

December 4, 1970

DETERMINED TO BE AN
ADMINISTRATIVE MARKING
E.O. 12356, Section 1.1

By JH NARA, Date 10/1/92

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MEMORANDUM FOR: OFFICE OF STAFF SECRETARY

FROM: ROBERT H. FINCH

SUBJECT: Women and the Administration (P615)
(See my previous memo of October 17, 1970)

The President's concern about the relation of this Administration to women appears justified at present, and if changes are not made, such concern may be more than justified in the next few years. Women can continue to become more active, more independent, and make greater claims on government.

The Administration should take steps to recognize and engage the increasing competence and importance of women so that they will work with and in the Administration, rather than against it. If this is not done, both government operation and national election can be more difficult. TAB A carries a few women's vote percentages.

Problem Indicators

When planning concerning women and the Administration, these information items should be considered:

- The birth rate is declining. This will give women more free time.
- The women's movement is strong and getting more so in its many varieties, most of which are peaceful and rational. The battle in Congress over the proposed Equal Rights Amendment helped to set the positions of women's groups. While they do not all agree on where or how they should stand, all seem to stand more firmly for equal treatment as they see it.



- There are repeated references in non-governmental feminist literature to the success of Blacks and the lack of women's success in dealing with government and winning "rights." Women could become more demanding and more militant.
- Some of the women who lead in our Administration and in the Republican Party are of the opinion (not publicly expressed) that the record is poor. The Report of the President's Task Force on Women's Rights and Responsibilities (April 1970), TAB B, carried the admonition (page v.):

The executive branch of the Federal Government should be as seriously concerned with sex discrimination as with race discrimination, and with women in poverty as with men in poverty.

- Women have been counting appointments to administrative posts. The Washington press women are reported to be preparing a comparative study of appointments in various Administrations.
- One leader of the women's groups for Nixon in 1968 stated that she could find it most difficult to organize Republican women in the current climate.
- Mrs. Helen Bentley surveyed it all with acerbity in her October 22 Memorandum to the President (TAB C). She offered specific and detailed recommendations, some of which are incorporated in the options that appear later. More, she expressed attitudes that are not uncommon, and that are gaining support.

Action Areas

Women and the Administration can be broken into three substantive issues and the question of implementation. The latter question of "Who should handle the problem?" can best be left until there are some conclusions as to what should be done.

The substantive issues relate to:

- PARTICIPATION 1. How women can be assigned and used effectively within our Administration so as to strengthen their confidence in it, identification with it, and support of it.

SOCIO-
POLITICAL
STATUS

2. What can be done to give the Administration the status of leadership in the development of women's equal roles and improved status.

INDIVIDUAL
AND NATIONAL
ACHIEVEMENT

3. How the Administration can enable women to be a more effective force to meet the national needs of our society.

1. The Issue of Women's Appointments and Participation in This Administration.

The record of appointments so far in our year-and-a-half can be criticized and is, more and more often. As the attached report from the staff in Harry Flemming's office shows (TAB D), the number of women in policy-making positions is quite small. The statement by Mrs. Bentley (TAB C) is even more dramatic on the subject. Last month a high official in Health, Education, and Welfare said, "Astonishingly, in HEW itself, only 24 of the 521 Grade 16's and above are women, and only 2.6% of all Federal employees Grade 18 and above are women."

There is also contention supported by some statistics that women have not fared as well in this Administration as they did in the last.

Mrs. Bentley proposes a women's talent bank and a special effort to appoint women in those areas where they have competence, at all levels.

Bentley, Nancy Hanks, Pat Hitt, Virginia Knauer, and the Treasurer are high level women appointees, but the percentage is small and the question often raised is who is available. An effort to prepare a list of eligible women has been suggested. So has preparation of a list of positions to which women could be appointed. "But," ask some women, "who in the White House cares?"

2. The Issue of Legislative and Administrative Policy on the Status of Women.

Some 1960 and 1968 campaign statements opened the way for appointment of the President's Task Force on Women's Rights and Responsibilities. It reported on December 15, 1969, and the report was published in April, 1970. The recommendations have been subjects of discussion, but not much more.

In August of last year, the President appointed the Citizens' Advisory Council on the Status of Women. The twenty-woman Council met three times in fiscal 1970, and met again this month. Its Chairman, the Honorable Jacqueline G. Gutwillig, confers with Len Garment, who has Women's Rights and Responsibilities as one of his many White House chores.

In March, 1970, the Advisory Council published a memorandum supporting the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution. In February, the Council transmitted to the President its recommendation "that the Interdepartmental Committee on the Status of Women urge the President to immediately request the passage of the proposed Equal Rights Amendment by the Congress of the United States." (The President supported the Amendment, but the White House did not press the Senate.)

The Council reports, and recommends, to the Interdepartmental Committee on the Status of Women. This Committee was established in 1963, and consists of nine Cabinet members and the heads of the Civil Service Commission and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The Secretary of Labor is its Chairman. While the Committee was somewhat active in the previous Administration, perhaps as a buffer, since January, 1969, it has met once, last November, for half an hour. It has no record of accomplishments.

There is a Women's Bureau in the Department of Labor, under its Assistant Secretary for Wage and Labor Standards. "The Bureau serves as the focal point of informed concern, policy advice, and leadership, and is the clearinghouse . . . on questions relating to development of womanpower resources and the economic, legal and civil status of women." Elizabeth Koontz directs the Bureau.

In summary, there is administrative organization for introducing and implementing administrative policies relating to women's status and role in American society, but that which is being done has received little attention at high levels and very little publicity. The credit to our Administration is almost non-existent. When asked, women who should know can't tell you what the policy is.

3. Organizing and Encouraging Special Activities for Women.

To summarize here, little has been done to encourage women's groups to serve in the needy causes of special reading programs, or ghetto programs, or in other problem areas where organized volunteers can act to meet society's current challenges. Again, some means of organizing and acting are available but little used.

The Center for Voluntary Action, which is part of the National Program for Voluntary Action, can formulate and execute such plans once the Center is strengthened. The Director of the Office, Christopher Mould, is sketching plans for this now. Women can be the effectives in the Center's work. At present, the Center lacks both funds and visibility, but it has great potential. This is new ground.

(1) OPTIONS ON NEW ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE TO HANDLE WOMEN'S ROLE AND STATUS.

1. That the President assign responsibility for Women and the Administration to one or two of his immediate staff, example, Shultz and/or Ehrlichman, and thereby give the issue high priority and visibility.

Approve ☒ Disapprove _____ Comment Rumsfeld & Finch

2. That Fred Malek be given special, visible, responsibility for appointing women to significant positions.

Approve ☒ Disapprove _____ Comment _____

3. That Catherine May be appointed to work with the immediate staff member, or with Fred Malek's group, to give special attention to the role of women in the Administration.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____ Comment depends on her role at RNC

4. That Catherine May be directed to establish a roster of talented women, of Republican affiliation or leaning, who might be appointed to positions in this Administration.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____ Comment 25 no. 3

5. That the present administrative units for women's affairs continue to operate (Citizens' Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Interdepartmental Committee on the Status of Women, Women's Bureau in the Department of Labor) without administrative or organizational change, but that they convene as soon and as often as is feasible.

Approve ☒ Disapprove _____ Comment _____

6. That the present administrative units for women's affairs continue to operate, but that the units be given new strength and new leadership.

Approve _____ Disapprove ☒ Comment _____

(2) OPTIONS ON POLICY AND LEADERSHIP PROPOSALS

1. The White House should issue a detailed directive to increase the number of women in high administrative positions wherever possible, including appointments to independent commissions.

Approve ☒ Disapprove _____ Comment _____

2. All Departments and Agencies should be directed to establish or rejuvenate offices or other arrangements for appointing and upgrading women in accordance with their ability, and for developing programs to improve their status.

Approve ☒ Disapprove _____ Comment _____

3. The National Program for Voluntary Action should be directed to plan and program the participation of women, including women's groups on a broad scale.

Approve ☒ Disapprove _____ Comment _____

4. Give the wives and mothers of Vietnam prisoners of war a far more significant and vocal leadership role in the struggle to obtain the release of the prisoners.

Approve _____ Disapprove ☒ Comment _____

(3) OPTION ON LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. For the Administration, the Republican congressional leadership should introduce a simplified equal rights amendment. Now that the previous proposal is stalled, the Administration may obtain credit for the passage of an amendment.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____ Comment Refer to Clark
MacGregor