

To: Tanya Hughes, Executive Director
From: Cheryl Sharp, Deputy Director
Re: **CHRO Outreach Activities**
Date: August 1, 2022

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Outreach Successes:

- **July Social Media**
The CHRO's Social Media Team of Jody Walker-Smith, Courtney Shields, and Spencer Hill created and/or coordinated 16 posts for the agency's Facebook and Instagram accounts.
- **Holocaust Symposium filming**
Attendees: 8
07/01 Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp, Outreach Coordinator Ana Mitchell, Regional Manager Ron Simpson, Investigator Ann Galer met with Ruth Weiner, Kathy Fishman, Tina Parziale, and Holden Escabi participated in the production of a short film about Holocaust survivor Ruth Weiner.
- **Commission on Racial & Ethnic Disparity**
Attendees: 25
07/11 Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp attended the WebEx Commission on Racial & Ethnic Disparity meeting as a member of the Commission.
- **WICC600 Radio Program**
Attendees:
7/11 – Attorney Jody Walker-Smith appeared on the WICC600 radio program Melissa in the Morning to discuss Non-Binary Awareness Week.
- **Affirmative Action Planning Consultant**
Attendees: 9
07/12 Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp, Legislative and Administrative Advisor Darcy Strand, AA Supervisor Neva Vigezzi, Attorneys Spencer Hill and Tim Lewendon, and HRO Representative Gary Madison met with OPH regarding an Affirmative Action Planning Consultant who will develop an actionable plan to leverage existing state technology and new analytical tools to improve the process of preparing, submitting, and reviewing state agency Affirmative Action plans.
- **Racial and Ethnic Impact Statement (REIS) Training**
Attendees: ?
7/12- Attorney Jody Walker-Smith attended the third of three installments of REIS training titled "Codified Racism: A CT policy Review."

- **Affirmative Action Planning Consultant**
Attendees: 9
 07/12 Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp, Legislative and Administrative Advisor Darcy Strand, AA Supervisor Neva Vigezzi, Attorneys Spencer Hill and Tim Lewendon, and HRO Representative Gary Madison met with OPH regarding an Affirmative Action Planning Consultant who will develop an actionable plan to leverage existing state technology and new analytical tools to improve the process of preparing, submitting, and reviewing state agency Affirmative Action plans.
- **AA Task Force**
Attendees: 25
 07/14 Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp and Outreach Coordinator, Ana Mitchell participated in, and Legislative and Administrative Advisor Darcy Strand led, the task force on affirmative action with state stakeholders.
- **Growing Together CT**
Attendees: 25
 07/14 Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp, Attorney Michelle Dumas Keuler, and Outreach Coordinator Ana Mitchell participated in the meeting.
- **Journey Home CHRO Best Practice Training**
Attendees: 30
 7/18– Attorney Michelle Dumas Keuler presented CHRO’s Discrimination and Best Practices.
- **WICC600 Radio Program**
Attendees:
 7/18 – Attorney Kim Jacobsen appeared on the WICC600 radio program Melissa in the Morning to discuss Weight Bias.
- **Executive Interns’ Summer Symposium**
Attendees: 101
 07/19 The focus was on ***Dobbs v. Jackson: The Decision that Overturned Roe v. Wade.*** The symposium was held virtually on Teams. Panelists Natalie Braswell, Dr. Shieva Ghofrany, Rachel Lonchar, Gretchen Raffa, and Jody Walker-Smith spoke about their advocacy, the implications of Dobbs on other civil rights, and the decision's impact on not just individuals with uteruses, but every single person in this country.
- **EEOC FEPA Conference 2022**
Attendees: 200
 07/19 - 07/21 Executive Director Tanya Hughes and Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp and many members of the agency’s staff participated in the EEOC Regional Conference.
- **CHRO Summer Symposium: Dobbs v. Jackson: The Decision that Overturned Roe v. Wade**
Attendees: 104
 7/19/22 – Attorney Jody Walker-Smith served as a panelist at the CHRO’s summer symposium and shared insights on the historical and legal implications of the Supreme Court’s recent decision in Dobbs v. Jackson.

- **Building an Inclusive Organization**
Attendees: ?
 7/20 – Attorney Jody Walker-Smith attended an EEOC training on building inclusive organizations in government.
- **FEPA District Meeting**
Attendees: 30
 07/21 Executive Director Tanya Hughes and Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp and other CHRO staff participated in the EEOC district meeting where they reported on the status of the agency, the education and outreach, enforcement, and legislative activities.
- **CTSAC: Overview of Zoning Report**
Attendees: 20
 07/22 Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp participated in the CTSAC Teams meeting where she serves as a member of the Commission. The Commission is a national civil rights organization- the United States Commission on Civil Rights. The group is wrapping up the zoning report and beginning work on an algorithm study for the state of CT.
- **Farmington Human Relations Commission presentation**
Attendees: 8
 7/25 – Attorney Michelle Dumas Keuler presented a CHRO information sessions to the Farmington Human Relations Commission.
- **Racial Equity Workshop 3**
Attendees: 20
 7/26 - Attorney Kim Jacobsen attended the third Health Equity Racial Equity workshop
- **CHRO's D&I Book Club**
Attendees: 12
 7/26 – Jody Walker-Smith attended and led discussion in the monthly CHRO's Diversity and Inclusion Book Club – this month's book was The Invention of Wings by Sue Monk Kidd.
 7/26 - Kim Jacobsen attended the book club discussion
- **D&I Committee Meeting**
Attendees: 9
 7/27 – Attorney Jody Walker-Smith, co-chair of the CHRO's Diversity and Inclusion Committee, led a monthly meeting including education and discussion on D&I topics.
- **Connoisseur CT Meeting with Social Media Team**
Attendees: 8
 07/27 Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp, Outreach Coordinator Ana Mitchell, Attorneys Spencer Hill and Jody Walker-Smith, and HRO Representative Courtney Shields met with Ferocious media to develop strategies to improve the traffic to the website of the CHRO.

- **WICC600 Radio Program**
Attendees:
7/28 – Attorney Kim Jacobsen appeared on the WICC600 radio program Melissa in the Morning to discuss Employment Accommodations.
- **CEA Meeting**
Attendees: 12
7/28 – Outreach Coordinator Ana Mitchell and Legislator Liaison, Darcy Strand lead the monthly meeting to discuss ways to educate various communities.
- **Equity and Discrimination Law**
Attendees: 8
7/28 – Attorney Jody Walker-Smith led a monthly meeting with the Legal Department on topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion in relation to discrimination law and our work.
7/28 - Kim Jacobsen attended the discussion
- **Advancing Racial Equity Symposium co-sponsorship**
Attendees: 4
07/29 Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp and Outreach Coordinator Ana Mitchell met with officials from the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity to discuss partnership for the Racial Equity Symposium.
- **CITY ARTS FESTIVAL 2022**
Attendees: 100
07/30 Outreach Coordinator Ana Mitchell participated in the Arts Festival where we offered the stakeholders of Waterbury an opportunity to be educated on the various services offered by CHRO.

Future Outreach Activities:

- **August Social Media**
The CHRO's Social Media Team of Jody Walker-Smith, Courtney Shields, and Spencer Hill are planning to create posts for the agency's Facebook and Instagram accounts.
- **Fair Share Consortium**
08/01 CHRO is collaborating with nonprofits and community leaders to address housing discrimination in the state. Open Communities Alliance has included the CHRO as a partner.
- **Kids Court Academy Year 2**
08/02, 08/16 This Program is an outgrowth or expansion of the CT Kids Speak and CT Kids Court Programs. CT Kids Court Academy is a free, 15-week attorney and social justice pipeline program for middle school and high school students.
- **NFHTA Virtual Convening titled We're All In This Movement Together**
8/2 – Attorney Jody Walker-Smith will serve as CHRO representative at this fair housing event by the National Fair Housing Training Academy discussing how NFHTA can support FHAPs like the CHRO.

- **Fair Housing Training**
8/3 Attorney Kim Jacobsen and Michelle Dumas Keuler will present fair housing training to the public
- **Fair Share Consortium**
08/10 CHRO is collaborating with nonprofits and community leaders to address housing discrimination in the state. Open Communities Alliance has included the CHRO as a partner.
- **CHRO's D&I Book Club**
8/17 – Attorney Jody Walker-Smith will attend and lead discussion in the monthly CHRO's Diversity and Inclusion Book Club – this month's book is Unbound: My Story of Liberation and the Birth of the Me Too Movement by Tarana Burke.
- **IABPFF Golden Anniversary presentation**
08/25 Executive Director Tanya Hughes and Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp will present regarding the CHRO mission and the complaint process, the importance of documentation before submitting any type of complaint, as well as sexual harassment and employment discrimination.
- **D&I Committee Meeting**
8/31 – Attorney Jody Walker-Smith, co-chair of the CHRO's Diversity and Inclusion Committee, will lead a monthly meeting including education and discussion on D&I topics.
- **Civil Rights Museum Planning meeting**
Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp will set up a planning meeting with some members of the Executive Committee and Real Art Ways to select a date for the unveiling of the museum and the procurement of art, artifacts, and materials for the museum.
- **Equity and Discrimination Law**
9/1 – Attorney Jody Walker-Smith will lead a monthly meeting with the Legal Department on topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion in relation to discrimination law and our work.

GRANTS

We wrapped up the three grants from HUD: CARES, Health Equity and COVID-19. We were awarded a HUD partnership grant so that CHRO can partner with the Connecticut Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity (CECSEO) to plan a fair housing webinar and video PSA. We have also applied for several grants with OPM to use CARE funds for civil rights convention, conference and to get needed staff and equipment to meet the demands presented post-pandemic.

VIDEO PROJECTS

- **PSA on Allyship**

The Executive Interns of the CHRO have created a public service announcement on allyship. It was released to the general public in mid-August of 2020.
- **Life after Incarceration Video Project**

The Executive and Deputy Directors and members of the legal department will begin production of a documentary film on policing, incarceration, and civil rights in Connecticut. The film will focus on Connecticut as a national leader in reducing the number of incarcerated individuals in Connecticut and the civil rights forward thinking and action in Connecticut. It will focus on the housing and employment challenges faced by formerly incarcerated individuals and will be used as a training tool for future seminars and conferences that will focus on this topic. This is a long-term project with a target date of 2022 for completion. The project will focus on the lives of at least three formerly incarcerated individuals and look at any civil rights injustices that may have contributed to the negative outcomes for these three individuals. Two formerly incarcerated individuals were interviewed for the film, by CHRO intern Matt Stayner.
- **What is Affirmative Action? What is Contract Compliance? Video Project**

In order to address the misnomers related to affirmative action and contract compliance the CHRO will develop, produce, post and distribute a short video project about affirmative action and contract compliance, its purpose, who is helped, what it all means, how people in the state of Connecticut are helped by these programs, the detrimental effects of not having these types of programs and how both programs are good for business and business friendly. The project will be led by CHRO Deputy Director, the AA/CC Unit and CHRO Attorney Michelle Dumas Keuler.
- **SB3**

On October 1, 2019, the CHRO rolled out its sexual harassment training video that was filmed at 450 Columbus Boulevard in Hartford. The video is available to all CT employers and their staff. The video complies with the statutory mandate that the CHRO provide training materials and a free training for the public by October 1, 2019. The law changed in 2021 and has been updated; so has the video.
- **From Lemonade to Light Post Documentary**

The CHRO will be producing a documentary film that has been entitled from Lemonade to Light Post. The focus of the film is human trafficking as a civil rights issue in Connecticut. Human trafficking disproportionately affects African American females in Connecticut and the CHRO will define the issues and interview experts who can help solve the crisis in Connecticut. The CHRO will also take a broader look at the issue to address all the civil rights issues embedded within the subject matter of human trafficking

CONTRACT COMPLIANCE/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION OUTREACH

Future Activities:

None Reported

Past Activities:

AA/CC

AA TA: N/A

AA Meetings: N/A

AA Special Projects: N/A

CC TA: **1481**

CC TA Session: 9

None Reported

- **Contract Compliance Technical Assistance Training**
Attendees: 9

REGIONAL OUTREACH AND HOUSING AT A GLANCE

Housing

Future Activities:

None Reported

Past Activities:

- **Summer Symposium – Dobbs v. Jackson**
Attendees: 1
7/19 - Cynthia Dryfe attended.
- **NHFTA Fundamentals of Fair Housing – FHAP Investigation**
Attendees: 3
7/22 - Investigating cases when housing providers use criminal records as a basis to discriminate. Jon Sykes, Cynthia Dryfe and Marisol Sala attended.
- **Diversity & Inclusion Committee**
Attendees: 2
7/27 - Monthly committee meeting. Jon Sykes and Shana Brown attended.

Capitol Region

Future Activities

None Reported

Past Activities

- **Holocaust Survivors Webinar with Holocaust Education Resource Office, CHRO & Real Arts Way**
Attendees: 5 Ann Galer and Ronald Simpson
7/1 meeting
- **Greater Hartford African American Alliance**
Attendees: 20 Ronald Simpson
7/9 meeting
- **Upper Albany NRZ**
Attendees: 8 Ronald Simpson
7/19 meeting
- **Farmington Human Relations Commission meeting**
Attendees: Laura Roxbury and Attorney Michelle Dumas Keuler
7/25 meeting

Eastern Region

Future Activities

- **Norwich National Night Out**
Attendees: ?
8/2 - Robert Aldi and Cathy Chester to attend at Howard T Brown Park at Marina.
- **GNACC Health Living Festival Meeting**
Attendees: ?
8/3 - Cathy Chester to attend walk-through at Dodd Stadium to view the space and determine how we will set up the vendors for festival in September.
8/19 - Cathy Chester to attend biweekly meeting to button up the last things for the festival
- **Farmers' Market at Marina**
Attendees:
8/3, 8/10, 8/17, 8/24, and 8/31
- **GNACC Legislative Committee Meeting**
Attendees:
8/4 - Robert Aldi and Cathy Chester to attend monthly meeting
- **Celebrate Cultural Diversity Committee Meeting**
Attendees: ?
8/8 and 8/22 - Cathy Chester to attend biweekly meeting to get ready for festival in September.

- **CHRO Tech Committee Meeting**
Attendees:
8/8 - Cathy Chester to attend monthly meeting.
- **D & I Book Club Meeting**
Attendees:
8/17

Past Activities

- **GNACC Legislative Committee Meeting**
Attendees: 5 people
7/7 - Robert Aldi and Cathy Chester attended the monthly meeting to discuss ideas for more interactive “breakfasts” with our local representatives.
- **CHRO Tech Committee Meeting**
Attendees: 8 people
7/11 - Cathy Chester attended the monthly meeting to discuss issues that have come up in the regions. Update on the pending ‘refresh’ of our agency-wide computers.
- **Celebrate Cultural Diversity Committee Meeting**
Attendees: 5 people
7/11 and 7/25 - Cathy Chester attended the biweekly meeting to discuss obtaining sponsorships and vendors for the festival on September 19, 2022 at Marina (aka Howard T Brown Park). Also updated the sponsor/vendor forms for distribution.
- **Farmers’ Market at Marina**
Attendees: 40+ people
7/13 - Cathy Chester, Zachary Cobb and Mario Garrido manned the weekly farmers’ market table to give out information about our agency and answer questions.
- **GNACC Healthy Living Festival Meeting**
Attendees: 12 people
7/15 - Cathy Chester attended biweekly meeting to discuss obtaining sponsorships and vendors for the upcoming festival scheduled for September 17, 2022, at Dodd Stadium.
- **CHRO Symposium Virtual Conference**
Attendees: 101 people
7/19 - Cathy Chester attended the virtual conference.
- **2022 EEOC-FEPA VIRTUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE**
Attendees: 200 + people
7/19 and 7/21 - Cathy Chester attended the virtual training conference about the new covid requirements and how they apply to our agency for filing purposes and other interesting topics.

- **Diversity and Inclusion Committee Meeting**
Attendees: 9 people
7/27 - Cathy Chester attended monthly meeting discussing Ableism, our new pending newsletter, and social media outreach.
- **CHRO Clerical Meeting**
Attendees:
7/28 - Cathy Chester attended the monthly meeting to discuss clerical issues within the agency and/or solutions we must share.
- **CEA Meeting**
Attendees: 10
7/28 - Cathy Chester attended the monthly meeting

West Central Region

Future Activities

None Reported

Past Activities

- **United Labor Agency**
Attendees: 500+
06/23 (not included in June's report) Representative Gene Cohen connected with the ULA's Executive Director at a Union conference and provided contact information for future reference. Informational material about the CHRO to be sent as a follow up.
- **Diversity & Inclusion Committee**
Attendees: 10
07/05 Trainee Courtney Winch attended subcommittee meeting to begin the process in creating the D&I newsletter
07/11 Trainee Courtney Winch attended the training subcommittee meeting to recap agencywide training presentation.
07/25 Trainee Courtney Winch attended DEI newsletter subcommittee meeting.
07/27 Trainee Courtney Winch attended the D&I monthly meeting.
- **Dobbs v Jackson Symposium**
Attendees: 90+
07/19 Trainee Christopher Blustein attended the online seminar/symposium regarding the USSC's decision to effectively overturn Roe v. Wade.
- **Community Engagement Ambassadors**
Attendees: 5
07/28 Trainee Courtney Winch attended the monthly Community Engagement Ambassador meeting.

Southwest Region

Future Activities

- **CHRO Diversity and Inclusion Committee and Subcommittee**
Southwest Human Rights Representative Courtney Shields and HR Trainee Abygail Meeks will attend the meetings and participate in researching and writing agency posts.
- **CHRO Technology Committee**
Southwest Human Rights Representative Jessica Kohut will attend the meeting to discuss current tech. issues and best practices to best assist the agency and the Southwest region.
- **CHRO Kids Court Academy**
Southwest HR Representative Debra Drexler plans to volunteer as a facilitator.

Past Activities

- **DEI Newsletter Subcommittee Meeting**
Attendees: 5
7/5 - Southwest Regional HRO Representatives Courtney Shields and Courtney Winch met with Human Rights Attorneys Jody Walker-Smith, Spencer Hill, and Megan Grant to work on an ongoing project to create a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Newsletter on behalf of the agency.
- **D&I Agency-Wide Training Subcommittee Meeting**
Attendees: 5
7/11 - Southwest Regional HRO Representatives Courtney Shields and Courtney Winch met with Human Rights Attorneys Jody Walker-Smith, Spencer Hill, and Megan Grant to discuss feedback on the subcommittee's agency-wide training in June 2022.
- **National Constitution Center Annual Supreme Court Review**
Attendees: Unknown—Online Webinar
7/12 - Southwest Regional HRO Representatives Courtney Shields attended a webinar hosted by the National Constitution Center and ADL featuring distinguished legal experts Erwin Chemerinsky, Gregory G. Garre, Amy Howe, and Frederick Lawrence discussing the important cases of the term including voting rights, church-state separation, reproductive rights, and immigration. They also discussed the impact of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson's confirmation to the Court and what to expect next term.
- **Social Media Team Meeting**
Attendees: 3
7/15 - Southwest Regional HRO Representative Courtney Shields met with Human Rights Attorneys Jody Walker-Smith and Spencer Hill to plan the agency's social media posts for the month of August 2022.

- **CHRO Annual Summer Symposium**
Attendees: 102
 7/19 - 10:00 AM-12:00 PM. Southwest Regional HRO Representative Courtney Shields attended the CHRO's summer symposium featuring a panel discussing the repercussions of SCOTUS' decision in Dobbs v. Jackson. Attended by Deb Drexler and Courtney Shields
- **EEOC/FEPA Virtual Conference**
Attendees: Approximately 100
 7/19-7/21 - Attended by Cathy Kendall, Deb Drexler, Christine Rowan
- **D&I Committee Meeting**
Attendees: 9
 7/27 - The D&I Committee met to provide each other with updates on ongoing projects, including an updated internal version and new external version of the Respectful & Inclusive Terms Reference Guide.
- **Social Media Team meeting with the Executive Team and Ferocious**
Attendees: 9
 7/27- 2:00 PM The agency's social media team will meet with Outreach Coordinator Ana Mitchell and a media consultant to discuss consistent messaging across platforms and post optimization.
- **Social Media Team Editing & Publishing**
Attendees: 3
 Southwest Regional HRO Representative Courtney Shields and Human Rights Attorneys Jody Walker-Smith and Spencer Hill will work together throughout the month to review, edit, and finalize all posts published on the agency's social media accounts.
- **Syngap Research Fund Virtual Caregiver Meeting**
Attendees: 13 people
 7/27 - 6-8pm, Discussed CHRO/EEOC missions and complaint process. Answered questions. Attended by Christine Rowan
- **CHRO D&I Book Club**

Attended by Christine Rowan
- **Community outreach (informal/non-event)**
Locations: Pretty Little Witchcraft, LLC (Seymour, CT), Talisman and Cauldron (Derby, CT), Effigy (Monroe, CT), Curious Goods (West Haven, CT), Circle Care Health Center (Norwalk, CT), Triangle Community Center (Norwalk, CT), Church of Eternal Light (Bethel, CT)

Dates and attendees varied. Provided opportunities to meet and provide literature to local business owners, clergy and community centers particularly serving the LGBTQ+ and Pagan community in Connecticut. The receptions were warm and very positive, as folks are glad to have information available in the event members of the community, they serve need the CHRO. Similar efforts are planned, focusing on community centers for other faiths, such as the Muslim and Sikh communities of Connecticut. Attended by Jesse Kohut

Social Media Posts – Courtney Shields:

- **Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act**

Attendance: Social Media Post, Facebook Reach: 154; Instagram Reach: 67

7/2 - Southwest Regional HRO Representative Courtney Shields created images for a social media post celebrating the Anniversary of the passage of the Civil Rights Act.

- **French American Heritage Month**

Attendance: Social Media Post, Facebook Reach: 222; Instagram Reach: 61

7/8 - Southwest Regional HRO Representative Courtney Shields drafted and created images for a social media post celebrating French American Heritage Month.

Text of Post: July is French American Heritage Month, which is dedicated to celebrating the contributions of all Americans with French heritage. This includes not only those directly descended from France but all communities that share French heritage including French Canadians, Acadians, Cajuns, and Louisiana Creole.

Today, approximately, 11.8 million Americans have French- or French-Canadian heritage in the U.S., with about two million of those speaking French at home. Though the U.S. Census Bureau does not provide statistics on the number of Americans that have French ancestry, in 2017, the Bureau found that the largest concentrations of French-speaking households nationwide were in New York, California, Florida, Louisiana, and Texas. Connecticut ranked #16 on this list with just under 25,000 French-speaking households. As one of the major colonial powers in North America, France and French Americans have had a long history in our country. From the founding of New Orleans to the gift of the Statute of Liberty commemorating the alliance of France and the U.S. during the American Revolution, France and the U.S. have a long history of coming together during times of upheaval.

French Americans have also made countless contributions to art, politics, science, and more. Chloë Sevigny, Timothée Chalamet, and Robert Duvall count among the many famous American actors with French ancestry, while classic French food dishes such as Coq Au Vin, Croque Monsieur, or Brioche bread are featured on menus nationwide.

French influence continues to be well-represented in several areas of the U.S. today. For example, the Cajun population of southern Louisiana and parts of Texas evolved from French Acadians who traveled from the Canadian province of Nova Scotia to the U.S. in the early 1700's. Preferring the more rural parts of the area, Cajuns settled into fishing and farming life, as reflected in many well-known Cajun dishes such as gumbo, jambalaya, and crawfish boils.

With European, African, and Native American influences, southern Louisiana in particular is home to rich music, including the blues and dance of Creole music, fiddle, guitar, and

accordion of Cajun music, and up-tempo Afro-Caribbean Zydeco music created and enjoyed throughout the region.

To celebrate this month, enjoy some French or French-influenced American art, literature, or cuisine, and inspire others to celebrate with you by providing ways to appreciate French Americans in the comments below.

- **Anniversary of the Signing of the Seneca Falls Convention**

Attendance: Social Media Post, Facebook Reach: 46; Instagram Reach: 63

7/19 - Southwest Regional HRO Representative Courtney Shields drafted and created images for a social media post celebrating anniversary of the signing of the Seneca Falls Convention.

Text of Post: The Seneca Falls Convention was held in Seneca Falls, New York on July 19-20, 1848. It was the first women's rights convention in the U.S. According to an ad placed in the Seneca County Courier on July 14, 1848, the Convention was organized to "discuss the social, civil and religious condition and rights of women." While the Convention marked an important milestone in the fight for women's rights, it also intentionally focused on the rights of White women to the exclusion and exploitation of women of color. As the fight for women's rights has taken on new importance in the wake of Roe v. Wade's repeal, the lessons of race and the Seneca Falls Convention are timelier than ever.

The convention was spearheaded by now familiar figures like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Mary McClintock, Martha Coffin Wright, and Jane Hunt. Approximately 260 White women and approximately 40 White men attended the convention, as well as renowned abolitionist Frederick Douglass, the only Black person invited. On the first day of the convention, Stanton read the "Declaration of Sentiments and Grievances" which had been modeled after the Declaration of Independence. The new Declaration's preamble declared that "all men and women are created equal; and that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights..." Both Declarations were silent as to race. This silence in the face of slavery and racism was an implicit acknowledgement that the "all" in "all men and women" meant only White people.

The new Declaration was hailed as revolutionary for its time and raised important issues. The Convention universally adopted it, bringing attention to gender inequality on a scale not realized in the U.S. before. Twelve resolutions were adopted in addition to the Declaration, demanding for women to be regarded as equal to men, to have equal rights within the church, and equal access to employment. They called for the disregard of any law placing women in an inferior position to men. The ninth resolution, which called for the right to vote, marked the beginning of the women's suffrage movement and led to passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920 finally granting White women the right to vote. This was a major victory at the time and it took many men and women decades of struggle and at times their lives in order to achieve. It also left behind women of color.

Incrementalism is touted as a practical approach to progress, but too often results in prioritizing the rights of one oppressed group before the rights of another. The Seneca Falls Convention did not fight for equal rights for all women despite the way some history books describe it. By taking it for granted that White women were interchangeable with "all women," those who began the fight for women's equality at Seneca Falls erased women of color from their movement, condemning them to an additional century's long struggle to achieve the rights won for a few. It wasn't until passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that the Convention's call for the right to vote was truly realized for all women.

Today, we are faced with a renewed need to fight for women's rights. The recent Supreme Court decision overturning Roe v. Wade has stripped women of what had been a constitutionally protected right to bodily autonomy. As the work for women's rights continues, remember the lesson of the Seneca Falls Convention. Fighting for the rights of all means not stopping when a few can claim victory. Instead, the work must continue until the goals of the Convention's Declaration become a reality and all genders – regardless of race – are equal and endowed with inalienable rights

Media Inquiries: 0

Meetings: 2

Inquiries: 12

Public hearings: n/a

Sexual Harassment Law: 132(July) and 6943(cumulative)55