provides for a complaint process and reporting of expenditures. *CHAP 633*

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parents. Expanded the Parents Fair Share program now operating in Anoka and Dakota counties.

Created a package of waiver requests from the federal government to remove barriers to employment for AFDC recipients.

Appropriated \$225,000 for displaced homemakers programs.

Appropriated \$125,000 for a food stamp outreach program.

VETOED BY THE GOVERNOR

CHILD CARE *CHAP 606*

Basic Sliding Fee

Appropriated \$8 million to the Basic Sliding Fee child care program which subsidizes the child care costs for low-income parents in work or school.

Non-STRIDE AFDC Child Care Subsidies

Allowed the redistribution of child care funds to serve AFDC recipients not enrolled in STRIDE. Counties using all their funds may receive additional funding transferred from counties not using their funds.

HEALTH

Women's Health Center

Created a partnership between the Department of Health and the University of Minnesota and other researchers to work on women's health issues.

Teen Pregnancy Prevention

Appropriated \$20,000 to develop and plan an education program to reduce teen pregnancy.

Cancer Screening

Appropriated \$70,000 for breast and cervical cancer screening for low-income women.

Breast Cancer

Provided for a study on the need for a breast cancer patient's bill of rights and a report and recommendation to the legislature by January 1995.

CHILD SUPPORT

Health coverage for children

Disallowed insurance companies from denying dependent health insurance to a child support obligor's child on the basis that the child was born out of wedlock, not a dependent on the obligor's federal income tax, not living with the obligor or not living within the insurance company's service area.

BATTERED WOMEN

Use of shelters

Expanded the definition of battered women for the purposes of eligibility to use a shelter. A woman could use the shelter if she had been battered by any person with whom she has had an ongoing relationship.

Female Genital Mutilation

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