



2012 National NOW Conference Resolutions

passed July 1, 2012

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NOW/PAC ENDORSEMENT OF THE OBAMA/BIDEN TICKET

BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Organization for Women (NOW), at its annual conference in Baltimore, MD, enthusiastically urges the NOW/PAC to endorse the Obama/Biden ticket for reelection in 2012.

MODERNIZE NOW’S STRUCTURE FOR THE 21st CENTURY

WHEREAS, the National Organization for Women (NOW) was formed in 1966 and remains the largest organization of feminist activists in the country; and

WHEREAS, in commemoration of the sesquicentennial of the 1848 Declaration of Sentiments, which launched the women’s rights movement, NOW dedicated our entire National Conference to the creation of a restatement of purpose, the 1998 Declaration of Sentiments of the National Organization for Women; and

WHEREAS, despite the major advances and changes in society since 1977, the last time NOW held a bylaws conference, NOW has not undertaken a similarly focused, comprehensive examination of the structure of our organization to ensure that NOW is a vibrant and effective organization in the 21st century; and

WHEREAS, the words of NOW's Declaration apply as much today as when we adopted them, "Today, we fight the same reactionary forces: the perversion of religion to subjugate women; corporate greed that seeks to exploit women and children as a cheap labor force; and their apologists in public office who seek to do through law what terrorists seek to accomplish through bullets and bombs. We will not submit, nor will we be intimidated. But we will keep moving forward"; and

WHEREAS, to continue "moving forward and fighting back," NOW activists wish to give concentrated time and attention to modernizing our organization's structure in order to optimize our strengths and improve our effectiveness;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NOW acknowledge the efforts of the ad hoc Working Group to Modernize NOW's Structure to continue the process begun by the NOW Board at its weekend brainstorming retreat in February 2012 on revitalizing NOW's structure, by initiating discussion at regional conferences this spring, distributing a member survey and facilitating brainstorming workshops at this conference; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Working Group continue, and is charged by the membership with, organizing online and in-person meetings of NOW members to consider the ideas generated by the NOW Board, the Regional Conferences and this National Conference, and to develop proposed revisions to NOW's bylaws and policies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NOW organize a national forum, open to all NOW members, to be held before January 31, 2014, to discuss and debate proposed revision(s) to NOW's structure under the bylaws and policies; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that proposed revision(s) be submitted to NOW members for a vote, in accordance with the procedure set forth in the current bylaws, at the 2014 National Conference.

THE WAR ON WOMEN IN STATE LEGISLATURES

WHEREAS, opponents of women's rights, workers' rights, LGBT rights, immigrant rights, disability rights, voting rights and civil rights, most notably Americans United for Life (AUL), National Right to Life Committee, ALEC, Federation for American Immigration Reform, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and others, have analyzed state laws, set long-term legislative goals on a state-by-state basis, and publicized their analyses and goals on the web; and

WHEREAS, more than fifty (50) model bills that will serve as templates for legislation introduced in many states are also publicly available on the web; and

WHEREAS, the war on women currently being waged in state legislatures is not the work of individual legislators acting independently, but is instead a nationally organized and coordinated assault on women's rights that is implemented through bills based on templates produced by various national organizations; and

WHEREAS, this nationally coordinated campaign has resulted in states passing laws requiring a woman to undergo a medically unnecessary transvaginal ultrasound prior to obtaining abortion services along with other legislation designed to restrict or deny a woman's access to abortion services; and

WHEREAS, because variations of these template bills are often introduced simultaneously in several state legislatures, National Organization for Women (NOW) activists in different states must combat nearly identical bills at the same time; and

WHEREAS, this long-term strategy and nationally coordinated effort to destroy women's rights and to wage a war on women calls for an organized and long-term response from NOW;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NOW expand its legislative program to address bills based on templates and introduced in state legislatures as part of national campaigns to roll back, undermine, or destroy women's rights; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NOW implement a program to facilitate communication and exchange of information across state and regional lines to combat nationally coordinated assaults on women's rights; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that NOW work to raise awareness within NOW of this organized assault on women's rights and work with state organizations to create strategies and a plan of action to defeat these efforts.

NOW ENDORSES THE 21st CENTURY FULL EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACT, H.R. 4277

WHEREAS, according to the National Women's Law Center (NWLC), women have made modest job gains during the economic recovery, even though heavy job losses in the public sector have contributed to a weaker employment picture for women, who lost 348,000 public sector jobs over the course of the recovery, offsetting their private sector job gains by 38.2 percent; and

WHEREAS, according to the NWLC and the Institute of Women's Policy Research (IWPR), women hold 29.4 percent of private sector jobs gained during the recovery, and just 22.5 percent

of all jobs added between June 2009 and May 2012, which represents 41 percent of the jobs they lost during the recession, while men have regained 44 percent of their lost jobs; and

WHEREAS, steep cuts in local and state governments have resulted in a significant loss of jobs for women working as public school teachers, social workers, medical professionals, and child care professionals; and

WHEREAS, President Barack Obama has consistently demonstrated a sincere commitment to help provide jobs for women by advocating for increased federal funding to states in order to maintain the optimal number of public sector jobs for women who are providing critically important services for children, women, families, seniors, and the disabled; and

WHEREAS, there is a significant percentage of households in the U.S. in which the woman is an essential breadwinner in order for a family to survive economically, and due to the recession, there are scores of single women-headed households across the nation in which the breadwinners are out of work and in urgent need of employment now in order to take care of their families' most basic survival needs; and

WHEREAS, we are in one of the worst recessions since the Great Depression, and there is an urgent need for the federal government to take a major role in direct job creation so that 14 million unemployed workers can find work, and another 14 million who are working part time or have given up looking for work can find meaningful employment at a livable wage; and

WHEREAS, Rep. John Conyers, (D-MI) has introduced federal legislation, H.R. 4277, "The Humphrey-Hawkins 21st Century Full Employment and Training Act," a 21st Century "new New Deal" that would provide job training and employment opportunities for millions of unemployed men and women in the U.S. who wish to become gainfully employed; and

WHEREAS, under H.R. 4277, the federal government would train, hire, and pay unemployed women right now to become employed in a manner to promote employment diversity, pay equity and enhanced professional credentials;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Organization for Women (NOW) hereby officially endorse H.R. 4277, "The Humphrey-Hawkins 21st Century Full Employment and Training Act," so that women can be put back to work now, and encourage other grassroots civil-society organizations to also endorse this legislation, which must be passed with all deliberate speed to assure employment for all who want to work—especially women.

NOW SUPPORTS “PLAN B” EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION ACCESSIBILITY AT ALL INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE (IHS) UNITS AS AN OVER-THE-COUNTER (OTC) FOR ALL NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN 17 AND OLDER

WHEREAS, the National Organization for Women (NOW) has committed to diversifying its membership, condemned the racism that inflicts a double burden of race and gender discrimination on women of color, and formed a Native American Women’s Task Force to join with its indigenous sisters to fight for equal opportunities, rights and justice in all areas, including reproductive rights and health; and

WHEREAS, in the United States, women age 17 and over have the legal right to obtain emergency contraception or Plan B over-the-counter (OTC) and without a prescription at their pharmacy; and

WHEREAS, 92% of Native girls who have had sexual intercourse report having been forced against their will to have sex, 62% of whom report becoming pregnant before the end of the 12th grade; and

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Justice Statistical Profile indicates that violent victimization among Native American women is more than double that among all other populations of women in the United States, and Native women are more likely to be victims of rape/sexual assault committed by a stranger or acquaintance than by an intimate partner or family member; and

WHEREAS, because the IHS is the primary health care provider for Native American women, and IHS does not provide consistent access to Plan B, requiring Native American women to wait to undergo an exam and receive a prescription for it, their human and sovereign rights are being violated by the policies of IHS since they are the only race of women denied this service based on race;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NOW will partner with the indigenous members of its Native American Women’s Task Force to provide the necessary support and advocacy for the inclusion of Plan B as an OTC at all IHS Service Units; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that NOW will urge the director of IHS, currently Dr. Yvette Roubideaux, to issue a directive to all service providers that emergency contraception be made available on demand, without a prescription and without having to see a physician, to any woman age 17 or older who requests it, as well as to provide notice of its availability posted prominently at all IHS Service Units.

NOW JOINS THE “ONE BILLION RISING” CAMPAIGN TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

WHEREAS, ending violence against women and girls is one of the National Organization for Women’s (NOW) six core issues; and

WHEREAS, Eve Ensler, world-renowned author of *The Vagina Monologues*, which has been performed in 44 languages in 140 countries and raises awareness of the urgent need to end violence against women, was an honored speaker at NOW’s 2012 National Convention; and

WHEREAS, Eve Ensler has called upon one billion women and those who love them to walk out, dance, rise up, and demand an end to violence against women on February 14, 2013; and

WHEREAS, this campaign is known as “One Billion Rising”; and

WHEREAS, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination contribute to and exacerbate violence against women, and factors such as ability, age, access to resources, indigeneity, race, ethnicity, language, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and class can exacerbate the violence that women and girls experience; and

WHEREAS, violence against women and girls is at epidemic proportions in the United States and worldwide, and this violence has unique forms, causes and consequences;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NOW Action Center, with the support of the NOW Global Strategies and Issues Committee and other interested NOW committees and task forces, will provide materials and action ideas to its activists and chapters to help them join “One Billion Rising”, and that NOW’s campaign will include images and experiences of a diverse community of women and girls.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES

WHEREAS, while all women and girls are at some risk of experiencing violence or abuse, this violence occurs more frequently in the lives of women and girls with disabilities, and researchers attribute this heightened vulnerability to the complex intersection of disability with gender, poverty, isolation, reliance on others for support, discrimination and stereotypes that they are dependent and asexual — all issues that restrict their violence awareness, safety-promoting behavior and access to resources; and

WHEREAS, women and girls with disabilities are more likely to experience physical and sexual violence and to arrive at adulthood having already been sexually assaulted as girls than are their non-disabled peers; and

WHEREAS, women and girls with disabilities are less likely to receive sex education or participate in personal safety or abuse awareness programs, and they are often socialized to be compliant or have a disability that may impede their ability to assess situations of risk, resulting in their not knowing that what they are experiencing is abuse or a crime; and

WHEREAS, predators often specifically target women with disabilities because of their vulnerabilities and the perception that this puts abusers at lower risk of discovery; and

WHEREAS, women and girls with disabilities experience disability-specific forms of violence, such as withholding, damaging or removing medical equipment and/or communication devices; physical, emotional and social neglect; unwanted sexual touching during dressing and bathing; financial exploitation and abuse by caregivers — situations that have no analog among non-disabled women; and

WHEREAS, women and girls with disabilities are also more likely than their sisters without disabilities to experience multiple forms of violence, violence of greater severity, and violence that continues for a longer period of time, but when they reach out for assistance to heal they are met with little to no support, resistance and insensitivity by law enforcement, social services and the healthcare systems;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Organization for Women (NOW) continue supporting reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), including specific recognition that women with disabilities are more likely to be survivors of sexual, domestic and stalking violence than are their non-disabled sisters and that VAWA should promote the need for barrier-free and inclusive services by rape crisis centers, domestic violence service providers, law enforcement and related healthcare systems; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NOW urge collaboration between its Disability Rights ad hoc Committee, the U.S. Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) and OVW's Disability Program grantees to develop a simple, effective guide that includes training for evaluating and enhancing the accessibility and inclusivity of services and supports offered by publicly funded rape crisis centers, domestic violence programs and shelters; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NOW encourage state and local chapters to engage their publicly funded, local and statewide rape crisis centers, domestic violence programs and shelters in a dialogue around eliminating barriers to and increasing access for women and girls with disabilities who are survivors of sexual and domestic violence and stalking, through the use of the previously mentioned guide; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that NOW advocate and lobby all states and the District of Columbia to ensure that all services, law enforcement and healthcare systems involved in supporting survivors of sexual and domestic violence and stalking are barrier-free and inclusive of women and girls with disabilities.

THE COMBATING RACISM BOARD/AD HOC COMMITTEE'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE 2014 NATIONAL NOW CONFERENCE

WHEREAS, there is a very active Combating Racism Board/Ad Hoc Committee invested in the success of the diversity-inclusive themed 2014 National NOW Conference;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that this committee shall work closely with the national officers and staff, as well as the local organizing committee, to prepare and execute all phases of the 2014 National Conference; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this committee be tasked with selecting speakers that impact feminists of color, addressing issues around combating racism and addressing the meaning of white privilege; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that every workshop shall have a component that is reflective of the perspective of feminists of color; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this committee shall call for workshop proposals; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this committee shall have input into creating the conference theme title.

REMOVING THE TIME LIMIT FROM THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

WHEREAS, the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) ensures that women will have equal rights under the U.S. Constitution, and the National Organization for Women (NOW) supports the advancement of women's rights; and

WHEREAS, the ERA would need only three more states for ratification, and strong ERA advocacy organizations have arisen in the 15 states yet to ratify; and

WHEREAS, legal opinions support the conclusion that "the Constitution imposes no time limit for ratification of amendments," and passage of the Madison Amendment 203 years after it was first proposed supports the determination that Congress can choose any time frame for deciding amendments; and

WHEREAS, Senator Ben Cardin and Representative Tammy Baldwin have introduced resolutions in Congress — SJ Res. 39 and HJ Res. 47 — to remove the time limit for the ratification of the ERA; and

WHEREAS, NOW has repeatedly called for the ratification of the ERA;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NOW call upon all members of the U.S. House and Senate to co-sponsor, support, and pass into law SJ Res. 39 and HJ Res. 47 so the ratification of the ERA shall be achieved upon the affirmative vote of three states; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NOW mobilize all of its chapters and provide non-monetary resources to support these efforts, including grassroots and legislative strategies in support of SJ Res. 39 and HJ Res. 47 and rapid ratification of the ERA.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that nothing in this resolution rescinds the final resolved clause of the resolution titled “Equal Rights Amendment” adopted at the 2009 National NOW Conference, which states “BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that NOW pursue grassroots and legislative strategies in support of both the three-state and the 38-state strategies.”

CONFERENCE IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, feminists from all over the United States come to the National Organization for Women (NOW) conference every year; and

WHEREAS, the principal business of the conference is to determine actions and policies of NOW through resolutions; and

WHEREAS, the NOW membership works very hard on the resolutions to make sure they say exactly what we want them to say; and

WHEREAS, the NOW membership takes these resolutions very seriously; and

WHEREAS, there are times when a resolution is passed and nothing is ever heard about it again;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NOW create a Policy Oversight Conference Implementation Committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that said committee will consist of at least two board members and three members from the general membership; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee will give quarterly status reports to the board and to the membership on resolutions passed at the conference and those that are referred to the board; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the committee's main purpose will be to ensure that all resolutions passed at a NOW conference be implemented in a timely manner.

JUDICIAL REFORM AND ACCOUNTABILITY

WHEREAS, the U.S. Constitution requires that all federal, state, and territorial governments provide equal treatment under the law to all persons who seek legal support and/or redress from any court or quasi-judicial forum; and

WHEREAS, the credibility of the judicial branch of government is critical to the achievement of women's rights; and

WHEREAS, there currently does not exist any independent watchdog for the federal judiciary with respect to women's rights; and

WHEREAS, there is inconsistency in the review of state court judges or territorial judges from one jurisdiction to another; and

WHEREAS, neither access to free legal services for the poor nor paid legal services is sufficient to guarantee access to equal protection or competent counsel for those seeking legal support and/or redress;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Organization for Women (NOW) calls on the federal, state and territorial courts to implement all court procedures and policies in a non-sexist, non-discriminatory manner.