

CWI

Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

P.O. Box 70603, Friendship Heights, MD 20813 Tel: 202 362-5717

OCTOBER 2004

WOMEN and EMPLOYMENT -- A LOOK BACK and a LOOK FORWARD

Where do women workers stand 40 years after Title VII of the Civil Rights Act was passed? We know there has been progress, but how much still needs to be done? Our two speakers, **Jocelyn Frye** and **Susan McGolrick**, will discuss the issues.

Jocelyn Frye, Director of Legal and Public Policy at the National Partnership for Women & Families, will present the timely new report of the Partnership for Women and Families on discrimination against women in the workforce. **Susan McGolrick** will tell us about the enormous pending discrimination case against Wal-Mart and other class action cases underway. We will discuss needs for legislative and enforcement action

TOPIC: **WOMEN and EMPLOYMENT**

SPEAKERS: **Jocelyn Frye**, Director of Legal and Public Policy at the National Partnership for Women & Families
 Susan McGolrick, Legal Editor of the Daily Labor Report published by the Bureau of National Affairs, Inc., will describe some of the class action suits now pending.

DATE/TIME: **Tuesday, October 26 -- Noon to 1:30 p.m.**

PLACE: **American Council on Education**
 One Dupont Circle - 8th Floor, Kellogg Room
 Bring brown bag lunch; soft drinks available from a machine

IMPORTANT NOTICE

A photo ID must be shown at the security desk of One Dupont Circle.

Next CWI Meeting, November 23, 2004

Program Summary – September Meeting **WOMEN and the 2004 ELECTION**

Our two speakers were **Anna Greenberg**, vice president of Greenberg, Quinlan, Rosner Research and **Kim Haddow**, media consultant (who very kindly filled in at the last moment for the ailing Page Gardner of Women's Voices, Women Vote).

According to Greenberg, the media focus on so called “soccer moms” or more recently on “security moms” obscures more particular and important concerns of women voters. At the same time, she added, “media creations” have become a lens through which we perceive issues ... “and it is important that the construction of gender issues in the current elections be examined, because the labels now in use are not helpful.”

Prior to 1980, regional and racial differences dominated electioneering. The so-called gender gap was not widely discussed until the 1980 election when it was discovered that 9 percent more women than men supported Democratic candidates. At that time, however, it was not noticed that 9 percent more men voted Republican than in previous elections.

Greenberg stressed that party loyalties change slowly over time. She said the real reason for the gender gap was that white men, particularly in the South, had slowly been leaving the Democratic Party since the 1950s. Female voting patterns remained stable whereas male voters deserted the Democrats in large numbers through 1984 when the Democrats lost the House. Women voters consistently voted Democratic in the 1992, 1996, and 2000 elections.

Two trends help to explain recent voting patterns among women. The first is the

rise of college educated women, who tend to be more politically liberal than high school graduates or blue collar workers. If women continue to obtain higher education in larger numbers, it is expected that this trend will continue. The second trend, which has been overlooked by many political analysts, is the increase in non-married women. In 1950, 80 percent of all American women were married. Today the number has declined to 50 percent. The reasons include an increase in those who never married, delayed marriages, divorce and older widows.

When marriage is examined, voting choices are radically different, with greater diversity among women voters than among men. Greenberg's data show that in the last election there was a 16 percent difference in the voting behavior of married and unmarried women. . American society has not yet recognized the political significance of this large group of approximately 22 million voters.

She said that while the press frets about “security moms” among conservative Republican voters, the concerns of unmarried women are ignored. Unmarried women tell us that security is not their highest priority. Republican women list security fifth among concerns. Most women, but especially those who are unmarried, are interested in the cost of health care, education, unemployment and the environment.

In Greenberg's research, 72 percent of unmarried women believe the country is going in the wrong direction; 56 percent are more concerned about pay equity, rising prices, wage decline, health care, and retirement than they are about security. Instead both the media and

politicians are giving overwhelming attention to cultural questions and ignoring the other election issues they want to hear addressed.

According to Kim Haddow, one reason why the voices of unmarried women remain silent is because many of them do not vote. They are not engaged in politics because they are busy working to survive; many earn less than \$30,000 per year. In addition, “they are deeply cynical about the election and do not think that their vote will make a difference.”

Who are the 22 million unmarried women who do not vote? 16 million are not registered to vote, 6 million are registered but did not vote. They represent almost one-quarter of the work force. Many are working at low wage jobs with child care and elder care responsibilities. These numbers include older women concerned about Social Security and health care, minority women worried about education and other economic problems. “They do not think political leaders are talking to them,” Haddow said.

She pointed out that if the 22 million unmarried women who do not vote were mobilized, they could make a big difference. In 2000 in Florida alone, they would have accounted for 200,000 progressive voters...

The good news, she reported, is that there are ongoing efforts to mobilize the unmarried vote. Haddow said that when individual women recognize that they are not alone, but one of 22 million, they

begin to understand that they can have an impact on the outcome of elections. Several different organizations have partnered to reach out to women in 12 “battleground” states. “In a world where people have lost trust in institutions, personal contact is the secret weapon of this election,” she declared.

Campaigns to make registration simple and convenient are an important part of the reaching-out process. Haddow said that several famous movie stars have agreed to appear in ads and telephone scripts to help get out the vote. There is extensive outreach especially to persuade younger women to vote; there also is a drive to encourage women to bring their children to the polls, citing research that shows that voting is a learned behavior.

Unmarried women, who say they prefer to be called women-on-their-own, are a critical component of our society but to date the candidates are not talking to them or addressing their concerns. The unknown factor in this election will be the size of the voter turn out. Recent polls based on estimates from past elections can be flawed if the turnout is different from the past.

Haddow noted that there are other interesting trends to watch for in the forthcoming election: whether or not young voters were more active than they were in the past and whether white men who state that they are dismayed by the excesses of corporate America will support change.

CWI Dues

Yearly dues (\$25 for individuals and \$35 for organizations) were due at the end of September. We assure you that your check will be welcomed, even if you missed the deadline! And why not consider sending an in-or-out of town friend a gift membership, which puts them on the newsletter list?

NEW BILL to STRENGTHEN TITLE IX

The High School Athletics Accountability Act (HR 4994) has been introduced in the House (and a similar one in the Senate) and was celebrated at a reception to honor female Olympic athletes. The bill will require high schools to report the number of female and male athletes participating at their school as well as money spent for each sport. The reception was held by the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues and the Women & Politics Institute. Speakers "discussed the merits of the bill and their appreciation to the US female Olympians for serving as role models to today's new generation of athletes."

(Feminist Daily News wire)

WORKINGWOMEN SPEAK OUT

BPW Foundation Survey

A survey conducted by the Business and Professional Women's Foundation (BPW) reports that domestic issues are far more important to workingwomen than terrorism and international issues.

The choice of domestic issues over terrorism and trade held for workingwomen of every political affiliation: Republican women chose domestic issues by two to one over terrorism and trade; Independents chose domestic issues four to one and Democratic women split nearly seven to one. The survey says:

- Health care is the most important concern to workingwomen "both as a political issue and as a workplace issue" and health insurance ranks first in importance as an employer benefit;
- Other employee benefits of major importance included flexible work schedules, leave to care for sick family members, and sick and disability leave.

Of interest to CWI: "More than three out of four workingwomen report that the women's movement has helped their own career growth and 92 percent approve of Title IX." Jane E. Smith, the CEO of Business and Professional Women/USA spoke to the Clearinghouse at the November 2003 meeting. She told CWI members about the survey, then just starting and pointed out that today's women are living lifestyles different than their mothers – there is no traditional pattern. The survey was organized to find out more about what women want and need.

Conducted between fall 2003 and spring 2004, the survey asked American workingwomen about their workplace, security, and quality of life concerns... However, "The respondent pool includes fewer women less than 36 years of age and more over age 50. On average, those taking the survey had higher educational achievement than the general female working population and higher personal income.

Copies of the executive summary and full report are available by calling Sherry Saunders at 777-8933 or online at www.bpw-usa.org.

PEACE by PEACE: Women on the Frontlines Common Ground Film Festival

The Search for Common Ground Film Festival and the George Washington University present six evenings of films that “focus on individuals who are working to make a difference in their community, show inspiring stories of reconciliation between former enemies, promote understanding of the issues and people involved, and give audiences a broader context of those issues.”

There is no charge for the programs and reservations are not required. The films, which all start at 7 p.m., will be followed by discussions. They will be shown in Room 213 at the Elliott School of International Affairs at GW, 1957 E St. NW.

The National Council of Women's Organizations is a cosponsor of the opening night movie on Oct. 19. (CWI is

a NCWO member). The film, “Peace by Peace Women on the Frontlines” is narrated by Jessica Lange and presents profiles on women in Afghanistan, Argentina, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Burundi and the US who are building the foundations for sustainable peace out of conflict and crisis.

The rest of the schedule: Wednesday, Oct. 20. The Friendship Village & Dinner for Two; Thursday, Oct. 21, Crucible of War & Improbable Pairs; Tuesday, Oct. 26, “In Rwanda We say..; Wednesday, Oct. 27, The Junction; and Thursday Oct. 28, closing night, Seeds.

For detailed information on the films, contact the Search for Common Ground Film Festival website at www.sfcg.org/programs.

PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENT PROCESS

The National Women's Appointment Project has been organized by the National Women's Political Caucus at every presidential election since 1976. A briefing session on the presidential appointment process will be held October 20, from 4:30 -6:30 p.m., in the Falk Auditorium in the Brookings Institute.

The project is a bi-partisan effort to present names of qualified women for consideration for appointment to posts at all levels and in each agency of the new administration, regardless of which party wins the White House. This year, the group has joined with Women in International Security to help fill vital security positions in the new administration as soon as possible. The project, which has already begun, will continue through the spring of 2005, to help the Presidential Transition Task Force, as it offers a pool of highly qualified women from which to make senior-level appointments. For further information, call Mulhauser and Associates, 463-0180.

Website Help Wanted!

Can you give CWI some help in maintaining a website? We have an opportunity to set up a website, but need someone to update it with our monthly newsletter. Please contact Joy Simonson at joy.rs@verizon.net or 363-7280

WOMEN in PRISON

Although women are a small minority of the prison population (3.7 percent of the 2 million people behind bars), their population is growing: the increase in female inmates in state and federal prison systems between June 2002 and July 2003, is almost double the increase for males. Arrests of men for all crimes declined between 5.9 percent 1993 and 2002; the number of women increased 14.1 percent.

According to Women's eNews, unlike Martha Stewart, "most women in prison are poorly educated; with no marketable skills and little or no income...many have substance-abuse problems and are led into crime by boyfriends, husbands, or pimps ... The lack of privacy in to prison life is harder for women than men, and particularly difficult for women who are pregnant. In addition, there are fewer prisons for women and in many states women are incarcerated far from their homes." Florida recently asked for emergency funds to be transferred from men's to women's prisons to pay for three new 131-bed dormitories at an existing women's prison.

Women "often get harsher prison sentences because they are frequently used as 'mules' or drug carriers, a low-level job in drug dealing ... (that) involved larger quantities of the drug than someone selling on the street carries at any one time." The article also points out that women have no bargaining power in the federal system— they do not have the connections that a drug "kingpin" might have that could be used in an exchange for a lighter sentence.

"Women are less likely to engage in violent crime and are most often arrested for property crimes and crimes involving drugs. "Experts ...agree that drug abuse and tougher drug laws at both the state and local level are major factors. Arrests for drug-related crimes nationwide increased 50 percent for women and 34.5 percent for men from 1993 to 2002."

Because drug laws have totally changed the way states respond to those offenses, "Judges have lost most of their discretion in meting out punishment for drug crimes, as mandatory minimum sentences and sentencing guidelines usually require some prison time for both men and women. Judges in the past may have taken a woman's special circumstance, such as having children to care for, or being pregnant into account when sentencing."

Part of the growth in arrests of women can be attributed to women's success in the corporate world, where "they have more opportunity to commit crimes than they had in the past ... federal data show embezzlement is the fastest growing crime involving women.

NELLIE BLY

Most of us have heard of Nellie Bly (real name Elizabeth Cochrane) but may not be aware of her accomplishments. She came to New York City when she was 22 to find a newspaper job. Women's eNews ran a profile of her, entitled "Nellie Bly Goes Crazy to Get the Story."

At a time when women reporters usually covered domestic or cultural topics, Bly worked in a Pittsburgh factory to expose child labor, low wages and unsafe working conditions. "Gotham's doors slammed in her face until Joseph Pulitzer, editor of the New York World,

hired her ... she and Pulitzer contrived the audacious idea of getting inside a lunatic asylum.” By dressing and acting crazy, she managed to get herself sent to the Women’s Lunatic Asylum on Blackwell’s Island, (in the East River). After 10 days in the “human rat trap,” she reported: the asylum was “overcrowded and filthy, with vermin-infested food and little enough of that. Locks on ward doors caused fire hazards. Nurses choked, beat, harassed and mocked the inmates, many of whom were not insane at all, but suffering physical illnesses or were foreigners who could not make themselves understood or women whose husbands wanted them out of the way. People with skin or scalp diseases shared towels and combs with the uninfected. “Treatment” consisted mostly of cold baths ... After the newspaper’s lawyer got Bly released, her story spread across the country and became a book. Some reforms, notably a larger budget for the asylum, followed. Bly continued her “undercover” activities and wrote stories about experiences as a servant, a chorus girl, and a single mother.

NOTES:

Wangari Mathai, of Kenya, we note with Sisterhood Pride, was awarded the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize. Founder of the “Green Belt Movement” to help reforest the country (where women and girls spent hours each day searching for wood for coking), she has also been a fearless worker for women’s rights.

Sexual Harassment: A committee established by Congress is reviewing reports of sexual assault and harassment at the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis and the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. The committee will issue a report within a year. According to the Washington Post article, the committee “is not investigating any one incident ... it is studying the overall culture of the academies, gauging attitudes toward sexual harassment and finding ways the institutions can best prevent such problems.”

Underpaid Women: Add to the list of underpaid women, female rabbis in the Conservative branch of Judaism. A new study shows that the women earn less, obtain fewer senior positions and are more likely to work part time. (Washington Post)

Domestic violence groups are protesting new rules developed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. In an effort to provide more information about the homeless, the rules require the collection of detailed information on tens of thousands of battered women. According to an article in the N.Y. Times, “Such information has traditionally been kept confidential by domestic violence agencies out of concerns that the identities and locations of the women could be discovered by their abusers. Placing it on centralized computers would make it accessible to a wide range of authorized and potentially unauthorized users, the groups argue. The agency says the information can be made secure against unauthorized users

NATIONAL WOMEN’S LOBBY/ Summit of Leaders 2004

The National Women’s Lobby (a division of the U.S. Women’s Chamber of Commerce, is sponsoring the Summit of Leaders 2004, November 9-10, at the Hotel Washington in D.C. According to their press release, “This will be the first gathering of influential women leaders of national regional women’s groups from around the country to address important issues of women and establish broad strategic objectives for creating real change and opportunity for women.” Sessions will focus on business, career, social, political and international issues. For further information call 888 418-7922 or 800 738-0653.



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NOVEMBER 2004

HEALTH HAZARDS FOR WOMEN

Even in the field of medicine we must be informed and watchful to avoid mistakes which may be due to ignorance, greed or actual chicanery. Fortunately we will hear from two exceptionally well qualified speakers who can alert us to a variety of hazards in the market place which can threaten women's health.

Dr. Diana Zuckerman, president of the National Research Center for Women and Families, is widely known for her expertise in the controversial field of breast implants. Her work with Congress and the White House covered many other issues of concern to women, such as diets and breast cancer treatment choices. **Leslie Fair** is an award-winning senior attorney at the Federal Trade Commission where she has worked on cases involving deceptive advertising of health-related products. She has broad experience as an educator, writer and lecturer.

TOPIC: **HEALTH HAZARDS for WOMEN**

SPEAKERS: **Dr. Diana Zuckerman**, President, National Research Center for Women and Families
Leslie Fair, Senior Attorney, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Federal Trade Commission

DATE/TIME: **Tuesday, November 23 -- Noon to 1:30 p.m.**

PLACE: **American Council on Education**
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Please listen to radio reports.

Next CWI Meeting, January 25, 2005

Program Notes – October 2004 Meeting

WOMEN and EMPLOYMENT

Our speakers at the October CWI meeting discussed the current status of women in the workforce, 40 years after the passage of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. **Jocelyn Frye**, Director of Legal and Public Policy at the National Partnership for Women & Families, spoke of the Partnership's recently published report on discrimination against women in the workforce. **Susan McGolrick**, legal editor of the Daily Labor Report, published by the Bureau of National Affairs, described some of the class action suits now pending.

According to Jocelyn Frye, when the Civil Rights Act was proposed, Title VII - dealing with employment discrimination - did not include gender. She said that opponents of the Act included workplace discrimination against women only because they believed the proviso would lead to defeat of the bill.

The Partnership's report, "Women at Work: Looking Behind the Numbers," analyzed statistics collected from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and showed conclusively that discrimination is still widespread. When the EEOC data were broken down by race, gender, and ethnicity, interesting patterns emerged. Racial discrimination is still the basis of the largest number of claims, with gender complaints second, followed by complaints of retaliation against those who protested discrimination (these complaints have steadily increased).

Examination of the numbers shows that complaints by women of color have increased whereas those by white women have decreased. Reflecting the

diversity of the workforce, complaints by women of other nationalities, including Hispanic and Asian women, have also increased. Age complaints by men have decreased, but those by women have increased

Frye strongly recommended that the EEOC adopt multiple strategies for examining data. Further research is needed to determine how gender, race and ethnicity interact. Important questions remain: Are there factors unique to women of color, to women in certain occupations, to women who identify themselves as belonging to multiple categories? Do outreach efforts that publicize discrimination lead to increases in complaints? More research is needed on questions such as why men have more success in discrimination claims than women.

Stressing that "these are important issues if we are to fully evaluate the impact of Title VII," Frye concluded: "There is still a need for comprehensive education for employers as well as rigorous enforcement." The National Partnership has presented its report to the EEOC and is working with the agency, as well as with other organizations, to begin improving both the type of data collected and how it is analyzed.

Susan McGolrick reviewed several current sex discrimination class action disputes. The largest is that of Wal-Mart, affecting 1.6 million women nationwide. To be certified in a class action suit, claimants must show that conditions existed in most stores and that all women impacted share common grievances. There has been difficulty

certifying the claims. Claimants protest that pay policies at Wal-Mart are subjective, with no uniform standards for promotion. The salary gap widens along the corporate ladder: women comprise 67 percent of all hourly workers, but only 36 percent of assistant managers, 23 percent of co-managers and 14 percent of store managers. The case is still in litigation and Ms. McGolrick observed that Wal-Mart fights every claim, seldom settling cases out of court.

For 650 women working for Costco, the class action suit is based on poor employment application procedures. McGolrick said it is easy to discriminate when job vacancies are not posted and job descriptions are not clear. The result: fewer than one in six store managers is a woman, all vice presidents are men and only two of 33 officers are women.

Other sex discrimination settlements noted by Susan McGolrick include a big settlement in Colorado at Home Depot for 5.5 million dollars; one at Boeing for 72.5 million dollars, affecting 29,000 employees; and the classic United Airlines case in which women flight attendants were required to weigh less than their male counterparts.

In the University of Washington class action suit, certification was denied on the grounds that each school and even each department had a different personnel policy. Other class action suits are related to company health plans that

refuse to cover the cost of contraceptives. (One member of the audience noted that she was finally successful in a college sex discrimination case by appealing to contract law rather than on discrimination grounds.)

The EEOC initiates litigation in approximately 5 percent of all claims. McGolrick pointed out that litigation takes a very long time, often years. When people hear about the huge fees given to trial lawyers handling these cases, she said, they should remember that throughout this long process, lawyers are not paid anything and they have large expenses, which include locating and preparing witnesses, travel, and research.

During the question period both speakers were asked if there was a need to improve Title VII. The speakers agreed most of the difficulties were not with the legislation but with Supreme Court interpretations of Title VII. Senator Kennedy has introduced a bill that would address some of the Court's decisions, such as eliminating monetary caps and damages, and other policies that have an uneven impact on certain groups. Another area of concern is gay rights. Frye clarified, in response to a question, that Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments dealt solely with educational issues, whereas employment discrimination was the focus of Title VII.

The Gender Wage Gap!

In a cartoon in the Nov. 1 *New Yorker*, an unhappy man at a bar says to the bartender

"I feel like a man trapped in a woman's salary"

No comment needed

The ELECTION

According to Women's Enews, "Though the election saw some disappointments for female candidates, some experts said this year's gains hark back to the so-called Year of the Woman in 1992, when the number of women in Congress jumped from 28 to 42." This year when the 109th Congress convenes in January, a record 65 women will serve in the House. The article points out that 139 women ran for the House of Representatives. "Of that group, 57 incumbents won reelection and eight newcomers won seats. Three women retained their seats as non-voting delegates representing the District, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam. The number of women in the Senate stays at 14. All five female incumbents held onto their seats; five female challengers for Senate slots lost.

POST ELECTION STATEMENT from OWL

"We will continue to fight to preserve Social Security, enhance health care and prescription drug coverage under Medicare, bring equity to the pension system, and strengthen older women's economic security. We will show policymakers that there is an inescapable connection between a strong social safety net and women's well-being as we grow older. Most importantly, we will continue to insist that this country can do better for midlife and older women, and we will not settle for the status quo-for the poverty, desperation, and isolation that mark the lives of so many women in the U.S. today."

SHARIFA ALKHATEEB

We note the untimely death of CWI member Sharifa Alkhateeb, 58, founder of the North American Council for Muslim Women. Alkhateeb spoke to CWI at the May 2000 program on Hispanic and Muslim Women in American Society. According to the obituary in the Washington Post, she "founded advocacy groups for Muslim women and explained the ways of Islam to America and the world as a scholar, journalist and educator."

ARVONNE FRASER

Fraser will be the luncheon speaker at the Woman's National Democratic Club on Thursday, November 18. Developing Power: How Women Transformed International Development, the new book she has edited, covers testimonies of 27 pioneering women who worked in international development projects and policy. The cost is \$25 for non-WNDC members. Phone 232-7363, ext. 3003.

WOW: 40th ANNIVERSARY/ Public Policy Seminar

Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) and George Washington University's Department of Women's Studies are sponsoring an event, "Linking Thought and Action" on Dec. 3, from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The seminar is described as "a conversation among scholars, practitioners and policy makers to increase opportunities

in the workforce for low-income women and girls.” Speakers include Heidi Hartmann and Mary Frances Berry. The seminar will be held at GW’s Cafritz Conference Center, 800 21st St. NW, Suite 204. Lunch and beverages are complimentary; there is no registration fee. But space is limited and registration will be first come first served. Contact Julia Barnes at WOW, 464-1596.

WOMEN’S RIGHTS

Iran. Hundreds of female students protested in Tehran against the poor conditions of dormitories for women. Lack of drinkable water, poor safety conditions, unhygienic meals and lack of telephone facilities around the campus were included in the complaints. “...female students have increasingly widened the academic superiority over their male counterparts. The fundamentalist regime in Iran considers this a ‘dangerous imbalance.’ In 2002, female students secured 63 percent of university entrance...the Iranian regime then pursued an agenda implementing fear,” targeting the female students... “With an overwhelming amount of dissent that is widespread throughout Iran, it is clear that the fundamentalist regime is making an utmost attempt to stifle and strangle any voice of opposition.” (Women’s Forum Against Fundamentalism)

Egypt. “A new family court system recently set up across Egypt will lead to a huge improvement in Egyptian women's legal rights. A total of 224 courts with about 1,200 judges are being established to help resolve the approximately million cases each year focusing on divorce, alimony, child custody and paternity. The family courts will replace the century-old institution of personal status courts and their creation marks a significant breakthrough for Egyptian women, whose rights suffered a blow in 1985 when the government reversed some of their earlier gains.”(Women’s eNews)

Afghanistan. Twelve-year-old Musliba is in jail waiting her turn before a judge because she defied her father by refusing to marry the man he chose (her father’s age) and then she had relations with an 18-year-old shopkeeper. “That is enough to land a girl in jail in a country that is in the midst of reconstructing its society after nearly a quarter of a century of war. Musliba’s case, along with those of many others in Kandahar and Kabul prisons, illustrates the post-Taliban obstacles facing women in a country where tradition ignores their voices and the law is stacked against them.” (Women’s eNews)

BARBARA LEE

The Barbara Lee Family Foundation was started in 1999, “one year after Barbara Lee watched in dismay as all 10 female candidates for governorships across the country lost their bids for office. Lee knew that male governors had moved on to the White House since the beginning of the Republic and was struck by the need to propel women into state elected offices.” The foundation, which gives away at least a million dollars each year, was established with money Lee got from her 1996 divorce; it funds research, campaigns and training. Lee has backed dozens of female candidates and explains that her goal is to put a “critical mass” of both Democratic and Republican women into influential and visible political positions.