



Reagan tries to stop sex discrimination

by Helen Thomas

WASHINGTON — With the demise of the Equal Rights Amendment that he opposed, President Reagan is now making a major effort to wipe out some of the more blatant vestiges on sex discrimination that are on the government books.

The president has given Elizabeth Dole, his dynamic assistant for Public Liaison, the green light to organize a broad attack on sex bias and legal inequity.

Dole, who was an ERA supporter, is enthusiastic about the new battle plan and believes that she will have the support of the activist women's libbers in ridding government regulations of obvious discriminatory terminology.

She feels she has a mandate to move ahead and says there is a "quiet revolution" taking place with a "tidal wave of women coming into the work force."

"We have to sort out the problems and what needs to be addressed," she said in an interview. Furthermore, she said polls show women have "less faith... less of a certainty about our institutions... a lack of confidence about the future as they have come into the work force."

Dole has her work cut out for her in pursuing Reagan's pledge to work with the governors of the 50 states to root out discrimination against women in their statutes.

"We have to move them to corrective legislation," she said.

Dole said that she has met with "many women's groups who say we'll work with you."

She acknowledges giving her husband, Sen. Robert Dole, R-Kan., a nudge when he introduced a bill before congressional adjournment at the president's behest to sanitize 100 laws from sex bias language.

In addition, she said that the Justice Department has organized a team of 15 to 20

men and women lawyers to look into discrimination in each government agency and department.

In a letter to Senator Dole on Sept. 27, Reagan noted that last year he had issued an executive order directing the attorney general to complete review of federal laws and regulations containing language "that unjustifiably differentiates or discriminates on the basis of sex."

"I am happy to report that the first stage of that process is under way, and I fully expect that when we are finished a significant contribution will have been made toward the achievement of full equality for women before the law," Reagan said.

He said the bill Dole introduced would revise a number of statutes identified as "sex biased" in a Justice Department report last June.

"As important as this is, all of us realize that it is only one step that must be followed by many others," he said. "But in the end, I hope we will be able to say that full equality before the law is not just an ideal but a practical reality."

Dole, who holds a Harvard law degree and a Phi Beta Kappa key, said she has had two meetings with the president to discuss plans which she is certain will show "some significant movement" in the drive for female equality in the workplace.

At a news conference last July 28, White House reporter Sarah McClendon, a long and active member of the National Woman's Party, challenged Reagan to make public the Justice Department interim report on the discriminatory regulations it had turned up government-wide.

Her questioning of the president spotlighted the issue and is credited with forcing the slow moving White House to accelerate the pace of eliminating the age old inequities, many of them economic.

A new script for Ronnie

by Art Buchwald

It is no secret that Ronald Reagan works best from a script. Therefore, the other day, just before he went out on the road to campaign for Republican candidates, his writers handed him a bunch of new pages to read.

"OK, Ronnie, now here's the story line. You've been President of the United States for two years, and no matter what you've tried to solve the country's economic problems, nothing has worked. So you're ticked off because people are starting to blame you for their troubles. You're no longer going to be Mr. Nice Guy."

Ronnie studied the script. "Gosh, you really want me to say that the Democrats are responsible for the rotten mess we've been in for the last 40 years?"

"Right. But you must do it with feeling. The people have to believe that you inherited the biggest financial disaster of anybody who ever sat in the Oval Office. You've tried to do something about it but the fat Democratic spenders in Congress have stood in your way. Can you do it with feeling?"

"Gee whilkers. It's so out of character for me. What's my motivation for becoming a demagogue?"

"You're on the hot seat because the

1982 Senate and House elections are coming up, and the Democrats are laying the blame on you for a stagnant economy, high interest rates and two-digit unemployment. If you don't come out fighting, you'll lose a Republican Senate and 40 or 50 seats in the House."

"I get it. By attacking Congress, I'm still a good guy because I'm trying to save the country."

"That's the way we wrote it. Now in this scene you are talking to the people who still believe in you, but occasionally there is a heckler in the audience who starts yelling for a job while you're talking. You never get flustered by him. You say, 'Look in the want ads.'"

"I like that line."

"It never fails to get the audience on their feet."

Ronnie went over the pages. "How about this one where I say, 'The fall elections offer a clear choice about the kind of nation we will be — whether we will continue our sure and steady course to put America back on track, or whether we will slide backward into another economic binge like the one which left us with today's pounding national hangover.' That's a big mouthful for me to say."

"We'll leave it in for Richmond, Virgi-

nia. If it doesn't get a laugh we'll drop it out on your next campaign."

Ronnie kept turning the pages. "Jumping bullfrogs, I see you're blaming Washington for all our problems. Suppose they say I'm the problem now."

"Ignore what they say. We figure the best bet is to attack Jimmy Carter's mess you inherited. The way we've written it whatever you can't blame you blame on Tip O'Neill. That's the regular. Can you do it, Ronnie?"

"I'm going to try my damndest, you're sure the people will still love me."

"They'll root for you, Ronnie, the way we've written it you're the hat, and the Democrats are the hat. The more you say it, the more they believe it."

"Are all these facts in the script?"

"Don't worry about facts. If you go with conviction people will believe whether the facts are true or not. Get on your horse and let's see the cameras and see how it plays."

"QUIET ON THE SET. TAKE ONE. THE GIPPER FIGHTS BACK. EM."



the small society

by Brickman



At least a lane beats a line

by Dick West

WASHINGTON — I drove into a gasoline station the other day to fill up my car. This is not the simple process it once was.

Back when motorists had to wait in long lines to buy gas, we would jolly well lurch up to any pump that was operating with no questions asked as long as there was enough room to nestle alongside. No more.

Now motorists must make a choice not only of the type of gasoline to buy — regular or premium, leaded or unleaded, etc. — they also must decide which lane to get in.

Some lanes are self-service. Others are full service. Some are for cash only. Others are for credit card users. And this is no time for gas line roulette.

According to oil expert Dan Lundberg, gas prices may vary as much as 60 cents a gallon, depending on which pump and which lane the motorist patronizes. So it pays to know what you are doing.

On the occasion of which I speak, I wanted to buy leaded regular gas at self-service prices with a credit card. It was my first visit to this particular station and I was frankly nervous.

When I pulled up to a leaded regular pump I had spotted, an attendant ambled out of the little glassed-in cashier's cage and began removing the cap from my gas tank.

"Isn't this a self-service island?" I asked. "No, this is a full service island," the attendant replied. "The self-service lanes is the next one over."

I backed up and parked by an unleaded regular pump at the next island, but I made the mistake of approaching it from the wrong side.

Instead of getting into the self-service credit card lane, as I discovered when I went over to the glassed-in cage to pay for the gas, I had gotten into the self-service "cash only" lane.

"This is most irregular," the cashier told me when I dropped a credit card into the sunken aperture. "You are supposed to be paying cash."

"I'm terribly sorry," I apologized, "but I don't have that much cash with me."

"On the north side of the self-service island, you get a cash discount and the pumps

are calibrated to compute prices at that rate. If you paid by credit card, you would be getting a discount to which you were not entitled."

I said, "Why can't you just charge me at the credit card rate?"

"I could figure it out, I suppose, but it would be terribly complicated," the cashier said sadly, shaking his head. "The cash price already has been recorded on the pump and

any difference throws our bookkeeping tem out of kilter. I am not an accountant, know."

"OK," I confessed, "I goofed. This first visit here and I got confused. What do now? Am I supposed to siphon the gas of the car and pour it back into the tank?"

The cashier sighed a weary sigh. "That would be the best thing," he said.

Berry's World by Jim Berry



"No. Actually, I am not aghast. I heard my first Christmas commercial of the year on September 14th!"

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