Debating Equal Rights in Eastern Washington
A Scholarly Study

By

Nancy Driscol Engle, Ph.D.

Sponsored in Part by the Washington Women’s History Consortium, a part of the Washington State Historical Society
August 3, 2010

Special thanks to Marion Moos, a longtime activist, Ann Murphy and the Spokane League of Women Voters, who provided me with inspiration. Stacy Warren and Shanna Stevenson read and commented on versions of this paper.

The Rising Tide

The struggle for women’s equal legal rights in the state of Washington was a political movement much like a rising tide, in which a variety of people took part, both Democrat and Republican, mature and young, female and male, whites and people of color, as well as adherents to a number of different religions. The nationwide feminist movement first energized young women living in urban western Washington in the early 1970s. From there it quickly found its way into cities in Eastern Washington through the League of Women Voters (LWV), branches of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and fledgling chapters of the National Organization for Women (NOW) chapters. Club members joined individuals from colleges and churches, urging local politicians and voters to support the cause.

The Eastern Washington movement was nourished by activism west of the Cascades and inspired by the national feminist scene, but worked out in processes familiar to women living on the east side of the state. This paper will trace the stories of activist women in Eastern Washington to explore the debate over feminism in the region. Kathy Utz and Ann Brown, for example, took early leadership roles in the pro ERA
forces in the Tri-Cities area. Joan Honican, Ann Dewey and Marion Moos stepped to the forefront in Spokane.

As an organized movement, the region’s antifeminists got started later than the pros did; nevertheless, the antis easily won converts, spreading their cause quickly throughout Eastern Washington. Their arguments against the ERA fed on the fears that a constitutional amendment giving women legal rights would fundamentally alter families, eradicate sex-segregated public restrooms, and send women into combat.¹ Their interests were primarily white-centered, for example their policy on minority rights focused on marriage and family issues, but did not specify any interests on behalf of or problems faced by women of color.² This pro [white] family message spread throughout the region at the behest of leaders like Susan Roylance, Dolores Glesener and Dolores Gilmore, in the Tri-Cities area, who used the large and already established communication networks of the Mormon and Lutheran Churches to get their message out. Similar anti ERA messages would be furthered by legislators from Spokane, such as the well-known Senator Sam Guess and Representative James Kuehnle, both of whom voted against equal rights throughout the decade.³

However, in the early days of the movement, women worked on behalf of the ERA relatively unencumbered. Their local efforts drew inspiration from the nationwide movement on behalf of women which many supporters believed was nothing short of

revolution. At long last, the stand for equal legal rights that Alice Paul had taken first in 1923 seemed within reach. Equality activists followed the news as U.S. Representative Martha Griffiths petitioned to have the proposed Equal Rights Amendment discharged from the Judiciary Committee, and then watched while the U.S. House approved it in October, 1971. By early 1972 local feminists were keeping tabs on the U.S. Senate debate over the ERA, and watching the African-American congresswoman Shirley Chisholm run for president.

Eastern Washington’s activist women carefully observed the discussion among the state’s legislators as well. Mirroring the divisions that were evident at the national level, the elected officials in Olympia were not always sympathetic. During the legislative session that began in late 1970, some young white members of NOW lobbied for the passage of approximately twenty bills aimed at remedying the state’s legislative prejudice against women. The NOW members had not been well received. Legislators passed only one (HB 594) bill making it illegal for employers, employment agencies, and labor unions to discriminate on the basis of sex. After their session had been completed, lawmakers privately asked members of the Seattle League of Women Voters why its members had not been in Olympia supporting women’s equal rights, implying that they could have lent credibility to the movement. One anonymous legislative secretary even

---

4 For one description of that revolution, see Jo Freeman, We Will be Heard: Women’s struggles for political Power in the United States, (Lanham: Rowan and Littlefield, 2008), 8-12.
5 For a scholarly study of women’s activism for political power from 1960s -90s, see Jo Freeman, We will be Heard: Women’s Struggle for Political Power in the United States, Rowman &Littlefield Publishers, Inc. (Lanham: 2008.)
suggested that the bills might have been successful if there had been more than just “angry, young, radical women,” promoting them.8

Seattle League members published the statement in their newsletter, using it to explain one reason why the local League should endorse women’s rights. Instead of being bothered, however, by the young NOW members, like the legislators had been; the League women saw the young activists and their friends as potential members of LWV.9 More broadly, they saw women’s rights as a personal issue that would appeal to their individual members and add breadth to the League’s studies.

To do so, Seattle’s LWV proposed in May of 1971 that the statewide organization add a “Study of the Status of Women in the State of Washington” to its human resources items slated for adoption at the upcoming state convention.10 In doing so, Washington’s League would move beyond the national LWV, which was avoiding taking a position on women’s equal rights because they thought the League should be focusing solely on the needs of poor and minorities.11 The Seattle members further argued that studying women’s equal legal rights was especially important for themselves, because Washington remained one of the few states with community property laws that denied wives the right to sue for injury under their own names. In addition, they thought

it would be a good way to honor the national League’s history, which had been the product of the women’s rights movement of the 1920s.

LWV Washington approved the Seattle club’s proposal and in January 1972 it published a pamphlet entitled, “Facts and Issues: Status of Women in Washington State.”\textsuperscript{12} Designed to educate its membership, the document discussed legal problems Washington women faced; including laws applying to married women, community property, employment, and the Equal Rights Amendment. It concluded that the amendment would be “one of the most comprehensive remedies for sex-discrimination.”\textsuperscript{13}

While the League was establishing its position on the Equal Rights Amendments, Washington Governor Daniel J. Evans, a moderate Republican who had demonstrated his interest in feminism as early as 1963, was advocating women’s rights and encouraging their increased political participation at the state level. In November of 1971, he had created the Washington State Women’s Council, designed in part to be a lobbying group. This was one aspect of the governor’s effort to incorporate more women into the state’s statutory boards and commissions.\textsuperscript{14} On January 9, 1972 Evans told a group of feminist women that he was endorsing changes in the state’s community property laws, as well as

\textsuperscript{12} See, \url{http://digitum.washingtonhistory.org/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/digipubs&CISOPTR=1574}.
promoting an Equal Rights Amendment for the state to be “modeled on the one being considered by [the nation’s] Congress.”

Following Evan’s lead, state legislators overcame their earlier hesitancy to endorse feminist initiatives and on January 22, the House of Representatives voted 96-3 to adopt a proposed Equal Rights Amendment for Washington’s Constitution. The Senate followed suit, and on February 10, approved the proposed amendment 36-13. With this move, Washington’s legislature preceded by six weeks the final congressional vote on the proposed equal rights amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Feminists in Eastern Washington reaped the benefits of this early drive for an ERA. Women in Spokane, like Margaret Fellows, a longtime member of the Spokane LWV, followed the state League’s decision to endorse the ERA, and helped to educate other residents of Spokane on the proposed Amendment. In Richland and its sister cities, League member Kathy Utz worked to recruit others who would support the ERA, often utilizing information published in the state League’s study.

Utz, program chair for the Richland branch of the AAUW, was a new resident of the region in the early 1970s, her young family having migrated from Pittsburgh to work for Westinghouse at Hanford Nuclear. Inspired by Shirley Chisholm’s run for President, and energized by what she perceived as the “totally liberating” politics she had found in Richland in the early 1970s, Utz, along with her friends, Sharon Lippincott and

---

16 Legislative Folders, Washington State Archives, Olympia.
20 Email to the author dated March 5, 2009.
Ann Brown, was already involved in affairs of state when she took up the cause of the state and national Equal Rights Amendments.

In the spring of 1972, Utz and her associates were planning a “Women’s Workshop” for the Tri-cities area. On June 1, she wrote to the leaders of other women’s organizations, sharing with them a preliminary plan for the session. The AAUW would be the prime sponsor, and was inviting other groups to join in planning and presenting a one-day seminar designed to help women reach their full potential in politics, careers, educational opportunities, and offering other subjects of interest. The guest speaker, whom she hoped would be a member of the Washington State Women’s Council, would explain the concepts behind the proposed state Equal Rights Amendment.

In Spokane a new NOW chapter was working hard to rally support for equal rights. Their newsletter was full of helpful information. For example, in early February 1972, Joan Honican reported that a car pool would be available for anyone interested in attending a joint committee hearing scheduled for Olympia on February 7, discussing the proposed state Equal Rights Amendment. People who could not attend the hearing could contact their local legislators, or call an Equal Rights hotline at the capital to find out more. In another item appearing in the newsletter, the local YWCA was sponsoring a

---

21 Kathy Utz, Richland, to heads of local women’s clubs, June 1, 1972. Utz private collection, used by permission.
22 The Spokane NOW chapter was formed in September 1971 with the help of a member of the Seattle NOW chapter. Telephone conversation with Marion Moos, May 20, 2009. My information on Kathy Utz, Sharon Lippincott, and Marion Moos began with telephone conversations and emails between myself and these activists. See also Marion Moos, Interview by Kina Herzinger, June 11, 2007, interview OH 961, transcript, Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture, Eastern Washington State Historical Society, Spokane, Washington.
meeting to discuss creating a Women’s Council for the city. Candy Hardin, a speaker at the local Unitarian Church was lecturing on “New Math in Marriage.”

Besides giving publicity to the steps people in Spokane were taking to promote equal rights, the local NOW members published survey results indicating that women in their city experienced more inequities than they did elsewhere in the state. For example, 80% of the human rights cases filed in the city were due to sexual discrimination, in contrast to only a third of similar cases tried throughout the rest of the state. The newsletter urged readers to contact representatives Bud Pardini and James Kuehnle, in support of House Bill 404, a proposed anti-discrimination measure.

While activists in Spokane were contacting their legislators, in the Tri-Cities, Utz and her associates were meeting with Gisela Taber on June 7. Taber, Governor Evan’s appointee to direct the State Women’s Council, was a former English teacher at Pullman High School. Though not originally from Eastern Washington, her youthful ways, enthusiasm, and ties to politicians and educators there were helpful to local activists. She even looked like many young feminists, and had briefly worked at the newly opened Evergreen State College. She threw herself into the drive for political equality in Washington, and lent to the movement her experience and contacts. Utz explained later that Taber had been “guardian angel” of the movement in Eastern Washington.

On a visit to Richland in June 1972, Taber promised to be the keynote speaker at an upcoming Women’s Workshop, which they had scheduled for late September. At the

24 For more information on Francis Conklin’s Seminar, see Gonzaga School of Law Catalogue, 1975-76.
28 Kathy Utz unofficial memoir 2009, Utz personal papers.
same time she taught local ERA activists how best to educate voters. For example, she told reporters that socially outdated laws, such as the state’s community property laws, discriminated against both men and women, thus preventing individual members of society from reaching their full potential.29

In Spokane, Taber’s enthusiasm and willingness to collaborate on strategies helped equip local feminists to counter early opposition to the movement. In July, she spoke to members of a newly established ERA Coalition, which included members of NOW, AAUW, LWV, and the YWCA. The state Women’s Council leader cautioned local feminists not to get defensive; instead, she admonished that they should always aim to educate. Local opposition, she argued, could be best overcome by laws that were required to change people’s behavior.30

ERA activists in both Spokane and Tri-Cities established speakers bureaus designed to educate voters on the need for an ERA to pass.31 In Tri-Cities Kathy Utz, a Democrat, asked Ann Brown to take her place because she was running for Benton County Commissioner.32 Utz won the election, and continued to publicly support the Equal Rights campaign by serving as a speaker. Sharon Lippincott, friend and fellow collaborator with Utz, remembered one appointment for which she and Utz had teamed up.33 Lippincott, a Republican, and Utz, a Democrat, discussed ways their particular parties had helped women, and concluded by demonstrating why members of both

32 Email to author, March 5, 2009.
33 Telephone interview with author, April 13, 2009.
organizations supported equal legal rights for women. The women were well-prepared, and the meeting flowed smoothly.

In Spokane, Dr. Edward Lindaman, President of Whitworth College, joined the legal equality activists. An important local official, he lent prestige to the ERA effort there, by serving as a co-chair of the coalition. In September 1972 the NOW newsletter explained, “We appreciate his interest and enthusiasm—and the full support he offers to women’s, and the whole field of human rights.”

The NOW newsletter also featured the work of Father Francis Conklin. In early 1972 he designed a full college course for his students at Gonzaga University exploring the feudal foundations to current restrictive common laws. Conklin continued teaching the course through most of the decade.

Conklin and Lindeman, both academics, were on the vanguard of people favoring legal equality for women. While not all employees of Eastern Washington’s colleges were feminists, a telephone survey of more than 800 Washington residents conducted in December of 1972, found that voters with higher educations tended to be more favorable toward the state and national ERAs than those with less education.

Spokane NOW members were seeking voters who would join their cause, and were keeping watch over the city’s senators and representatives at the state capital. They were happy to discover some people with kindred spirits. Republican Bud Pardini co-authored the article supporting Equal Rights that appeared in the voters’ pamphlets.

35 The fragmentary collection of law school bulletins at Gonzaga indicated that he was still teaching the class in 1975. Special Collections, Foley Library, Gonzaga University.
distributed across the state. Six other representatives, all Democrats, also supported the measure.37

But if some legislators were kindred spirits, there were many more who did not share the feminists’ views. In June, the NOW newsletter emphasized the members’ frustration in capital letters, “LOCAL OPPOSITION IS GREATER IN SPOKANE THAN ANYPLACE ELSE.”38

To verify this, one only had to look at the records of Spokane’s elected officials serving in Olympia. Back in January and February 1972, when Washington legislators had voted to support the state ERA, five of the thirteen senators who opposed the measure were from Spokane: Democrats Sam Guess, William Day, James Keefe, John Cooney, and Republican Robert Twig. Even more alarming to Spokane’s feminists, all three state representatives who voted against the ERA: Democrats Carlton A. Gladder, and W.W. Richardson, and Republican James Kuehnle, lived in Spokane. Kuehnle, a businessman who campaigned for office on his ability to lead, had gone so far as to co-author the article that appeared in the 1972 voters’ pamphlet opposing HJR 61.39 In it, he argued that women were entitled to enjoy equal rights, but he believed that the proposed amendment would deny them important legal protections. He further explained that the ERA threatened the “vast legal framework of distinction between the sexes that has been built up through the years.”

The nationwide debate in early 1972 over the ERA was similar. For example, Phyllis Schlafly, a conservative at the forefront in the national debate against the ERA, gained political mileage for her cause by arguing that women should be protected from serving in combat. She differed, of course, with the U.S. Representative Martha Griffiths who argued that women should be able to serve with men in the military on equal footing. The two were not so far apart, however, even Griffiths had stopped short of arguing that equality meant that all women should take up arms and fight. She believed that some women, as well as men, were better suited for non-combat roles, and she was willing to give commanding officers discretion over the jobs they would assign to women. Opponents at the state level, like Kuehnle, however, implied that women should not bear arms or serve in combat situations.

Despite the positions that Kuehnle and his fellow antis took, Spokane’s NOW members had time to work for change before the November election. Besides publishing a monthly newsletter, and cooperating with a local coalition of ERA supporters, they sent surveys to each of the Spokane legislators regarding their vote on the issue. The NOW members were delighted when James Keefe replied to their letter, stating that he now favored HJR 61. Gleefully, the editor exclaimed, “So [he] has evidently been converted!”

In early 1972, a small, but misinformed, group of antis in the Tri-Cities region irritated the local ERA coordinator. That summer Kathy Utz complained in a letter that

---

the antis had “badly misrepresented the ERA.”\textsuperscript{42} Ann Brown agreed with Utz, and later explained to reporters that, “The real issues are complicated by peoples’ fears and personal interpretations.”\textsuperscript{43} She and her co-activists, for example, were trying to correct the impression that approving an Equal Rights Amendment would mean that public restrooms across the state would have to be integrated. She went on to explain, “Unless we get the truth to them, myths are all they have to believe.”

Despite such opposition, even from some prominent people, both groups of ERA supporters in Eastern Washington were enjoying a measure of success.\textsuperscript{44} For example, the coalition of pros in the Tri-Cities region was enjoying genuine acceptance for its speakers. For example, after Utz spoke at the Columbia Basin College, Walter A Oberst, Practical Politics Coordinator, wrote praising her scholarly presentation. He thanked her for “dispelling” popular misconceptions about legal equality.\textsuperscript{45}

Indeed, the equality activists were explaining that the Equal Rights Amendment would help both men and women. They pointed out that divorce cases, and social security benefits would be more equitable, and argued that the amendment would eliminate double standards in educational institutions, as well as in some criminal law provisions. Finally, they wanted voters to know that the Equal Rights Amendment specifically targeted legal rights. It did not dictate the way that individuals interacted or behaved socially.

During the late summer and fall of 1972, activists in both regions kept busy. In Spokane, NOW members were combating similar fears. They held an open meeting on

\textsuperscript{42} “Organizational Chart for Tri-Cities committee for the Passage of ERA = HJR 61” unpublished undated letter, Utz to Committee Chairs, Utz Collection.

\textsuperscript{43} “Tri-City Women work for Equal Rights Amendment,” \textit{Tri-City Herald}, August 27, 1972.

\textsuperscript{44} Walter A. Oberst, letter to Kathy Utz, October 4, 1972. Utz Collection. Used by permission.

\textsuperscript{45} Emphasis Obersts’.
September 27 at the YWCA to discuss the question, “How will the ERA affect education, jobs, credit, family life, divorce laws, retirement, etc?” At the same time, they circulated a flyer entitled, “Vote yes on HJR 61,” featuring answers to nine questions dealing with the proposed amendment, and its impact on individuals. The newsletter also offered contact information for speakers or invitations to join the ranks of volunteers.

The League of Women Voters published their intent to support the measure shortly before the election.

In Richland, local ERA activists sponsored an event that appealed to rural women, and raised funds for their campaign to promote passage of the ERA. They held a “Country Fair.” It featured locally produced pottery and other pieces of art, along with fresh garden vegetables, preserves, handicrafts, toys and ERA t-shirts.

In 1972 equal legal rights activists in the Tri-Cities enjoyed a lot of local newspaper coverage. Beverly Jacobson, Editor Desert Living Section of the Tri-City Herald, was both an equality activist and an employee of the local paper. In late summer she took a photograph of Barbara Eyrse and her two daughters standing in their garden, wearing ERA t-shirts, and talking about the upcoming fair. Throughout the late summer, she and Jay Crawford, a fellow journalist, had published five articles about the

---


50 By March, 1977, Beverly Jacobson was serving as the Southeastern Washington Coordinator for the IWY conference. “Women can suggest topics for statewide conference, Walla Walla Union-Bulletin, March 20, 2977. This article is available at http://digital.lib.cwu.edu/collect/1977wome/index

51 “Right on to the Fair,” Tri-City Herald, undated, Utz Collection.
upcoming Workshop for Women, one of which prominently displayed eight photographs of pro-ERA activists in the local area.52

When Election Day arrived in November, activists in both regions followed the results carefully. The vote on Washington’s ERA was close enough that it took days before the final tally could be confirmed. In Spokane, despite the feminists’ efforts, more than 53%, or 63,058 of voters, said no to the state’s ERA.53 The majority of voters in the city remained unconvinced that the amendment was necessary, perhaps still fearing that they would be forced to use uni-sex bathrooms and send women into combat.54

Elsewhere in Eastern Washington the voting results were more pro-ERA. Tri-Cities voters passed the measure. In Benton County, it won 15,834 to 13,057, and its sister county, Franklin, favored it with a margin of 131 votes. In Kittitas County, the seat of Central Washington University, voters supported the amendment 5,353 to 4,144.55

State legislators voted to approve the national ERA in March, 1973. They chose to do so on the 22nd of the month, exactly one year after national legislators had voted to send the amendment to the states for ratification. In supporting the measure, Washington’s legislators could even show enthusiasm. This was true, in parts of Eastern Washington, as well. In Benton and Franklin Counties, all four representatives and one

---

52 “Workshop for Women” September 27, 1972, “Tri-City women will present their interests at workshop,” September 29, 1972, and “Opportunities for women explored at workshop,” October 3, 1972, Tri-City Herald. See also “Tri-City women work for Equal Rights Amendment,” Tri-City Herald, August 27, 1972.

53 63,058 people voted against the measure, giving a solid victory to opponents of the measure. “Final Official cumulative Report, General election Spokane County” Washington State Archives, Eastern Regional Branch.


55 Election data for the state of Washington beginning with the 1970 election is available online at http://www.secstate.wa.gov/elections/results_search.aspx.

In Eastern Washington the rising tide of ERA activism had brought together a broad based, rather loose coalition of people. The majority of the supporters were white women, such as Marion Moos in Spokane, and Kathy Utz and Sharon Lippincott in Richland. But the pros in the Tri-Cities included women, such as Ann Brown, a young divorcé and member of NOW, working alongside Weeona Harves, the middle-aged president of the Benton-Franklin League of Women voters. In addition, their ranks included the Democratic City Council member, Shirley Miller, and Republican Wilma Dainard Connell.\footnote{“Tri-City Women will present their interest at workshop,” Tri-Cities Herald, September 29, 1972.} The youngest women activists were students. In Spokane they included Christine Cary and Kathleen Lovejoy, two seniors at the Gonzaga School of Law.\footnote{“Equal Rights Apathy Seen,” Spokesman-Review, January 20, 1974.} Some white men took stands for the ERA as well, including Rev. Francis Conklin, Dr. Edward Lindaman, and the local City Councilman, Steve Eugster.

Women of color joined the movement. For example, Francis Scott, a middle aged African-American teacher and law student worked alongside other activists in Spokane. She would attend in 1977 the state’s International Women’s Year Conference, (IWY,) as well as go on to Houston for the National IWY Conference.\footnote{Nominee list 1977, Moos papers, 4:7, Museum of Arts & Culture, Eastern Washington State Historical Society, Spokane, Washington.} She and her fellow African-American pro-ERA activists would take increasingly more prominent
positions in the movement in the months leading up to the Washington state IWY. Native-American women would also join the movement.

The IWY and the Sleeping Giant

While ERA activists in Spokane, Benton and Franklin counties continued supporting legal equality for women, they emphasized different issues in the months following March of 1973. No longer did they need to convince voters in their hometowns—nor the legislators in Olympia—to support the ERA. The state constitution had its Equal Rights amendment, and Washington was on record as having ratified the national ERA. So in Eastern Washington the legal equality activists found new ways to get their message out.

NOW members in Spokane worked to promote affirmative action.\(^{61}\) They targeted discrimination at the municipal level, as well as scrutinized the practices of local businesses. Marion Moos remembered going with feminists to secretly record City Hall meetings, thereby identifying where Spokane officials needed to be reformed.\(^{62}\)

By 1975 local feminists were preparing for Washington’s International Women’s Year conference. In doing so they were following the precedent set by the United Nations, which had sponsored in 1975 the world’s first international conference dedicated to women’s concerns. That conference, in turn had produced a plan of action, asking the world’s leaders to address women’s concerns better nationally and locally. The U.S. would


national IWY commission in turn had passed the torch on to states, provided funding and slated the state events for 1977.63

In Spokane a Gonzaga student, Paula Gibson, served on the national IWY Commission. Appointed by U.S. President Gerald Ford, she worked alongside such well-known people as the actor Alan Alda, the U.S. Rep. Bella Abzug, Lenore Hershey, editor in-chief of the *Ladies Home Journal*, and the Commission’s director, Jill Ruckelshaus, the wife of a prominent diplomat.64 In Spokane, Gibson was a celebrity, especially among feminists.

In turn, more people endorsed the ERA. For example, in the spring of 1977, African-American women throughout the state began organizing. Linda Edwards, the acting director of Black Studies at Eastern Washington State College joined approximately 20 women from Spokane to participate in a meeting in Yakima, organizing a Black Women’s State Caucus. The meeting was a first, she said in Washington, and it had enabled them to set up a network of communication between themselves and other professional women of color from Tacoma, Seattle, and Olympia. At about the same time, Edwards worked with Ms. Lydia Sims, Spokane’s president of the NAACP, to advertise the upcoming IWY conference to their peers.65

At the same time, Jacqueline Delahunt, of Tumwater was working with a group of Native-Americans. Delahunt was from western side of the state, but was charged with representing Native American women statewide. Her committee was preparing a set of resolutions that reflected the needs and interests of the state’s Native Americans,

---

64“Women’s Resource Center takes on big role during IWY,” *Spokesman-Review*, June 1, 1975.
including recognition of treaties, for example. Their work would become part of the state IWY’s proposed resolutions.66

While women of color were joining Washington’s feminists, national activists were appointing local women to serve on the state IWY committee. In Spokane, Paula Gibson; Donna Hanson, President of Junior League; Marion Moos, feminist bookshop owner; and Sally Stephens; a seminary student at Whitworth College, were selected. The Journalist Beverly Jacobson represented the Tri-Cities area on the committee.67 Alice Yee, Coordinator for the Women’s Center at Central Washington University was chosen director of the Washington IWY, slated for July, 1977, in Ellensburg.68

Feminists predominated, with most members of the state IWY commission favoring equal legal rights. ERA opponents on the committee included Dr. Kathleen Skrinar. The state group, however, missed large numbers of conservative women while sending invitations to Ellensburg. They sent out a large number of general invitations, often published in the newspapers around the state. They also mailed packets to women’s clubs, which usually had contacts with feminists.69

Nevertheless, the IWY movement brought many opponents to the ERA in Eastern Washington to their feet. Kennewick’s Susan Roylance, who was serving at the time as vice chairman of the Republican Party’s Central Committee of Benton County,  

68 “Yee to plan Women’s Meeting” Ellensburg Record, January 18 1977. This article is available at http://digital.lib.cwu.edu/collect/1977wome/index.
later explained that the IWY movement “awakened a sleeping giant.” It motivated, she asserted, many antifeminists to get involved.

Yet the seeds of the awakening in Eastern Washington had begun sprouting before Ellensburg. For example, in August of 1976 at the Benton County Fair, Dolores Glesener, from Kennewick, tended a booth from which she distributed anti-ERA literature. In doing so, Glesener helped start a conversation that proved especially strong in the eastern half of the state. By April, 1977 her group was large enough that she was able to mail ten thousand petitions to volunteers throughout the state who in turn sought the signatures of likeminded voters. For example, in Spokane, one of Glesener’s volunteers, Helen Treffrey, oversaw the distribution of eleven hundred petitions. She coordinated a team members living in each of the city’s seven congressional districts. In turn, they sought signatures and contacts among their neighbors, thereby helping Glesener gather the names of antis throughout the city and county.

This process of identifying opponents of the ERA, Glesener explained to a reporter, was designed to garner 800,000 signatures by June 20. The effort would help place an initiative on the state’s November ballot, asking voters to rescind the state’s ratification of the national ERA. The petition ultimately proved unsuccessful, but her team of antis had already been recruited and would be easily accessible during the weeks ahead.

---

At that time Glesener was allied with an anti-ERA coalition that stretched beyond the eastern border of Washington. For example, Mrs. Silvia McKeeth, of Boise, Idaho, had led a group to Olympia during the first week of April. They had asked a State House committee to introduce a bill designed to rescind Washington’s ERA ratification. When the committee denied their request, the anti-ERA activists changed tactics, and began a petition drive that would have put an anti-era voter initiative on the November 1977 ballot.

Within Eastern Washington, Glesener worked with Delores Gilmore, and Susan Roylance. She was acquainted with them from having been active in local Republican parties. When it came to fighting the ERA, these politically-active women used their own contacts and already-existing communication networks to identify supporters. Besides locating thousands of like-minded individuals, the three collectively rounded up more than 2000 conservative women and men to attend the IWY conference in Ellensburg.

Their political experience added to their religious affiliations provided them with effective starting points. Glesener and Gilmore were both Catholics, Roylance was a Mormon. Each could quickly form a loosely organized conservative group, simply by making phone calls, or tapping into other communication opportunities available through their churches. The groups would eventually become part of a larger, better organized coalition of conservative activists that would become an influential political group in Washington in the weeks following the Ellensburg IWY.

76Susan Roylance oral interview with Mildred Tanner Andrews, May 3, 2008, 3,
Glesener’s alliance with local antis as well as with those who lived outside the state, illustrates how women across the nation were participating in the new Christian right as it became a political force in the United States. Women were joining the conservative movement by becoming activists on local social issues. When they did so, they created for themselves spaces within the nationwide conservative movement.77

With respect to the Ellensburg IWY, Glesener and her allies got a late start. Gilmore, a family life lecturer and president of Citizens for Youth, a statewide Catholic organization, began thinking seriously about the IWY conference only days before it was scheduled to begin.78 Her late decision resulted from at least three different factors. First, Citizens for Youth had not received an official information packet on the upcoming Washington State IWY. In the Tri-Cities area, Ann Brown, Kathy Utz and their associates had received packets via the AAUW, and LWV. This approach by the State IWY committee seemed at least reasonable, because in early 1977 Beverly Jacobson published 15 related articles in the *Tri-Cities Herald*.79 But, although the articles were done professionally, conservative women like Gilmore did not see them as personal invitations to the IWY. The second reminder she received about the state IWY was a video of the Oklahoma IWY event. Finally, Dr. Kathleen Skrinar, a state committee member and friend of Gilmore’s, called and asked her to consider attending.

After responding to the personal invitation, Gilmore telephoned Citizens for Youth representatives all over the state, telling them about the conference in Ellensburg,
She thought, she explained later that it would be an educational event. Her appeal proved persuasive. Somewhere between 500-700 members of Citizens for Youth decided to attend Ellensburg eventually becoming part of what became the “Blue and White” coalition. Wednesday, July 6, only two days before the conference began, Gilmore knew that the anti delegation would be large.80

While Gilmore was inviting conservatives to the IWY, Susan Roylance was preparing to serve as floor leader of the Blue and White group.81 A former secretary of the Republican Central Committee in Franklin County and the sitting vice chairman of the Central committee for Benton County, she had participated in a number of meetings conducted with parliamentary procedure. Thus, she could help the self-proclaimed pro-family delegation.

The Blue and White coalition, a hastily-organized group of white middle class women, were unprepared to work as a political unit. They could be a genuine problem for the IWY organizers, nevertheless, because their numbers were large enough to double attendance at the event. Added to their conservative political views, these two factors made the latecomers seem to be increasingly difficult in the eyes of the pro-ERA organizers of Ellensburg.82

---

80 “They wanted to preserve families,” Spokesman-Review, July 22, 1977, 6. Gilmore told Andrews in an oral interview, that Glesener had not been involved with the anti-ERA movement until after Ellensburg. This study indicates, however, that Glesener had been actively campaigning against the ERA before Ellensburg. “Independent Woman: ERA opponents prepare petition drive,” Spokesman-Review, April 10, 1977, C8. What Gilmore probably meant by that statement is that the coalition of women who made up the Blue and White were more broadly focused than simply a group of anti-ERA representatives slated to go to Ellensburg. See Dolores Gilmore oral Interview with Mildred Tanner Andrews, http://www.washingtonomenshistory.org/themes/womensRights/oHistProj/gilmore.aspx.


Indications that there would be a large conservative contingent began surfacing early in the week before the IWY opened on Friday, July 7. Susan Roylance had begun attempting to contact the committee as early as July 2, the Saturday before. There were newspaper reports in Yakima on Monday, July 3, saying that a conservative Eastern Washington contingent was forming.

In Ellensburg, nevertheless, an understandably busy Alice Yee underestimated their potential impact. She told reporters as late as July 7, “[A last minute conservative contingent at Ellensburg] is one small facet of a lot of things.” Thus, Yee and her allies were unprepared as late as Thursday July 7, just before the conference began. That evening, a woman whom they had heard was named Susan—they later found out her last name was Roylance—knocked on Yee’s door and said, “I just thought you would like to know that there will be two thousand women coming tomorrow for the conference and they are not registered.”

Seething with anger and pushed into high gear, Yee and her fellow committee members began a last-minute scramble. She called the only printer in Ellensburg, and told him “I would be indebted to him for life if he would stay up all night and do our printing.” Then, one woman pulled the printed materials off the press as soon as they were done and rushed them to Yee’s house for collating; while most of the committee members arranged and stuffed 2000 additional delegate packets throughout the night. At

---

86 Alice Yee to Mildred Andrews, Oral Interview, May 9, 2008,
the same time, Yee made frantic telephone calls to find places for the newcomers to stay in schools, public buildings, and churches because the dorms and city’s hotels were full.

If Roylance knew that Gilmore had been in Ellensburg earlier in the week and had already been arranging for housing for the Blue and White coalition members, she did not mention it to Yee.87 This detail might have eased Yee’s perspective a bit, if she had known earlier. On Friday, when the IWY registration lines were overwhelmed and had to be shut down only twenty minutes after they had been opened, the relationship between the two factions deteriorated further. Hours later, crowds of conservative women and men still milled about, attempting to register. Across campus Dr. James Brooks, President of Central Washington University, told seated delegates that if the Nicholson Pavilion’s capacity of 4300 were exceeded, the late registrants would not be seated. That was not necessary, however.

At least some of the Saturday workshops ran smoothly. For example, one resolution on child care managed to gain consensus by adding a clause recognizing homemakers. On the other hand, those focused on controversial topics made little headway. For example, 116 curious Blue and White members stacked the lesbian rights workshop, leaving room for only four ERA activists. Perhaps the antis were so successful in that workshop, because the worried pros were meeting informally around the pavilion, planning how they might maximize their ability to control the vote for delegates to the upcoming national IWY event scheduled for Houston.

The conference organizers had been observing other IWY events across the nation, and did try some ideas they got from those events. For example, they tried to

stack the ERA workshop, similar to how feminists at the Arizona IWY had done. They failed, however, to pay enough attention to the problems that had surfaced during the Utah IWY, which had been swamped by unregistered Mormons, and an attendance of 14,000.88

During the plenary session on Sunday some pro ERA supporters had planned to deliberately try to delay votes in order to protect the ERA, sixth on the docket. The effort was unnecessary, however. Delegates discussed the first resolution three hours. Susan Roylance recalled that she had tried to submit a prepared set of resolutions on behalf of the Blue and White, but she had not been allowed to do so.89 Committee members later said that she had submitted the printed list as an amendment to the “disabled women’s policy statement” and the chair had ruled her out of order. Roylance, however, thought the move had been a deliberate effort to shut out conservatives. Frustrated, she responded by advising the Blue and White members to vote no.90 By the 5th recommendation the conservative vote was strong enough to prevent passage of the resolution on education.91

The Ellensburg IWY ended on the afternoon of July 10 with only six of its 23 resolutions voted on, and only four passed. The Equal Rights Amendment, slated sixth on the list of recommendations had not been voted on. With only 40 minutes left in the session, the battling factions joined forces just long enough to suspend the rules and jump from number five to number 21, the resolution on Ethnic Women of Color. It had been

88 For a discussion of Utah women, the Mormon Church and IWY see Martha Sontag Bradley, Pedestals & Podiums: Utah Women, Religious Authority and Equal Rights, (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005.)
loaded with endorsements for a number of related items including the right to work, affirmative action, and the ERA.\textsuperscript{92} Members of the Blue and White tried to amend the resolution to exclude the ERA and other items they believed inappropriate, but had been ruled out of order. When the vote was called, conservatives mustered enough votes to reject the resolution. Thus, Washington women voted no against the minority slate. And the day ended without a resolution supporting the ERA.

Deborah McBride, a writer for the\textit{Spokesman-Review}, described the event as a “fiasco.”\textsuperscript{93} Conference participants, she said, had been “forced into meaningless debates,” over unisex restrooms and whether married women should be expected to take jobs outside the home. Others were more optimistic. A smiling Donna Hanson, a Spokane club woman who had chaired the child care workshop and had maintained a neutral position at the conference, said the IWY had been one of the “most meaningful experiences in her 36 years.”\textsuperscript{94} She felt especially gratified that it had brought women together to talk and she treasured the successful resolutions passed: Those advocating women’s economic independence; equal employment; promoting women’s health, and child care. Hanson’s evaluation sounded similar to Susan Roylance’s post-conference analysis.

Although not an official delegate, Roylance went to Houston as an observer to the National IWY Conference. While there, she proudly wore her IWY button, in celebration of the resolutions that Washington women had passed. But when this leader of conservative women went into the Stop ERA Newsroom in Houston, she encountered

\textsuperscript{92} See “Minority Resolution,” Recommendations of the Washington State International Women’s Year Conference, \url{http://Digital.lib.cwu.edu/collect/1977wome/index/assoc/HASH}
unspoken hostility. Phyllis Schlafly, who was presiding over the newsroom, assumed incorrectly that the newcomer was in favor of the ERA. Roylance remembered the moment thirty years later, explaining that Schlafly glared at her, “a feeling of hate” in her eyes.95

During the Washington IWY she had helped to pass resolutions on behalf of women in the state, and had been a leader in the fight to give conservative women a voice. In doing so, Roylance enjoyed a considerable measure of personal political gain. For example, in the six weeks following Ellensburg, she, Delores Glessner, and to a lesser extent Delores Gilmore, had helped to facilitate a signature drive among Washington voters. She would go on to be active in local and national politics for many years.

Roylance had been offended when Gisela Taber, the state Women’s Council Director, had asserted that the anti delegation to Ellensburg represented the “minority opinion.” On August 16 Roylance, irritated that the Women’s Council was using state tax dollars to promote a feminist agenda, told reporters in Spokane that the Ellensburg IWY helped educate conservative women in Washington on the issues, and had made it possible to organize large numbers of antifeminists.96 They were working, she announced, to give Washington voters the opportunity to vote on the Women’s Council, and thus make a statement about the feminist movement.

To do this, the conservative women were taking advantage of a Washington State Constitutional provision which delayed legislation from becoming law for 90 days after it

---

was passed. According to a state provision, voters who filed at least 61,856 signatures could get a referendum petition placed on the ballot, requiring that a law be put into suspense until after voters could decide on the legislation’s ultimate fate. This meant that although, state lawmakers had approved making the Women’s Council a statutory agency in June and Governor Ray had signed the bill, the measure was not slated to become law until September 21. Thus, antifeminists had six weeks after Ellensburg to collect the necessary signatures.

In the weeks preceding their September 21 deadline, the group Roylance and Glesener were working with sent out speakers, recruited helpers, and published documents in newspapers all over the state, asking voters “DO YOU WANT THE FEMINISTS (WOMEN’S LIB) TO HAVE THEIR OWN TAX-FUNDED COMMISSION?” They surpassed their goal of 70,000 signatures, turning in approximately 100,000 on September 19.

When the general election rolled around, Roylance’s side had won convincingly. Nearly 72% of voters across the state chose not to make the Women’s Council a permanent commission. People all across Eastern Washington gave large numbers to the anti side, including those in Spokane, Benton, Franklin, and Kittitas counties. Not to be outdone by the east side of the state, King County did so as well.

Referendum 40, as it had been named, was orchestrated and publicized by an openly antifeminist movement. Roylance, Dr. Skrinar and people from both sides of the state were convinced that their drive was a mandate from voters statewide against

97 Washington State Constitution, Amendment 26, article II, paragraph 41.
98 “Initiative and Referendum” Washington State Archives, Olympia.
99 For example of one that appeared in Eastern Washington, see the Yakima Herald-Republic, September 13, 1977.
100 Voting information for this paper came from http://www.secstate.wa.gov/elections/
feminism. Roylance later explained why she thought they had been successful. “... quite frankly, we would never have been able to get the signatures if it hadn’t been for the IWY conference.”\textsuperscript{101}

And yet, Referendum 40 was not as representative of the electorate of Washington as one might assume. True, Roylance and her associates had convinced 100,000 people to sign their antifeminist petition, but Washington voters were not as clearly antifeminist as it seemed. For example, eight members of the League of Women Voters discussed the Women’s Council’s future with Governor Ray in early 1979. They discussed a poll commissioned by feminists, showing that only 22\% of Washington’s electorate could be described as antifeminist. 34\% of the vote had been anti-government bureaucracy, and another 27\% expressed a lack of knowledge about what the Women’s Council did, and an unusually high number of voters, 7.2\%, abstained from voting on the measure. Finally, they argued, voter turnout for the November 1977 election, at 52.4\% of registered voters was the smallest of the decade. Therefore, the vote on Referendum 40 was not so large that could be considered a mandate from the people against the Women’s Council.\textsuperscript{102} It was, nevertheless, a difficult position that feminists found themselves in.

The antifeminist movement did gain supporters following the Washington IWY. Only months before it, efforts against the ERA had been less definitive. For example, on April 8, 1977, Kennewick Representative, Claude Oliver had failed to push through HJR


65, requiring House members to rescind their ratification of the national ERA.103 Two days later, Dolores Glesener also of Kennewick, was in Spokane, working to blanket the state with petitions for an initiative letting voters push for rescission.104 Once again the antis’ efforts fell short of the signatures they needed. She was, however, laying groundwork, that would prove important in the movement against the Women’s Council.

At the same time, the antifeminist pressure was great enough before the Ellensburg IWY for local feminists to recognize that their political interests were being challenged. When a legislative attempt to make the State Women’s Council permanent stalled in a committee, the Spokane NOW newsletter urged their readers to quickly call a hotline or write to their legislators. The stakes were high, the feminists predicted, “If this doesn’t happen in a week, we’ll lose the State Women’s Council.”

Following the Ellensburg IWY Conference, the stakes were higher. In August the antifeminist move toward Referendum 40 was in full swing. On the 16th, for example, Susan Roylance was collecting signatures in Spokane, and recruiting members for a newly established organization entitled, Women for Integrity in the Nation, (WIN.) She was working to pull together a statewide coalition of voters, hoping to turn the question about the Women’s Council into a referendum on feminism. She told reporters that Spokane was the last city on the East side of the state to be organized, then proceeded to see that it was done. In a three-hour-meeting she helped select an area chair of WIN, Helen Treffrey, the same woman who had facilitated Glesener’s local signature drive two

months earlier. She oversaw the election of eleven other women from the greater Spokane area and Pullman, to serve as helpers to Treffrey.105

In October Roylance met with other antifeminists in Ellensburg and joined The Umbrella Group, (TUG), orchestrated by the Richland resident Richard Evans.106 Designed to provide antifeminists throughout the state with a way to network among themselves, the event also provided information for local antis to join nationwide antifeminist groups. For example, one speaker, Oklahoma’s Diane Edmondson, urged the 400 “concerned citizens” in attendance to join Phyllis Schlafly, the nationally known antifeminist activist, in her newly founded conservative group, entitled Eagle Forum.107

Clearly, the antifeminist movement was spreading beyond the locale of Eastern Washington, with its antis joining likeminded voters across the state and beyond. Being the self-professed “pro family” group, they only had to convince voters that conservative women represented true womanhood. For example, Edmondson told TUG members the ERA was “a fraud.” She went on to explain that “Many feminists are anti-American; anti-man. . . . Their ideas don’t represent what the rest of us want.”108

Washington’s antifeminist movement corresponded with a conservative political trend that was gaining ground across the nation in the last years of the decade. Although they were not acquainted during the period, Susan Roylance and Phyllis Schlafly both enjoyed political careers founded on their personal opposition to feminism. Moreover,

---

the fight that pitted women against women in the national discussion that evolved around the Equal Rights Amendment, was visible in Washington, especially so in the weeks following the Ellensburg IWY. Many of their arguments hinged upon the same ideas that were surfacing in local debates about women’s equality all over the nation. For example, naming their group Women for Integrity, the conservative women were claiming the intellectual high ground for themselves. They talked as if they were the only moral ones; the self-appointed keepers of motherhood; and intimated that they were the only church goers. Taking such a stance enabled them to quickly recruit supporters, and make their opponents appear unethical.

This was not so unusual during political campaigns, but the pros had difficulty countering it. Deborah McBride, a self-described moderate and reporter for the Spokesman-Review, explained the problem, “Such claims compromised the beliefs of the Christian mothers who did support the ERA.” This situation was so troubling to McBride, that she described what happened at Ellensburg as a “horrible religious war.”

McBride was correct in asserting that there were Christians among the pro ERA activists. Marion Moos, owner of the Past-Time Feminist Bookstore in Spokane and organizer for ERA, was a Methodist at the time and a life-long activist. Sister Bea Farrel, a Catholic, chaired the Spokane ERA coalition, known as the Friends of Equal Rights, was a member of NOW, and was a candidate to go to the Houston IWY as a delegate from the state. Dr. Edward Lindamen, President of the Presbyterian-affiliated Whitworth College, had co-chaired the ERA coalition early in the decade. And in June 1977, the Reverend Dr. William Harper Houff, of the Spokane Unitarian Church publicly

endorsed the ERA at a rally in Spokane’s Riverfront Park. Clearly, members of the pro ERA coalition endorsed moral values, and represented a variety of churches. In terms of getting their message to the public in Eastern Washington, however, the pro forces were unable to fully counter the anti’s claims to possessing the moral high ground.

Advocates of the ERA were more diverse racially than their opponents. This had become the most evident during the plenary session at Ellensburg, when two white antis had stood to vote for the minority resolution, even though Roylance had recommended that the Blue and White group remain sitting. Pandemonium followed for several minutes, when two African American pros quickly went over to the dissenting white women and gave them big hugs.

As the previous example illustrates, the antis were more complex than their opponents understood. Many pros in Washington believed the opposition was all Mormon. This was partly because Susan Roylance had played a prominent role at the IWY, functioning as the only designated “floor leader,” during the plenary session, while the feminists represented themselves. But activists on both sides of the ERA question estimated that approximately two-thirds of the 2000+ anti ERA delegation were Mormon.

A number of Mormon women were there because male church authorities had sent letters to relief societies urging women in local wards to attend IWY. The male

leadership instructed the women to “oppose actions that were radical, sexually explicit, or detrimental to the family.” Rumors about the Mormon role in Ellensburg’s IWY had begun as early as July 7. And the people who spread them had many misperceptions. For example, Deborah McBride asserted that the 2000 antis were Mormon and she further assumed that all of those were polygamist. But members of the LDS church did not make up the entire coalition of antis, and the vast majority of members of the Blue and White represented traditional families, with one husband and wife, plus children. The conservative forces were more complex than their opponents assumed, nonetheless. There were conservatives who attended Ellensburg who were not under the auspices of the Blue and White coalition. For example, Midge Sartain, a Catholic member of NOW from Seattle, told Roylance that she had walked into a side room where a man was instructing a group of Mormon women how to maintain the microphone, and telling them to sing or chant during discussions they disagreed with. Roylance curtly interrupted Sartain with an answer that reflected the complexity of the antis as well as that of the Mormons, “That is a faction. I have no control over that.”

In that quick statement, Roylance admitted that there may well have been groups of Mormons at the conference, directed by men. Their presence in Ellensburg may


explain why Roylance has maintained in the years since the Washington IWY that she had told the Mormon men *she knew* to sit in the back.\(^{119}\) She was clearly trying to position herself, and the Blue and White Coalition, as a moderate in contrast with the more extreme antis.

Furthermore, however well represented Mormons were in Ellensburg, the unified anti movement that swept into the conference on such short notice had close ties to Dolores Gilmore, a Catholic and former civil rights activist. As president of a Christian organization with chapters around the state, she had simply gotten on the phone in the days leading up to the conference and invited representatives of Citizens for Youth to attend IWY. In addition, Gilmore invited LaRaine Job, a Lutheran, Kathy Potter, a Baptist, and one Mormon, Susan Roylance, to join her team of anti leaders. Roylance, and Gilmore, later joined forces with the Catholic Dolores Glesener, the Kennewick resident who had been distributing anti ERA petitions in Eastern Washington prior to the conference.\(^{120}\)

Finally, one of the most persistent rumors about IWY, which still surfaces more than thirty years later, was the report that Mormon men monitored their women’s behavior at Ellensburg while stationed in large vehicles parked in the parking lot. But this study found no record that church authorities posted men in vehicles in the parking lot. The pros may have seen a blue van in the lot with men working out of it, or they may also have simply made some assumptions about a vehicle sitting in the parking area in which Delores Gilmore spent most of her time.


\(^{120}\) “They wanted to preserve families,” *Spokesman-Review*, July 22, 1977, 6.
Gilmore’s responsibility during the conference had been to orient arriving members of Citizens for Youth. She did so by establishing a temporary office in a motor home, which sat in the parking lot. She spent most of her time there while the conference was in session, going inside only to attend the lesbian workshop. 121 The rumors that there were men stationed in the parking area could have come from pros who didn’t know it was Gilmore sitting in the RV. On the other hand, if Gilmore sat in a vehicle in the parking lot and helped orient incoming antis, there could have been other organizers based in vehicles. 122

Although, IWY organizers found nothing to confirm it, rumors abounded in the days before and after the event that church authorities had tried to take over the conference, much as they had done during the Utah Conference. 123 Mormons from Eastern Washington, nevertheless, were well represented in Ellensburg. In fact, although they represented less than 2% of the state’s population, they constituted two-thirds of the anti delegation, and approximately 30% of the total attendance at the conference. 124

There were factions of that church’s leadership that clearly wanted to become a force to reckon with in Ellensburg. Although focused more broadly on a Conservative victory, Roylance herself arrived at the conference with a typed set of resolutions she

122 Martha Sonntag Bradley, Pedestals and Podiums: Utah women, Religious authority and Equal Rights, (Smith-Pettit Foundation: 2005, 231.)
123 The IWY committee did some research immediately following the conference, where they said they could not substantiate claims that Mormons tried to take over the conference. Jean Withers, Lynn Morrison, Ruth Jones, and Fredica Foster, “Did the Mormon Church organize to take over the conference?” Women of Ellensburg: Report of Washington’s International Women’s Year Conference, privately published: 1977, 33. The foremost historian on Mormon women and the ERA, Martha Sonntag Bradley says they did attempt a take-over. Martha Sonntag Bradley, Pedestals and Podiums: Utah women, Religious Authority and Equal Rights, (Smith-Pettit Foundation: 2005, 231, 472.)
124 Although Bradley has asserted otherwise, this study shows that the Blue and White group had at least a significant
planned to propose on behalf of conservative women. The relatively large numbers indicate that some of the Mormons in Washington were operating what Martha Sontag Bradley has described as an “unofficial covert campaign,” against the ERA in Utah.

Roylance later asserted that she had not recruited any attendees to IWY. She had, however, been interested in making a big statement by bringing a large contingent to the conference in Ellensburg. Moreover, Dolores Gilmore told reporters in Spokane, in the days immediately following the IWY that Roylance had been responsible for seeing that Mormons were contacted throughout the state. She used already established communications systems within the Mormon Church, and in response local church leaders encouraged members of the local Ladies Relief Societies to attend.

Neither group understood the complexity of their opponents. The pros said that all the opposition came from Mormon women who were supervised closely by Mormon men. But there were approximately 700 women who were part of the Blue and White Coalition, who were not Mormon. Equally mistaken, the antis, on the other hand, asserted that the pros had deliberately not invited conservative women to attend nor asked for their input in planning the conference.

---

126 Martha Sontag Bradley, Pedestals and Podiums: Utah women, Religious authority and Equal Rights, (Smith-Pettit Foundation: 2005, 149.)
The tide that had turned against feminism in 1977 remained viable in Eastern Washington through the end of the decade. For example, when Claude Oliver, a legislator from Kennewick, had lost his attempt to legally rescind the state’s ratification of the ERA, he joined antis from Eastern Washington looking for another way to pose a legal challenge to it. In late 1978, Spokane Attorney Michael P. Farris announced joint plans with Oliver to file a lawsuit. He argued that the U.S. Congress’s extension of the deadline for ratifying the national ERA from 1979 to 1982 was unconstitutional. Thus, the lawsuit argued, Washington’s 1973 ratification of the federal amendment had been nullified.\textsuperscript{132} Farris and his associates dropped the lawsuit in June of 1979, choosing to join a similar case that had originated in Arizona.\textsuperscript{133}

Thus conservatives in Eastern Washington finished out the decade leading voters in the state against feminism. Supporters of the status quo had won at the ballot box. The state no longer had a Women’s Council, nor has one been re-established in the intervening years.

Nevertheless, the 1970s were, both nationally and locally, a decade of remarkable women politicians. Shirley Chisholm had run for president. Washington had elected its first woman governor, Dixie Lee Ray. A variety of activists, from many different religions, of many colors, and backgrounds, living all over the state had learned political action as they worked together to gain, or fight against, legal equality for women. Washington politicians had ratified the proposed national ERA and had established an Equal Rights Amendment for the state. Late in the decade, anti-ERA activists like Susan


\textsuperscript{133} “ERA Advocate says legislators are ‘quibbling,’” \textit{Spokesman-Review}, June 21, 1979, 10.
Roylance, became political figures in their own right. Roylance enjoyed enough name recognition, that local Republicans urged her in 1978 to run for the U.S. Congress.

However, the decade did not provide an unqualified endorsement for women in politics in Eastern Washington, neither for equal legal rights. Governor Ray, although she had indicated beforehand that she would try to fund it in some way to fund it, dissolved the Women’s Council in August 1978, despite the fact that it had funding adequate for another year. In doing so she cited the 1977 results of Referendum 40, saying they were “strongly suggesting that the Women’s Council be discontinued.”

Finally in March 1982 the deadline for ratification of Federal ERA passed, with supporters of equal rights three states short of ratifying the amendment.

Yet as the 1970s closed and the 1980s began, Washington had an Equal Rights Amendment as part of its constitution. The long discussion about women’s rights had encouraged state lawmakers to change Washington’s community property laws, expand laws against discrimination to include marital status as a protected category, and work to increase the percentage of women employees in state jobs. The struggle for equal legal rights had put large numbers of women into the headlines of local papers, and had brought a wide range of women and men of many different colors, religions, and political persuasions into a discussion about women’s equality. Despite the loss of the state Women’s Council, women were playing new political roles in their hometowns, and across Washington.

135 There is a renewed movement to ratify the ERA. Senators in Washington D. C. approved it in 2007. And a movement in Florida to get the Federal ERA ratified is planning to begin again when the legislature begins in the fall of 2009. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article, see also www.now.org/issues/economic/cea/faq.html, and http://www.equalrightsamendment.org/viability.htm
House Bill, 449, which had passed in June 1977, would not have needed voter approval to become law. What put it on the ballot was the Referendum petition 40, that Dr. Kathleen Skinner and her associates filed, along with 157,000 signatures, asking to have the bill appear on the November ballot.