



1525 M Street, N.W. Suite 602
Washington, D. C. 20005
(202) 833-4354

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Liz Carpenter, Elly Peterson, Co-chairs

TO: Midge Costanza
FROM: Marie Bass

As we have discussed, it is crucial that the President talk about the Equal Rights Amendment when he is in Illinois late this week. ERA is very much "in the air" at this time. There is usual hustle and bustle preceding a big vote; horse-trading, flying rumors, short fuses. The timing of the President's visit could help to focus all this activity in a positive way and bring the final pressure to bear on the legislature necessary to pass this issue.

I. Cook County Democratic Dinner -- Thursday night, May 25

The President should realize, if he does not already, that the people necessary to pass ERA in Illinois will be in the room he addresses Thursday night -- George Dunne, Mayor Bilandic, Richard Daley Jr., Senate President Tommy Hynes, House Majority Leader Mike Madigan. The influence of these men, individually as well as collectively, goes deep within the House and Senate and could bring about the necessary votes in both houses. There will be, as well, in the Thursday night audience many of those 17 Democrats who voted no on ERA in 1977. Just six of these would have brought about a successful vote on ERA at that time.

You have received from Greta DeWald some suggested remarks for the President before this group.

II. Speech to the General Assembly in Springfield -- Friday, May 26

This will be the morning following the Cook County Democratic dinner. The legislature will be in session to hear the President. There are rumors that the ERA sponsor in the House,

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THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

"Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

Alan J. Greiman, and Majority Leader Mike Madigan may try to schedule a vote on ERA around the President's visit. We have no way of knowing whether this will happen. They will only call a vote if the pro-ERA votes are sufficient at the time.

Again, from the standpoint of this issue, it is so important that the President stress that Illinois -- among all the unratified states -- holds the key to ERA ratification at this time. Illinois can be the state that breaks the deadlock against ERA and their ratification will mean that two more states can be won after the November elections, and we will at last have this simple and long overdue matter of justice behind us. Surely, Illinois -- with its long history on civil rights and human rights -- will not turn its back on women's rights.

III. Possible Picketing or Demonstrations

As I mentioned to you on the phone, NOW is planning a demonstration in Chicago for Thursday (I am told there was a story about this in the Sunday Sun-Times.) and possibly again in Springfield on Friday. There may be placards such as "Boycott Presidential Candidates from Unratified States" or "We Want our Next President to Come From a Ratified State," similar to those the President saw on his western trip. We have talked extensively with the NOW national leadership to dissuade them from carrying out these plans and we believe all these plans are being drastically curtailed now. And of course, the mainstream ERA forces in Illinois are very much opposed to any such plans.

Thus, I do not think these activities will be widespread or significant, but as you well know, emotions are running high on this issue and many people are exceedingly frustrated and angry. Two things more:

- The League of Women Voters, ERA Illinois, the Illinois Women's Political Caucus and other organizations are planning to have their people visible in Chicago and Springfield, and they will carry pro-Carter, pro-ERA signs and will make a very positive showing to counteract any negative signs.
- If the White House could let it be known this week -- before the President goes to Illinois -- that he will talk about the ERA when he is out there, this would create a much more positive atmosphere and it would

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also put the legislature and the press on the alert
and could be a very positive advance signal.

I know you will do everything you can, and please call
on us if there is anything more you need from us. I will let
you know if we hear anything else.