

7-5-1984

## NOW Fundraiser Speech

Geraldine Ferraro

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ELEANOR

July 5

5:30 to 7:30

NOW fundraiser

Speak at 6:30

on

Border Gap

on

Platform

REMARKS BY REP. GERALDINE A. FERRARO AT THE NOW-NYC  
FUNDRAISER - FIRST WOMEN'S BANK - JULY 5, 1984

Thank you. I am very glad to be here tonight for two reasons. First, I always like to turn out for a good cause and women making a political difference is just about the best cause I can think of. Second, just being here in this bank, the First Women's Bank, makes me feel nostalgic. I can tell you that without this financial institution -- which had faith in my political future and proved it with a campaign loan back in 1978 -- I literally would not be standing here today.

Yes, it all began here for me -- and your contributions will mean a beginning for many, many other women. You know, New York has 34 people in Congress. 33 of them are men. Much as I enjoy being unique, I think it would be a great deal healthier for our state and our country if we still had women like Bella Abzug and Liz Holtzman and Shirley Chisholm in our Congress. There are 22 women in the House and two in the Senate and only about half of us can be considered feminists. We must all work a little harder this year -- and through the 80s -- to change this mix.

As I said at the NOW convention in Miami last week,

Ronald Reagan has made feminism as American as apple pie. In the heat and struggle of this political season we must never lose sight of the fact that this Administration has been a disaster for women -- especially poor and minority women. This Administration has made us less secure abroad. It has fumbled foreign policy and ignored arms control. It has made us less secure at home. Its budget cuts fall most harshly on those least able to afford them. And, four more years of Reagan could mean five new Supreme Court justices, threatening our most basic freedoms.

I have these issues firmly in mind when I think about the possibility of a woman vice presidential candidate on the Democratic ticket.

The political pundits like to say two things about a woman vice president. They say there is no woman ready to take the job. And they say America is not ready to accept a woman in that job. I say they are wrong, on both counts.

Women are ready -- many women are ready. In the 64 years since we became full citizens of the United States by winning the right to vote; in the 17 years since NOW was founded, women have surged into our universities, surged into our workforce, surged into business and the professions and politics. We have faced and still face, enormous

barriers. There are not enough of us holding the reigns of power in this country. But to deny our qualifications to hold that power is to deny that America can work to fulfill its promises to all Americans.

*And, I believe, America is ready. The polls show a*  
~~And, I believe, America is ready. The polls~~  
remarkable increase in the number of people ready to vote for a ticket with a woman on it. And the Gender Gap shows us that women voters are prepared for the first time in history to make a difference at the voting booth.

Of course there are people -- men and women -- who say they won't vote for a woman, just as there are people who won't vote for a black candidate or a Jewish candidate or -- 24 years after John F. Kennedy -- a Catholic candidate. But to say America is not ready for any of these candidates is to deny Americans a chance to fulfill the promise of democracy.

I don't know what is going to happen at our convention in San Francisco. But whatever does happen, you, NOW and the women of America will have made a difference, a real difference. After I met with Walter Mondale in Minnesota last Monday, I was asked what he must do to "pass the test with women."

I said "Mr. Mondale passed the test when he started to

run for election and started to tell us exactly where he stands on the issues. When you take a look at what's right for the women of the country, Fritz Mondale has been right all along. No longer does the "white male only need apply" sign hang outside the office of the Vice President -- or the President -- thanks to all three of our Democratic candidates for the Presidential nomination -- and thanks to groups like NOW.

We will go on to make a difference in November. The women of America are not a special interest group but the majority of our voters and our population. The time for us to use our clout is NOW. For making the political power of women a reality, I thank you.