

Public Letter Box

March 9, 1974

Readers of The Star are invited to send opinions on questions of public interest to the Public Letter Box. Letters should be written on one side only of a sheet of paper. The writer's name and address should accompany each letter, but will be withheld on request. The Star reserves the right to reject any letter. On letters which exceed 250 words in length, The Star reserves the right to edit content, but will attempt to preserve the writer's opinion in so doing.

Perhaps Mr. Evans' lack of compassion for the pregnant woman stems from his refusal to take pregnancy seriously. He calls it an "inconvenience." Is vomiting every morning for three months an inconvenience? Are varicose veins and swollen ankles an inconvenience? What about hemorrhoids and heartburn? And the financial strain of medical bills and maternity clothes? I call these sacrifices—sacrifices that women who want to become mothers make out of love; sacrifices that no woman should be forced to make against her will. Evans also ignores the fact that a woman is more likely to die from a pregnancy than from an abortion. The proposals he supports force women to take the greater risk whether they want to or not. How can he claim that this is "Protecting the Right to Life?"

Evans on Abortion

SUE ERRINGTON
3200 Brook Dr.

M. Stanton Evans's article "Protecting the Right to Life" leaves the impression that the Supreme Court's abortion ruling opened the door to one million abortions. Actually the door was already open since it's estimated that the same number of abortions were performed each year prior to the court's decision. The difference is that, before, they were mostly performed illegally.

Evans envisions an "antilife contingency" plotting to exterminate the aged and the sick along with the unborn. Among the many organizations which have taken a stand against restrictive abortion laws are the American Bar Assn., American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, White House Conference on Children and Youth, American Home Economics Assn. and United Auto Workers Union—hardly an "antilife contingency" to my way of thinking.

Mrs. Evans' concern for the unborn leaves no room for compassion for the women whose civil rights will be severely limited if the legislation he favors is adopted. The Hogan amendment, for example, provides for absolutely no exceptions, not even permitting abortion in case of rape, incest, suspected deformity of the fetus or to save the life of the mother. The Buckley proposal, although permitting abortion if the mother's life is in danger, allows no other exceptions.

Letters to the editor

The Evening Press welcomes letters from its readers. Only letters containing correct names and addresses are considered for publication. In certain cases, pseudonyms are permitted to protect writers' identities. We prefer short

letters of 200 words or less. All letters are subject to condensation and deletion of matter considered libelous or in poor taste. Letters attacking private individuals will be published only if writers permit their own names and addresses to be used.

ERA defended against criticism

January 10, 1975

To the editor:

Letters have appeared lately opposing the Equal Rights Amendment because women will be subject to the draft.

All citizens have a duty to serve America in times of need. Service to one's country has many forms and the ERA will not force all women into combat duty just as all men have not been sent to the front lines in the past.

All women would not be drafted any more than all men have ever been drafted.

Besides shared responsibility in defending America, ERA will provide for equalization of benefits which come from military service. Volunteer standards at present are higher for women than for men. Without equal access to the service, women have not had equal access to such benefits as the GI educational bill, GI loans and mortgages, and veterans' preference in Federal job placement.

Today, the number of mili-

tary positions open to women is restricted — about one third those available to men. By denying women access to these positions, the military also denies them related job training known to be beneficial in later career development.

Under ERA, enlistment and placement standards must be applied equally. Women will have access to the very real benefits of the military. Women will share in the defense of their country.

America deserves the best from all its citizens.

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January 13, 1976

NOW replies to Mrs. Sharp

To the editor:

Today's woman has an identity and confidence that she lacked ten years ago. In 1976 if an employer fires her for marrying a co-worker, she sues and wins. In 1966 she complained but generally accepted her job loss whether it was fair or not. Women now know their rights and stand up for them. What's the cause of this new-found knowledge and confidence? The National Organization for Women deserves much of the credit.

Since NOW was founded in 1966, we've lobbied for legislation to outlaw sex discrimination in areas such as employment, education and credit; we've insisted that laws be enforced and we've informed the public of the injustice of sex discrimination.

In a recent Press interview Sammie Sharp, president of the local Eagle Forum, lists a number of goals which she claims to have taken from our summary of resolutions and policies from 1966-1972 entitled "Revolution: Tomorrow is NOW." The 11 goals she gives are not quotes from our publication. In some cases they are distortions; in other cases they do not appear at all. For example, the section on education lists 25 goals, not one of which—contrary to Mrs. Sharp's claim—is "removing school textbooks which portray 'stereotype' of women in the home."

NOW is an organization for women of all walks of life, including homemakers. A Pittsburgh housewife chairs our national board; I am a homemaker.

Regarding what Mrs. Sharp calls "prolesbian legislation", NOW acknowledges the fact that some women are lesbians and believes that their civil rights should not be denied because of sexual preference.

From the number of errors and mis-

conceptions in Mrs. Sharp's statements, I question whether she has read "Revolution: Tomorrow is NOW". I invite questions about NOW but suggest that the most qualified persons to answer them are NOW members. For that purpose we have a speakers' bureau and our meetings are open to the public. Interested persons may contact us at the address below.

SUE ERRINGTON, President
Muncie-Delaware NOW
3200 Brook

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Fruits of NOW

SUE ERRINGTON

President Muncie-Delaware NOW,

3200 Brook Dr.

Last Thursday's Star (Jan. 29) carried a letter from an unidentified women's club attacking the National Organization for Women and instructing readers to "Know them (NOW) by their fruits." The following are some of those "fruits."

Although the U.S. government established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to investigate unfair job practices, EEOC ignored practices that were unfair to women. Then NOW came into being in 1966 and successfully lobbied President Johnson and EEOC to enforce sex discrimination laws. Since then, EEOC has investigated over 40,000 women's cases.

NOW also managed to have women included in virtually every major anti-discrimination law and executive order written in the last decade. The Equal Credit Opportunity Act is a recent example. Today a woman who can prove she was unfairly denied credit will not only get credit, she'll get \$10,000 in damages.

It used to be that a rape victim in Indiana could expect to have her sex life dragged into court even if it had no bearing on the case at hand. NOW research and testimony helped end that vicious practice last year through passage of Indiana's rape shield law.

In short, NOW has fought — and won — major campaigns in the legislatures and courts to establish the principles and machinery of equal opportunity for women. Equally important, we've helped women to know their rights and to have the self-confidence to stand up for them.

We welcome questions about our organization. For that purpose we have a speakers' bureau and our meetings are open to the public. Interested persons may contact us at the address above.

PUBLIC LETTER BOX

Let Sharp Know

6.15.1977 SUE ERRINGTON
3200 Brook Dr.

America's "back alley" abortionists used to do a thriving business. They could set outrageous prices, ignore decent standards of sanitation and have no medical training whatsoever, yet their estimated one million customers a year never complained.

1973 was a bad year for the butchers; that's when abortion became legal and the market for illegal abortions dried up. Legalized abortion meant that American women no longer had to meet strangers on dark street corners or shabby motel rooms in order to end a pregnancy they desperately did not want. Legalization meant that abortions could be performed by licensed physicians in hospitals and clinics with standards set by the state boards of health.

A majority of Americans — 54%, according to a 1976 Harris poll — prefer that safe, legal abortion remain an option, if only to keep the illegal operators out of business. Yet Congress has before it a bill which would force poor women back into the hands of the quacks with their dirty rooms and coat hanger techniques. The bill is called the Hyde Amendment and it says that Medicaid funds can't be used for abortion. It doesn't stop abortions for everyone — just for the poor. Wealthy and middle class women could continue to deduct the cost of their abortion from their income taxes or pay for it through their insurance policies.

Congressman Sharp says he opposes abortion but does he oppose it just for the poor? He says he opposes the expenditure of tax dollars for abortion (approximately \$200 each). What about the taxpayers' bill for the estimated 25,000 seriously botched abortions costing up to \$2,000 each which HEW figures would occur each year if Medicaid abortions were banned?

If Congress passes the Hyde Amendment, the cost to the individual and to society will be great for one group of American women will lose their option to a safe, legal abortion and the "back alley" butchers will be back in business. I urge you to write Congressman Sharp and remind him of this. Hon. Phil Sharp, House of Representatives, Washington, D. C. 20515.

Public Letter Box

Jan 18, 1979

Abortion Issue

SUE ERRINGTON

Six years ago this month a Supreme Court ruling dramatically changed the way in which abortions are performed in this country. By declaring that decisions regarding pregnancy are a personal matter, best left to the individual who must live with her choice, the court legalized abortion and put the back alley quacks out of business.

No longer are women forced to act alone and in secret, shaking the grapevine for the name of a friend of a friend who got an abortion and survived the unsanitary conditions and unknown qualifications of the illegal abortionist. The approximately one million American women who annually overcame their fears and took a chance that the illegal operator wouldn't botch it have been replaced by a new generation of women who can make this difficult decision knowing that an early abortion performed in a clean facility by a competent physician is four times safer than a tonsillectomy.

Abortion is not a choice that women make lightly. In addition, restrictive legislation and unavailability of services make the decision difficult to carry out for many, particularly the poor. Yet in 1977, according to the findings of the Alan Gutmacher Institute, 28% of pregnant women in the United States decided abortion was a better alternative for their situation than continuing their pregnancies.

In January of each year abortion opponents spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on demonstrations, marches, newspaper ads and roses in their efforts to pressure lawmakers to overturn the Supreme Court decision. Changing the law will not eliminate abortions. Until the perfect contraceptive method is devised and people use it unfailingly, abortion — legal or illegal — will be one way some women choose to deal with an unwanted pregnancy.

If Right-to-Life members and sympathizers really care about life and want to see abortions become a thing of the past, their money would be better spent on ways to prevent unwanted pregnancies instead of trying to drive women back into the hands of illegal butchers.

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Teen Mother Program

To the editor:

An open letter to the Muncie Community Schools board members:

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Muncie-Delaware County Chapter of the National Organization for Women to express our concern about the future of the Teen Mother Program.

Our members feel very strongly that the school board has a responsibility to continue the program in a form that will make it possible for school girls who have become pregnant to continue their education. A program that has a realistic chance of success should meet the following minimum requirements:

— Child care and educational instruction must be in the same facility. It is unrealistic to expect that these young mothers — some not even old enough to drive a car — would be able to take their babies to a child care facility that is

not close to school. Child care for infants is almost nonexistent in Muncie and it is not always possible for a relative to care for the baby.

We have heard of a proposal that the babies could be kept at the Area Career Center while their mothers attend classes at their regular schools. This is not practical and, in our opinion, amounts to no more than window dressing.

Realistic options are to provide child care at the schools the girls regularly attend or offer child care and academic classes for the mothers at the Area Career Center or another school facility.

— Provide parenting classes for the girls in addition to the academic curriculum. Ninety-six percent of teens who give birth keep their babies. However, many are scarcely more than children themselves. For their sake and for their babies, they need adult help in learning how to take care of their

infants and themselves.

Although a Teen Mother Program may seem insignificant in terms of the number of students who take advantage of it, the benefits for those who do are enormous. Pregnancy is, by far, the most frequent reason that girls drop out of school. As a school board member you are well aware of the economic disadvantage faced by any high school dropout. Add to that the gap between male and female wages (female college graduates earn, on average, less than males with an eighth-grade education) and you can appreciate the enormous handicap these young girls will suffer for the rest of their lives if they cannot finish school. It is no wonder that many who do not graduate find it necessary to depend on welfare.

In your search for ways to balance the school budget, we urge you to consider the long-term benefits of a program that meets the requirements we have set forth.

By providing the tools now that will make these girls self-sufficient and less dependent on public assistance in the future, you are acting in the interest of the individual and the general public as well.

SUE ERRINGTON, president
Muncie-Delaware County NOW