

Bob -  
I'd appreciate  
your views. I think  
it will be a hard  
fight next year -  
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APR 13 1971

April 12, 1971

M E M O R A N D U M

To: The President

cc: John N. Mitchell  
John Ehrlichman  
Leonard Garment  
Ray Price  
William Safire

From: Rita E. Hauser

Subject: Emergent Responsible Feminism - Why We are  
Missing the Boat for 1972

Cy. to  
Barbara  
Hanklin  
4/27/71

This Memorandum is written by one deeply committed to the success of your Administration, one loyal to you personally, and in the optic of a forthcoming re-election campaign in which I will be most active on your behalf fighting hard for victory.

Looking back over the past two years, I believe this Administration missed virtually every opportunity to address itself to and command a most powerful and rapidly growing social/political phenomenon: Emergent Responsible Feminism.. For reasons I state below, it is clear to me that this major development will be felt directly in the 1972 Election. Unless steps are taken now to associate this Administration in proper ways with this movement, a source of electoral support may be missed and, even more important, turned against you.

In the past month alone, I was the Centennial Celebration speaker at the University of Arkansas and at Baylor University in Waco, Texas --neither of which places could be characterized as radical spots. The subject on which I was asked to speak at each place was "The Woman of the Seventies". At each place, the great halls were filled to capacity, with students and alumni alike, male and female. I have addressed the Women's Division of the AFL-CIO on the same issue, and B'Nai B'Rith, and Catholic Women of America. All such women are intensely interested in and moved by the dimensions of a newly felt Feminism. In short, there is no doubt in my mind that for the first time, there is a collective unity among women on an important issue, a unity which crosses Party, social and economic lines.

It is an issue we have fundamentally ignored.

A golden opportunity is at hand for you to associate yourself with the spirit of rising hope on the part of so many women to participate fully, and on an equal plane, in the life of America.

Certain issues concern women directly. They want to know you and the Administration understand this and they want to hear your views on them. I think you took a good step by discussing the abortion issue-- a question of primal importance to women and one discussed everywhere I have been where women gather. Whether women agree or disagree with the position you took on the issue, you reached them more directly by this than by an hour's TV interview with a woman reporter, where the discussion is about non-issues in large part (i.e., what you eat for breakfast, how you relax, etc.).

To state it bluntly, women today are alive. They read and see and hear all the same sources of news as men. They have firm views on matters. I do not believe you can approach them by what they call "kitchen talk". Nor do they wish to be told by high officials that women, more than men, are the true believers in and the guardians of peace. If so, why are they totally absent from every council where decisions affecting peace are taken? Women do not wish to be told how important they are as teachers and nurses. If so, why are these jobs so poorly paid and why are men virtually absent from them?

In a word, women, as voters, must today be approached on the same level of intelligence and comprehension as men. If you talk to male factory workers about job opportunities, you must talk to women workers on the same subject and on the same level, with special attention to their special inequities. If you talk to male college students about their opportunities, you must hold out the same level of possibility for the women students, if not more.

I would like to make two specific recommendations to be implemented with an eye toward 1972:

1. At an appropriate time, it would be extremely newsworthy for you to hold a "rap session" with selected women of different walks of life, the express purpose of which would be for you to learn why they feel as they do on key issues and what, generally, they are about. This would acknowledge that you recognize an Emergent Feminism, the unity of women about which this Memorandum is concerned. Of particular interest would be questions such as: sex discrimination in employment, housing and public places; review of tax laws affecting the widow, divorcee and working mother; job training programs; government personnel policies; prospects for government



sponsored day care centers for children; abortion reforms; compulsory national service for women, to name but a few.

Responsible, intelligent women, professional and blue-collar, student and homemaker alike, can be selected.

To my mind, this would be far more intelligent a PR approach than interviews with women reporters.

2. I believe a White House Advisor on Women's Affairs should be appointed.

I have been asked about this in the past and I have had reservations about singling out women as a kind of minority group. On balance, however, and in view of the stinging criticism I have heard in so many places about the indifference of this Administration to the Emergent Feminism, I think the moment may be right for this Office.

I would be happy to discuss the function of this Office and the kind of woman to fill it with whomever you indicate.

What is crucial is that this Office not be confused with the type of function typically covered by a campaign co-Chairman, the get-out-the-vote function among women Party faithful. This is an important function, but it belongs elsewhere. The Office of Women would be geared to addressing the Administration to women with problems, doubts, thoughts, views --a cross section, only some of whom will vote for you. It cannot, if it is to succeed, be directed solely to the typical Republican woman active in politics: upper middle-class and one who has never worked or competed for a job.

CONCLUSION: I believe the moment is here to grasp the Emergent Feminism, which came to life during this Administration, in a way which will be productive for the country and beneficial to us in 1972. We can speak to the New Woman, whatever her age, who is appearing all over America. Not to reach out for her would, truly, be "missing the boat" in 1972.

REH