



1990 BIENNIAL REPORT

Commission on the Economic Status of Women

January 1991

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COMMISSION ON THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN

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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 study topic or they may be open as to topic.
- Task forces are established from time to time when more intensive study is needed on a particular topic.
- Research includes data gathered by the staff through surveys, analysis of data from state agencies, the U.S. Bureau of the Census and the U. S Dept. 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 programs are developed each biennium. The Commission provides information and assistance to the legislature as it considers proposals affecting women.
- Public information is provided through publications and by telephone. 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 1989-1990

Representatives

Karen Clark
Connie Morrison
Katy Olson, Vice Chair
Howard Orenstein
Gloria Segal

Senators

Linda Berglin
Gary DeCramer
Pat Piper, Chair
Jim Ramstad
Ember Reichgott

Staff

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

MEETINGS AND HEARINGS

1989

June 6, 1989
St. Paul, MN

Commission meeting. Review of 1989 legislative session.
Discussion of studying a coordinated child care system.
Interim hearing plans.

August 28, 1989
Bemidji, MN

Public hearing. Child support collections and problems of
low income families. Women's economic issues.

October 2, 1989
St. Cloud, MN

Public hearing. Women's access to affordable health
care and child care. Women's economic issues.

Dec. 5, 1989
St. Paul, MN

Commission meeting and public hearing. Report from child
care task force. Issues relating to low-income women
and women on public assistance. State agency testimony
on displaced homemaker programs, Family Investment Plan,
prenatal care for low-income women, school-age child care.

1990

Feb. 1, 1990
St. Paul, MN

Commission meeting to consider 1990 legislative agenda.
Public testimony on increasing the state minimum wage.

June 25, 1990
Winona, MN

Public hearing. Health care and child care affordability.
Women's economic issues.

October 3, 1990
Windom, MN

Public hearing. Rural women and economic opportunities.
Availability of health care and child care in rural areas.

October 3, 1990
Pipestone, MN

Public hearing. Child care and STRIDE program.
Economic development opportunities for rural women.

Dec. 4, 1990
St. Paul, MN

Commission meeting to discuss 1991 legislative agenda.

Dec. 11, 1990
St. Paul, MN

Commission meeting to discuss 1991 legislative agenda.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

Each session the Commission endorses legislative proposals designed to improve the economic status of women in the state. Summaries of the 1989 and 1990 proposals and action on the proposals are included at the end of this report.

PUBLICATIONS

The Commission published the following materials in 1989 and 1990:

- Vocational Education Sex Equity Report: Secondary, 1986-87, November 1989.
- Vocational Education Sex Equity Report: Post-Secondary, 1986-87, November 1989.
- Pay Equity: The Minnesota Experience, a review of the Minnesota experience with pay equity at the state and local levels. Written in 1985, revised in 1987, rewritten in 1988 and 1990.
- A Woman's Place, a guide to women's economic and legal rights, revised in 1990.
- Minnesota Women in the Twentieth Century, an overview of the last 90 years comparing labor force participation rates and data on marital and family status, published September 1990.
- Child Care Task Force Report, a report and recommendations related to child care policies in state government, published January 1991.
- 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

1989

January
February
March
April
May
June
July
August
September
October
November
December

Legislative Proposals 1989
Welfare in Minnesota, summary
Women in Elective Office-MN and U.S.
Minnesota Farm Women
Child Care; Displaced Homemaker programs
Legislative Summary: Session 1989
Marital Status & Living Arrangements
Older Women in the Workforce
U.S. Population Profile:1986-88
The Wage Gap
Technical Institute Enrollments: a report summary
Gender Fairness in the Courts Task Force Report:
Family Law-Part I

1990

January
February
March
April
May
June
July
August
September
October
November
December

Gender Fairness in the Courts Task Force Report: Part II
Summary of 1990 Legislative Proposals
Labor Force Participation of U.S. Women, 1947-1987-Part I
Labor Force Participation of U.S. Women, Part II
1990 Legislative Summary
Divorce in Minnesota, 1988; Dept. of Health Stats.
"Reflections of Risk"; Child Care Resource & Referral
Maternity Arrangements, U.S.
Child Support in the U.S., 1988
Changes in the American Family
Poverty and the Working Poor
Women in Elective Office

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

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 ongoing 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 similar 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.

Public hearings. Public hearings, in conjunction with statistical research, form the basis for Commission reports and recommendations. Hearings may be on a particular study topic, or open to any concern participants wish to express 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. 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;
- Providing information via telephone, including a toll-free "Women's Information Line" for callers outside the Twin Cities.

Women's Information Line. Many people call the Commission office for information on where to get help with employment problems, legal questions, collecting child support, divorce or starting a business. Resource and referral information is offered. Calls are from individuals, advocates, organizations, legislators or legislative staff or media wanting statistics or information on certain laws in Minnesota and the U.S. About 15 calls are answered per day and about one-fifth are from outside the Twin Cities. **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.
- Data, including poverty and labor force statistics, demographics and requests for statistical reports.

BIENNIAL BUDGET

DESCRIPTION	BUDGETED FY'90	BUDGETED FY '91	TOTAL
Salaries and fringe	\$122,000	\$130,400	\$252,400
Repairs	\$ 300	\$ 300	\$ 600
Printing	\$ 11,000	\$ 11,000	\$ 22,000
Computer Services	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	\$ 3,000
Purchased Services	\$ 100	\$ 100	\$ 200
Communications	\$ 5,500	\$ 5,500	\$ 11,000
Members Travel and Per Diem	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 10,000
Staff Travel (In state)	\$ 700	\$ 700	\$ 700
Staff Travel (Out of state)	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 2,000
Supplies and Publications	\$ 2,100	\$ 2,100	\$ 4,200
Equipment	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 2,000
TOTAL	\$ 150,200	\$ 158,600	\$ 308,800
To develop recommendations for a coordinated child care system*	\$ 50,000		\$ 50,000
Contract with Department of Vocational Technical Education	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 20,000
TOTAL	\$ 210,600	\$ 168,600	\$ 378,800
Reduction	\$ 207,600	\$ 162,600	\$ 370,200

* CHILD CARE TASK FORCE

In 1989 the legislature appropriated \$50,000 to the Commission to be used to develop recommendations for a coordinated child care system in Minnesota. The Commission appointed a task force representative of consumers and providers of child care, professionals in the field and of all state agencies which currently oversee the expenditure of child care funds. The task force was chaired by Rep. Karen Clark and Sen. Pat Piper. The task force met over a 15-month period, from September 1989 to December 1990. The final recommendations of the task force are contained in the Child Care Task Force Report and will be issued to the legislature in January 1991.

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY 1989

The following summary includes enacted legislation related to the Commission's 1989 legislative proposals. Chapter numbers refer to the section of Minnesota law where the new legislation appears.

WOMEN'S PROGRAMS

COMMISSION ON THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN: Provides continued funding for the Commission on the Economic Status of women. Increases funding base to provide benefits to all commission staff. Appropriates \$50,000 for the biennium to the Commission on the Economic Status of Women for a study of a coordinated child care system. (CHAP 335)

BATTERED WOMEN'S PROGRAMS: Appropriates \$1.2 million as a result of increasing marriage license and divorce filing fees and from the general fund to the Department of Corrections. (CHAP 282)

DISPLACED HOMEMAKER PROGRAMS: Appropriates \$952,000 for the biennium from the marriage license and divorce filing fees to the Department of Jobs and Training. (CHAP 282)

SEXUAL ASSAULT PROGRAMS: Appropriates \$150,000 for the biennium as a grant to a sexual assault coalition and an additional \$450,000 for sexual assault victims programs to fund existing programs and help create three new victim programs (CHAP 282)

ELIMINATE DEDICATED REVENUE FUNDING: Eliminates the dedicated use of marriage and divorce filing fees collected by the courts to fund displaced homemaker and battered women's programs. The fees continue to be collected but the programs will be funded from the general fund. (CHAP 335)

FAMILY SUPPORT

FAMILY INVESTMENT PLAN (WELFARE REFORM) Authorizes the Department of Human Services, in consultation with other state departments, to plan and design an overhaul of the public assistance programs supporting families with children. Authorizes seeking federal approval for the changes. "Field trials" will be conducted to test policies, methods and costs. Goals of the program are to support a family's transition to financial independence; consolidate and simplify public assistance programs; prevent long-term dependence; and allow families on public assistance to keep a greater portion of their earnings when they become employed. (CHAP 282)

FAMILY PLANNING: Appropriates \$11 million to the Health Department's Maternal and Child Health program. This appropriation affects five programs, including family planning and preventive medical care for teenagers at risk of early pregnancy. Grants are made to community health agencies. (CHAP 282)

CHILD SUPPORT: Discontinues the five-county automatic income withholding pilot projects for non-AFDC cases, but expands automatic income withholding to all counties in the state for cases collected by the child support enforcement office by November 1, 1990. Begins the process of computerizing the state's child support collection system. (CHAP 282)

RESPIRE CARE: Appropriates \$90,000 for a resource center on caregiver support and respite care services (CHAP 282)

CHILD CARE

CHILD CARE FUND: Appropriates an additional \$10 million to the state's Child Care fund, which subsidizes child care costs for AFDC families and low-income working families (CHAP 282)

RESOURCE AND REFERRAL, SERVICE DEVELOPMENT GRANTS: Appropriates an additional \$900,000 for the Child Care Resource and Referral programs. Appropriates an additional \$600,000 for Child Care Service Development Grants, which go to family day care homes and child care centers for start-up and improvement costs. (CHAP 282)

POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS: Creates a new \$4 million fund for low-income post-secondary students who need assistance with child care costs. The fund is administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB). Students will receive subsidies for their expenses while in class and may receive help for up to 20 employment hours. (CHAP 293)

CHILD CARE STUDY: Appropriates \$50,000 for the biennium to the Commission on the Economic Status of Women for a study of a coordinated child care system. (CHAP 335)

WORKPLACE ISSUES

PAY EQUITY: Allows the results of pay equity job evaluations and pay equity reports to be used as evidence in any proceeding or action alleging discrimination. (CHAP 335)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES: Appropriates \$400,000 to the Women's Economic Development Corporation, a non-profit organization which helps women develop new businesses. (CHAP 335)

EDUCATION

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE POLICIES: Requires each local school board to adopt a written sexual harassment and sexual violence policy which applies to pupils, teachers, administrators and other school personnel. Policies must include reporting procedures and disciplinary actions for violators. The policy must be conspicuously posted in each building and printed in each school's student handbook. Requires the commissioner of education to maintain and make a model policy available to school boards. Each school board must submit a copy of the sexual harassment and sexual violence policy to the state board of education. (CHAP 329)

Requires the governing board of the Minnesota State High School League to adopt a sexual harassment and sexual violence policy for participants in league activities. (CHAP 329)

HIGHER EDUCATION

PART-TIME STUDENTS: Appropriates \$2 million in state scholarship and grant monies to part-time student grants. (CHAP 293)

WOMEN'S ATHLETICS: Appropriates money to improve the programs and resources available to women and to ensure that University of Minnesota campuses are in compliance with Title IX. Includes at least \$1.5 million to the Duluth, Morris, Crookston and Waseca campuses for women's athletic programs. (CHAP 293)

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE: Requires the governing board of each public post-secondary system and each public post-secondary institution to adopt written policies regarding sexual harassment and sexual violence. The policy must apply to students and employees and must provide information about their rights and duties. It must include reporting procedures and disciplinary actions against violators. Private schools which enroll students who receive financial aid must also adopt such policies. Requires HECB to coordinate policy development. (CHAP 293)

TAX ISSUES

TAX CREDIT: Expands the dependent care tax credit to allow families with incomes of \$13,350 or less to take the maximum credit and increases the credit available for families earning more than \$13,350. Raises the maximum family income eligible for the credit to \$27,000. Requires that the income levels considered eligible for the credit be indexed for inflation.

TAX LIABILITY AFTER DIVORCE: Stipulates that married couples filing joint or combined tax returns who later divorce have proportionate shares of the tax liability based on their income, as if they had filed separate returns.

COMMISSION ENDORSED LEGISLATION WHICH DID NOT PASS

AFDC: Increase AFDC grants.

AFDC: Require the county to notify a former AFDC recipient when Revenue Recapture is being used to intercept a tax refund to collect child support arrearage and to pay the recipient first for child support owed before collecting on the county debt.

PAY EQUITY: Define pay equity implementation. Outline procedures for determining local government compliance with the Pay Equity Act. Provide a mechanism for resolving differences between local governments and the state regarding pay equity implementation.

CHILD CARE: Appropriate \$5 million to provide grants to child care programs to increase compensation for child care workers.

CHILD CARE: Continue funding for school-based pre-kindergarten programs and fund extended day child care programs.

CHILD CARE TAX CREDITS: Provide tax credits and/or other incentives to employers who pay for or subsidize licensed child care services for their employees.

GENDER BALANCE IN STATE AGENCIES: Require gender balance on multi-member state agency boards.

FAMILY/MEDICAL LEAVE: Require employers to offer family and medical leave which allows leave of absences for the employee's sickness or children's sickness. Allow use of an employee's sick leave for caring for a sick child.

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY 1990

The following summary includes enacted legislation related to the Commission's 1990 legislative proposals. Chapter numbers refer to the section of Minnesota law where the new legislation appears.

CHILD CARE

CHILD CARE FUND: Appropriates \$5.6 million to the Child Care Fund to be used to pay child care costs of AFDC-STRIDE program participants, to re-instate some low-income, non-AFDC recipients to the basic sliding fee subsidy program, to prevent current sliding fee recipients from having their benefits discontinued unless they become ineligible, to maintain the current level of rate reimbursement to child care providers serving subsidized clients and to add one staff member.

Excludes AFDC recipients from receiving subsidies through the basic sliding fee program. Counties may limit applications to the basic sliding fee program if they believe over 95 percent of their state allocation will be spent before the end of fiscal year 1991. (CHAP 568)

CHILD CARE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: Requires the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) to study the feasibility of a loan program for students whose child care subsidy has run out. The HECB will also study ways to redefine the cost of living allowance used to determine eligibility for state grants, to more accurately reflect living costs for students with varying living arrangements and family responsibilities, including child care costs. HECB must conduct a review and recommend changes in the amount schools and HECB can deduct from the \$4 million student child care fund for administrative costs. HECB must work with the MN Association of Financial Aid Officers to simplify the procedures to calculate eligibility for the child care grants. All reports must be made to the legislature before the 1991 session begins. (CHAP 591)

STRIDE-WELFARE REFORM

Changes STRIDE program eligibility guidelines. After May 1, 1990 those who can volunteer for STRIDE enrollment are limited to:

1. Caretakers under age 20 who have not completed a high school education or a high school equivalency program;
2. AFDC-Unemployed Parent principal wage earners;
3. Caretakers who have been receiving AFDC for 48 or more months out of the last 60 months;
4. Caretakers who began participating in STRIDE prior to May 1, 1990, and have not completed their Employment Development Plan (EDP);
5. Caretakers whose youngest child is age 16 or older;
6. Participants in two special programs, the Self Employment Demonstration and New Chance;
7. After September 1, 1990, custodial parents ages 20 and 21 with no diploma or little or no work experience will also be eligible.

Allows the Department of Human Services to expand entrance into STRIDE beyond the above categories if there are not enough participants to use the allocations or to meet federal requirements. (CHAP 569)

AFDC STUDY: Orders a study of items that should be included in calculating the AFDC standard of need and appropriates \$50,000--part of which shall be used for this study. (CHAP 568)

PAY EQUITY

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY EQUITY: Clarifies that "equitable compensation relationships" means that "compensation for female-dominated classes is not consistently below compensation for male-dominated classes of comparable work value." Also makes clear that the purpose of the pay equity statute is to eliminate sex-based wage disparities in public employment. Provides for a negotiation process between the Commissioner of Employee Relations and local units of government when there is a disagreement over compliance.

Requires that job studies be updated and maintained and that local governments file an implementation report after the compliance deadline of Dec. 31, 1991 (or other date approved by the commissioner). Requires the commissioner, in determining compliance with the pay equity law, to consider additional factors which are unrelated to gender, but may cause a local government to be out of compliance. The commissioner must report to the legislature before a non-compliance penalty will actually be assessed. (CHAP 512)

GENDER FAIRNESS IN THE COURTS

LEGAL SERVICES FOR LOW-INCOME CLIENTS: Appropriates \$890,000 to improve access of low income persons to legal representation in family law matters. (CHAP 568)

BATTERED WOMEN: Appropriates \$175,000 for battered women's services.

DOMESTIC ABUSE: Expands Orders for Protection (OFPs) to allow exclusion of the offender from the petitioner's place of employment.

Allows the court to require an abuser who violates the terms of the OFP to acknowledge an obligation to obey the OFP on the court record or to post a bond that is forfeited if the OFP is violated. If the abuser fails to comply the court may commit the abuser to jail.

Expands the definition of first degree murder to include a death caused by someone while committing domestic abuse, if that person has engaged in a past pattern of domestic abuse and the death occurs under circumstances manifesting an extreme indifference to human life. (CHAP 583)

DOMESTIC ABUSE PROSECUTION PLANS: Creates a five-county and five-city pilot program for prosecutors to develop prosecution plans and procedures for increased efficiency in prosecuting domestic abuse cases. Counties eligible to participate must have a record of dismissing 50 percent or more of the domestic abuse cases in that county. Advocates must be allowed to help develop these plans.

The plans must include provisions relating to early assignment of trial prosecutors, early contact with the victim, enhanced methods of gathering evidence and use of subpoenas. The plans must be reviewed annually.

Requires a prosecutor who dismisses criminal charges against someone accused of domestic assault to make a record of the specific reasons for the dismissal. If the dismissal is caused by the unavailability of the witness, the prosecutor shall indicate the specific reasons that the witness is unavailable.

DOMESTIC ABUSE COMPUTERIZED DATA BASE: The commissioner of public safety shall, by Feb. 1, 1991, evaluate the feasibility of establishing a statewide computerized data system containing information on domestic assault crimes and domestic abuse orders for protection. The data base should include perpetrators' information and the names of their victims; prior arrests for serious crimes; pretrial release conditions; probation and supervised release conditions; identifying information on those named in OFPs; and terms and conditions of the OFPs. (CHAP 583)

FAMILY LAW

Requires the court to award attorneys fees to help parties pay the costs of court proceedings if they are unable to carry on or contest a proceeding due to financial considerations. The court can do this after considering the financial resources of both parties. Also allows fees to be awarded to one party if the other party unreasonably contributes to the length or expense of court proceedings.

Requires the court to make specific findings when it awards joint legal or physical custody over the objection of one of the parties. Creates a rebuttable presumption that joint legal custody is not in the best interests of the child when there has been domestic abuse.

Clarifies what constitutes mediation and does not allow a mediation agreement to be enforced until reviewed by attorneys and accepted by the court.

Gives persons convicted of certain violent crimes and who have either custody or visitation rights the burden of proving that continued custody or visitation rights will be in the best interests of the child. (CHAP 574)

CHILD SUPPORT

Amends the child support guidelines to exclude income from a second job in determining the net income available for child support and modifications of the original support order. Second income is excluded only if: the job began after the dissolution action began; the job is in addition to a 40-hour work week; the support ordered is at least at guideline level; the additional employment is voluntary; the compensation is by the hour or fraction of an hour; the obligor's pay structure is not different from what it had been for two years prior to the dissolution action. (CHAP 574)

Amends the definition of net income when determining child support amounts to include "in-kind" payments received by the obligor from an employer if the payments reduce the obligor's living expenses. (For example, an apartment caretaker who receives a reduction in rent would have to include the value of that reduction in his or her income.)

Allows the court to order a child support obligor to identify or establish a child support deposit account at a bank when that person's child support payment cannot be made through income withholding. (For example, an obligor who is self-employed or receives fee payments as income, rather than receiving a regular paycheck through an employer.) Child support payments can then be automatically transferred from the account to the Child Support Enforcement Office, which will forward it to the obligee. If the bank fails to transfer available funds the bank is liable to the obligee.

Requires employers who are withholding income for an employee who owes child support to notify the child support enforcement agency if the employee is to receive a lump sum payment of more than \$500 from the employer. The employer must hold the payment until the court determines how much must go toward the child support obligation. Allows the state to pay a bonus to county child support enforcement

offices for identifying and enforcing any dependent health care coverage that a child support obligor might have available, when that obligor is under court order to pay for health care and the dependents are currently on medical assistance. (CHAP. 568)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SMALL-BUSINESS PROCUREMENTS: Establishes a program for state purchasing from small, targeted businesses and businesses in economically disadvantaged areas of the state. Targeted businesses include those owned and operated by women, persons with disabilities and specific minority groups. Targeted businesses shall be given a six percent preference when submitting bids. The purpose of this legislation is to remedy the effects of past discrimination. State purchasing from these groups is to be reviewed every two years. (CHAP. 541)

MINIMUM WAGE

RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE: Raises Minnesota's minimum wage from \$3.95 to \$4.25 per hour beginning January 1, 1991, for those working for larger employers. For smaller employers, the wage rises to \$4 per hour. Eliminates the sub-minimum wage for minors and sets their minimum wage at \$4 an hour. (CHAP. 418)

PRE-NATAL CARE FOR LOW INCOME WOMEN

PRENATAL CARE, PREVENTIVE CARE FOR CHILDREN: Requires the Commissioner of Health, along with other state agencies, to prepare a state plan to increase the usage of prenatal care and preventive health care services for children and make a report to the legislature by Dec. 15, 1990. (CHAP. 568)

OBSTETRICAL AND PEDIATRIC SERVICES: Increases the reimbursement rate paid to medical providers under Medical Assistance for obstetrical and pediatric services by 15 percent. Includes a provision for more outreach under the Children's Health Plan to improve access to prenatal and infant medical care. (CHAP 568)

MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH: Appropriates \$900,000 to fund maternal child health block grants and social service programs designed to reduce incidences of medical complications of children born to alcohol or drug-using mothers. (CHAPS 542 and 568)

OTHER

The following legislation is of interest to women but was not part of the Commission's 1990 legislative proposals:

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE Requires all employers to allow their employees up to 16 hours of leave during any school year to attend school conferences or classroom activities if they cannot be scheduled during non-work hours. The leave can be unpaid, unless an employee chooses to use vacation or other paid leave as appropriate.

For employers with 21 or more employees at one site, employees must be allowed to use any of their own accrued sick time to care for their sick children. (CHAP 577)

NURSING GRANTS : Creates a grant program, administered by HECB, for students entering or enrolling in registered nurse or licensed practical nurse programs with no previous nursing training or education, who agree to practice in a designated rural area. To be eligible they must serve at least three of the first five years following licensure in a designated rural area and have financial need.

Establishes a grant program for already licensed practical nurses who are enrolled in a program leading to licensure as a registered nurse. Registered nurses may seek grants for a B.A., M.A. or other advanced nursing program. (CHAP 591)

EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY EDUCATION: Creates a grant program for local school districts that want to expand Early Childhood Family Education programs beyond kindergarten to third grade. Services must integrate the roles of families, regular classroom teachers, and community-based social service agencies. (CHAP 562)

CRIMINAL SEXUAL CONDUCT: Expands the definition of fifth-degree criminal sexual conduct to include the intentional removal or attempted removal of clothing covering a person's intimate parts or undergarments. (CHAP 492)

AUTO INSURANCE FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS: Prohibits insurance companies which provide no-fault automobile coverage from excluding vehicles used to transport children as part of a family or group family day care program. (CHAP 496)

WOMEN OFFENDERS: Appropriates \$1.8 million for services to adult women offenders. Adds prison facilities for women in Moose Lake. (CHAP 568)

HUMAN RIGHTS: Requires an employer to make "a reasonable accommodation" for an employee's pregnancy or childbirth related disability, just as with other types of disabilities. To fail to do so would constitute an unfair employment practice.

States that it is an unfair discriminatory practice for a person engaged in trade, business or providing a service to refuse to do business with, to refuse to contract with, or to change the terms of a contract because of a person's race, color, sex or disability unless it can be shown that there is a legitimate business purpose for this discrimination. (CHAP 567)

"DROP IN" CHILD CARE: Changes the definition of "drop in" child care programs to include only non-residential programs in which a child participates a maximum of 45 hours per month. Eliminates the five-hour daily limit. (CHAP 568)

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN STATE AGENCIES: Requires that the Governor, when reviewing the performance of state agency department director, to review their department's attainment of its affirmative action goals. Requires the boards of the higher education systems (community colleges, technical colleges, state universities), to do the same with system directors. (CHAP 571)

CONCILIATION COURT LIMIT: Increases amounts for claims in Conciliation Court from \$2,000 to \$4,000, except for claims involving consumer credit, which are limited to \$2,500. (CHAP 575)

ABOUT THE COMMISSION

The **Commission on the Economic Status of Women** is a legislative advisory commission established by the Minnesota Legislature in 1976. Commission members include state senators and representatives. The Commission studies all matters relating to the economic status of women in Minnesota and publishes reports and recommendations to the legislature and to the Governor.

Commission members are:

Senator Linda Berglin
Senator Gary DeCramer
Senator Pat Piper, chair
Senator James Ramstad
Senator Ember Reichgott
Representative Karen Clark
Representative Connie Morrison
Representative Katy Olson, vice chair
Representative Howard Orenstein
Representative Gloria Segal

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