

WHAT IS THE IWY SUPPORT COALITION?

Fact Sheet

The IWY Support Coalition began in California for that state's conference. Feminists, lesbians and minority women realized that only a united front could insure continuation of the positive gains towards ratification of the ERA and the passage of other human rights legislation. Thus in California, because of coalition efforts, women favoring strong human rights won all the delegate seats to the National IWY Conference, November 18-21 in Houston.

Why form a coalition?

Organizers of the Support Coalition believe Houston is the place where women must claim their birthright to the words "the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness... with liberty and justice for all." The IWY conference is being used by the government to determine the will of the American woman. Resolutions passed in Houston will be used in government policy-making decisions and legislation that will affect the lives of women for decades to come.

What is the Coalition doing?

The IWY Support Coalition was formed to insure a united strength of pro-woman energy to meet the challenges placed before women in Houston. The coalition is based on a full understanding that, together, women are likely to achieve more of their long desired goals. RATIFICATION OF THE ERA, REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS FOR WOMEN (including the rights to ABORTION ON REQUEST and the ELIMINATION OF FORCED STERILIZATION), LEGISLATIVE PROTECTION TO INSURE GAY RIGHTS, and CHILDCARE CENTERS FINANCIALLY ACCESSIBLE TO ALL are among the non-negotiable, unifying points supported by the Coalition.

What are the Coalition goals?

California sees the work of the Coalition to be:

- 1) a support group and lobbying force for feminist and minority delegates
- 2) a vehicle for organizing national caucuses and coalitions immediately
- 3) an opportunity to dialogue before the conference about the unique concerns of each group and to identify areas of mutual support
- 4) the development of a set of resolutions representative of minority and feminist concerns and which can be taken to Houston with the assurance of full support from all coalition affiliates
- 5) raising funds to send non-delegate supporters/workers to Houston

How will this be done?

To achieve a unified presence in Houston the Coalition is actively working to build bridges between delegates, groups, organizations and other caucuses. Instrumental to this effort has been the establishment of a nationwide WATS telephone line at the Coalition headquarters. This line will provide a national communications link from the California IWY support group to other IWY support groups, caucuses, organizations and delegates across the nation. The IWY support effort in California asks that all elected delegates send their names, addresses and phone numbers with copies of their top priority resolutions as soon as possible. Names of their coalition support leaders with addresses and phone numbers are also needed for the communications network. Names, addresses, contact person, and phone numbers of all supportive and interested groups, organizations, etc. are also requested.

The coalition will be calling contact persons and sending information as it becomes available. No personal information will be given out to anyone without first obtaining permission. Members of the Coalition believe communication will be the key to a Houston success and nationwide organization must begin immediately.

Passage of a unified slate of resolutions based on the input of as many pro-feminist, pro-human rights delegates as possible is viewed as the essential conference work. There will be little time during the conference to work for consensus and support around mutual concerns. That work must be done now through coalitions and dialogue. Efforts during the conference must concentrate on unity. Women of all minority groups must join together to give validity to the resolutions passed. Observers anticipate our inability to work cooperatively and TV cameras will be on hand to record our process. It is time for the women of this country to show that we can no longer be divided nor our purposes defeated through divisionary tactics. Conference time will also need to be spent educating, through lobbying efforts, the delegates not reached before the conference.

The coalition in California is also working on expanding awareness of the coalition and intensifying community outreach. Letters are being sent to groups and organizations throughout the state, and mass meetings are being planned to insure community involvement and information sharing.

Fundraising efforts are essential to all the activities discussed. Los Angeles alone hopes to raise \$50,000 to assist in network building and to enable coalition supporters/workers to travel to Houston to support efforts there.

How is the Coalition organized?

In California the work of the Coalition is being done through task forces and co-chairs. Two co-coordinators are coordinating the effort in each city. They are assisted by a coordinating committee comprised of one designated representative from each task force. Each task force provides extensive minutes of its meetings/activities to the Media Task Force for compilation and dissemination and to the coordinating committee to insure information sharing within the organizational structure. The following task forces are currently in operation:

Political Strategy - overall design of the organizing effort and implementation of goals

Media - information gathering and dissemination

Fundraising

Transportation - to arrange transportation and housing in Houston

Scholarship - to send a lobbying force to Houston

Speakers Bureau - to speak to media and organizations, groups, etc.

Research - develop and gather information to share

Coalition Outreach - coordination with other concerned groups/coalitions/minorities, etc.

Houston Coordinating - coordination of all efforts in Houston

How can you help?

1. Start an IWY support group in your city and join the communications network.
2. Send the phone numbers of key organizations in your area and the numbers of key people for WATS calls.

Contact the local city or state National Organization of Women (NOW) and/or their Lesbian Task Force, etc. Ask about the national IWY support effort and how to get involved.

4. Send MONEY. If YOU can't go to Houston, help send someone to insure your rights are represented.
5. Write the California support group reporting the results of the delegate and resolution votes at your state conference. It is important to include the known political position of each delegate.
6. Send unique ideas and strategies used by BOTH sides which were effective in your state conference. These will not be published in any press.
7. Send all clippings regarding IWY in any papers published in your area and send addresses of your local publications so that the coalition can continue to keep you and the rest of the country informed.

ALL INQUIRIES, INFORMATION AND CONTRIBUTIONS SHOULD BE SENT TO:

IWY SUPPORT COALITION OF CALIFORNIA

1117 Tenth Street #3

Santa Monica, CA 90403