

## How has the financial turmoil affected women?

The economy continues to face enormous challenges and the financial industry has demonstrated that significant reform is required to protect the American people and women in particular. Our speakers' focus is on a bill pending in Congress, SB 3217, *The Restoring American Financial Stability Act*, and on how the public can develop a voice in policy debates.

Speakers at our May meeting are experts, activists in financial reform efforts. **Heather Booth** is Executive Director of Americans for Financial Reform, Vice President for External Affairs of USAction, and President of the Midwest Academy. Our second speaker, from America Speaks, will update us on the process and progress of the national conversation.

Americans for Financial Reform is a coalition with over 250 organizational partners, dedicated to real financial reform. America Speaks is an organization committed to engaging citizens in governance. They are currently developing a process to engage thousands of citizens across the country in a discussion of the nation's fiscal challenges.

**Date/Time:** Tuesday, May 25, 2010 / 12 noon sharp to 1:30 pm.

Open to the public, no reservation necessary.

**Place:** One Dupont Circle, 8th Floor, Washington DC

Bring brown bag lunch, soft drinks available from a machine.

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

A photo ID must be shown at the security desk of One Dupont Circle.

Please allow time to go through the sign-in system.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, June 22, 2010

## Single-Sex Public Education: Bad for Boys, Bad for Girls, Bad for Everyone

The speakers, **Dr. Bernice Sandler**, Senior Scholar at Women's Research and Education Institute (WREI), and **Dr. Sue Klein**, Education Equity Director, Feminist Majority Foundation, provided answers to key questions about sex segregation in K-12 public education exclusively.



*Sue Klein and Bunny Sandler*

### **How does Title IX prohibit sex segregated education?**

*Sandler:* Many people have said that Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is the most important law passed for females since women obtained the right to vote in 1920. Virtually all sex segregated classes, programs and schools have always been considered as sex discrimination under Title IX. Sex stereotyping has been considered as sex discrimination. Allowing single-sex classes, programs and schools especially when based on stereotypes is the largest threat to Title IX since it was passed. When Title IX passed in 1972, routine sex segregation such as shop for boys and home-economics for girls was prohibited. At the same time, many people concerned about educational equity pushed for coeducational classes and schools to become less sexist. And also to incorporate into coeducational classes, a variety of teaching techniques, including collaborative learning that had been used in some single-sex settings. In the past few years, there has been an increase in K-12 public schools with single-sex classes, programs and schools. Many of these are based on sex stereotypes, inadequate research, and misinterpretation of research. Title IX prohibits sex discrimination in educational institutions receiving federal funds. A few exceptions allow sex segregation, such as in sexuality classes and contact sports. You can't classify (or discriminate against)

people on the basis of sex. Just as under other laws such as Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, you can't assign or give extra benefits to students on the basis of race or national origin. You can sort students in many other ways, (e.g. test scores, previous grades) but not by sex.

*Klein:* Under Title IX regulations some affirmative action (to help females or males) is allowed as long as the purpose is to reduce sex discrimination—the key purpose of Title IX. However, very few sex-segregated programs have been used for affirmative action under Title IX. Additionally, there are some protections against sex discrimination under the Constitution and some federal and state laws.

### **How did the Bush Administration weaken legal protections against sex discrimination in education in 2006?**

*Klein:* When the draft version of this regulation was released in 2004 only about 100 of the over 6000 public comments were supportive, but the Department of Education issued its new regulation allowing single-sex programs in 2006.

*Sandler:* The regulation specifically allowed single-sex classes, schools, programs, and extra curricular activities in primary and secondary non-vocational public schools as long as there is "substantial equality." It also stated: Enrollment in a single-sex class or school must be voluntary; Schools must provide a "substantially equal" coeducational class or extracurricular activity for the excluded sex; There has to be an "important objective to improve educational achievement of its students, provided that the single-sex nature of the class or extracurricular activity is substantially related to achieving that objective." Thus,

## Program Summary, continued

the school must justify a link between an education goal and the single sex program; Periodic evaluations are required to justify the single-sex class, program or school.

### **What have we learned about how schools chose to sex segregate?**

*Klein:* The Feminist Majority Foundation study on the State of Public School Sex Segregation in the States, and legal challenges brought by ACLU, have shown that these minimal protections as well as other Title IX requirements have been ignored. Schools rarely choose sex segregation as a way to decrease sex discrimination. Few, if any, schools have done the required evaluations to see if their objectives have been met. The regulation stresses that the single sex classes must be completely voluntary. However many children have been placed in single sex classes without their permission or that of their parents. Often there is no required coed option. Even if a coed class is offered there often is no substantial equality. It is hard to have substantial equity in three types of classes — boys, girls and coed. In many cases schools and classes are not “substantially equal,” they often increase sex stereotyping by teaching girls and boys differently and sometimes with different content.

### **Does sex-segregated public education increase sex discrimination compared to sex-integrated public education?**

*Sandler:* Yes. Although there are still inequities other than single-sex programs in our public schools, the inequities in the sex segregated schools and classes are far more damaging, as shown in the ACLU challenges to these programs.

- **Why is sex segregation especially bad for girls?** Girls generally get inferior resources and more sex-stereotyped limitations. The “best” teachers may be assigned to boys’ classes because boys “need more help.” Stereotypes about girls’ passivity, being “feminine” or girly and boys being strong and “manly” are often emphasized.
- **Why is sex segregation especially bad for boys?** Masculine stereotypes tend to be exaggerated and encouraged. Boys who do not fit

masculine stereotypes are made to feel like outsiders. Bullying related to homophobia is often exaggerated in all male groups.

- **Why is sex segregation bad for everyone?** Sex-segregated classes focus on the differences between girls and boys and thus make the “other gender” strangers and opponents.

### **What is the nature of the increase in sex segregation in Public K-12 Education?**

*Klein:* Our Feminist Majority Foundation study on sex segregation documents over 600 public schools with single-sex classes in 2007-9. We now estimate that there are over 1000 schools with intentional sex segregation.

### **What are the reasons people are supporting sex segregated public education?**

*Sandler:* Belief in differences between the sexes; using gender stereotypes to explain behaviors. Belief that boys and girls are so different in the ways they learn, that they will learn better in sex-segregated classes. Belief that sex-segregated education is more effective at least for some children—the “boy” problem. Concern about academic problems makes sex-segregated classes look like a quick and easy solution to low achievement and discipline problems. Belief that everyone should have a choice for single-sex education like the parents of children in private schools. Belief that high achievement in private single-sex schools is related to gender separation rather than other factors (e.g. high socio-economic status, smaller classes, highly selected students, weeding out of discipline problems, more personal attention). Belief that girls won’t get into “trouble” (read “pregnant”) if kept away from boys. Belief that boys are so distracted by girls that they cannot learn in their presence.

### **Reasons for opposition to sex-segregated classes and programs.**

*Sandler:* Misperceptions and pseudo-scientific theories about nature and importance of sex differences in brains and, even in teaching and in learning. There are no male and female “learning styles” or any sex differences in brain physiology that specifically relate to learning or abilities.

Most research on single-sex education has been on private schools, not public schools, and badly conducted, badly interpreted or based primarily on anecdotal observations. Differences between boys and girls are not nearly as great as the differences among all girls or all boys. Even when sex-segregation proponents acknowledge that not all boys or all girls fit generalizations (such as boys are competitive), they ignore the effect of their programs on such students. Sex-segregated programs often are successful at the beginning because they are new or because of high expectations for their success. Boys are being reinforced for being competitive and thus are not learning cooperative and collaborative behaviors; the reverse is true for girls. Boys and girls need to learn both styles of behaviors.

*Klein:* Educators are finding that single-sex classes are more expensive than equivalent coed classes.

### **In Summary**

*Sandler:* We still face many obstacles in getting the 2006 Department of Education Title IX single sex regulation rescinded: Many people support the stereotypes about boys and girls being different. Although the Obama Administration is doing

more than its predecessors, it is not clear that they will withdraw the regulation. Education Secretary Duncan seems impressed with the Chicago Boys School, although its success is likely due to other factors, such as being a better school experience than its being sex segregated. There are better and fairer ways to get additional education resources to male and female students than using sex segregation. Single-sex schools, classes and programs are the biggest threat to educational equity. We must work together to restore full compliance with Title IX and educate educators and the public about the dangers we discussed today.

*Klein:* Please join us in: Supporting the rescission of the regulation allowing sex segregation and sex discrimination; Reinvigorating the Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA) as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) Reauthorization; Creating an office for gender equity in the Department of Education, like the Women's Bureau in the Department of Labor; Supporting multiple efforts to end overt and subtle sex discrimination and educate to create a new gender-equitable society.

For further information visit [www.feminist.org/education/sexsegregation.asp](http://www.feminist.org/education/sexsegregation.asp).

### **CWI Slate for 2010-11**

We will vote at the June meeting.

**Sue Klein**, *Vice President Programs*

**Holly Taggart Joseph**, *Treasurer*  
Holly is active in NOW and the League of Women Voters.

*Directors:* **Al Golub**, **Linda Fihelly**

**Sarah C. Albert** is a Social Policy and Advocacy Director at YWCA USA Washington DC and co-chair at The Working Group for the Ratification of CEDAW.

**Dr. Bernice R. (Bunny) Sandler** is a Senior Scholar at the Women's Research and Education Institute in Washington, DC, where she consults with institutions and others about achieving equity for women and is an Adjunct Associate Professor at Drexel University College of Medicine.

### **President's Message**

Our June meeting will focus on our organization members. Each group will discuss their mission and interests. The time allotted for each organization depends on the number of participants. Your group must be a paid organization member to participate. Membership forms are on our website: [www.womensclearinghouse.org](http://www.womensclearinghouse.org). To register your speaker's presentation email [cwi-info@womensclearinghouse.org](mailto:cwi-info@womensclearinghouse.org) or call 301-493-0002 after May 26th please.

This is a wonderful opportunity to get your message out to women. We had excellent attendance last year.

—*Barbara J. Ratner*

## Dorothy Height

She died April 21 at age 89. According to *The New York Times*, Height was “a leader of the African-American and women’s rights movements who was considered both the grand dame of the civil rights era and its unsung heroine.

“With Gloria Steinem, Shirley Chisholm, Betty Friedan and others, she helped found the National Women’s Political Caucus in 1971 ... if Ms. Height was less well known than her contemporaries in either the civil rights or women’s movement it was perhaps because she was doubly marginalized, pushed offstage by women’s groups because of her race and by black groups because of her sex. Throughout her career, she responded quietly but firmly, working with a characteristic mix of limitless energy and steely gentility to ally the two movements in the fight for social justice. As a result Ms. Height is widely credited as the first person in the modern civil rights era to treat the problems of equality for women and equality for African-Americans as a seamless whole, merging concerns that had been largely historically separated.”

## Let’s Help Lilly Ledbetter Get what She Deserves!

*(from the National Council of Women’s Organizations)*

Lilly Ledbetter, who worked as a supervisor at Goodyear Tire & Rubber in Gadsden, Alabama, sued Goodyear for discrimination when she found out she was being paid significantly less than her male counterparts. She was awarded \$3 million, but the US Supreme Court overturned the award because the complaint was made more than 180 days after the first discriminatory paycheck. To remedy such situations, President Obama signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay law. However, Lilly can’t benefit from this.

Two Seattle women, Deb Bluestein and Linda Mitchell, struck by the unfairness of Lilly’s situation, have started a campaign to ask one million women to send a gift of \$3.00 to Lilly to undo the wrong that was done.

Send your check, made payable to Lilly Ledbetter, to Bluestein/Mitchell at 964 Denny Way, Seattle, WA 98109 and they will send it on to Lilly. To give via PayPal send your gift to [lillyledbetter@hotmail.com](mailto:lillyledbetter@hotmail.com). There is more information on how to give online at [www.makelillyright.com](http://www.makelillyright.com).

## Justice Stevens and Woman’s Rights

*(Women’s eNews)*

In a blog on the Huffington Post, Marcia D. Greenberger of the National Women’s Law Center said that few articles on the tenure of Justice John Paul noted that women have been particular beneficiaries of Stevens’ service on the Supreme Court.

“Justice Stevens has left a profound stamp on women’s legal rights during the past 35 years. He wrote critically important opinions that established students’ rights to sue for sex discrimination under Title IX and that protected the privacy rights of pregnant women. He cast important votes in closely divided cases on other legal issues of key importance to women and girls as well, including cases that allowed students to sue school districts for sexual harassment by other students; that prohibited state universities from excluding applicants on the basis of their gender; and that reaffirmed the essential holding of *Roe v. Wade*. He was a strong vote in favor of ensuring that individuals have access to the federal courts to enforce their legal rights to health and safety protections.

“It is especially appropriate to underscore the profound respect and gratitude for his remarkable service to this country that he is due. Quite simply, he has ensured that virtually every woman and girl in this country has a legal right to pursue her dreams and aspirations. But his retirement is also a reminder of how fragile these rights and opportunities can be with the replacement of even one Justice. Nothing is more important than President Obama’s honoring Justice Stevens’ legacy by nominating an individual who is just as committed to equal justice for all to take his place on the Supreme Court.”



## Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

10401 Grosvenor Place #917  
Rockville, MD 20852

FIRST CLASS MAIL

### COMING EVENTS

**Friday, July 16**

#### **What a Difference an X Makes**

The Society for Women's Health Research will present an all-day seminar with a distinguished roster of doctors and researchers discussing various aspects of women's health, including sessions on: cardio-vascular problems, pain, stroke, obesity, immune systems and the brain. Barbara Jordan Conference Center, Kaiser Family Foundation, 1330 G Street NW.

[info@womenshealthresearch.org](mailto:info@womenshealthresearch.org)

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*Photos: D.Anne Martin; Editor: Roslyn Kaiser; April meeting summary draft by Alicia Jurek, former FMF intern; Production: Letterforms Typography & Graphic Design.*

#### **CWI Board of Directors, July 2009 - June 2010**

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