



Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

P.O. Box 70603, Friendship Heights, MD 20813 Tel: 202 338-4820

www.womensclearinghouse.org

SEPTEMBER 2005

THE SUPREME COURT AND EMERGING WOMEN'S ISSUES

The nomination of John G. Roberts, Jr. to be Chief Justice of the Supreme Court has focused public attention on the critical importance of the judiciary for public issues affecting our lives. We are fortunate that two exceptionally well-qualified speakers will provide us with their special insights on these issues that specifically affect women.

Nan Aron, President of the Alliance for Justice, is a major voice in public interest and civil rights law. She founded the Alliance 25 years ago. It now leads a coalition of major organizations concerned with monitoring judicial nominations at all levels. Nan is nationally recognized for her vast expertise in public interest law, the federal judiciary and citizen participation in public policy. She has appeared as an expert in such media outlets as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Nation*, *Vanity Fair* and National Public Radio.

Professor Laurence Nolan specializes in family law, legal research and writing at Howard University. She is the author of many articles and several books on related topics. She is accredited to practice before the Supreme Court as well as the courts of several states and the District of Columbia. Professor Nolan will discuss Bush appointments to federal courts, recent changes in state courts, the outlook or changes that may impact particular concerns of women and possible strategies to protect gains that may be threatened.

SPEAKERS: **Nan Aron**, President of the Alliance for Justice
Laurence Nolan, Professor, Howard Law School

TOPIC: **Supreme Court Nominations – Potential Impact on Women**

DATE/TIME: **Tuesday, September 27, 2005 / 12 noon – 1:30 p.m.**

PLACE: **American Council on Education,
One Dupont Circle, NW, 8th Floor, Kellogg Room**

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

Next Meeting: October 25, 2005

Program Notes – June Meeting
WOMEN and MIGRATION

“Men and women move all over the world in search of a better life because it is so easy to do so,” said Frances Sullivan of the International Organization for Migration (IOM.) Factors that encourage migration include conflict, a change in the economy, rising unemployment, and wage differentials. Sullivan explained that the term “migrants” captures the complexity of mobility and refers to all persons who need services, immigrants, emigrants, and refugees, legal or non-legal, temporary or permanent.

She reported that women are approximately 48 percent of the estimated 185 million migrants in the world. The fate of migrant women reflects the status of women in the host countries. If discrimination is practiced against all women, migrant women have few opportunities to correct grievances. Often conflict between different cultures increases the migrant’s marginalization.

IOM was founded in 1951 to solve problems of displaced persons after World War II. The organization, which has mounted awareness campaigns to make others understand the economic, social and legal problems that women migrants confront, would prefer to prepare people for their new lives before they leave their country. Increasingly, migration has become more of a business, with smugglers and traffickers exploiting people. Women Migrants have particular problems related to their gender; they are more vulnerable than men and too often are caught up in clandestine activities.

According to Sullivan, government policies and legislative barriers generally understate the number of women migrants; they are usually counted as dependent on males. Husbands are generally seen as the family provider, but this perception may be changing. Since 1980, more women migrants have made pragmatic choices to leave their homelands and they are increasingly becoming migrants independent of family.

In many cases their wages provide essential family support in the form of remittances sent back to their original homes. Migrant females have become an important economic force in spite of the fact that women generally have low-level positions, such as household domestic workers.

She said that in the developed world, the number of men and women who migrate is about equal. In the U.S. and Canada, for example 51 percent of migrants are female and usually have definite skills. This holds true for Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia. Migrants from poorer countries are less skilled and more vulnerable. They are often unaware of their rights and obligations and are more fearful of lodging complaints. As a result, they tolerate abuse.

Sullivan believes that women are agents of change. In addition to the needed remittances sent home, when migrant women return they sometimes network with others, and often start small business operations and export local products. In other ways, women find new ways to exert power. She said that some women migrants send home remittances to their mothers, rather than husbands, to ensure that the money is used to support the children left behind.

Turning to the topic of displaced persons, Sullivan noted that women and children are 70 percent of the persons displaced through conflict. Although it is women who press for peace and create survival strategies with limited resources, they are seldom invited to talk at the peace table.

The major theme throughout her talk and in response to questions, was that we must find ways to manage migration that than trying to control it through harsh laws. The practical reality, she said, is that the long wait for legal status makes it more attractive to circumvent the law. She pointed out that in the U.S. there are more than 70 different kinds of visas but there are only four routes to legal status: family ties, employee support for a

specific job, refugee status and success in the diversity lottery.

Two student interns who work for Legal Momentum (the new name for NOW's Legal Defense and Education Fund), Lindsey Kerr and Jamie Bagliebter, discussed their experience this summer working with migrants. They have been providing technical assistance with the problems, particularly domestic violence. For example, violence may be severe when the migrant woman cannot obtain legal immigration status; if the husband is a permanent resident, he must petition for his wife, and can withhold her passport. The problems are further exaggerated if neither partner is a citizen. There is some limited support for migrants in the Violence Against Women Act, which is up for renewal this year, as well as in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act,

passed in 2000. "Identifying victims of trafficking is very difficult;" Sullivan said, "These people don't have status or passports, and they are afraid. This is especially true for women and children and they need to know there are avenues for help."

She added that the best hope for change will come from comprehensive immigration reform and she urged her listeners to support legislative initiatives, such as the McCain-Kennedy bill (The Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act). Proposed in May, the bill contains an "essential worker visa program," which would offer certain visa status and opportunities for work in the U.S. These special visas expire after three years, and may be renewed once for three more years and some of these immigrants will be eligible to apply for permanent status.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As incoming president of the CWI, my first task - and it is a most pleasant one - is to give thanks to our outgoing board members: Mickey Klein, Elinor Waters, Gilda Morse, secretary, and to Roslyn Kaiser, our superb Newsletter editor.

I would like pay "joy-ous" tribute to Joy Simonson, our outgoing president. Joy has represented the Clearinghouse at numerous conferences and at steering committee of the National Council of Women's Organizations. She is also responsible for the research and publication of "Three Decades of the Clearinghouse on Women's Issues," which records the activities, issues, speakers and officers involved since our founding. Most recently, Joy has brought the organization into the 21st Century by arranging for a website and electronic mailings of our newsletter.

Joy has agreed to chair the September meeting, which I cannot attend due to a long- standing commitment abroad. I look forward to a great year working with our excellent and enthusiastic board.

VISIT OUR NEW WEB SITE
www.womensclearinghouse.org

TODAY'S IMMIGRANT WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR

A recent report entitled "Today's Immigrant Woman Entrepreneur" provides a detailed look at this segment of U.S. population. Excerpts from the executive summary, written by Susan C. Pearce, Ph.D. as seen on the web site of The American Immigration Law Foundation (www.aifl.org) states: "Immigrant women entrepreneurs are rapidly making their mark in the U.S. business sector, in every region of the country and across a large range of industries. Today, immigrant women of the post-1960s wave of immigration comprise one of the fastest growing groups of business owners in the United States. This study examines the rise of immigrant women entrepreneurs and profiles them as a group using data from the 2000 Decennial Census and other sources. Among the findings in this report:

- In 2000, 8.3 percent of employed immigrant women were business owners, compared to 6.2 percent of employed native-born women.
- The number of immigrant women business owners has increased nearly 190 percent since 1990 and 468 percent since 1980.
- The largest group of immigrant women entrepreneurs in the United States – 234,454 or 41.6 percent of the total – comes from the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean. The second largest group – 165,483 or 29.4 percent of the total – comes from Asia and the Pacific Islands.
- Among the top ten countries from which immigrant women entrepreneurs in the United States originate, three are in Latin America (Mexico, El Salvador, and Cuba), five in Asia and the Pacific Islands (Korea, Vietnam, Philippines, China, and India), and the remaining two are Germany and Canada.
- The top industry for immigrant women business owners is work in private households, followed by child day care centers, and restaurants and other food services. Nineteen of the top twenty industries in which these entrepreneurs work are service industries.
- In addition to the 563,814 immigrant women business owners, 1,054 immigrant women across the United States are CEOs of not-for-profit organizations.

The top ten cities where immigrant women business owners work are distributed across the U.S. Northeast, Midwest, Mid-Atlantic, Southeast, Southwest, and Northwest. The most popular destination is the Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County metropolitan area, which hosts 74,134 immigrant women entrepreneurs, or 13 percent of all immigrant women entrepreneurs in the nation." The report is published by the Immigration Policy Center, A division of the American Immigration Law Foundation. The full report with graphics can be obtained on their web site: <http://www.aifl.org/ipc/ipf011705.pdf>

CWI NEWSLETTER NOW AVAILABLE VIA E-MAIL

Members wishing to receive the CWI Newsletter via email instead of by U.S. Mail can send their requests by email to **cwi_nwsltr@aol.com**. The newsletter will be sent in PDF format. The first issue after the request is received, the newsletter will be sent via e-mail and U.S. mail. The following month, the newsletter will be sent via email only. Requests to discontinue the email version and re establish the regular mail version can be sent to the same email address. If you have questions concerning these procedures, please call Sheila Willet, newsletter editor at 202 588-1734.

EVENT NOTICES/ARTICLES ACCEPTED FOR INCLUSION IN CWI NEWSLETTER

Notices of upcoming events as well as articles sent by members and member organizations can be sent via email to cwi_nwsltr@aol.com. Be sure to include your name and telephone number.

It's Time to Renew! September 2005

BEST BARGAIN IN TOWN.... *Individual dues \$25.00 or \$35.00 for organizations.* We have made joining easier by having one date for everyone. Dues are now due in September to start your membership for the upcoming year (September 2005 through August 2006.) Use the renewal coupon sent the first of September to all members or clip the coupon below and mail today.

RENEW NOW....WHY? Clearinghouse for Women's issues (CWI) presents educational, expert speakers nine times during the year on current topics, which impact the lives of women.

WHERE? We meet the fourth Tuesday of each month (except Dec. July, Aug.) from 12 noon to 1:30 P.M. at One Dupont Circle, NW, 8th floor conference room. Bring a brown bag lunch and enjoy speakers from government, academe, and advocacy organizations.

NEWSLETTER....With your membership you will receive nine issues of the newsletter. Each issue contains a preview of the upcoming program, a detailed summary of the previous month's presentation, and timely news items of special interest to women.

TAKE ACTION....Your dues will enable CWI to take action on important issues affecting women's lives. We do this by joining in coalitions with other organizations that work to improve the status of women.

NEW THIS YEAR....We have a website. Visit us at www.womensclearinghouse.org.

Sincerely,
Ellen Overton, President

Clip and mail with your check made payable to CWI to CLEARINGHOUSE ON WOMEN'S ISSUES c/o Linda Fihelly, Treasurer, 5618 N. Marwood Blvd., Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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Enclosed is my check made payable to CWI: ___ Individual-\$25 ___ Organization-\$35
Name of Organization: _____

I would like to help CWI with an additional contribution: \$10.00___ \$25.00___
\$50.00___ Other \$ _____

Donations and contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

COMING EVENTS

- SEPTEMBER 27** CWI Meeting, 12 NOON – 1:30PM (See page 1.)
- OCTOBER 6-9** 25th Anniversary OWL Convention, Sacramento, CA
Reservation form and additional information available
at web site www.owl-national.org
- OCTOBER 25** CWI Meeting, 12 NOON – 1:30PM

<p>CWI Board of Directors, July 2005 – June 2006. OFFICERS: President, Ellen S. Overton; Vice President Program, Sue Klein; Vice President Membership, Jean Landweber; Treasurer, Linda Fihelly; Secretary, Harriett M. Stonehill. BOARD MEMBERS: Alvin Golub, Harriett Harper, Roslyn Kaiser, Karen S. Mayers, Ruth G. Nadel, Jacqueline Scherer, Clara G. Schiffer, Joy R. Simonson, ex officio. Sheila A. Willet, newsletter editor</p>
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