

DISABILITY RIGHTS INCLUSION AS ONE OF THE CORE ISSUES OF NOW

WHEREAS, all people have fundamental moral and constitutional rights. These rights must not be abrogated merely because a person has a mental or physical disability; and

WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control, about 36 million women in the U.S. have disabilities – and the number is growing; and

WHEREAS, although women and girls with disabilities experience many of the same forms of violence that all women experience, when gender, race and disability intersect, violence has unique forms and causes, and results in unique consequences. The range of violence experienced by women and girls with disabilities can include physical and sexual violence, as well as emotional and verbal abuse. The disparate treatment of Black women with disabilities underscores the triple jeopardy syndrome of race, gender, and disability bias in our society; and

WHEREAS, the effects of this violence are widespread, and the cost of violence against women and girls is substantial, both monetarily, as well as emotionally and socially, and it prevents women and girls from realizing their full potential as members of society; and

WHEREAS, historically, some families, professionals, and policy-makers have incorrectly assumed that people with mental and physical disabilities are not capable of making choices in their own best interest and made decisions on their behalf; and

WHEREAS, women and girls with disabilities are rarely included in such efforts and, if included, their participation is rarely part of the media coverage of such efforts; and

WHEREAS, disability rights are not explicitly included in the current mission of the National Organization for Women (NOW);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NOW commit itself to be inclusive of women and girls' disabilities, including women with either visible or invisible cognitive, mental and/or physical disabilities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NOW include Disability Rights as an additional and distinct separate CORE Issue; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the description of Disability Rights read as follows: NOW is committed to advocating for disability rights and fighting discrimination based on disability including visible or invisible cognitive, mental and/or physical disabilities in all areas, such as employment, housing, public accommodations, health services, child custody, and military policies. NOW is further committed to highlight and advocate for women of color at the intersection of race, gender, and disability, who experience very targeted marginalization. NOW is committed to educational efforts that combat the adverse effects of disability discrimination, promote positive images in the media, and ultimately ensure civil rights protection for all. NOW asserts the right of disabled individuals to live their lives with dignity and security.