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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 10, 1983

TO: OPL SENIOR STAFF
FROM: FAITH RYAN WHITTLESEY *FRW*
SUBJECT: The President's Position on the ERA

You may be able to use some of this material in speeches
and in questions and answers. Please read it carefully.

Attachment



**national
RIGHT TO LIFE**
committee, inc.

Suite 402, 419 7th Street, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20004 — (202) 638-4396

October 31, 1983

Jack Courtemanche
Deputy Assistant to the President
for Public Liaison
The White House Office
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Courtemanche:

During our meeting on October 11, Mrs. Whittlesey requested that I submit a short memo regarding the President's stance on the ERA. I regret the delay in providing that memo, which is enclosed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Johnson
Legislative Director

DJ/hs
enc.

October 31, 1983

Memo

Reframing the ERA debate

The House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights will approve the proposed Equal Rights Amendment on Friday, Nov. 4. The full House Judiciary Committee is expected to approve ERA, without amendments, before Thanksgiving. The full House could act during a post-Thanksgiving session, if there is one; otherwise early next year.

Pro-ERA groups are selling ERA as a guarantee of economic equity for women; they are evading the drastic constitutional and social implications of ERA's sweeping and absolutist language. The media are playing along, for the most part framing the issue as "for or against equality for women." As long as the issue is framed in that way, public opinion polls will continue to show strong majority support for ERA.

The President's opposition to ERA will be noted with increasing frequency by the press, and by the President's political opponents, between now and election '84. It will not be possible for the President to maintain a "low profile" on ERA. Although it is already widely known that the President opposes ERA, it is not widely known why. If the President continues to rely on brief stock responses, such as, "I'm for the E and the R but not the A," it will reinforce the perception among some groups that he is really against legal equality for women.

It is time that the President became less defensive on this issue. Whenever he is asked about ERA, he should mention three or more specific areas of public policy in which ERA would have drastic and pernicious effects-- effects not supported by most Americans.

The President's response could be along these lines: "No, I will not reconsider my opposition to ERA. I do support economic equity and legal equality for women. But there is solid evidence that the absolutist language of ERA would have very destructive effects on our society. For example, ERA would certainly require that women be assigned to combat on the same basis as men; I'm opposed to that. ERA would virtually eliminate single-sex educational institutions. Even the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts would have to become sexually integrated to retain their congressional charters. I'm opposed to that. ERA would likely result in invalidation of the Hyde Amendment and all state restrictions on tax funding

ERA/ page two

of elective abortions; I'm against that. There is even a strong case that under ERA major religious bodies which make some distinctions on the basis of sex, such as the Catholic Church and Orthodox Jewish bodies, could lose their tax-exempt status, and I'm opposed to that. These are not far-fetched concerns. All of these points, and others, have been supported in expert testimony before the congressional committees which have been conducting hearings on ERA."

Whatever specific effects of ERA the President chooses to mention, should be repeated every time ERA is brought up. If the President makes the same points repeatedly, this will help reframe the ERA debate. And to whatever extent the debate shifts from "For/against equality for women" to "What will ERA really do?," the political benefits of the President's principled opposition to ERA will be maximized, and the political costs will be diminished.

Furthermore, whatever additional credibility the President gives to the real dangers which are inherent in ERA, will provide political protection for a number of Republican senators who also recognize these dangers but who fear that an anti-ERA vote will brand them as opposed to women's rights.

2080
Publications
5/19/73
David Stephenson

LYDIA FELLOWSHIP

The State of North Carolina

File
ERA

May 26, 1982

Dearest Lydians:

Greetings in the most Holy Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you.

I am writing you out of a sense of Divine Urgency concerning ERA. I have discussed this urgency with Campbell and Shelagh McAlpine and have their authority to write you. We are asking LYDIANS across America to join with us in prayer and fasting May 31-June 2 for ERA to be defeated in the states of North Carolina, Florida, Illinois and Oklahoma. We must persevere in prayer as never before! Please "give Him no rest until" ERA is defeated and the Church of the living God is established throughout America and the world! (Isaiah 62:6,7)

I am asking the Lydia Leaders in North Carolina to do the following:

1. To have an emergency meeting of all Lydia Prayer Groups in their respective territories to read this letter and give each woman the enclosed information.
2. To write letters to their N.C. State senators and representatives immediately stating their stand against ERA. To also write Governor Jim Hunt and Lt. Governor Jimmy Green.
3. To fast and pray May 31-June 2. To meet the evening of June 2 at 7:30 p.m. with their groups for communion and praise and worship.
4. For as many as possible to come to Raleigh, N.C. on Thursday June 3 at 10:00 a.m. to support the N.C. Legislators who are AGAINST ERA. This rally will be held at the STATE LEGISLATIVE BUILDING on Jones Street between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. I would ask you to come as a concerned mother and housewife, not as a member of a group.
5. To pray "without ceasing" through June 30.

I am enclosing a list of suggestions to aid you in the days ahead as you pray. Joan Stephenson of Durham, N.C. and I met and sought the Lord for this direction.

Thank you for hearing God's call to intercession and the "place of prayer." Thank you for "standing in the gap" for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you.

MaryLance



"Do whatever He tells you" —John 2:5