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# No Permanent Waves

## Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism

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RUTGERS UNIVERSITY PRESS

## 7

## Labor Feminists and President Kennedy's Commission on Women

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Many histories of U.S. women's rights note the impact of two best-selling 1963 publications: Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* and the President's Commission on the Status of Women report, *American Women*.<sup>1</sup> Both texts called for a reassessment of women's place in society, and both helped spawn the new feminism that would erupt by the late 1960s. *The Feminine Mystique* resonated with the frustrated aspirations and seething resentment of millions of women, and its author, Betty Friedan, went on to launch the National Organization for Women (NOW) and serve as its first president. Similarly, *American Women*'s bold assertion of women's second-class citizenship and its call for widespread government action to end the "discriminations and disadvantages" that created this status also found a responsive audience.<sup>2</sup> *American Women* sold out quickly and a small but growing group of committed men and women began agitating for the implementation of its many recommendations and for the creation of commissions on the status of women in states and municipalities across the country. By January 1965, in response to the mounting political pressure, thirty-six governors had appointed commissions.<sup>3</sup> Betty Friedan herself was swept up in the new movement: it was at the Third National Conference of Commissions on the Status of Women in June 1966, sponsored by the Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor, that Friedan and others launched NOW.<sup>4</sup>

Yet despite the centrality of the President's Commission in changing attitudes, generating policy initiatives, and spurring the birth of a new women's movement, its origins remain obscure and its politics baffling.<sup>5</sup>

Why, for example, did President John F. Kennedy issue an executive order setting up a federal commission on women in December 1961, years before the rise of "women's liberation"? And how did a national document proclaiming its commitment to ending the secondary status of American women emerge in an era often seen as mired in conservative gender ideology and hostile to women's equality?

This article maintains that the origins and politics of the President's Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) can only be understood by incorporating the long and robust traditions of labor feminism into our narratives of twentieth-century women's rights. As I will detail in the rest of this essay, by the 1940s, a group of women labor reformers and their allies, a group I have termed "labor feminists,"<sup>6</sup> reached a consensus that a presidential executive order setting up a federal commission on the status of women would be a major boost to advancing their agenda, and it was their consistent and persuasive lobbying in the decades following World War II that finally resulted in the emergence of the PCSW in the early 1960s.

I consider this group of women labor reformers and their allies "feminists" because they recognized that women suffer disadvantages due to their sex and because they sought to eliminate sex-based disadvantages. I call them *labor* feminists because they looked to the labor movement as the primary vehicle through which to end the multiple inequities women confronted. Their notion of women's rights emerged in conversation with men and women in the labor movement as well as other campaigns for social justice such as the civil rights movement; it also was shaped by their involvement in transnational and international organizations and debates. *American Women* did not fully incorporate the aims or the social policies advanced by labor feminists: political compromises were necessary. Nevertheless, the labor feminist vision is evident throughout its pages.

Within a few years of its publication, *American Women* would be challenged by a new feminist sensibility with different notions of women's needs and different ideas about how to realize those needs. For many post-1960s feminists, the President's Commission and its report would come to seem conservative and even "pre-feminist." Now, almost fifty years later, it is time to reconsider *American Women*. In that spirit, the essay ends with a rereading of *American Women* that endeavors to place it in the context of its times and to see its strengths as well as its weaknesses.

### Multiple U.S. Feminisms

Ever since the word “feminism” came into common usage in the United States in the early twentieth century, there have been debates over who was and was not a feminist and what the appropriate ends and means for a movement on behalf of women should be.<sup>7</sup> That debate intensified after the passage of suffrage in 1920 when two groups of women reformers faced off against each other over how best to advance women’s equality. The historian William O’Neill called these two groups “social feminists” and “equal rights feminists” and his categories are still useful.<sup>8</sup> I also find Kathryn Kish Sklar’s term “social justice feminist” equally appropriate and will use it interchangeably with “social feminist.”<sup>9</sup>

Social feminists believed that women’s oppression stemmed from multiple sources and that a wide variety of interventions were necessary to remedy these disadvantages. The problems of class, for example, or of race, could be as serious a barrier to women’s opportunity and advancement as restrictions based on sex. Social feminists argued that “equal treatment” under the law and in practice might not always result in moving women toward “equality.” There were some sex-based distinctions, legally and socially, that were advantageous for women, particularly given women’s greater responsibilities for child and elder care. “Equal rights feminists,” on the other hand, stressed “equal treatment” under the law and, after the Nineteenth Amendment was passed in 1920, gathered their forces and single-mindedly pursued a second constitutional amendment, the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). When introduced into Congress in 1923, the ERA declared that “men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and in every place subject to its jurisdiction.”<sup>10</sup>

The political chasm between these two groups widened in 1923 and remained a yawning divide for the next half century. For one, the two groups failed to reach a compromise on the language of the ERA that would protect the body of fair labor standards legislation that Progressive era social justice feminists like Jane Addams, Florence Kelley, Rose Schneiderman, and Pauline Newman had made a priority. But equally revealing was the divide over the 1923 Supreme Court decision in *Adkins v. Children’s Hospital*, which overturned the District of Columbia minimum wage law. Social feminists were distraught, believing that without such protections the majority of women’s lives would be greatly worsened; equal rights feminists celebrated,

believing it a victory for women’s freedom and an acknowledgment of their equality with men.<sup>11</sup>

Underneath the conflicts over how to advance women’s interests lay other profound political disagreements. The “equal rights” banner was carried primarily by the National Woman’s Party (NWP). Although some working women belonged to the NWP, the majority of its members were professional women from middle-class and elite backgrounds. They also tended to be white and Republican, and their principal allies after the 1920s were Republicans and conservative Democrats as well as business groups like the Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers. Many of these allies supported the ERA because they, like the social feminists, believed it would mean the end of sex-based labor legislation.<sup>12</sup> In contrast to the NWP feminists, social feminists allied primarily with the liberal wing of the Democratic party. They disliked many of the NWP women as much for their Republican affiliation and their opposition to labor regulation as for their gender politics.<sup>13</sup> For labor feminists in particular, the “liberty of contract” doctrine that workers should have the right to contract or sell their labor without any government constraints or regulations such as minimum wage laws held little appeal. For those without capital, economic or cultural, labor feminists believed, the so-called free market was a source of exploitation and degradation as much as a realm of fulfillment and freedom.<sup>14</sup>

The NWP continued its efforts on behalf of the ERA during the so-called “doldrum years” of the post–World War II era.<sup>15</sup> So did the social feminists. The older social feminist network of separate-sex women’s organizations, loosely gathered around the U.S. Women’s Bureau, persisted and was joined by new women’s organizations like the National Council for Negro Women (NCNW), founded in 1935 by Mary McLeod Bethune, and the YWCA.<sup>16</sup> By the 1940s, however, labor feminists took the leadership reins of the social feminist movement. Both in terms of numbers and the power of the organizations they represented, they were the dominant constituency within social feminism from the 1940s to the 1960s. They brought their ties to the economic and political resources of organized labor, the largest social movement of the day, and they brought their own ideas of how to advance the status of women.<sup>17</sup>

Like earlier social feminists, labor feminists continued to oppose the ERA, believing it a threat to state sex-based labor standards laws that remained, even after the passage of the 1938 federal Fair Labor Standards Act, the primary mechanism regulating the wages and hours of many low-income

female wage earners.<sup>18</sup> At the same time, they pursued their own political agenda. Labor feminists advocated an end to sex- and race-based discriminations which they believed disadvantaged women. Yet they pointed out that ending discrimination was not enough. Many low-income women would not be able to take advantage of equal employment opportunities without additional social and economic rights and guarantees. Thus, they pressed for a wide array of positive rights and benefits—what they called “full social security”—both from the state and from employers. These included not only healthcare and pension guarantees but universal, government-funded childcare, social wages for childbearing and child rearing, and changes in workplace policies that would make it easier to combine income-earning and caregiving. They sought legislation that would raise the minimum wage and require equal pay for equal work. They also sought a fairer share of the country’s wealth and a greater political voice for working people through collective organizing and bargaining. They looked primarily to the new industrial labor movement, the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), to realize these reforms. Yet many labor feminists, African Americans as well as others, saw the civil rights movement as crucial to women’s freedom and considered the fate of workers, women, and other marginalized groups as deeply intertwined.<sup>19</sup>

### A Diverse Movement

The majority of labor feminists came from working-class and poor backgrounds, but some of the most prominent were from decidedly elite families. A generation earlier, many politically engaged college women moved into settlement house work, or joined the National Consumers’ League, or pursued a career in social welfare. But in the context of the 1930s, they gravitated toward the labor movement. By the 1940s many held union staff jobs as lobbyists and political action coordinators, as community service representatives, and as research and education directors.

Labor feminists also were racially and ethnically diverse. Many were African American: Dorothy (Dollie) Lowther Robinson of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the U.S. Women’s Bureau; Maida Springer-Kemp of the International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union and the International Affairs Division of the AFL-CIO; Gloria Johnson of the International Union of Electrical Workers; Addie Wyatt of the United Packinghouse Workers Union;

and Lillian Hatcher of the United Automobile Workers, for example. A few were Spanish-speaking such as Dolores Huerta of the Farm Workers or Luisa Moreno of the Food, Tobacco, and Agricultural Workers.

A number of labor feminists who were close to the Communist party like Luisa Moreno or Ruth Young, the first woman on the international executive board of the United Electrical Workers Union, disappeared from the national leadership by the early 1950s, due in large part to Cold War politics. But labor feminism persisted, rooted largely in the left-liberal industrial unions allied with the Democratic party.<sup>20</sup>

It would be impossible to give each of the leaders of this movement their due, but let me offer brief biographical sketches of a few of the labor feminists who figured prominently in the history of the President’s Commission. Esther Eggertsen Peterson and Katherine (Kitty) Pollak Ellickson, both from middle-class backgrounds, were among the most influential. Born in 1906 into a Republican Mormon family in Provo, Utah, Esther Peterson finished a degree at Brigham Young University before heading to New York City. She earned a master’s degree from Columbia Teachers’ College in 1930 and was soon swept up in labor and feminist politics. She taught classes for industrial workers at the YWCA and at the Bryn Mawr Summer School for Women Workers and organized multiracial locals in the South during World War II for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. In 1945, she became its first legislative representative in Washington. In 1948, when her husband, Oliver Peterson, was appointed labor attaché to Sweden, she moved her family of four abroad, continuing her trade union work in Sweden and then in Belgium where she helped found the Women’s Committee of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the forty-eight-million-member labor body set up by noncommunist unions as a rival world federation to the World Federation of Trade Unions. Upon her return in 1957, she became the AFL-CIO’s first woman Washington lobbyist. In 1960, President Kennedy tapped Peterson for director of the U.S. Women’s Bureau and then promoted her to Assistant Secretary of Labor, making her the highest-ranking woman official in his administration. It was Peterson who took on the task of convincing Kennedy to set up the Commission and it was Peterson who served as its executive vice-chair.<sup>21</sup>

Katherine Pollak Ellickson, a close friend of Peterson’s, graduated from Vassar in 1926 with a degree in economics and then did graduate work at Columbia University. When the CIO hired her into its Research Department

in 1942, Ellickson already had a decade of experience as a labor educator, speechwriter, and organizer. She stayed with the CIO Research Department during the war and moved into the AFL-CIO Research Department after the merger in 1955. In 1962, at the urging of Peterson, Ellickson took a leave from the AFL-CIO to take on the full-time job as the commission's executive secretary, coordinating its work.<sup>22</sup>

Three other labor feminists, Mary Callahan, Addie Wyatt, and Caroline Dawson Davis, all from working-class backgrounds, ended up serving on the commission along with other labor women like Bessie Hillman, cofounder of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers along with her husband, Sidney Hillman. Widowed at age nineteen with a two-year-old son in the middle of the Depression, Mary Callahan found a job at the International Resistance Company electronics plant in Philadelphia. Soon after, "for reasons of dignity," she later explained, she led her fellow workers out on a month-long strike for union recognition which also gained them the right to have the washrooms unlocked and a regular "relief period" (bathroom break). By 1946, she held the top position in her local union, a sizable organization with 85 percent female membership, and had successfully negotiated paid maternity leave and other innovative benefits. She moved on to chair the National Woman's Council of the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE) and to serve as one of two women on the IUE National Executive Board. In 1961, she accepted President Kennedy's appointment to the twenty-six-member Commission, joining college presidents, senators, corporate heads, newspaper publishers, and other powerful public figures.<sup>23</sup>

Addie Wyatt and Caroline Dawson Davis did not serve on the Commission itself but on one of the seven advisory committees to the Commission: Wyatt sat on the Committee on Protective Labor Legislation, Davis on the Committee on Private Employment. Hired in 1941 at Armour's meat-packing plant in Chicago, Mississippi-born Addie Wyatt, like many African American women, had her first encounter with trade unionism during the war. It was not long before she filed her first grievance. The foreman had given her job to a newly hired white woman and reassigned her to a worse position on the "stew line." "I was very angry, and as I always did when there was something I didn't think was right, I spoke out." When the issue could not be resolved with the foreman, Wyatt and her union representative, a black woman steward, marched over to the plant superintendent's office. "What effect," Wyatt remembered thinking, could "two black women have talking to the two

white, superior officers in the plant?" To her amazement, they won. Just as surprising was the union response when she got pregnant. The steward explained the union's maternity clause: Wyatt could take up to a year off and her job would be held for her. "I didn't really believe them. But I thought I'd try it, and I did get my job back." By the early 1950s, her local (United Packinghouse Workers of America, Local 437), the majority of whose members were white men, elected her vice-president. Later, she took over the presidency of the local and ran successfully for the national union's executive board on a platform emphasizing women's rights and the advancement of racial minorities. In 1954, she was appointed to the national union staff as the first black woman national representative, a position she held for the next thirty years.<sup>24</sup>

Caroline Dawson Davis, who directed the influential Women's Department of the United Auto Workers (UAW) from 1948 until her retirement in 1973, grew up in a poor white Kentucky mining family steeped in religion and unionism. In 1934, she got a job as a drill press operator in the same Indiana auto parts plant that hired her father. Caroline Davis had a strong antiauthoritarian streak, and like Addie Wyatt, had a bad habit of stepping in to stand up for anyone being mistreated. Both these traits propelled her toward union activity. "The worst thing about a job to me was authority," Davis once explained. "I loved people," she continued, and "I believed in people. I never saw the difference between someone who had a title and a lot of money, and Joe Doe and Jane Doe who swept floors and dug ditches." Thirty-year-old Davis helped organize her plant in 1941, was elected vice-president of UAW Local 764 in 1943, and shortly thereafter, "moved upstairs when the union president was drafted." By 1948, Davis had taken over the reins of the UAW Women's Department. A year earlier, *Life* magazine ran a feature story on "the strikingly attractive lady labor leader," accompanied by a four-page photo spread of Davis. In one photo, Davis lounges at home reading Freud, a thinker whose ideas, she explained to the interviewer, proved indispensable to running her local union. "If I hadn't been a union leader," Davis added, "I would have been a psychiatrist."<sup>25</sup>

### The Global Origins of the President's Commission on Women

It is no accident that U.S. labor women began contemplating a domestic commission on the status of women in 1946 and introduced the "Women's

Status Bill," the labor feminist alternative to the NWP's Equal Rights Bill, a year later. U.S. labor women found the language of "status," a concept employed among feminists worldwide by the 1940s, helpful in their own domestic policy campaigns and they adopted it. Like many women reformers around the world, they were influenced by the global debates on women's status that had taken place in such forums as the Pan-American Union and the League of Nations in the 1920s and 1930s. These then burst forth again, with pent-up intensity, after World War II, culminating in the establishment of the United Nations (U.N.) Commission on the Status of Women in 1946.

Before World War II, U.S. and non-U.S. feminists in both the Pan-American Union and the League of Nations called for commissions on the status of women. Doris Stevens, who from 1928 to 1939 chaired the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), a branch of the Pan-American Union, and other feminists associated with the NWP emphasized the need for a study of the legal and civic status of women on a country by country basis. They hoped that such studies would lead individual countries to pass an "Equal Rights Treaty" committing them to the eradication of sex-based differential treatment of men and women. U.S. Women's Bureau director Mary Anderson, a former shoe worker, union official, and Women's Trade Union League leader, lobbied against the NWP's Equal Rights Treaty in the CIM and in the League of Nations. She, along with other labor feminists, feared that such a treaty would eliminate the large body of labor standards and worker rights that by the 1930s existed not only as national and subnational law but as international policy through the International Labor Organization (ILO), the body set up by the League of Nations in 1919 to formulate international labor standards.<sup>26</sup>

Labor feminists, however, did support international efforts to establish women's status commissions when such initiatives called for investigations into the status of women without committing nations to "equal treatment" of the sexes in their laws and policies. Labor feminists favored broad-based studies focusing on the economic and social status of women as well as their political and civil rights. Pre-World War II feminist agitation for women's status investigations culminated in 1937 when the assembly of the League of Nations approved a proposal (presented by Sweden's Kerstin Hesselgren, a factory inspector who two years later became the first woman to preside over the Swedish Parliament) for a committee to study the status of women

worldwide.<sup>27</sup> Hesselgren and Anderson had close ties throughout this period, due to their shared Swedish heritage and to Anderson's own international work with the ILO and the League.<sup>28</sup>

With the dissolution of the League of Nations in the aftermath of World War II, efforts to advance the study of women's status through national and regional commissions continued under the aegis of the U.N., the League's successor.<sup>29</sup> Labor feminist Frieda S. Miller, who took over from Mary Anderson as director of the Women's Bureau in 1944, was intimately involved in these international initiatives in the 1940s and 1950s, and their influence on her and other U.S. women reformers of the time was substantial.

Miller first found her internationalist sea legs in 1923 when she attended, along with her life-long partner veteran labor organizer and labor journalist Pauline Newman, the third conference of the International Federation of Working Women (IFWW) in Vienna. The IFWW dissolved soon after, but many of its members, including Anderson, Miller, and Hesselgren, turned to other venues like the League of Nations in search of mechanisms to raise women's global economic and social status. Miller served as an official U.S. delegate to the League's ILO gatherings in 1935, 1936, 1938, and 1941, for example, and in 1946, she chaired the ILO Constitutional Committee charged with, among other items, ensuring the ILO's transition into the U.N. and coordinating its work with the newly established U.N. Commission on the Status of Women.<sup>30</sup>

Miller brought back insights from her ILO and U.N. activities into her domestic work and shared them with the labor feminist network she had gathered around the U.S. Women's Bureau. In 1945, Miller set up the "Women's Bureau Labor Advisory Committee," which served for the next decade as a policy think tank for top women in the labor movement. It included, among others, Esther Peterson and Dollie Robinson of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers; Kitty Ellickson of the CIO Research Department; Caroline Davis and Lillian Hatcher from the United Auto Workers; Ruth Young of the United Electrical Workers; and Pauline Newman of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. Out of these meetings sprang not only the Equal Pay Act, introduced for the first time in 1945, but also the "Women's Status Bill," introduced into both houses for the first time on February 17, 1947, and reintroduced every year until 1954. At the "heart of the bill," Frieda Miller explained, was a recommendation for a presidential commission on the status of women.<sup>31</sup>

### The Two Equal Rights Bills

The "Women Status Bill," as Cynthia Harrison points out, was "a way to meet the threat of the ERA."<sup>32</sup> By 1946, the ERA was ready for a vote in both houses, having been favorably reported out of committee for the first time since its introduction in the early 1920s. But the labor feminists who supported the "Women's Status Bill" had more on their minds than simply stopping the ERA. They were pursuing a comprehensive and ambitious reform agenda to raise women's status on multiple fronts.

The Women's Status bill called for a nine-member commission appointed by the President which would investigate and review "the economic, civil, social, and political status of women, and the nature and extent of discriminations based on sex throughout the United States, its Territories, and possessions." According to the bill's preamble, the commission and its subsequent report were needed to eliminate "statutes, regulations, rules, and governmental practices which discriminate unfairly on the basis of sex" and to bring the United States "into harmony" with the principles of the U.N.'s 1945 Charter "promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinctions as to . . . sex."<sup>33</sup> Proponents of the bill, echoing the preamble's sentiments, often cited their desire to end unfair discrimination against women and spoke of the U.S. commission as a necessary domestic analog to the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women. As Frieda Miller explained in her 1948 congressional testimony on behalf of the bill, the U.S. commission will "enrich and expand the information on the status of women which is being prepared for the United Nations." Without such a commission, she warned, the United States might be embarrassed in front of the international community. A "comparative study is being planned by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women," she reminded her audience, "and women in the United States are eager that American experience be presented as fully as possible for the United Nations use."<sup>34</sup>

Esther Peterson and Kitty Ellickson were particularly strong advocates for a U.S. commission when it was discussed in the U.S. Women's Bureau Labor Advisory Committee meetings. They and other labor feminists were influenced by Miller, who urged her committee to link their domestic reforms to the global conversation and frame the U.S. commission as a part of the U.N.-sponsored efforts to map the global status of women.<sup>35</sup> They also

found the President's Committee on Civil Rights, established by President Harry Truman's executive order in December 1946, and its pending report, "To Secure These Rights," which appeared in 1947, a useful precedent and model. The report, "a clarion call to wipe out racial injustice," according to civil rights historian Steven F. Lawson, provided a "comprehensive blueprint for achieving first-class citizenship" for all and set "the federal government's agenda on civil rights" for years to come. Although many of its recommendations were not enacted until the 1960s, the report was an important national acknowledgment of the race problem and the need for government intervention to help solve it. The labor feminists behind the Women's Status Bill hoped for a similar report that would stir the nation and inaugurate a national debate over the status of women.<sup>36</sup>

The Women's Status Bill and its proponents are rarely mentioned in histories of women's rights in the postwar era. It is the bill labor feminists opposed, the ERA, which is seen as carrying the banner of feminism. Yet the actual congressional debates reveal a surprising degree of unanimity among NWP and labor feminists on many issues. Both groups believed that the law discriminated against women on the basis of sex, that such discriminations should be eliminated, and that the ultimate goal was equality between the sexes. As Frieda Miller remarked, "Everyone is for equality for women"; what is not clear is "what in fact would provide equality for the great majority of women."<sup>37</sup> Both sides also agreed that it was unclear what, if any, biological distinctions existed between the sexes, except for pregnancy and childbirth, and that the law should accommodate these differences in some fashion.

The angriest exchanges were often over political differences having little to do with gender. Emma Guffey Miller, the congressional chairman of the National Woman's Party, opened her congressional testimony on behalf of the ERA in March 1948 by attacking her opponents as "Communists," as "professional welfare workers," as "lady bountifuls," and as dupes of "certain labor leaders" who "fear that women may take their jobs." Pauline Newman and other labor feminists responded in kind, charging those who proposed this "so-called ERA" with being "selfish careerists" who were "numerically insignificant, industrially inexperienced, economically unsound, and intellectually confused."<sup>38</sup>

Most of the more reasoned debate centered not on gender per se but on labor standards laws—specifically the woman-only state laws that still existed

in virtually every state in 1948—and whether the ERA would eliminate these laws and whether this loss would be a good thing. Labor feminists and their allies—women such as Helen Gahagan Douglas, Democratic congresswoman from California, and Mary Norton, Democratic congresswoman from New Jersey—feared the ERA would remove all such laws. Instead, they proposed that the sex-based laws be evaluated on a case-by-case basis—an approach that came to be known as “specific bills for specific ills.” The laws deemed harmful to women would be removed; those deemed beneficial would be retained or amended to cover men. The presidential commission they sought would evaluate laws on a case-by-case basis and consider the broader questions of women’s economic and social equality. As Peterson explained in a January 1947 meeting of the labor advisory group, the commission could list the “distinctions that should be kept, those that should not, and those in the middle ground.”<sup>39</sup>

By the mid-1950s, political pressure for the Women’s Status Bill, including its clause proposing a President’s Commission on the Status of Women, subsided among labor feminists. With the return of a Republican to the White House, labor feminists and their allies turned their attention to state and local politics and to more specifically targeted federal initiatives such as the Equal Pay for Equal Work Bill and tax policies to better support childcare and mothering. Labor feminists, many of whom were women of color, also became increasingly involved in the civil rights movement and in pushing their labor unions to end race discrimination in the workplace and to take a stand against Jim Crow in all its forms.

### Establishing the Commission

With the election of Democrat John F. Kennedy to the presidency in 1960 many believed a new day was dawning. Esther Peterson, an early supporter of Kennedy and a friend of his from her Washington lobbying days with the AFL-CIO, had set up a Women for Kennedy National Committee in 1959, helping elect Kennedy in an extremely close vote. She accepted Kennedy’s appointment as director of the U.S. Women’s Bureau and immediately went to work strategizing about how the long-stymied labor feminist agenda from the 1940s could be enacted. She quickly revived the idea of a presidential commission on women. Within two months of Kennedy’s inaugural speech in January 1961, Peterson met with trade union women and convinced a small

committee, including Dollie Robinson and Kitty Ellickson, to begin drafting a proposal for a presidential commission. Before approaching Kennedy, Peterson lined up Secretary of Labor Arthur Goldberg, a former labor counsel to the Steelworkers and the CIO and an old friend of Peterson, and other governmental officials and made sure she had the support of her base: women in labor organizations, in the Democratic party, and in the social feminist Women’s Bureau network. President Kennedy was closer politically and socially to labor feminists than to the equal rights feminists gathered under the banner of the NWP, and may have preferred establishing a commission to pushing for the passage of the ERA. Yet in agreeing to set up the commission, Kennedy also was responding to pressure from labor feminists and their allies.

Peterson proposed the commission on women to Secretary Goldberg in June, noting that it would “help women move to full partnership and genuine equality of opportunity” and “substitute constructive recommendation for the futile agitation about the ERA.” It would also make suggestions on “adopting protective laws to changing conditions,” on “new and expanded services required for women as workers, wives, and mothers,” and other topics. Having secured Goldberg’s blessing, Peterson now convinced Ellickson to take a leave from her job at the AFL-CIO and devote herself full-time to the commission. Ellickson agreed, and in consultation with Peterson, Goldberg, trade union women, and Women’s Bureau staff, she prepared a background paper detailing the rationale for the commission.<sup>40</sup>

In early December, Goldberg wrote President Kennedy to secure his support, relying on language drawn almost word for word from Ellickson’s draft proposal. Kennedy agreed, signing Executive Order 10980 establishing the President’s Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) on December 14, 1961. Peterson asked that Eleanor Roosevelt be appointed chair, a largely honorific position, and that Kitty Ellickson be made the executive secretary, a key administrative appointment responsible for coordinating the work of the commission and its many committees and helping draft committee and commission reports. Peterson acted as executive vice-chair and took the lead in appointing the twenty-six commissioners (eleven men and fifteen women) and the dozens of others who joined the PCSW’s subcommittees and consultations. She insisted that the PCSW be bipartisan and that it include high-level government officials as well as prominent public men and women from business, labor, and the university sector. On the commission itself sat



IUE's Mary Callahan, National Council for Negro Women president Dorothy Height, AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer William Schnitzler, Congresswoman Edith Green, Radcliffe College president Mary Bunting, Senator Maurine Neuberger, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, historian Caroline R. Ware, New School for Social Research president Henry David, *Ladies' Home Journal* public affairs editor Margaret Hickey, and others. Peterson selected Princeton University economics professor Richard Lester as the commission's vice-chair. The seven subcommittees and four consultations advising the commission had a similar mix of appointees, including trade union women Caroline Davis, Addie Wyatt, Bessie Hillman, civil rights activist and lawyer Pauli Murray, IUE President James Carey, Mary Dublin Keyserling, who would move into the U.S. Women's Bureau directorship in 1964, and dozens of others.<sup>41</sup>

### The Labor Feminist Agenda and *American Women*

Given the large and diverse constituency of the PCSW, its final report, *American Women*, was not simply a restatement of the longstanding agenda of labor feminism: other political perspectives were represented. Auto worker leader Caroline Davis, for example, who served on the Committee on Private Employment, felt the commission had been unduly swayed by employer arguments against government regulation. Davis urged tough new government policies forbidding sex discrimination that would cover *all* employers in the private sector. The Commission, however, ended up recommending an executive order favoring "equal opportunity for women" that covered *only* a small minority of employers: those with federal contracts. The majority of employers were asked by the commission to initiate *voluntary* equal opportunity policies and "to examine individual qualifications rather than accept general attitudes when hiring women."<sup>42</sup>

Similarly, labor feminists Addie Wyatt, Bessie Hillman, and Mary Callahan, all on the Committee on Protective Labor Legislation, were dismayed when some of their recommendations were rebuffed by the commission. The commission agreed with the committee that woman-only state maximum hour laws should be "maintained, strengthened, and expanded" until other provisions were in place. But the commission *rejected* its proposal that the woman-only maximum hour laws, many of which offered *better* health and safety protection and set *mandatory* limits on work time, be used

as the model for all workers. Instead, the commission favored the weaker Fair Labor Standards Act model, which eschewed mandatory hour limits and relied solely on the disincentive of "premium pay" for overtime as a "deterrent" to "excessive hours." This defeat arguably is part of the reason why work hours in the United States are among the longest in the industrial world.<sup>43</sup>

Nevertheless, because of Peterson's influence as executive vice-chair and the involvement of many other labor feminists, the priorities of the commission and many of its key policy recommendations reflect those animating the postwar labor feminist wing of the women's movement. The commission, for example, assumed that "women work in home and out for income and self-fulfillment," and its aim was dual: to open up opportunities for women in the market sphere and to enhance women's satisfaction in non-market endeavors. The report held that these changes, "long overdue," would not come about without societal and government action. The problems women faced were structural and social, not private and individual. "Full equality of rights" had been denied women: employers, unions, and the government had an obligation to rectify that situation.<sup>44</sup>

Later characterized by Peterson as an exercise in "the art of the possible," the report's recommendations provoked criticism when first released and continue to remain controversial. Yet set in the context of its time, *American Women* was a far-reaching document that condemned sex discrimination and offered a concrete set of recommendations aimed at achieving gender equality. The PCSW did not endorse the ERA, deftly sidestepping the issue by relying on Pauli Murray's contention that equality of rights under the law could be advanced through the Fourteenth Amendment and thus, the ERA, "need not now be sought." But it did assume that there were problems women faced because they were *women*, a view not widely shared at the time, and it called unequivocally for the right to employment for all women. This right, the commission pointed out, could only be achieved by eliminating the particular barriers faced by low-income women and mothers and by ending discrimination against "nonwhite" and other minority women.<sup>45</sup>

Ironically, the few contemporary commentators who took the report seriously—much of the popular media treatment was "humorous, condescending or tinged with sexual undertones," according to Ellickson<sup>46</sup>—often saw it as undermining the very behavior some later critics claimed it

reinforced. By affirming women's right to employment, contemporary commentators, with few exceptions, worried that *American Women* encouraged women to abandon their home responsibilities. In contrast, later criticism faulted the commission for paying too much attention to the needs of mothers and homemakers and not enough to women's employment rights. The commission's concern for women's family responsibilities and for helping them meet the multiple demands of home, community, and the economy was viewed as undermining women's claim to paid careers and to employment equity.<sup>47</sup>

The report, however, was optimistic that the long list of concrete interventions they urged would not only help reconcile market work and family life but would move all women toward first-class economic citizenship. The commission sought greater respect for women's nonmarket work and "more attention to the services needed for home and community life." Specific recommendations included income guarantees for pregnant and unemployed women, childcare services for women "whether they were working outside the home or not," better tax policies for families raising children, and changes in the Social Security system that would allow housewives to build up equity as if they were earning wages. *American Women* favored opening up educational and training opportunities so that women could move into jobs traditionally held by men. At the same time, the commission recognized the need to upgrade the conditions in what labor feminists called the "woman-employing occupations," where the vast majority of women worked. As part of that effort, the commission endorsed raising minimum wages, expanding the number of jobs covered by labor laws, ending sex-based wage discrimination, and passing "equal pay for comparable work" legislation, long a labor feminist priority. Finally, the commission favored a firm governmental commitment to the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively and to programs increasing women's political and civic leadership.<sup>48</sup>

In contrast to the women's movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, the commission emphasized reaching equality through revaluing the work women did rather than pulling down the walls separating men and women's jobs or rethinking the gendered division of labor. The Committee on Protective Labor Law, heavily weighted toward labor women, did question conventional notions of masculinity by arguing that many of the stronger labor rights and protections women enjoyed under state law, such as limits

on involuntary overtime and shorter hours, should be extended to men. In so doing, they were unmasking the myth of male power in the marketplace, that is, the gendered *assumption* that men, unlike women, did not need protection from market forces. Yet the commission rejected this recommendation in part because no one challenged masculinity in the home: it was agreed that men, unlike women, had only a limited capacity to nurture and that their nature prevented them from taking a primary role in the home. Nor did anyone argue that men ought to have *more* domestic duties and that limiting men's work time would open up that possibility.<sup>49</sup> Such a wholesale assault on the gender division of labor and on notions of masculinity and femininity would not emerge until later. But that assault was made possible by the work of earlier feminists.

### An Unfinished Agenda

In 1973, Kitty Ellickson wrote her own history of the President's Commission on the Status of Women. Now in her sixties and in semi-retirement, she had time to reflect, ten years later, on its limits as well as its achievements. In a remarkably charitable spirit, Ellickson welcomed the new feminism that had swept her generation's work aside. She described it "as a different wave in the long struggle for women's equality." And although it was "more representative of professional and upper middle-class groups than the larger number of wage workers," it reflected "the desire of young women to find their identity, [to have] control over their own bodies, and overcome the many discriminations the PCSW by its very nature could not handle." She listed these as "the psychological aspects of discrimination, abortion, and the sharing of household tasks." Yet the PCSW agenda, she continued to believe, still best represented the needs of wage-earning women.<sup>50</sup>

Today, in 2009, the problems of low-wage women and the difficulties of combining income-earning and caregiving, two central concerns of labor feminists, seem more pressing than ever. Indeed, class inequalities among women as well as men have soared to levels not known since before the New Deal, producing extremes of ostentatious wealth and grinding poverty. The economic situation for many women, particularly for women of color and for single heads-of-household, is worsening. Forty-seven percent of the nation's wage and salary workforce is now female, but many of these women continue to be relegated to the lowest-paid, least prestigious jobs. A whopping

90 percent of those earning less than \$15,000 annually and over two-thirds of those making under \$25,000 are women.<sup>51</sup>

To make matters worse, although many men of all classes engage in caring labor at home and in their communities, the rise of female-headed families and the aging of the population have resulted in increased numbers of women caring for children and elderly relatives with little help from men, financially or emotionally. The highly touted family-friendly workplace—that coveted market nook with flexible work schedules, job sharing, childcare assistance, and comprehensive health and welfare coverage—is not yet a reality for the majority of salaried employees let alone hourly workers. Those needing help the most, hourly workers stuck in low-paying jobs, are the last to benefit. They cannot afford to send their children to the on-site childcare center, even if one exists. And in workplaces where bathroom breaks are still monitored, taking time off for a child's graduation or leaving early to fix an aging parent's heater in the dead of winter can mean losing one's job.<sup>52</sup>

Labor feminists believed that the needs of low-income women and of those responsible for caregiving were different from those of other groups and that those needs had to be considered in formulating policy and priorities. For them, that meant redesigning workplaces to fit nonwork schedules, curtailing involuntary market work as well as involuntary domesticity; raising the pay, status, and working conditions of traditional women's work in the home and in the market; and creating social supports and benefits that made it possible for all women to have opportunities for education, leisure, and citizenship as well as satisfying work and social relationships. They believed that these advances would only come when women organized politically and economically. This was the "bread and roses" tradition of unionism that working-class women had carried forward for generations.

In October 1971, Esther Peterson penned a letter to Representative Martha Griffiths in which she explained why she no longer opposed the ERA. Hers was not a letter admitting she was wrong. She simply noted that since few woman-only state laws remained, many of the reasons to oppose the ERA had disappeared.<sup>53</sup> Peterson was relieved that this barrier to cross-class alliances among women was finally gone. Yet class differences had not disappeared, she stressed, and these differences should not be forgotten. She urged women like Griffiths "who have found changes in the law to be to their advantage to make every effort to assist those who still may be exploited."<sup>54</sup> It is for historians to assess whether her admonition was heeded.

## NOTES

This article was originally published online as "The Labor Feminist Origins of the U.S. Commissions on the Status of Women" on the Scholar's Edition of *Women and Social Movements in the United States, 1600–2000*, 13, no. 1 (March 2009), at <http://asp6new.alexanderstreet.com/was2>. Used by permission.

1. Betty Friedan, *Feminine Mystique* (New York: Norton, 1963), and President's Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW), *American Women: Report of the President's Commission on the Status of Women* (Washington, DC: Government Publications Office, 1963). For historical treatments, see, for example, Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience: A Concise History*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001), 482–492, and Ellen Carol DuBois and Lynn Dumenuil, *Through Women's Eyes: An American History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2005), 559–562, 588–592.
2. PCSW, *American Women*, quote from 4.
3. For the list of state commissions as of January 1965, Margaret Mead and Frances Balgley Kaplan, eds., *American Women: The Report of the President's Commission on the Status of Women and Other Publications of the Commission* (New York: Scribner, 1965), 171–172. Many of the records of the commissions on the status of women are now available on the *Women and Social Movements in the United States, 1600–2000*, Scholar's Edition, database and website.
4. On NOW and the 1966 conference, Betty Friedan, *Life So Far: A Memoir* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 164–179; Cynthia Harrison, *On Account of Sex: The Politics of Women's Issues, 1945–1968* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 192–209; Susan Hartmann, *From Margin to Mainstream: American Women and Politics since 1960* (New York: Knopf, 1989), 58–69; Dorothy Sue Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement: Workplace Justice and Social Rights in Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 182–186; and "The Founding of NOW," [http://www.now.org/history/the\\_founding.html](http://www.now.org/history/the_founding.html) (accessed October 10, 2008).
5. The scholarship on the origins and the politics of *The Feminine Mystique* is also still surprisingly thin, although some excellent studies do exist. See, for example, Daniel Horowitz, *Betty Friedan and the Making of the Feminine Mystique: The American Left, the Cold War, and Modern Feminism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998).
6. Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement*, 3.
7. On the history of the term "feminist," see Estelle B. Freedman, *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women* (New York: Ballantine, 2002), 3–6.
8. William O'Neill, "Feminism as a Radical Ideology," in *Dissent: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism*, ed. Alfred F. Young (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1968), 275–277, and William O'Neill, *Feminism in America: A History*, 2nd rev. ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1989), xiv. I prefer using the terms "social feminist" and "equal rights feminist" to the more popular categories of "equality" and "difference" feminists. The latter labels are misleading because

- both groups believed in women's "equality" and few in either group believed that men and women were the "same." I consider labor feminism a strand within a broader social feminist movement. Not every social feminist, however, was a labor feminist. Labor feminists stressed labor organizations as vehicles for lifting women's status, for example, an emphasis not shared by all social feminists.
9. Kathryn Kish Sklar, Anja Schuler, and Susan Strasser, eds., *Social Justice Feminists in the United States and Germany: A Dialogue in Documents, 1885–1933* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 5–6.
  10. The debates among feminists in the 1920s are illuminated in Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987); Kathryn Kish Sklar, "Why Were Most Politically Active Women Opposed to the ERA in the 1920s?" in *Women and Power in American History*, ed. Kathryn Kish Sklar and Thomas Dublin (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1991), 2:154–173; and Amy Butler, *Two Paths to Equality: Alice Paul and Ethel M. Smith in the ERA Debate, 1921–1929* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002).
  11. Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement*, 60–61, 94–96. On Newman and Schneiderman, Annelise Orleck, *Common Sense and a Little Fire: Women and Working-Class Politics in the United States, 1900–1965* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).
  12. On the background of NWP members, Butler, *Two Paths to Equality*; Leila J. Rupp and Verta Taylor, *Survival in the Doldrums: The American Women's Rights Movement, 1945 to the 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); and Carl Brauer, "Women Activists, Southern Conservatives and the Prohibition of Sex Discrimination in Title VII of the 1964 CRA," *Journal of Southern History* 49 (February 1983): 37–56.
  13. On social feminists, Jan Doolittle Wilson, *The Women's Joint Congressional Committee and the Politics of Maternalism, 1920–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), and Susan Ware, *Beyond Suffrage: Women in the New Deal* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).
  14. Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement*, chs. 2, 6.
  15. The phrase "doldrum years" is taken from the title of Rupp and Taylor's book, *Survival in the Doldrums*.
  16. *Ibid.*; Harrison, *On Account of Sex*; Kathleen Laughlin, *Women's Work and Public Policy: A History of the Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, 1945–1970* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000); and Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894–1994* (New York: Norton, 1999).
  17. Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement*, chs. 1, 2.
  18. Ironically, the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938 was supposedly gender-neutral in that it covered both men and women. Yet because it covered jobs primarily in the industrial sector, fewer women than men were protected.
  19. Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement*, chs. 1–6.
  20. For biographical sketches and further sources on these and other labor women reformers, consult Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement*, 25–49.
  21. *Ibid.*, 34–36, 151–164, 181–182; Esther Peterson (with Winifred Conkling), *Restless: The Memoirs of Labor and Consumer Activist Esther Peterson* (Washington, DC: Caring Publishing, 1995); and Esther Peterson Papers, Schlesinger Library on the History of Women, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA (hereafter EP-SL).
  22. On Ellickson, Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement*, 35–37, and Kitty Ellickson Papers, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit (hereafter cited KPE-ALUA).
  23. On Callahan, Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement*, 31–32; interview with Mary Callahan by Alice Hoffman and Karen Budd, 7 May 1976, *Trade Union Woman Oral History Project* (microfilm edition, 1979) (hereafter cited TUWOHP); and *IUE News*, October 8, 1979, and May 11, 1959, 5.
  24. Quotes from Wyatt, "An Injury to One Is an Injury to All": Addie Wyatt Remembers the Packinghouse Workers Union," *Labor Heritage* 12 (Winter/Spring 2003): 6–27, and interview with Addie Wyatt by Rick Halpern and Roger Horowitz, January 30, 1986, United Packinghouse Workers of America Oral History Project, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison. See also Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement*, 31–33, 201–203.
  25. On Davis, Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement*, 31–34; cites from interview with Caroline Davis by Ruth Meyerowitz, July 23, 1967, TUWOHP, 83, 112–114; and "Lady Labor Leader: To Keep Labor Peace and Prosperity in an Indiana Factory, the Boss of Local 764 Just Acts Like a Woman," *Life*, June 30, 1947.
  26. See, for example, Series V, Inter-American Commission of Women, Doris Stevens Papers, 1884–1983, and Folders 7, 16, 28, 30–33, 69, 75–77, Mary Anderson Papers, both in Schlesinger Library on the History of Women, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. For an argument that U.S. and Latin American feminists differed on the goals of CIM in its early years, Megan Threlkeld, "The Pan American Conference of Women, 1922: Successful Suffragists Turn to International Relations," *Diplomatic History* 31, no. 5 (November 2007): 801–828. See also Francesca Miller, *Latin American Women and the Search for Social Justice* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1991).
  27. Carol Miller, Jean Quataert, and Marilyn Lake, among others, have recounted parts of this fascinating interwar history: Miller, "Geneva: The Key to Equality": Interwar Feminists and the League of Nations," *Women's History Review* 3, no. 2 (1944): 219–245; Quataert, *The Gendering of Human Rights in the International Systems of Law in the Twentieth Century* (Washington, DC: American Historical Association, 2006); and Lake, "From Self-Determination via Protection to Equality via Non-discrimination: Defining Women's Rights at the League of Nations and the United Nations," in *Women's Rights and Human Rights: International Historical Perspectives*, ed. Patricia Grimshaw, Katie Holmes, and Marilyn Lake (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 254–271. On Hesselgren, Lene Buchert, "Kerstin Hesselgren, 1872–1964," *Prospects* (UNESCO, International Bureau of Education) 34, no. 1 (March 2004): 127–136.
  28. Anderson emigrated from Sweden in 1889 at the age of sixteen and maintained strong links with her country of origin. See Mary Anderson's memoir, *Woman at*

- Work: The Autobiography of Mary Anderson as told to Mary Winslow* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1951), ch. I. See also Mary Anderson Papers, Schlesinger Library on the History of Women, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. Interestingly, Esther Peterson also became friends with Hesselgren in the 1940s and 1950s while she was in Sweden and maintained ties with her until Hesselgren's death in 1964. See, for example, Folder 361, EP-SL.
29. For a recent discussion of the early U.N. Commission on the Status of Women, Jo Butterfield, "Playing Russian Roulette: Cold War Politics, International Feminism and the Stakes over the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women," paper prepared for the 14th Annual Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, University of Minnesota, June 2008.
  30. On Miller, see, for example, Box 1, Folder 1, and Series V, International Labor Organization, 1936–1967, Frieda S. Miller Papers, 1909–1973, A-37, Schlesinger Library on the History of Women, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA (hereafter, FM-SL); Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement*, 27–29, chs. 2–7. Miller remained active in international efforts to secure women's economic and social rights throughout the 1950s and 1960s.
  31. Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement*, 52–54, 63–64. "Statement of Frieda S. Miller," U.S. House of Representatives, *Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution and Commission on the Legal Status of Women: Hearings before Subcommittee No. 1 of the Committee on the Judiciary*, March 10 and 12, 1948 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1948), 102 (hereafter U.S. House, *Equal Rights Hearings, 1948*).
  32. Harrison, *On Account of Sex*, 26.
  33. Text of H.R. 1972, H.R. 1996, H.R. 2003 (and other identical women's status bills), reproduced in U.S. House, *Equal Rights Hearings, 1948*, 89.
  34. "Statement of Frieda S. Miller," in U.S. House, *Equal Rights Hearings, 1948*, 103.
  35. Minutes, 9 January 1947, and 3 February 1947, Labor Advisory Committee, box 6, file 140, FM-SL; statement of Frieda Miller, 15 April 1949, box 8, file 168, FM-SL; and box 91, file 12, KPE-ALUA, pt. 1. See also "Agenda—Labor Advisory Committee Meeting," 3–4 June 1948, box 6, File 141, FM-SL, and Peterson, *Restless*, 102–114.
  36. Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement*, 63. For Lawson quotes, see Steven F. Lawson, preface to *To Secure These Rights: The Report of President Harry S. Truman's Committee on Civil Rights*, edited with an introduction by Steven F. Lawson (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2004), iv.
  37. "Statement of Frieda S. Miller," U.S. House, *Equal Rights Hearings, 1948*, 100.
  38. U.S. House, *Equal Rights Hearings, 1948*, 10–11, 215.
  39. Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement*, 60–66; minutes, Labor Advisory Committee meeting, 9 January 1947, Box 6, File 140, FM-SL.
  40. Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement*, 145–155, 159–161.
  41. *Ibid.*, 148–161; Harrison, *On Account of Sex*, 109–126; and PCSW, *American Women*, 77–85.

42. Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement*, 170–171; PCSW, *Committee on Private Sector Employment* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1963); and PCSW, *American Women*, 27–34.
43. Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement*, 171–172; PCSW, *Committee on Protective Labor Legislation* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1963); PCSW, *American Women*, 36–37; and International Labor Organization, *Key Indicators of the Labour Market*, 5th ed. (Geneva: ILO, 2007).
44. Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement*, 169, and PCSW, *American Women*, 2, 27–34, 44–46.
45. Esther Peterson, "The Kennedy Commission," in *Women in Washington*, ed. Irene Tinker (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1983), 29; and PCSW, *American Women*, 4–5, 18–26, 35–39, 43, for the ERA quote and the argument that the U.S. Constitution "now embodies equality of rights for men and women," 45–46.
46. Katherine Pollak Ellickson, "The President's Commission on the Status of Women: Its Formation, Functioning, and Contribution," unpublished manuscript, January 1976, box 90, file 1A, KPE-ALUA, pt. 1, 13.
47. Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement*, 170.
48. PCSW, *American Women*, 19–23, 37, 39, 40–43, 49–52.
49. PCSW, *Committee on Protective Labor Legislation*, and PCSW, *American Women*.
50. Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement*, 196; Katherine Ellickson, "Eleanor Roosevelt's Contribution to the PCSW," n.d., box 6, file 40, KPE-ALUA, pt. 2. See also Ellickson, "The President's Commission on the Status of Women."
51. Dorothy Sue Cobble, "Introduction," 1–12, and Vicky Lovell, Heidi Hartmann, and Misha Werschkul, "More Than Raising the Floor: The Persistence of Gender Inequalities in the Low-Wage Labor Market," Table 2.1, 36, both in *The Sex of Class: Women Transforming American Labor*, ed. Dorothy Sue Cobble (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007).
52. Cobble, "Introduction," and Netsy Firestein and Nicola Dones, "Unions Fight for Work and Family Policies: Not for Women Only," 140–154, both in *The Sex of Class: Women Transforming American Labor*, ed. Dorothy Sue Cobble (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007).
53. After *Rosenfeld v. Southern Pacific Co.* (1968), in which a California district court invalidated a sex-based weightlifting law, holding that it conflicted with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, many states followed the court's reasoning by repealing or amending their protective laws for women. See Karen J. Maschke, *Litigation, Courts, and Women Workers* (New York: Praeger, 1989), 44–45, and Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement*, 182–190.
54. Esther Peterson to Martha Griffiths, 12 October 1971, Box 54, File 1061, EP-SL.