JeS0 to the NEWS

by PHYLLIS SCHLAFLY

Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002
Phone: 618-462-5415

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INTERNATIONAL WO N'S YEAR

How does the Federal bureaucracy fund new projects which Congress has not approved and for which Congress has not appropriated any money? A good example is provided by the way Federal tax dollars are currently being spent for International Women's Year.

Earlier this year, Congresswoman Bella Abzug introduced a bill to create a National Commission on International Women's Year (H.R.4346),f It requests an appropriation of $3.5 million, although leaks from persons friendly to this project have intimated that they will be sa tisfied with a grant of $700,000.

Although the bill has not yet even come up for a vote in the House, on April 2 President Ford appointed the National Commission on Inter national Women's Year, with Jill Ruckelshaus as chairman, and 35 mem bers including Alan Alda, whose claim to fame is from the television program "M*A*S*H. 11

The IWY Commission is not waiting for Congress to vote the money, but has already opened an office in the State Department and hired a staff of 13. It is operating on secret grants from other Federal De partments during fiscal year 1975 as follows: State Department: $50,000; HEW:$125,000; Transportation: $35,000; Interior: $20,000; Justice: $10,000; Defense: the services of a 35_{1}$000 executiv ; Labor: the ser vice of a $35,000 executive; USIA: the services of two executives.

For FY 1976, the State Department has already pledged an additional $75,000 and HUD has pledged $35,000.

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At its first meeting on April 15, the IWY Commission pledged to give top priority to ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. The resolution passed by the Commission promised "to do all in our capacity (that is, on our tax money) to see that ERA is ratified at the earliest possible moment."

The chairman and members of the Commission have already made it clear in their first press conference in Washington, followed by appearances on all three television networks, that ERA is their first and perhaps only tangible objective.

The amending process is the one part of our entire governmental system in which the executive branch of our government has no part whatsoever. It is strictly a legislative matter. A constitutional amendment goes directly from the U.S. Congress to the state legislatures for ratification. Neither the President of the United States nor the governor of any state can sign or veto a constitutional amendment. To put it bluntly, it is none of their business.

Missouri recently became the fifteenth state this year to reject ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. Only one state ratified in 1975. Is Federal tax money now going to be used to force the states to ratify a constitutional amendment that cannot succeed on its own merits?

The National Commission on International Women's Year is the domestic offshoot of a United Nations project of the same name which is engaged in a hard-sell consumer campaign to promote the concept of "equality" between men and women throughout the world. The UN has appropriated $350,000 to stage a big conference in Mexico City later this year, a sort of international "consciousness-raising" session. How much of this money and effort will spill over into the campaign for ratification of ERA in the United States is still an open question.

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