

CONDEMNING DEHUMANIZATION OF WOMEN BY LANGUAGE USEAGE

WHEREAS, the war on women has escalated into high gear with serious backlash against previously won gains, including attacking women's ability to self-determination by limiting how we refer to ourselves, and are referenced in this latest chapter of patriarchal attempts to define, label, dehumanize, and control women; and

WHEREAS, there is a rising tide of health care institutions, organizations, and other communications referring to women by their body parts or biological processes, e.g. people who menstruate, people with uteruses, bleeders, breeders etc.; and

WHEREAS, this trend is particularly dangerous for Black women who, during U.S. slavery, were referred to and used in such ways and are subject to the worst maternal mortality rates in the country; for women of color who for hundreds of years were selectively chosen for sterilization; and suffer, along with low income women, from poor medical care and outcomes; and

WHEREAS, this use of body parts or biological processes to describe women negatively impacts women and girls, especially women of color, and harms them as recipients of health care; and

WHEREAS, everyone deserves the right to be addressed and referred to with dignity and respect, and while more than half of the world's population is female and they suffer discrimination and hardship as a class, if we cannot use the word "woman," we cannot address these issues;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Organization for Women (NOW) condemns the use of body parts or processes to label, define, or refer to women; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NOW will refer to women as full human beings and not as body parts or biological processes in all its actions, events, communications, and documents; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NOW condemns such discriminatory practices within publicly funded health or educational institutions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NOW calls upon all agencies of federal and state governments and elected officials, specifically including all health care agencies and institutions, as well as non-government organizations, especially those working in human rights, to only refer to women as full human beings and not as body parts or biological processes; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that NOW reiterates its founding principle to demand equality, dignity, and respect for women. Women must be treated as full human beings with all human rights as outlined in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

