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NEW LAW IN STATE OF WASHINGTON

As of June 9, 1975 the state of Washington has a new law that deals effectively with the problem of sex discrimination in the public schools. The new legislation, House Bill 413, outlaws "inequality in the educational opportunities afforded women and girls at all levels of the public schools in Washington state," since such inequality would be a breach of the state's Equal Rights Amendment. Specifically, the new law gives the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) the power to "develop regulations and guidelines to eliminate sex discrimination as it applies to public school employment, counseling and guidance services to students, recreational and athletic activities for students, access to course offerings, and in textbooks and instructional materials used by students."

The athletic section calls for recreational and athletic activities offered to all students without regard to sex. It leaves to individual schools decisions about coeducational or separate teams. However, if schools do choose to institute separate teams, disparities between the sexes may not occur with regard to equipment and supplies, medical care, services and insurance, training and per diem allowance, coaching and instructional opportunity, publicity and awards, scheduling of games and practice times, facilities and their use and opportunity for competition. This section also requires SPI to develop every three years in each local school district a survey of students' interest in specific sports.

Course offerings must be available to all students regardless of sex, with the provision that separation is permitted within any class during sessions on sex education or physical education. Textbooks and instructional materials are required to adhere to the guidelines developed by the SPI's office. A Task Force on Women and Girls in Education from that office has already made several recommendations in this area. However, this section does not prohibit introduction of material deemed appropriate by the instructor for educational purposes.

Monitoring to assure compliance with this new legislation falls upon the SPI's office, whose duty it is to establish a timetable and regulations for enforcement of the law, plus guidelines for affirmative action programs to be adopted by all school districts. Noncompliance by local districts could mean "the termination of all or part of state apportionment or categorical moneys to the offending school district, the termination of specified programs in which violations may be flagrant within the offending school district, the institution of a mandatory affirmation action program within the offending school district and the placement of the offending school district on probation with appropriate sanctions until compliance is achieved."

This landmark piece of legislation was drafted by Barbara Vanderkolk, Governmental Relations Coordinator for the Washington Education Association. A former teacher and strong feminist, Ms. Vanderkolk lobbied long and persuasively for passage of the bill. Typically, many thought the bill superfluous since Washington already has its own Equal Rights Amendment. Others thought the bill would only duplicate the Title IX regulations. However, feminists were able to persuade enough legislators of the weakness of Title IX (no mention of textbooks or instructional materials, for example). Another telling point in favor of the bill was that, although the SPI Task Force on Women and Girls in Education had published many pages of recommendations, no action had followed. A strong law, not mere recommendations, was needed to move the educational bureaucracy into action.

Now that the statute is on the books, funding has become the next question. The SPI office estimated funding for the first year at $30,000 which included money only for staff to develop the required rules and regulations for implementation. Funding for the second year is estimated at $164,370 and includes funds for five and one-half staff members to work directly with local school districts. To date, no money has been appropriated by the legislature and according to Senator Hubert Donohue, Chairperson of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, no money will be provided in the near future because, he says, there simply is none available. It seems clear that if this law is to become operational, further lobbying for funds by concerned individuals and groups is essential.

Sally Bader Muckle, Feminists Northwest

WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAMS (continued)

Wayne S U, Detroit, MI 48202—Women's Studies.
Weber S C, Ogden, UT 84403—Women's Activities, Sue Stevenson, Coord.
+Webster C, 470 E Lockwood, St Louis, MO 63119—Women's Studies, Carol L. McCut, Coord: Program offers the M.A. degree through the Master of Arts - Independent Program.
Wesleyan U, Middletown, CT 06457—Women's Studies, Sheila Tobias, Coord.
Western Washington S C, Bellingham 98225—Women's Studies, Meredith Cary, Coord: Program offers a minor.
*Western Washington S C, Bellingham 98225—Women's Studies, Dorothy Walters, Coord: Program offers the B.A. degree and some work on the graduate level.
Wilson C, Chambersburg, PA 17201—Women's Studies, Eleanor Bustin Mattes, Coord.
Wisconsin, U of, Oshkosh 54901—Women's Studies, Virginia Cox, Coord: Program offers a minor.
Wisconsin, U of, Milwaukee 53201—Office of Women's Studies (Bolton 211), Rachel I. Skalitzky, Dir.
Wisconsin, U of, Superior 54880—Women's Programs, Delores Harms, Coord.
Wittenberg U, Springfield, OH 45501—Wittenberg Women's Program, Patricia O'Connor, Dir.