



NATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE OBSERVANCE OF  
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR

Office of Public Information  
U.S. Department of State  
Washington, D.C. 20520  
(202) 632-8978 or 79

PR 77A April/1977  
For Immediate Release

President Carter has announced former New York Congresswoman Bella S. Abzug will head a National Commission sponsoring an unprecedented series of women's meetings from coast to coast.

For the first time in history, grassroots American women from a spectrum of ages, incomes, ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds have been given federal money and backing to press for changes in policies that obstruct women's equality.

Among Carter's 42 appointments to the IWC Commission are former First Lady Betty Ford; civil rights activist Coretta Scott King; LaDonna Harris, President of Americans for Indian Opportunity; Ruth Clusen, President of the League of Women Voters; and Carmen Delgado Votaw, President of the National Conference of Puerto Rican Women. John Mack Carter, Sey Chassler, Lenore Hershey and Gloria Steinem, prominent editors of women's magazines, will also serve.

All Commission members serve without compensation.

Thousands of individuals -- with diverse backgrounds and opinions -- are organizing public meetings in all States and Territories. These meetings are scheduled throughout the summer.

The cornerstone of each State meeting is the adoption of recommendations and the election of delegates to a National Women's Conference November 18-21 in Houston.

-MORE-



The major emphasis of the Carter-appointed IWY Commission is on involving a cross-section of Americans: homemakers, students, nurses, secretaries, artists, rural women, household workers, teachers, civic leaders, union members, church workers, and especially people who may never have been to a women's meeting.

"America will never be the same," Ms. Abzug said. "Vermont has already proved that. They held their meeting in February and expected 300 people. But more than 1,000 slogged through heavy snow to be there. An informal poll showed that forty-five per cent of those women had never attended a meeting of that kind before, and 54 per cent don't belong to any women's organizations.

"Look at Alaska. It's the largest State in our Union, and women there face staggering handicaps because the State is completely dependent on costly air fare. But they haven't given up. Their State meeting will be televised via satellite to the remote bush country.

"The Georgia coordinating committee is asking State legislators to select women from each district to attend, so that rural and minority women are represented. Planners have asked ministers to announce the Georgia meeting from their pulpits.

"In West Virginia, coal miners' widows are going door-to-door asking other wives to spread the word.

"Women will talk together, exchange ideas, and plan strategies to make changes in their States and nationally."

Meeting workshops are centered around employment, education, homemakers' legal rights, rape, wife abuse, child care, the image of women in the media, and many other problems faced by women.

The handbook for all meetings is the 1976 IWY report, "... To Form a More Perfect Union..." Justice for American Women.

The law funding the National Women's Conference and State meetings commemorates the contributions of American women during the past 200 years. Inspired by the American Bicentennial, the United Nations-designated International Women's Year (1975), and the subsequent UN Decade for Women (1975-1985), this far-reaching legislation is the first to allow serious public attention to the unfinished business on behalf of human and women's rights.

Said Abzug: "The meetings will link women with each other, our past, and our full participation in the future. Our work at these meetings, our recommendations, and future strategies will not be just for ourselves or our daughters, but for all those generations of women yet to be born."

The 1977 appointments to the National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year are:

Bella S. Abzug, of New York, New York, Presiding Officer, IWY Commission; Former U.S. Congresswoman (D-N.Y.); Attorney; Founder and Former Chair, National Women's Political Caucus; Congressional Adviser to the U.S. Delegation to the UN World Conference on IWY in Mexico City, July 1975.

Ruth J. Abram, of New York, New York, Executive Director, Women's Action Alliance; Former Program Director, American Civil Liberties Union; Executive Director, the Norman Foundation.

Maya Angelou, of Sonoma, California, Poet; Actress; Playwright; Author, I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings and And Still I Rise, Broadway musical opening in Autumn 1977.

Elizabeth Athanasakos, of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, Practicing Attorney; Former Municipal Judge; Presiding Officer, IWY Commission, 1976.

Betty Blanton, of Nashville, Tennessee, First Lady of Tennessee; Member, 51.3 % Committee.

Cecilia Preciado Burciaga, of Palo Alto, California, Assistant to the President, Stanford University; Researcher and Writer; Consultant; Educator.

Liz Carpenter, of Austin, Texas, Co-Chair, ERAmerica; Public Relations Executive; Former Press Secretary to Lady Bird Johnson.

John Mack Carter, of New York, New York, Editor-in-Chief, Good Housekeeping Magazine; Former Editor, Ladies' Home Journal, McCall's, American Home, and Assistant Editor, Better Homes and Gardens.

Sey Chassler, of New York, New York, Editor-in-Chief, Redbook Magazine.

Ruth C. Clusen, of Green Bay, Wisconsin, President, National League of Women Voters; Alternate U.S. Delegate to the UN World Conference on IWY in Mexico City, July 1975.

Audrey Rowe Colom, of Washington, D.C., President, National Women's Political Caucus; Director of Women's Activities, Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Jane Culbreth, of Leeds, Alabama, President, National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc.; Corporate Officer and Secretary, Moss-Thornton Company.

Harry T. Edwards, of Boston, Massachusetts, Professor of Law, Harvard Law School; Former Professor, University of Michigan Law School; Professional Labor Arbitrator.

Beverly Everett, of New Sharon, Iowa, Iowa State President, American Association of University Women; Member, Iowa Commission on the Future; Activist on Agriculture and Rural Development issues.

March K. Fong Eu, of Sacramento, California, Secretary of State for California; Former President and Life Member, American Dental Hygienists' Association; Member, California Consumer Affairs Council.

Betty Ford, of Palm Springs, California, Former First Lady of the United States.

Bernice S. Frieder, of Lakewood, Ohio, Former National Officer, National Council of Jewish Women; Past President and Honorary Life Member, National Association of State Boards of Education.

Martha Griffiths, of Romeo, Michigan, Member, Griffiths and Griffiths Law Firm; Member of Congress, 1955-1975.

Dorothy Haener, of Detroit, Michigan, International Representative, Women's Department, United Auto Workers; Board Member, National Committee on Household Employment; Founder and Past Board Member, National Organization for Women and the National Women's Political Caucus.

Rhea Mojica Hammer, of Chicago, Illinois, Businesswoman; Journalist-Newspaper Publisher of El-Charin; Consultant, Latino Unlimited; Founder, National Latino Media Coalition.

LaDonna Harris, of Albuquerque, New Mexico, President, Americans for Indian Opportunity; Member, Common Cause.

Lenore Hershey, of New York, New York, Editor-in-Chief, Ladies' Home Journal; Creator and Executive Producer of the annual "Women of the Year" TV Show.

Koryne Horbal, of Minneapolis, Minnesota, Chair, Women's Caucus, Democratic National Committee; Democratic National Committeewoman.

Mildred Jeffrey, of Detroit, Michigan, Chair, Democratic Women's Task Force, National Women's Political Caucus; Board Member, Consumer Federation of America; Founder, Coalition of Labor Union Women.

Jeffalyn Johnson, of Arlington, Virginia, Management Consultant; Former Associate Director, Dean and Senior Professor, Federal Executive Institute.

Coretta Scott King, of Atlanta, Georgia, Civil Rights Worker; Founder, Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial Center, Atlanta; Dag Hammarskjold Award, 1969.

Mary Anne Krupsak, of Canajoharie, New York, Lieutenant Governor, State of New York; Former Senator, New York State Assembly.

Margaret J. Mealey, of Washington, D.C., Executive Director, National Council of Catholic Women; Former Member, Citizen's Advisory Council on the Status of Women; White House Conferences on Children and Youth; on Aging; on Food, Nutrition and Health.

Jean O'Leary, of New York, New York, Co-Executive Director, National Gay Task Force; Member, Regional Advisory Committee to the New York State Human Rights Division.

Mildred E. Persinger, of Dobbs Ferry, New York, UN Representative of National Board, Young Women's Christian Association of the U.S.A.; Organizing Chair of the non-governmental Tribune of the UN World Conference on IWY in Mexico City, July 1975.

Connie Plunkett, of Carrollton, Georgia, Member, Affirmative Action Committee of the Democratic National Committee; Former City Councilwoman, Carrollton; Former Vice Chair, Georgia Democratic Party; Deputy Campaign Director, Campaign Staff, Carter-Mondale Campaign.

Ersa Poston, of Loudonville, New York, Commissioner and Past President, New York Civil Service Commission; Former Member, U.S. Delegation to the UN General Assembly.

Claire Randall, of New York, New York, General Secretary, National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.; Former Associate Executive, Church Women United; Church Educator; Artist; Designer.

Alice S. Rossi, of Amherst, Massachusetts, Professor of Sociology, University of Massachusetts; Chair, Board of Directors, Social Science Research Council, New York; Former Chair, Committee on the Status of Women, American Association of University Professors; Author, The Feminist Papers and many other articles.



Gloria Scott, of Houston, Texas, National President, Girl Scouts of America; Professor of Higher Education, Texas Southern University; Member, Board of Directors, National Urban League.

Eleanor Smeal, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Chair of the Board, National Organization for Women; Homemaker.

Jean Stapleton, of Los Angeles, Actress; two-time Emmy-winner for "All in the Family"; Recipient of two Golden Globe Awards and two American Academy of Humor Awards; appeared in both Broadway and motion picture versions of Damn Yankees and Bells Are Ringing; Other motion picture credits include Klute and Up the Down Staircase.

Gloria Steinem, of New York, New York, Editor, MS Magazine; Chair of the Board, Women's Action Alliance; Founder, National Women's Political Caucus.

## Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

Ethel Taylor, of Bala-Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, National Coordinator, Women Strike for Peace.

Carmen Delgado Votaw, of Bethesda, Maryland, President, National Conference of Puerto Rican Women; Board of Overseas Education Fund, League of Women Voters; Member, Hispanic First Federal Credit Union.

Gerridee Wheeler, of Bismarck, North Dakota, Member, Republican National Committee; Past President, National Association for Mental Health; Member, Department of Health, Education and Welfare Secretary's Advisory Committee on the Rights and Responsibilities of Women.

Addie Wyatt, of Chicago, Illinois, Vice President, Coalition of Labor Union Women; Vice President, Amalgamated Meatcutters and Butcher Workmen of North America; Citizens for Day Care, Illinois.



Members of Congress:

Senator Birch Bayh, from Indiana.

Senator Charles Percy, from Illinois.

Representative Elizabeth Holtzman, from New York.

Representative Margaret Heckler, from Massachusetts.

#####

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

# Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

# Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, U.S.A.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20520

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
STA-501



Fundação Cuidar o Futuro