



**WORKING
AMERICA**
A Community Affiliate of the AFL-CIO

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MEMORANDUM

To: Deborah Greenfield

From: Karen Nussbaum

Re: U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau

Date: December 12, 2008

I am providing comments on the Women's Bureau for your review of U.S. Department of Labor agencies, pursuant to the discussion between the two of us about the Women's Bureau on November 25, 2008.

I served as the Director of the Women's Bureau for the first 3 years of the Clinton Administration and have a lifetime of professional experience as an advocate for women workers in the women's movement, the union movement and currently as the executive director of Working America, community affiliate of the AFL-CIO.

I have a deep appreciation of the importance of this agency if led well. The Women's Bureau has an important Congressional mandate -- to promote the welfare of wage-earning women -- and a significant national infrastructure. It also does not have a specific enforcement responsibility. This combination is the greatest strength of the Women's Bureau and creates the greatest opportunity for abuse. The crucial factor is leadership.

In the last 8 years, as in the 12 years of Republican Administration prior to my time at the Women's Bureau, we've seen a moribund agency at best and a perversion of the mandate at worst. Under a strong, focused and creative leader, the Women's Bureau is uniquely positioned to support sweeping changes in economic and workforce policy. This is precisely the time to take full advantage of the resources of the Women's Bureau, its standing as a government agency to promote solutions in the public, its ability to engage women workers who are among the most seriously affected by the economic crisis and who can help lead their communities to a better day.

The Women's Bureau can also play an important role in moving Department-wide initiatives and directly supporting the work of the President and the First Lady, should she choose to be involved in working women's issues.

I hope you find these comments useful. I am happy to provide additional information.