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Dear Sisters,

I would like to bring to your attention a bill that will be coming up before the legislature this session. It is L.D. 842, "An Act Concerning Displaced Homemakers", presented by Representative Merle Nelson of Portland.

A displaced homemaker, as used in this bill, is a person who has worked in the home for a substantial number of years without pay, supported financially by another family member. However, through divorce, death of spouse, or other circumstances, the homemaker is often left without any source of income. At this point in time, the greatest number of people in this situation are middle-aged women. Due to the ensuing circumstances, the homemaker is placed in a financially insecure position. She is ineligible for welfare assistance if she is not physically disabled and if her children are past a certain age. She is too young to receive social security benefits, and unemployment insurance is unavailable to her as she has never been paid for her duties in the home. And, on top of these difficulties, she lacks any recent work experience and/or training and skills, making it virtually impossible for her to find a job to support herself.

L.D. 842 would establish a multipurpose program that would provide job counseling, job training and placement, and referral services to displaced homemakers. We at the University Women's Forum feel that these women are a vital and yet unpaid sector of the work force, and legislation is certainly needed to

help homemakers who are placed in this situation.

We urge you to contact Merle Nelson at the State House in Augusta and obtain a copy of this bill. After reading and discussing it, communicate with the legislators, either through letters, phone calls or personal meetings, stating your support of its passage. Governor Longley has announced that he is in favor of L.D. 842, but is not sure that a need for it exists. With a statewide effort, we can show the legislature that there is a definite need for these kinds of services.

In struggle,

Meri Edelstein

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