

### **HOMEMAKERS' RIGHTS AS A PRIORITY**

**1978**

**WHEREAS**, homemakers have contributed substantial efforts on behalf of the National Organization for Women; and

**WHEREAS**, resistance to the feminist movement has been identified as full-time homemakers; and

**WHEREAS**, ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, as well as progress in other issue areas depends heavily on support of homemakers;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that adoption and implementation of a homemakers' bill of rights should

## DOMESTIC RELATIONS

be a priority for the National Organization for Women; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED**, that the implementation shall include building a strong national homemakers' rights committee.

### HOMEMAKERS' BILL OF RIGHTS ECONOMIC RIGHTS WITHIN MARRIAGE

1978

**WHEREAS**, the unpaid status of the homemaker has resulted in exploitation and injustice; and

**WHEREAS**, the National Organization for Women has pledged itself to achieving dignity and security for all women; and

**WHEREAS**, the homemakers' rights committee has been charged with the duty of proposing a bill of rights for homemakers;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Organization for Women endorses the proposal of economic rights within marriage, as follows:

In recognition of marriage as a truly equal partnership, homemakers shall be granted equal access to, and control over, all money acquired during the marriage;

- Through revision of federal income tax forms and their interpretation, so that there is a clear indication that all income listed on a joint income tax return is co-owned;
- Through abolition of gift taxes on interspousal transfers;
- Through revision of state laws so that a homemaker has the right to obligate the family income through credit purchases, loans, and similar transactions;
- Through evaluation and revision of state property laws so that the contributions of the wage-earner and the homemaker are given equal weight in determining ownership of marital property.

### HOMEMAKERS' BILL OF RIGHTS: ECONOMIC RIGHTS FOR HOMEMAKERS IN TRANSITION

1978

**WHEREAS**, the economic security of the homemaker rests entirely on the stability of the marriage; and

**WHEREAS**, a homemaker who is divorced, widowed or abandoned is often left without adequate resources, and with bleak prospects for becoming self-sufficient because of ongoing economic discrimination against women, particularly older women; and

**WHEREAS**, the homemakers' rights committee has been charged with the duty of proposing a bill of rights for homemakers;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Organization for Women endorses the proposal of economic rights for homemakers in transition, as follows:

In recognition of the fact that over one-third of all marriages now end in divorce; and that homemakers fare poorly in most states because division of property and recognition of entitlement is often inadequate and unjust; and that homemakers who are divorced have among the highest rates of unemployment and underemployment because of the lack of recent paid work experience, prejudice toward their marital status, age and sex discrimination, and the unwillingness to translate homemaking skills into marketable job skills; homemakers must be protected in divorce:

- through equitable division of property which recognizes the unpaid contributions of the homemakers in acquiring and maintaining the family's assets;
- through maintenance (alimony) awards to compensate for the loss of educational opportunities, seniority, advancement, benefits, and accrued protections the homemaker

## DOMESTIC RELATIONS

would have had if the homemaker had been in the paid workforce during the years of homemaking;

- through vigorous enforcement of court-awarded maintenance;
- through comprehensive legislation and funded programs to offer divorced and displaced homemakers job-entry education, training, counseling and placement, and supportive services;
- through recognizing the right of homemakers to unemployment compensation;
- through legislative protection and court award of an equitable share of pensions, annuities, and other retirement securities;
- through mandatory disclosure of assets of both parties of a divorce including those sold or distributed in anticipation of a divorce.

In recognition of the special problems a homemaker faces when s/he is widowed, the homemaker must be protected from the unfair burdens that add to her/his grief:

- through continuation of pensions, family insurance coverage, and other employment-related benefits;
- through abolition of interspousal inheritance taxes;
- through the right to continued access to the family savings accounts, checking accounts, securities and safe deposit boxes.

### HOMEMAKER'S BILL OF RIGHTS: ECONOMIC RECOGNITION FOR HOMEMAKERS

1978

**WHEREAS**, society has not recognized the economic value of the goods and services provided by the homemaker to her/his family and the community; and

**WHEREAS**, the lack of value has resulted not only in the evaluation of homemakers as "non-working" women, but has also deprived the homemaker of job related benefits that paid workers take for granted; and

**WHEREAS**, the lack of recognition of the economic value of homemaking has had an adverse impact on women in paid employment, especially in those occupations seen as extension of a homemaker's duties, such as nursing, education, restaurant service, domestic service and office work; and

**WHEREAS**, the homemakers' rights committee has been charged with the duty of proposing a bill of rights for homemakers;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Organization for Women endorses the proposal of economic recognition for homemakers, as follows:

In recognition of the fact that it is not the homemaker who benefits most from her/his unpaid labor, but it is the community and family and through them all of society, homemakers should be granted the recognition and rights of paid, skilled workers:

- through independent social security coverage in her/his own name, portable into and out of marriage and continuing as the homemaker leaves and reenters the paid workforce, containing provision for disability and retirement benefits adequate to maintain a decent standard of living;
- through inclusion of the value of goods and services produced and provided by homemakers in the gross national product;
- through revision of welfare laws so that a low-income homemaker can remain at home with her/his family, rather than be forced to take a second, paying job;
- through development of flexible-time and part-time employment, and the development of adequate flexible-time and part-time child care facilities to make these jobs more available to parents of young children;

## DOMESTIC RELATIONS

- through civil and criminal protection from spousal rape and domestic abuse;
- through providing the homemaker with a safe workplace and adequate housing regardless of income;
- through comprehensive review of current domestic relations laws to challenge and change those laws, statutes, procedures and codes that deprive homemakers of dignity, security and recognition;
- through recognition of the right to retire or change jobs.

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the National Organization for Women adopts the proposals of economic rights within marriage, economic rights for homemakers in transition, and economic recognition for homemakers as a comprehensive statement of a bill of rights for homemakers.

## ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL HOMEMAKERS' RIGHTS COMMITTEE

1977

**WHEREAS**, a primary goal of NOW is the economic equality and independence of women, and approximately 40 percent of the adult female population of the United States are full time homemakers; But homemakers have no legally recognized share of the household income, have difficulty acquiring credit in their own names, and do not have disability insurance, unemployment insurance, unemployment compensation, or independently-based social security, severance pay, or benefits, and homemaking is not even classified as work or given credit as work experience, although homemakers acquire a variety of skills and training and, contrary to popular myth, are producers as well as consumers; and the non-paid workforce of women with elasticity to enter the paid workforce at any time tends to lower the wages of women:

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that NOW make explicit its concern for homemakers by establishing a national homemakers' rights committee to:

1. Develop a homemakers' bill of rights setting forth the requirements for the economic equality and independence of homemakers;
2. Win a legally recognized share of the household income and work benefits for homemakers through legislation and through changes in administrative regulations;
3. Develop the concept of household partnership in which each partner legally shares equal portions of the household income;
4. Promote the interests of homemakers as workers with recognizable skills, training, responsibilities, and benefits.

The National Homemakers' Rights Committee shall be composed of a chair and eight members appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Board. Insofar as possible, the committee members shall represent the nine regions. The national committee members shall be responsible for recruiting regional, state, and chapter committees, identifying those that already exist, and developing a program for achieving its purposes. The National Committee shall be responsible for communicating by mail with all levels, and the regional members shall be responsible for conducting workshops at their respective regional NOW conferences and for recruiting and training workshop leaders for state NOW conferences.