

The *Contract with Women of the USA* A Model of Policy Advocacy to Promote Self-Determination

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Preface – Creating the *Contract with Women of the USA*

The 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing adopted a *Declaration and Platform for Action*, unanimously endorsed by 189 government delegations, including the United States. These governments thus created a powerful agenda for women’s equality and human rights worldwide – and an important organizing and advocacy tool for social change. Indeed, feminist organizations, scholars, and policy makers in many countries have used their governments’ endorsement of the *Platform* at Beijing to press their leaders to make its promises a centerpiece of public policy and social programs.

The *Platform for Action* addresses 12 “critical areas of concern” that define obstacles to the full equality of women and girls: poverty, education and training, health, violence, armed conflict, the economy, decision making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights, media, the environment, and the girl-child. The accompanying *Declaration* “reaffirmed the commitment of Governments to eliminate discrimination against women and to remove all obstacles to equality. . . . [and] recognized the need to

ensure a gender perspective in their policies and programmes” (United Nations Department of Public Information, 1995).

As Bella Abzug declared in Beijing: “We have a contract here – that’s what we call the *Platform for Action* from the Beijing conference – a contract with the world’s women. It may not be legally binding, but I believe it is politically binding” (Center for Women Policy Studies, 2000a). Together, the Center and Bella Abzug’s organization, the Women’s Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), took steps to make this vision a reality in the United States.

Our partnership and the **Contract with Women of the USA** began almost by accident – but really because we were in the right place at the right time with similar purposes – and we were able to immediately understand, based on our years of policy advocacy, that we had experienced a powerful “explosive moment” that would move our women’s human rights agenda forward (see Wolfe and Tucker, 1995, for an explanation of the theory of “explosive moments”). At the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) Fourth National Forum for Women State Legislators in San Diego in November 1995, Bella Abzug gave a keynote address about the Beijing conference and the Platform for Action.

Later that same day, Center president Leslie R. Wolfe and vice president Jennifer Tucker convened a long-planned informal meeting with several women legislators to discuss strategies to respond to anti-woman policies generated by the right wing in their states and to promote a multiethnic

feminist policy agenda. This conversation – and the inspiration Bella’s speech gave to legislators -- provided the initial impetus for the Center to find a new approach to implementation of the Beijing *Platform for Action*.

Together, the Center and WEDO “translated” the Beijing *Platform for Action* into a set of 12 principles that are specifically relevant to promotion of women’s human rights in the United States. We named it the ***Contract with Women of the USA*** to reflect Bella’s assertion that this is a “politically binding” contract – a tool for policy advocacy that enables us to hold our Nation’s leaders accountable for implementing the commitment they signed in Beijing.

In fact, the ***Contract with Women of the USA*** reflects many of the enduring principles that have guided the Center’s work since its founding in 1972 – ending the burden of poverty, ensuring access to quality health care, guaranteeing women’s sexual and reproductive rights, ensuring women’s workplace rights, promoting educational equity for girls and women, and ending violence against women, for example.

Further, the ***Contract*** -- and the **State Legislators Initiative** through which we implement it -- represents a policy tool that brings the Center’s unique multiethnic and multi-issue feminist mission into the mainstream. Indeed, the Center’s mission and theory in many ways operationalize the academic term “intersectionality.” We use a variety of strategies to put our multiethnic and multicultural feminist ideology into practice – thus implementing “intersectionality” in the public policy realm.

The Center grounds its work in the belief that policy must address the *combined* impact of women’s multiple identities – by gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, age, disability status, and immigration status. The Center’s work seeks to reflect women’s kaleidoscopic diversity and to bring the self-defined needs of women, particularly women of color, to the policy table.

A hallmark of the Center’s 31 year history as an institution with a multi-issue focus has been our ability to identify cutting edge issues and trends that are not yet the topic of public policy debate, to define them from women’s diverse perspectives using research and policy analysis methods, to shape multiethnic feminist responses and research-based policy options, and to produce materials that can influence the coming debate and help transform the public discourse.

We also apply our multiethnic feminist lens to our assessment of current social, economic, and political trends – especially to women’s policy issues that have become “chic” -- to understand their potential impact on women who have been rendered invisible and marginalized by the prevailing assumption that “all” women will by definition benefit equally from certain progressive policy options, such as unpaid family leave, for example.

Because our primary audiences are policy makers and advocates, we often use clarifying images to characterize our stereotype-breaking and norm-changing ideological and theoretical assumptions. For example, many of our colleagues do not immediately understand why we consider “inclusiveness” to

be an inappropriate term and strategy; we explain that the term and the practice – in both activism and research -- imply the need to understand “the other” in the context of what is assumed to be “real” and normative – that which is white, middle class, heterosexual, and non-disabled.

To concretize our mission to create and define a new norm in “user-friendly” terms, therefore, we often use the image of women worldwide as being “in the same boat.” Some of us -- by virtue of our race, ethnicity, class, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, nation of origin – are in first class cabins, some are working in the kitchen, and some remain locked in the cargo hold. The boat is stratified by race, class and gender; it is often brutal and dangerous – and it is governed by patriarchal assumptions. Our goal is to develop research-based policy analyses that will change the norms, assumptions, and practices of the institutions that govern our lives.

The Center conducts its policy research and advocacy in three ways. First, we conduct original policy-relevant research and policy analyses on underexplored issues and with marginalized groups of women; the Center’s research is designed to bring the self-defined needs of women of color from margins to center, to break stereotypes about women and girls, and to look at issues in true multiethnic perspective that includes both women of color and white women. Second, we “translate” existing data and research studies into policy-relevant terms and formats that policy makers will find accessible and significant for their own work. And third, we convene diverse groups to take

the conversation on difficult and/or new issues to the next level (see Wolfe, 2001).

Given its unique mission and strategies, the Center was especially well positioned to take on its special role in post-Beijing implementation activities in the United States defined by our ***Contract with Women of the USA State Legislators Initiative***.

Indeed, the Center's "niche" since 1996 has been to build a network of women state legislators – and several men – in all 50 states who endorse the ***Contract's*** principles and work to implement them in their states. In this era of devolution of many federal responsibilities to the states, the leadership of women state legislators is especially crucial in the struggle to preserve and expand women's human rights. And a powerful group of legislators worked with the Center to launch the ***Contract with Women of the USA*** in 1996.

Launching the *Contract with Women of the USA State Legislators Initiative*

On March 8, 1996 – International Women's Day – the Center and WEDO officially announced the creation of the ***Contract with Women of the USA*** and the Center launched the **State Legislators Initiative** with women's legislative caucuses in six states – Arizona, California, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota and New York. Women state legislators in these states hosted media events in their state capitols to publicly pledge their support for the ***Contract's*** principles and to announce their own ***Contracts*** with the women of their states. On April 15 – Income Tax Day – women legislators in Florida and

Oregon reflected on the persistence of the wage gap and women's lower economic status in announcing their state **Contracts** at a series of press events.

In each state, legislators used the national **Contract with Women of the USA** as a model for creation of their own state-relevant and specific documents and activities. In Arizona, a coalition of legislators and members of the Arizona delegation to the Beijing conference launched the **Contract with the Women of Arizona**. California legislators announced the **Contract with California's Women**. And Illinois legislators introduced a resolution in their legislature supporting the **Contract with Women of the USA**.

More than 25 Maryland women legislators introduced the **Pledge to Maryland Women** as a legislative resolution. And the Minnesota Democratic Farmer Labor (DFL) Women's Caucus announced the **Covenant with Minnesota Women**. The New York Legislative Women's Caucus announced **Women 2000: Putting Women on the Public Policy Agenda**, a five year plan to integrate women's issues into the state's public policy agenda.

The Center was successful in these states largely because women legislators already were well organized and committed to promoting a women's issues policy agenda – through their existing women's legislative caucuses. However, it soon became clear that replicating these first eight state **Contracts** in other states that had less active legislative women's caucuses, or that had not yet created caucuses, would strain the Center's staff and financial resources and likely produce limited success. We therefore

decided to create a different strategy to engage far larger numbers of legislators throughout the United States in the **State Legislators Initiative**.

Building the State Legislators Initiative

The Center therefore created a **National Honor Roll of State Legislators** and invited all 1500 women state legislators in the United States to sign on to the principles of the ***Contract with Women of the USA*** and, thereby, become members of the **Honor Roll**. On Women's Equality Day, August 26, 1996 – the 76th anniversary of women's suffrage – we announced the charter members of the **Honor Roll** (current and alumnae members of the **Honor Roll** are listed at www.centerwomenpolicy.org).

The **Honor Roll** now numbers 500 current and former state legislators – both women and men. It is a powerful network of policy makers who support the women's human rights agenda reflected in the **Contract with Women of the USA**. Though ours is not the only network of women state legislators in the United States, it is the only one which is explicitly women's issues-based and built on a commitment to a pro-choice, multiethnic feminist policy agenda. We therefore have created a unique “niche” for the Center among other national women's organizations and organizations that work with state legislators.

The legislators who participate in our work are the ones most likely to take leadership on legislative and policy initiatives to implement the **Contract's** principles and to stand up for women's rights in their legislatures, in their own districts, and in the federal policy arena. Today, **Honor Roll** alumnae serve in

the United States House of Representatives, in the United States Senate, and in statewide offices – including Governor.

Creating New Materials

The Center – serving as their “national staff” – provides these legislators with special support and assistance. And this is a key to our success, as we perform the duties both of state legislative staff members and national policy leaders. For example, we maintain a state legislative clearinghouse for innovative legislation on women’s issues – and share individual legislators’ model bills with their colleagues in other states.

State Legislative Report. Our newsletter, the *State Legislative Report*, provides updated information on federal policy and legislation and on state efforts to implement the **Contract’s** principles. Starting in 2002, we have published the newsletter online – sending it by email to state legislators and posting it on our website – while still faxing or mailing it to those legislators who do not use email. Beginning with the February 2003 issue, we substantially revised the newsletter’s format -- to make the *State Legislative Report* shorter, to produce it every other month (or six times per year), and to focus each issue on a particular policy concern.

For example, the February 2003 issue addressed some of the reproductive rights and health issues currently being debated nationally and in state legislatures across the country. The April 2003 issue highlighted progress on another of the Center’s signature issues – access to postsecondary education as the route to economic self-sufficiency for low

income women, including recipients of welfare assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. And the June/July 2003 issue focused on a relatively new policy issue for state legislators – but one that the Center has been addressing since 1999 – sexual trafficking of women and girls into the United States.

Action Alerts, Op-Eds, and Letters to the Editor: Our other materials for legislators respond to their self-expressed need for short pieces that they can use immediately. Thus, we send regular *Action Alerts* on timely federal and state policy issues. For example, we have produced a series of *Action Alerts* to encourage legislators to share information about state welfare reform needs with their national representatives during the TANF reauthorization process. We also have sent legislators several *Alerts* over the years on the range of reproductive rights and health issues – from the impact of the Global Gag Rule on women worldwide to state legislative efforts to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, for example. All of these *Alerts* remain available to legislators for up to five years.

Because legislators' voices must be heard in their own communities on key women's policy issues, we prepare op-eds and letters to the editor for legislators to place in their own local newspapers – thus bringing the Center's research and policy analyses to larger audiences and expanding awareness of a range of women's human rights issues nationwide. For example, we have used this strategy to encourage legislators to educate their constituents on the international women's rights treaty – the Convention on the Elimination of All

Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), sexual trafficking of women and girls as a US problem, HIV/AIDS prevention for girls and young women, and the importance of college as a route out of poverty for women.

Policy Research and Analyses: In addition, the Center produces a variety of other materials for legislators – all designed to help them decipher and manage the impact of the “devolution revolution” -- new federal laws that simultaneously delegate more responsibility to the states while restricting federal financial support and creating new limits on traditional areas of state jurisdiction. We produce extensive policy analyses for both federal and state policy makers – and for the advocates who are policy influencers at both levels.

Our 2002 report, *From Poverty to Self-Sufficiency: The Role of Postsecondary Education in Welfare Reform* (available for download at www.centerwomenpolicy.org), is the first to include both a persuasive, research and data-based argument for allowing TANF recipients to count postsecondary education as an allowable work activity and also an extensive policy analysis of state laws implementing the TANF program since its passage by Congress in 1996. Indeed, we found that 49 states and the District of Columbia currently include some form of postsecondary education as an allowable work activity for TANF recipients – information that policy makers and advocates have found invaluable during the Congressional reauthorization effort for TANF during 2002 and 2003.

We also share the Center's other publications with legislators, thus providing them with more in-depth research and policy analyses on such key issues as the women's HIV/AIDS epidemic in the United States (see Gaberman and Wolfe, 1999; Wolfe et al, 1999; Rochelle and Wolfe, 1999), Medicaid managed care (see Center for Women Policy Studies, 1998a), violence against women and girls (see Fiduccia and Wolfe, 1999; Copeland and Wolfe, 1991; Center for Women Policy Studies, 2001), and work/family and workplace diversity (see Tucker et al, 1999), for example. Based on legislators' responses, we develop action alerts, action kits, op-eds, and letters to the editor on these and other issues. Indeed, our first two *State Legislators Action Kits* – on access to postsecondary education for low income women and on women and HIV/AIDS – “translate” much of our research and policy analysis into short pieces, or fact sheets, that focus on the policy implications for the states.

Convenings

From the Center's early days, we have considered our convening function to be a significant part of our policy research and advocacy programs. Indeed, we regularly conduct policy and research seminars and think tanks that bring together scholars, activists, practitioners, and policy makers to discuss difficult, controversial, and/or new trends and topics – with the goal of shaping woman-focused research, policy and advocacy agendas. For example, we brought our research on women's health decision making to a group of practitioners, state legislators, corporate executives, and researchers

at our 1996 **Symposium on Building Partnerships for Women's Health** in Washington (Center for Women Policy Studies, 1997).

Our 1997 **Summit on Girls and Violence** brought together a key group of advocates, researchers, educators, funders, and policy makers to strategize about ways to galvanize attention to the findings of the Center's research, and the research and practice of **Summit** participants, to focus national attention on the devastating violence that plagues the lives of girls and young women – and on the increased willingness of girls to become violent in response (Center for Women Policy Studies, 1998b).

Finally, since its creation in 1987, the Center's **National Resource Center on Women and AIDS Policy** has convened several seminars and think tanks that break new ground in our understanding of the women's HIV/AIDS epidemic and the link between HIV, substance abuse, and reproductive rights issues. For example, our 2000 **Policy Seminar on HIV and Drug Policies** was the first to bring together women involved in substance abuse policy reform and women working on HIV/AIDS to discuss the extent to which policy development in both fields is designed to restrict women's reproductive rights and health (Center for Women Policy Studies, 2000b). And, with the AARP Women's Initiative, the Center convened the first-ever **Seminar on Midlife and Older Women and HIV/AIDS** in 1993 – at which policy makers and advocates learned from leading researchers and practitioners about the then virtually invisible HIV epidemic growing among older women (Center for Women Policy Studies, 1994).

When we launched the ***Contract with Women of the USA State Legislators Initiative*** in 1996, we expanded on this traditional convening strategy to develop specific, focused efforts to bring women legislators together. Our decision making about format, location, and approach was based in large part on our conversations with legislators about what they most want and need from meetings – namely, the opportunity to spend time together to learn about substantive issues that affect them and the women they represent and to learn from each other about what works to make change. In response, we convene workshops and other sessions – including luncheons with nationally known speakers – at the annual conferences of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). We conduct legislative briefings and legislative exchange sessions at NCSL, in Congress, and within specific states.

National Conference of State Legislatures: Because the NCSL annual meeting traditionally has been the prime opportunity for legislators to gather together, we have focused substantial resources on this event. Because we are not officially part of NCSL – which is a well-staffed membership organization of the 50 state legislatures – we function as an “ancillary group” and hold our sessions during the specific times allowed by NCSL. While this limits our options, we have found NCSL staff and elected leaders to be supportive and helpful and we have convened several sessions as part of NCSL annual meetings in recent years.

Our 2000 policy seminar at NCSL, entitled **Women State Legislators on the Cutting Edge – Women’s Health Policy Seminar**, brought together 23 women state legislators to consider issues of access to health care for low income women. Nearly 50 legislators attended our 1999 **Roundtable on Sexual Trafficking of Women and Girls** at NCSL – an exceptional turnout for an issue that had not yet reached national prominence; at this roundtable, many state legislators learned for the first time about proposed federal law (since passed) and about the role of states in addressing this global/local crisis. Demonstrating the extent to which our work since 1999 has had an impact, we were invited to make the overview presentation on trafficking as a state policy issue at an official 2003 NCSL-sponsored session on human trafficking – another first.

NCSL also sponsored a major session on **Women and HIV/AIDS** in 1998 – to showcase then-Miss America Kate Shindle’s work on HIV prevention. The Center for Women Policy Studies, in partnership with the NCSL Women’s Legislative Network, put the session together and brought a group of experts on women and AIDS to the attention of participants – the first time, again, that these critical women’s issues were addressed by NCSL and, sadly, the last to date.

In recent years, again based on our conversations with legislators, we have expanded our convening strategy to initiate a series of “legislative exchange” sessions that respond to legislators’ desire to strategize together on difficult issues. For example, we have convened two legislative exchange

sessions on **Threats to Women's Reproductive Rights and Health** at NCSL – the first in 2001 and the second in 2003. And we also have convened two legislative exchanges at NCSL on access to postsecondary education for low income women – in partnership with the National Education Association (NEA). The first exchange, in 2002, focused on **Preparing for TANF Implementation**, and the second, in 2003, expanded the focus to include the upcoming reauthorization of the *Higher Education Act* by Congress in 2004.

Our **Legislators Luncheons** at NCSL have proved to be one of our most effective strategies – partly because we present excellent speakers and partly because we provide a comfortable atmosphere that promotes their own networking – and delicious food, the importance of which never should be underestimated! Our 2001 luncheon energized legislators on the needs of low income women facing domestic violence and our 2003 luncheon brought them an analysis of the impact of the Supreme Court's affirmative action rulings on their states.

These events go a long way towards engaging state legislators with the Center in both personal and political ways. As they listen to us and our excellent speakers, as they share food and conversation with our staff and each other, they become even more involved with the Center as an entity they care about – as well as an organization they can rely upon for experts assistance in their own legislative work.

We also invite our sister organizations that work with women state legislators to join us as co-sponsors of the **Legislators Luncheons**. This

further deepens our relationships with such organizations as the NCSL Women's Legislative Network, the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), the Women Legislators Lobby of Women's Action for New Directions (WILL/WAND), and the National Organization of Black Elected Legislative Women (NOBEL/Women).

Congressional and State Legislative Briefings and Exchanges:

State legislators rarely have the opportunity to testify before Congress on women's rights issues or to spend time in meetings with Members of Congress, on Capitol Hill – with the exception, of course, of their own Representatives. The Center's Congressional Briefings have begun to change this and, again, to deepen legislators' engagement with the Center. In fact, legislators who speak at these Briefings become committed to the Center in a new way, as we provide them with national visibility and with new opportunities to share information and strategies with their national counterparts.

To follow up on our Congressional Briefings, we bring the same issues and messages home through state briefings and legislative exchange sessions. In 2002, for example, we conducted three Congressional Briefings – followed by state sessions in 2003.

Reproductive Rights: We sponsored a groundbreaking **Legislative Exchange on Reproductive Rights and Health** in June 2002 for the *Congressional Pro-Choice Caucus* of the US House of Representatives. This Briefing brought four women state legislators from four states to Capitol Hill to share their experiences with leaders of the *Congressional Pro-Choice Caucus*

and Congressional staff. Although they are fighting on very different battlefields, pro-choice state legislators and Members of Congress face parallel reproductive rights and health challenges. This Briefing gave them an opportunity to come together to share strategies and struggles, learn from each other, and build shared networks of support.

Following the success of the Congressional Briefing, we convened two state legislative exchange sessions in 2003 – both of which produced unexpected results that demonstrated the importance of such convenings. We began with a legislative exchange in Colorado, a state whose legislature is not led by a pro-choice majority and whose pro-choice legislators rarely succeed in passing bills they introduce. And yet, 10 state legislators participated in the session, and inspired us with their commitment to promoting women’s reproductive rights in their legislature – despite their minority status. These 10 legislators agreed to create a new “Reproductive Freedom Caucus” and to invite all 100 members of the Colorado legislature to join. This was a stunning outcome and will, we hope, help energize pro-choice forces in the legislature and throughout the state.

We convened our first regional legislative exchange -- for pro-choice legislators from two states, Maryland and Virginia. The session gave them an opportunity – which they had never had before – to examine lessons learned in their recent legislative sessions and to develop strategies for the 2004 session. We used this regional strategy for the first time because these neighboring states are in contrasting policy making postures with regard to

women's reproductive rights. For the first time in several years, Maryland's governor is not pro-choice, though the legislature's majority remains pro-choice. In Virginia, the governor now is pro-choice but the legislative majority is strongly anti-choice. Given these mirror images, we thought it would be useful for these legislators to come together for a freewheeling discussion. Despite their differing policy environments today, legislators from both states acknowledged how swiftly things can change and agreed to consider creating their own state reproductive rights legislative caucuses.

Welfare Reform: Four Members of Congress hosted our 2002 **Congressional Briefing on Postsecondary Education as an Effective Welfare Reform Strategy** and our speakers included three women state legislators who had introduced bills to allow TANF recipients to remain in college, as well as two college professors who work with low income students -- and thus were able to bring to Capitol Hill the perspectives of both colleges and their low income students.

This Briefing also marked the beginning of our long term partnership with the National Education Association to address these issues at both the federal and state levels – a partnership that has been invaluable to the Center as it has opened access to educators nationwide who are supportive of legislators' efforts to maintain educational opportunities for TANF recipients and other low income women.

We convened our first state briefing in St. Paul, Minnesota in November of 2002 – shortly after the mid-term election which altered the

state's political landscape. While we had carefully crafted the agenda for the session, which we titled **From Poverty to Self Sufficiency: Preserving Postsecondary Education for Low Income Women**, legislators needed to process the election results and share their concerns about the election's potentially negative impact on their efforts to maintain a focus on higher education for low income women. Indeed, they were most interested in our analysis of changes in the national political landscape since the elections and on the expected restrictions coming with reauthorization of TANF.

Legislators also focused on several issues we had addressed only peripherally – such as the impact on recipients of caseworkers who discourage them from education and strategies legislators can use to influence colleges and universities in the districts they represent, to ensure access for TANF students. Again, we learned from legislators and advocates what their needs are and this has helped us plan our upcoming Congressional Briefings – in anticipation of reauthorization of the Higher Education Act – and state legislative exchange sessions.

Girls and Young Women with Disabilities: The Congressional Bipartisan Disabilities Caucus and the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues co-sponsored our Congressional Briefing on girls and young women with disabilities. In fact, this was, to my knowledge, the first time there had been such a briefing focused on disabled girls in the halls of Congress. In contrast to our other Congressional Briefings, we invited disabled women experts to present these issues to the Members of Congress who lead the

Disabilities Caucus, to Congressional staff, and to disability advocates who joined the audience.

Disability policy and programs rarely consider the particular needs of girls and young women. In short, the field rarely applies the gender lens to its analyses. Therefore, our goal was to provide new information to policy makers and advocates alike rather than to bring legislators to Congress to share their experiences. We now hope to work with disabled women experts in other states to bring their perspectives to state legislators who have not yet become involved in disability policy development that will benefit girls and young women.

To begin this state strategy, the Center partnered with the California-based Disabled Women's Alliance to convene our first state **Legislative Briefing on Girls and Young Women with Disabilities** in Sacramento for California state legislators, staff members, and advocates in August of 2003. We entitled the Briefing "Strong Proud Sisters," after the title of a Center report (Rousso, 2001). We now have developed a model for such state Briefings that will enable the Center to engage legislators on these issues in partnership with a local or statewide disabled women's organization – and then leave the educated policy makers and advocates behind to carry on independently. In many ways, therefore, the Center is engaging in education of legislators and capacity building of state organizations that now are poised for substantial success as policy advocates.

Translating the Model – Other Movements, Other Issues: Discussion Questions

The following discussion questions are just a beginning. I hope they will help participants shape their own strategies for building a policy advocacy effort for the self determination movement. And I hope that learning about the Center’s model will be beneficial and that participants in this conference will look back years hence to think of this session as a launching pad.

But first, you need to consider such questions as:

What is the comparable “hook” to the ***Contract with Women of the USA*** for the self-determination movement?

What are the signature policy initiatives the movement seeks to implement in the states?

Which states are most likely to respond initially – i.e. to function as policy laboratories for the new policy advocacy component of the movement? Criteria for selecting these states might include: presence of relatively strong state and/or local organizations that could take the lead; presence of expert advisors, researchers, advocates; presence of policy makers who are supportive.

Who are the key movement allies on shared policy concerns – including, for instance, women’s groups, parent groups, educators, disability rights groups, independent living centers?

Who are the key movement adversaries and how can they be dealt with?

What are the top five key policy issues that you should begin with – to create a “Contract” or “Bill of Rights” or other document that clearly defines the movement’s policy mission?

What strategies – conferences, materials development, research, legislative exchanges, etc – are most likely to be effective on these issues?

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