



Your Money's Worth

By SYLVIA PORTER
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EQUAL PAY ACT SHELVED AGAIN

For the 18th consecutive year the Congress of the United States has considered and shelved legislation to require employers to pay women the same rates as men for identical or comparable work.

The Equal Pay Act of 1962 got further than any previous effort "to prohibit discrimination on account of sex in the payment of wages," though. For the first time in history an equal pay bill actually was passed by one of the Houses of Congress: the date was July 25, the place, the floor of the House of Representatives. Admittedly, the House passed the bill in a frivolous mood, amended it so that it would have permitted employers to cut the pay of men to equalize the pay of women. But at least H.R. 11677 reached a Senate subcommittee before getting the usual treatment - sudden death.

So the great United States, leading republic and democracy of the world, remains among the backward nations in its attitude toward women in the labor marketplace, not even recognizing on a national level the justice of equal pay for men and women doing work of equal type and value.

There are 24 million women in the U.S. work force today, one-third of all workers - and before this decade ends, the female work force will be at the 30 million mark. Women have penetrated just about every occupational group, ranging from the most demanding scientific work to the least demanding service work. The average age of women workers today is 40 against an average age of 26 in grandmother's day and more than half of all women workers are married. Women constitute one-third of all college graduates, one-third of all who hold master's degrees as well as one-third of the labor force.

Yet, only 22 of our states have laws requiring equal pay for comparable work, many of these state laws are of dubious effectiveness and Congress has once again seen to it that there is no federal equal pay law. As a result, the discrimination on pay scales because of sex continues painfully obvious.

One-third of 1,000 companies surveyed by the National Office Management Assn. last year frankly reported a double-standard pay scale for male and female officeworkers. In one plant in Utah studied by the Young Women's Christian Assn., the hiring rate for women inspectors is \$1.38 an hour, for men, \$1.48 an hour and the differential rises to 34 cents as they move up the experience ladder - even though, as Miss Ruth Thompson of the YWCA told a House subcommittee, "they are required and expected to do exactly the same job under the same conditions."

Another survey of bank tellers' salaries in 1960 disclosed that women tellers with under five years of experience typically average \$5 to \$15 a week less than men in the same group - and in a bank, a teller is a teller, regardless of sex. Among college graduates, the differences in average salaries for men and women, when compared by occupation and type of degree, range from \$290 to \$1,560 a year, all in favor of men. In fact, the gap widens as education levels rise because of the barriers to promotion of women.

The evidence of discrimination is overwhelming and no one denies it. In her testimony before the House subcommittee, Mrs. Gladys A. Tillett, a U.S. representative to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, submitted data that should make any American, man or woman, blush, for we're behind even some of the most underdeveloped lands on writing this principle into law. Japan put the equal pay for equal work principle into its constitution in 1946. Burma did it in its constitution in 1947. India in 1949, Indonesia in 1950, Vietnam in 1952, Thailand in 1956.

The explanations for our persistent failure to recognize the validity of this principle are a hodge-podge of pocket-book, prejudice, tradition and fear. Many employers are openly hostile to the action because they fear their payrolls would be hiked overnight if women's wages were the same as men's for identical work. The prejudices and traditions need no comment; you know them.

The YWCA's Miss Thompson summed it up superbly when she said to the House subcommittee:

"Is this because we want to say to the world that we hold women's work to be less valuable than that of men's? This is hardly conceivable. I prefer to believe that it merely signifies that we have just not yet caught up with ourselves. We certainly have not."

Valley Artist To Attend Meeting

A Rogue valley artist will be among those participating this month at the 11th annual Northwest Regional Conference, American Institute of Architects at Oceanside, Ore. Eugene Bennett, Medford, and Tom Hardy, Portland, will discuss their sculptures at the conference along with David John McCosh, professor of art, University of Oregon, painter; and Jane Allen Gehring, assistant professor of art, University of Oregon.

The artists will have some of their work on display and will offer instructions in painting, sculpture, sand casting, and stichery during afternoon, outdoor sessions.

More than 300 persons are expected to attend the meeting Oct. 10 through 13 from AIA chapters in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Alaska, and Hawaii.

Theme for the conference is "The Art of Doing." Key-note speaker will be Philip C. Johnson, New York City, who will speak on "The Art of Building."

NO CONFERENCE

Washington - President Kennedy will not hold a news conference this week, the White House said Monday.

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