

## **OLOC Confronting Sexism Series August 15, 2023 Highlight Notes**

### **An Anatomy of Institutions and their Impact on Girls and Women: Law**

#### **Sally Tatnall**

I am going to be talking about the origin of American law. American law is patterned after British common and civil law processes where law is the individual against the state. And civil law is a person, an argument between people. Early on, the king and the knights determined the law, and it basically was to protect property, riches and religion. As judges began to decide outcomes in law the idea of precedence became the rule. Once a judge had decided something, that decision was encoded for future decisions. The result of this was to bring this process of encoding the prior decisions for future decisions and that is how American law functions. In common law, property and resources became number one priority in past and future decisions. In civil law, the same thing happens. Once a judge decides for the landowner or whoever it is carried into the future. Given that bribery was a very popular way to influence judges in the past, you can see how very fickle the process of deciding cases is. Today, American law is based on all the same things. All these same things that came from Britain. It is rarely based on what might really be fair or just.

#### **Rena Grasso**

I would like to give a somewhat longer historical perspective and to show how powerful the law is to patriarchy and always was from the very beginning. And secondly, to underscore the systematic nature of sexism by which we mean how all of these institutions that we are looking at and the many more that we are going to look at operate as a system. Reinforcing each other, which is what gives sexism, its tenacity and its devastating impact. The first codes of law really were created as patriarchy was in the process of consolidating itself, in other words, at a certain point in history, men became dominant.

Now there are a whole lot of theories, but it happened and one of the first places it happened was in religion. So, around the year, 2,500 BCE were the first codified laws of discrimination against women. But of course, they were just against women because the rise of patriarchy, with slavery and with class, economic oppression. They all go together from the beginning. The other thing is once one realizes this it disabuses you of any idea that you might have that somehow the law is natural, that it's about right and wrong or somehow it is above politics, that the law must be objective. It is not, it is not natural, it is not objective. It is shot through with, with these oppressive values which is now racist, but used to be slaves and a female oppressive society. All of these first major ones around 2100 BCE took place in in the Fertile Crescent, what is now Iraq and we do have fragments of it. The second one took place in Suma in that same area that we think of as the Middle East. But the most famous one and the most extensive one because we have it all is Hammurabi's code which was written down in 1,700 BCE. That is about ten centuries before the Old Testament and has its mosaic laws that were written down. But actually, the code of Hammurabi is being written approximately at the time that biblical scholars believe that Abraham was a person, you know and all of that tribal identity around the Levites and the Hebrews, etc. But the Bible did not get written down or codified until the 7 or 8 century BCE. The mosaic law first of all, certainly underscores that a male consciousness wrote these laws. There is no law against violence against women; rape is not mentioned; nor is wife beating mentioned, it is simply omitted. On the other hand, there are many laws which you can see the values of this society and how women were oppressed. So, for example, women were certainly focused on as the breeders, as mothers important for their reproduction. Therefore, if a man killed a pregnant woman the penalty was that his daughter had to be killed. But if the man kills the daughter of a plebe, a plebe being the word for working class person, still a citizen, but the penalty was a payment. And if the man killed a slave the payment was half of that as their penalty. So, you see how the structures of oppression are all intertwined and is true today. The women are the bottom of it all because amongst the slaves, the women were the least valued and the most oppressed. So, if a woman wanted to divorce she had to prove that her husband was unworthy, she had to prove it in some kind of a court, obviously run by men by something called a water test. Now, I was not able to find out what this water test was, but I was thinking about the witches. Remember how they were dunked into water and if they did not drown, it meant they were innocent but of course most of them drowned which was proof that they were guilty. So, I suspect

something like that, but the point is that if she cannot prove anything and leaves her husband she would be stoned to death. There are a whole bunch of these types of laws that very much clarify how primary women's oppression is amongst all of these interdependent systems of oppression.

So, I want to move up to American law that was based on Blackstone in England and remind everybody that it was only in the late nineteenth century that women could own property. If you were single woman you might be able to purchase property, but the chances that you as a single woman would be able to own property would be very low because whatever work was open to you it would be incredibly low paying. If the money came from an inheritance such as was true for married women everything they owned belonged to their husband. If their husband died, then their male relatives would get it. So basically, women could not own property. Now you know when we put this all together economically it is just systematic oppression. Since women could not own property, they were economically disenfranchised because they were only working class women. They were only working these low-paying oppressive jobs because women were not allowed to have an education. Even when women got it in 1964, Title 7, making a law against discrimination with sex as a category of discrimination was introduced by Southerners who hoped that if they put sex in the statute that northerners would not vote for the anti-discrimination clauses against race. So even then, in 1964 it was an afterthought and remember that it was only with agitation of the second wave of the women's movement that rape in marriage became a crime.

### **Patty O'Donnell**

The Equal Rights Amendment: **"Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."**

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) continues to be a proposed amendment to the United States Constitution designed to guarantee equal legal rights for all United States citizens regardless of sex. Proponents assert it would end legal distinctions between men and women in matters of divorce, property, employment, and other matters. The first version of the ERA was written by Alice Paul and Crystal Eastman and was introduced in Congress in December 1923 and has been introduced each year since.

With the rise of the women's movement in the United States during the 1960s, the ERA garnered increasing support, and, after being reintroduced by United States Representative Martha Griffiths from Michigan in 1971, it was approved by the US House of Representatives on October 12, 1971, and by the US Senate on March 22, 1972, thus submitting the ERA to the state legislatures for ratification, as provided by Article V of the US Constitution.

Congress set a ratification deadline of March 22, 1979, for the state legislatures to consider the ERA. Through 1977, the amendment received 35 of the necessary 38 state ratifications. With wide, bipartisan support (including that of both major political parties, both houses of Congress, and presidents Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, and Jimmy Carter) the ERA seemed destined for ratification until Phyllis Schlafly mobilized conservative women (men) in opposition. These women argued that the ERA would disadvantage housewives, cause women to be drafted into the military and to lose protections such as alimony, and eliminate the tendency for mothers to obtain custody over their children in divorce cases. In 1978, Congress passed, and President Carter signed, a joint resolution with the intent of extending the ratification deadline to June 30, 1982.

In the 2010s, due in part to the #MeToo movement, there was a renewed interest in the adoption of the ERA. In 2017, Nevada became the first state to ratify the ERA after the expiration of both deadlines, and Illinois followed in 2018. In 2020, Virginia's General Assembly passed a ratification resolution for the ERA to bring the number of ratifications to 38 states. However, it is still not part of the Constitution. David Ferriero, the former Archivist, refused to publish the amendment without a Court order because the Justice Department, under the Trump administration, issued a brief that upheld the time-limit. Several states have sued him for refusing to sign. The case is now on appeal before the DC Circuit Court. (*State of Illinois, et al., v. David Ferriero*)

The bottom line is the Trump administration illegally inserted itself into the ratification process and the Biden administration simply needs to correct that error by having the US Archivist publish the Equal Rights Amendment as the 28th Amendment, restoring the process to its intended order. But the Biden Justice Department continues to defend the Archivist. Although, their brief repeats President Biden's statement that he supports the Equal Rights Amendment "loudly and clearly" and in his view nothing stands in the way of Congress taking action to recognize the ERA as fully ratified.

Learning that in 1992, a constitutional amendment, known as the Madison Amendment, was ratified, concerning congressional pay-raises, was first proposed in 1789 and finally ratified 203 years later. ERA activists were dumbfounded and furious. The Madison Amendment was allowed over two centuries to be ratified. While the Equal Rights Amendment was limited to a mere ten years. Since the ERA time-limit is in the proposing clause of the Equal Rights Amendment, not in the Amendment itself it should not hinder it.

The US House of Representatives has taken action with a bill to remove the ERA time-limit that has been passed by the House with bi-partisan support. There is also a bi-partisan majority ready to pass a companion bill (S Res.1) in the US Senate—but not enough to overcome an expected filibuster.

A new bill (HR 891) to simply recognize the Equal Rights Amendment as fully ratified, was introduced into the US House, but it has yet to be voted on.

#### **Some ACTIONS that you can take:**

- Vote for candidates that support the Equal Rights Amendment
- States that have NOT ratified the ERA:  
Alabama; Arkansas; Arizona; Florida; Georgia; Louisiana; Mississippi; North Carolina; Oklahoma; South Carolina; Utah

You can contact your state legislators in these states and urge them to support the Equal Rights Amendment and to bring it to the floor for a vote. **What else can you do?** You can contact your US Senators to sign on as co-sponsors if they have not already and to bring it to the floor for a vote for the removal of the time limit placed upon the ERA by the US Congress in 1972. The bill in the US Senate is S.J. Res 1.

#### *Comments/Statements:*

##### ***Have you had personal experiences dealing with the law?***

- Yes, I wanted to talk about this case because I was someone who was involved. In 1973 not all that long ago, a woman moved to Cleveland from Tucson, Arizona. At the time she was staying with a friend and did not know Cleveland. She did not know the neighborhood she was in. There was a man who lived a couple of doors down from where she was staying and when the woman, she was staying with left for work he kidnaped her, held her for hours, and repeatedly raped her. It was a horrible, horrible experience. Why? At one point and this critical in this case, because she was a vegetarian, he allowed her to go back the two doors down to where she had been staying to get food. What she got was a pot and some broccoli and brought it back to his house. The way she was able to finally get away, which was many hours later was that she actually hit him with the broccoli pot. This is another thing that became very newspaper worthy. When she got home and the woman she was staying with was there they called us – six women including me living in a collective house. When they called, we went and got her and we had long discussions about whether she would press charges. There, opinions on both sides but equal opinions saying that it would just be words if you press charges and nothing would be done but if she did not press charges, he was getting away with it. Well, she decided that she would press charges and because I was one of the people that had seen her within an hour of her escape, I was allowed to be one of the people who testified. Well, how the case proceeded was criminal, absolutely criminal. First, one of the women was a

university professor who had been doing some work on trauma and how trauma affects women was not allowed to testify. They said her testimony would be irrelevant. The fact that somebody is held for eight hours, repeatedly raped then goes home and comes back was considered her free choice. The other women in the household, we all testified. And this is what was said of us "That we not only lesbians and vegetarians but we ran a house of ill repute. I mean, it just was endless, endless. What happened in that trial? We, women gathered and went down to observe and stay there and needless to say, he was not convicted. After all the testimony that was given, after all the reasons why he was guilty were given, apparently being hit with a broccoli pot and her coming back to his house, now remember it was only two doors away and she was terrified, was enough to get him off.

- When I was involved with the battered women's shelter in our community, this was in the late 1970s, I brought a woman into family court to get an order of protection. The family court judge at that time who was notorious said to this woman, "What you are going to stay at the battered women's shelter and leave your husband alone on Christmas? That to me was unbelievable and it was not uncommon. It was just so flagrant because of the holiday coming up. But that is how women were treated in the family court at that time. Within the next couple of years, a woman in New York was able to go into criminal court to get an order of protection and to press charges against a battery and that was the work of the battered women's advocates across New York State.
- In the early 1990s, I was living with my then partner. I was in the greater Cleveland area and suddenly things went haywire. I was a lesbian who was living in a battered relationship. She would do a variety of things like lay out a series of guns on the table or put a series of long knives out or and get enraged if something I cook for dinner was not right and of course I kept trying to guess what the right thing would be, but nothing ever worked. A woman at the shelter than in Cleveland somehow, I do not even know how she heard what was going on called me and asked me, Elizabeth, tell me what's happening in your house. I started telling her and she said, "That is a high degree of lethality." And I said what word did you use? "We know that to be a high degree of lethality." You need to get safe so I started living from house to house on floors and people would do things and so by batterer learned how to track me and she find me even if somebody did not have a phone listed in the book and say I know Elizabeth is sleeping on the second floor in the in your house. I mean, it was scary, so I made plans to get out and, on a day, where she was supposed to be away at work, I had people from my office coming to help me just move a few things, she came home. She choked me, I had scars, etc. She was also friends with the county sheriff. But he came and arrested her because by then the law said they were the ones to press charges, but then she was released of course not even on bail, just her own personal recognizance because she was also a politician in that county. Then we went to court and the decision was that the bruises from the choke hold on my neck from her were not enough convict her and in this rural county, they also said, really, this is nobody else's business. She has to this day continued to receive care and protection and inclusion by various members of the lesbian community in Cleveland, some prominent, some not. And for me, that experience with that system, that jury system was just appalling, and it had taken everything I had as a not yet out lesbian at my job. We ended up being on the front page below the fold of the main Cleveland newspaper, our pictures and so it was all very public and that was my biggest experience with the law.
- My experience with the law and I have had several, but one is that this man on my very narrow street drives past me and almost hits me. So, I follow him, and he stops at a house. I get out of my car - I know people telling me, you crazy at this day and age to do that kind of stuff - and I said, do you know what you did was a dangerous thing and then he started calling me all these disgusting

names, I mean, forget cunt, that was bad enough. I called the police. And I said to them this is the thing and these are the things that he said to me, this is hate speech! Well hate speech against women is not acknowledged - what the law omits.

- My lesbian partner and I had a child in 1985 in Ann Arbor, Michigan and we separated in 1988 when the child was 3 years old. We had been together 10 years at that point, and I was unable to get any visitation with my daughter because the court did not recognize me as a family member or as a parent. My ex at the time had a fairly high-powered attorney, a feminist attorney in Ann Arbor who weighed in to protect her biological rights. Because grandparent's rights were being argued and fought at that time it was a way to solidify parental rights against grandparent rights and they threatened action against me if I pursued the frivolous lawsuit. So, I lost my daughter. Within 10 years, and again, still in Ann Arbor, a number of attorneys in part I think because of my case and other cases, they arranged with a judge to do second parent adoptions within a 60 mile radius. And so, when my son was born in 1997 to my partner, I was able to adopt him. I don't know if that was ever challenged and so we were all pretty, careful not to rock the boat at all when that was happening.
- The fact that women who kill their abusive husbands get incredibly long sentences. The abuse does not mitigate their sentence. Another thing I want to say is that in this country (United States) right now, and then certainly in 13 states The law is now condemning poor women to death. I am talking about the forbidding of abortion. It is basically a death sentence to many women particularly poor women and women of color. Let us say what it is a death penalty.
- People do not want to go into the law and I do not mean as a profession, I mean, they do not want to go to the police for people of color. They do not want to use the law for justice because they know they will not get it. I think that this is very telling and just really goes to show like in the story that I told - the pros and cons of taking a case to the court, being in a situation where you have to decide whether or not taking it to the law because it is going to be worse for you and getting some kind of ruling.
- I just want to give an example of generational experiences with the law. My older daughter is and has been for decades now and out proud lesbian married to her wife, and they are the moms of my four first grandchildren. So, when they had their first child, they took turns with an anonymous supply and just as an aside, as any good lesbians might, once they have their babies, they have a ceremony in the backyard and buried the rest of the donation because they bought the whole thing. For the first three kids, they were able to have an adoption. My daughter and daughter-in-law were pissed off every time they had to go to court for the adoptions. There was, I mean, part of their heads could appreciate this, but they were so righteous that this was so wrong that these were their children, and they should not have to do this. By the time the fourth one came, they did not have to. Adrian delivered the fourth one and Heather was named immediately on the birth certificate as the other parent. I just find it hilarious in some ways and fascinating that they just were so furious every time they had to go through an adoption. We have not given up, we are persistent and we keep working even if it is incremental. But I can't tell you the difference it made for me for these younger generation of lesbians.
- I did a lot of work at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, which is the only maximum. Security prison for women in New York State and one of the things that I did, we worked with another government agency. We held hearings at the prison regarding women who are incarcerated because they were battered women and that they were battered never came up in their trial. The vast majority of these women got a sentence of 20 years to life because they did not take that into account such as self-defense when a woman was battered and killed was a way to save herself. There was one

woman who I became very good friends with who got a smaller sentence and that's because she was a very middle-class white woman, 2ell educated and had total parental support so she was in only for 5 years. And the nice part is that when she was released, she started to work at a battered women's shelter and was instrumental in really helping a huge number of women. At this point in time, being a battered woman and using self-defense is taken into account so fewer women are incarcerated for that amount of time.

- I have a cousin who is a stepmom and has five kids and that family was very poor, working class, down and out family. The kids are all biracial and currently the older daughter has four or five kids of her own. This older daughter's daughter is married and has a daughter also who is living with a guy who is abusive and horrible. That daughter left and went to live with her mom and brought her son and he is four years old. The husband knew where she was staying and went to the house asking her to just go for a ride and talk about this; can we just figure this out and she said okay. She got in the car, and he started driving, he whipped out a knife and said now I have got you where I want, I am going to kill you. She jumped out of the moving car on the freeway, broke her arm and got bruised. She got hurt but she managed to get out of the car and came back to the house, I believe they reported it to the police. and I do not even know if they got a restraining order because he is also the father of that boy. But she was told that we need to press charges, but the daughter said I do not know, it might make him feel bad. This is one of the common things which somebody was just saying that it is so hard to press charges to get someone, especially if they are in an underprivileged situation themselves. To get to press charges against the abuser because they' are afraid either that they will hurt them because they are attached in some way, but also because they are afraid it will make it worse, maybe the person will come after them, and harder in a more dangerous situation. And that is a very common situation that people are afraid to even use the law, whether it would, or might not help, but they are afraid to even make that attempt. And this situation is just horrendous; she's still staying with her mom; And the kid is still staying with the mom. When my cousin visited the other day the first thing the young boy said was, this is a happy house, we don't hurt anybody in this house. No nobody hurts anybody and stops. And that was his first. It is really true that people do not feel like the law is on their side in these situations.
- This is not something that has happened to me personally, but something that I care about a great deal. I think the women that are most oppressed by the laws in this country, I don't know very much about other countries, are the women who are incarcerated. They have had their children taken away - if a woman goes into prison and she is pregnant and has that child in prison, immediately that child is taken from her. She is allowed one day with her child. That's it. This does not happen to men coming into prison. This happens in California and there is one prison in Dublin. where the sexual abuse of women is just off the charts horrendous. It is just horrible. And what is happening is when these women are released and they decide to press charges against the male guards who had been raping and abusing them some as many as 80 women that if the women are undocumented, they use the laws against them, and the women are turned over to ICE. They are using these laws to oppress and assault and rape and kill women. And I think that the prisons should be shut down period, not enough is done for women in prison. They are making 8 cents an hour and if a woman works in prison for 30 years and then is released when she's 65 years old or 85 years old, she does not have any social security and that is something that we do not think a lot. So, if a woman has no money when she is in prison and has her period, she is only allowed 4 pads of month if she cannot buy anymore. The abuse and the oppression of women in prison is just so beyond anything that we can imagine.

- To collaborate, collaborate, collaborate. I just finished reading this book that was published in 2022 called *Corrections in Ink*. It validates everything Ruth said. This woman went to prison for 2 ½ years on drug charges, she was an addict herself. It is beautifully written and when she came out, she did work in a nonprofit to help women in prison. It is pathetic. The author is Keri Blakinger. She happens not to be a lesbian but that would not have helped her in prison. My own story is I was very, very lucky in my divorce in Massachusetts. Even if you have been married for 34 years and you want 50% of the assets, which you are totally entitled to in any other state, you have to go to court, I mean you have to fight for it and my ex took me to court. I had to go for a trial but fortunately I was very lucky because I got the best judge in the county that I live in, and it was terrific. I had a fabulous lawyer also, but I had assets, and I am educated. I am going to this; men physically are the stronger ones. I mean, I should not say that because some women are stronger than some men, but on the whole, and when I look back that there were goddesses and the humans did think that women were strong because we did give birth and they did not quite know how we gave birth thousands of years ago, but that went by the way when men put two and two together and were the physically stronger ones. And I am scared to death - one more thing that frightens me and we have not mentioned it here are the guns in America. I am shocked at how many millions of guns there are in America. And I believe totally that if you, if some guy has a gun and that and it happens day and day out the killings of children not just women but children and everybody else and there is no support of gun control anymore because men love guns. And I am just going to throw that out there, it scares me a lot. In terms of the future civil war if things really get bad because it is the men who have the guns are not afraid to use them. And that is very frightening to me. So, I am sorry to bring up another what I consider negative in America for women. Women do own guns. I read that a woman should not buy a gun because if an intruder comes in, he can whip that gun out of her hand and in a minute or a second usually.
- We are living through the first time that in my years I have been aware that females are getting some sort of justice period. And that is in Georgia where I do not know that it will actually happen, but hopefully it will. This is a female District Attorney supporting a mother and daughter who are poor. And were working a job for the government. She is getting harassed for putting Trump up for trial, to be indicted. If you or I did half the things he does we would have been in prison, raped and murdered by now. How do we get around that sort of thing? My observation is fear and I guess I want to say anger.
- There are many organizations throughout the United States regarding guns. I belong to one called Girl and a Gun where they literally teach women how to use a gun properly and especially defensively. So, you know, I would not say that women do not know how to use guns or that some stranger coming in would take that gun away.
- The cold was only found by archaeologists in 1902 and it was written on a phallus shaped obsidian. About the prison stuff – it is my understanding that the majority of women in are in prison for theft. So you have the poverty of women, which is a kind of violence - poverty is violence. And then they get thrown in prison, they're violated even more. A society that would make a corporation a person and enable that “person” in power, corporate power.

***If women were to create the law, what would we do?***

- I don't know how many times I hear a story on the news and my first reaction is shoot him! No trial. That will not go over really big, but gut reaction. I do not know how we can stop these guys; the court system is not doing it. I guess I do want to be part of a vigilante.

- How do we change the law so that it is equal for everybody. It does not matter how much money you have, what you wear between your legs, or where you live, or what your background is or your class or your color or whatever but that everybody is treated the same. We have to do something about getting the law to be equal and that is equal to everybody. It doesn't matter if you're a lesbian or just a plain old woman or if you are male or if you are a trans or whoever you are, that everything is looked at from an equal playing field.
- One of the biggest things we need to do is to get the go background checks for purchasing guns, bring back the background checks to where they used to be. For every gun and every rifle that I hold. I had to go through a complete background check on it and everybody needs to do that. Your slightest little imperfection in that background check – you do not get a gun. They have to be very stiff because we're getting a lot of idiots out there, especially like here in the state of Texas and a couple of other states now where you do not have to have a gun permit to go buy a gun. You can walk into a gun store, or any old place and they pick it up and say here is the cash and buy a bunch of bullets and go shoot up somebody. So very strict, very strict gun background checks.
- It was mentioned that there are a number of states who have still not ratified the Equal Rights Amendment. I am motivated to do it since I live in Florida. What I think is most important is to vote. The ability to get active, the ability to have your voice heard through the vote is what would motivate me to do something about it. The laws there but it is not being accessed, it is not being used. Now is the time for me and all of us to vote and make sure that the Equal Rights Amendment passes.
- When my daughter did her university junior year abroad in Egypt and this was in the 1980s, the week before she was coming back to the States, she began to have horrible nightmares. She finally realized that why she was having such horrible nightmares was because she was returning to the United States, and she had to fear rape. In Egypt the penalty for rape is execution or it was in the 1980s. If I were making the laws not only would the word rape not be omitted as it was in Hammurabi's code, but I would have a death penalty for rape and for incest against children.
- I would make it illegal for somebody to have more than they needed. I would make it illegal to have such a military budget or such a police budget, and instead have poor assistance for families who need food and shelter and health care.
- Certainly, the inequality in terms of wealth in this country creates problems across the board. Maybe I am wasting my time, but I keep writing to the governor and my senators. In New York we have such problems and there is not enough money to take care of all these problems. And now with all these migrants being shipped here and they are sleeping on the streets. Tax the rich - 2% or more would solve all our financial problems in the city and in the country. I think that anyone who has a billion dollars should be taxed probably 40% but let us start with 2%. We would not need all this military. It just one thing leads to another, and it becomes like a snowball. When everyone is pissed off, then there is all kinds of violence and then people end up in prisons. And then they are violated against.
- I think that the only way we can change the laws is by changing the people who make the laws. The most important thing that we can do is to keep electing women and for women to run for office. If we want to change the laws, we just have to change who makes them.
- I would outlaw immediately all atomic and nuclear weaponry.
- I would institute laws that would prevent the accumulation of wealth. We do not all have to be equal, but the accumulation of wealth. The decline of all societies as history shows us Rome being the notable one and militarism.



- Change the status of the payment that goes to attorneys. It needs to be restructured because if you could afford a good attorney, you can get out of almost any crime. But most women and people who are not within not engaged in a system that kind of works against them get a poor deal. And so I would probably make all attorneys employees of the state of the government somehow so that they are paid equal amounts, no matter who they represent and they still could make a really good living wage. I am not saying to pay all attorneys \$8,000 a year but I think that there is a lot of misuse of the system. It would quiet down if there were equality in the legal representation that people could access.
- I agree and I think economic disparity along with racial disparity. The economic disparity is a major factor so equal pay for equal work is the bottom line. Therefore, you can afford to run for office, you can afford to hire a lawyer. I think we are slowly getting there in the sports world where they are beginning to have more equal pay. I think the equal rights amendment is a great place to start. It is a very real telling that it still is not a part of our Constitution. I am an economics person and the bottom line on that is money. If you put the equal rights amendment in place then the women would have to be the paid the same as men, what is that going to do to the capitalists? So, I think equal pay for equal work is a major factor here. And I know we have talked a lot about violence and custody and inheritance, but the right to vote and women's rights on property are not that old in the history of this country. So, we've got a long way to go to use those rights to get what we want.
- I would eliminate any corporation. I would disallow the institution corporation. The first legal obligation of a corporation is profit. That is its legal mission, the making of profit. Over everything else this is one of the most degrading parts of our world - the God prophet. I would also forbid lobbying and require proportionate representation in government which would mean at least 51% of government must be female and racial representation which would make it more than 51%. I would eliminate the laws against drugs. We must substitute centers to help people and create a life that encourages people and keeps them away from the horrors of addiction. First, we have to stop this drug war.
- It seems to me that this whole society is based on money. Jobs that where the salary is the highest are the ones closest to money, it has nothing to do with people, it has nothing to do with making life better. It just has to do with money. This whole country just cares about money. That is our value and that is empty, deadening. We must somehow change the whole paradigm of what this country is which is capitalism and move it away from that. I really don't know how that is going to happen without the women's movement, but also a labor movement that has some bite to it. When I think about things that way, I just get really depressed. Because I do not see that happening in this country. Our values just suck.
- I think this has been a very worthwhile discussion. I think it is wonderful that we have this opportunity. I pray that all of you will take a moment to smile because it makes all the difference in the world as to how you feel, how your body responds because this has been a very difficult discussion as far as I am concerned because we have been shit on all our life, that is all we have known. How many of us would do to women what is being done to us now and I hope that it is not many. I hope it is a very small percentage, but I cannot guarantee it. So, for those of you who give a damn just remember to smile regularly because it is the only thing that is going to keep you going and keep you afloat.
- I think we should also sing - Motown and Alex Dobkin just sing at the top of our lungs. That lifts my spirit.
- And let's not forget dancing - I miss those lesbian dances. I know dancing is so important.

- In early Christianity, the early church the making of interest was a mortal sin, to make interest on money was a mortal sin. The reason why it was a sin is because the theologian reasoned it is unnatural, money is not supposed to grow, it is the organic that grows. And hence we have hedge fund managers who make more money than doctors and especially teachers. The worship of death, the worship of money.
- We need to make a commitment to speak to one another even when we disagree. Because if we do not do this as women, we will never be able to come together. We have to talk with one another, put it aside, be willing to listen, do not assume that you are right. This is so important, and I would mandate it as a law.
- I want to leave you with this thought. In the United States, the relationship, or the percentage between gender when versus women is 50%. Worldwide it is 56% women over men. So, we have got enough women out there we should and need to get together somehow and really show these men where the hell the door is.

**From the Chat:**

- Thanks to all for the stories. Still so much to do in the legal field!
- Sending love to all of you, my luscious Lesbians.
- Death Penalty is always wrong - totally disagree - state-sponsored murder is murder.
- Excellent discussion and right on points! Thank you, Rena, and all who planned this!
- End stage/extractive capitalism.
- Great discussion...I look forward to all of these gatherings.
- Thank you Patty and Sally for hosting this discussion. Enjoyable. Thanks everyone!