

Support, not legislation, ensures equality

Social changes come rarely and only with great effort. Adequate, if not exceptional leadership is indispensable. Small, continual advances tend to be more permanent than large leaps and bounds, but



Becky Stingley

progress is progress.

Mothers Against Drunk Drivers, a coalition created, developed and organized by women, more specifically by mothers, has been given much credit for the 12 percent drop in the country's 1982 traffic fatalities. The ever-growing nuclear freeze movement has been largely spearheaded by females, and in recent years, two women have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

In the United States, as well as abroad, women have succeeded in attaining more powerful political positions. Great Britain has a female prime minister, and last week, President Reagan appointed Elizabeth Dole

as the new secretary of transportation. In November, Nebraska voters elected two women to the NU Board of Regents — a traditionally male-dominated body.

Newly inaugurated Gov. Bob Kerrey appointed six women to high positions in his administration. Two of his staff assistants are women. The new state tax commissioner, who will receive a \$43,625 salary, is a woman. Furthermore, the directors of the State Department of Aging, the State Office of Energy and the State Department of Motor Vehicles are women.

At the university, female students have uniformly shown that they are not helpless girls. Rather, they are competent individuals. The last three editors of the Daily Nebraskan have been women, and student advocate Nette Nelson has developed ASUN's Government Liaison Committee into a strong, productive and effective lobbying organization.

These talented, intelligent persons have succeeded because they have received fundamental support from others who aligned with their ideas and who maintained confidence in their abilities. Victory resulted because they were given the necessary resources and the obligatory oppor-

tunities to prove themselves and to justify their positions.

Yet, days ago, the Equal Rights Amendment was re-submitted to Congress. It seems that a certain group of women is intent upon putting "women" into the Constitution. It is futile to think that documentation of equal rights in the Constitution is a complete solution.

More remotely, it is incredible that this female legion plans to continue to spend vast amounts of money, time and energy — as they have in the past decade — on legislation that promises to eliminate the identical patronizing attitudes towards minorities that have risen out of the Equal Employment Opportunities laws.

Women do not need legislation that requires that they be treated equally, instead, they need legitimate confidence invested in their abilities. They need emotional, physical and financial support for their desires, creativity and efforts.

For a woman to scream, "You've got to treat me equally because it is the law" seems to be a contradiction of the philosophy that women are capable of the same, if not grander, social, political and financial accomplishments that men are.

President Reagan has seen it for two women to be members of his Cabinet, yet he has denied many others educational opportunities by substantially decreasing the amount of funding available to students. Women are rarely discriminated against by academic institutions in terms of acceptance; in fact, EEO legislation has given them a definite advantage. But what good is acceptance to medical school without the financial resources to attend?

Females need to be given the credit availability and financial backing that other, more traditional groups have access to. What good is a solid, business idea without the preliminary capital to attempt such a venture?

No one is asking for a free ride. Society has no room for deadbeats. But present leadership needs to make room for equalized women in business, politics, the arts and every other area of organized humanity.

Give women a chance to demonstrate their proficiency. Fairly scrutinize their performance, not their presence. Praise their achievements and criticize their failures. Reward them accordingly. All in all, treat them like you do men.

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