

*Nancy E. Eskridge*  
*2513 Windsor Avenue*  
*Owensboro, Kentucky 42301*  
*Phone/fax: 270-684-2002 Cell: 270-316-8065*

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Dear Commissioners:

I felt it necessary to write this letter to impart some feelings and information to all of you. There are a couple of things that I want us to consider.

First, we need to be inclusive as we plan our events and not exclude any woman because of political party affiliation. As we invite Republican women of stature to our state and national events I wish us to also invite Democrat women of the same stature to attend. I am a born and bred Republican and have been registered as that all my life, but I still feel that we can not accomplish for women in this state and in this nation the equality to move forward with just one political party. There would be too many women that we exclude. I would also hope that the commission is representative of both parties as well as any independents out there wandering around. We will benefit from all points of view.

I also have another bone to pick I guess. Perhaps I am a little sensitive about this since I have no college degree, but I feel my temperature rising each time we talk about how Kentucky will never move forward without getting all our young people (let alone girls) to college. I wonder what jobs we have for all these graduates. What will keep them here in Kentucky? Who will work in the restaurants? Who will work as nurse's aides, who will be teacher assistants, secretaries, and sales people? Certainly, the list could go on and on. I know the adage about get the graduates and the companies and jobs will follow. I believe that is mostly true and I most certainly believe in education. I have served for 14 years as a member of our local board of education and advocated life long learning for all of that time. Both of my children have advanced degrees which we helped them to achieve.

With that being said, I want to tell you all that there are thousands of women like me across this great Commonwealth. They work hard, rear good children, participate in their community and add to the fiber of Kentucky every day and do not have degrees. I believe that there will be people like us in each generation who are active, energetic, capable women who will never get degrees. What are we? Chopped liver! If we really want to change Kentucky and the plight of women in our state then we can not forget to get some of these women on board to help with the change. And, we can not assume that a state full of women with advanced degrees means that all our problems as women go away!

*Now  
Bye*

I believe that the plight of the poorest of our counterparts in Kentucky can best be served by making sure first that they get a high school education during which time we encourage them to become life long learners and to see the wonder of giving back to their communities as volunteers. They don't see the benefit of a seminar on achieving wealth or entrepreneurship or many of the other topics that we seem to discuss because they are tied up with putting food on the table and a roof over the heads of their families. If I were them I would benefit more from health care reform and daycare reform.

Certainly, I want all the scientists, math specialists, engineers and technology gurus that we can educate and employ. However, I do not want to devalue the work that other women are doing for a living: the clerk at Kroger, the school crossing guard, the sales gal at Macys, the aid in the nursing home, the gal who does your nails and hair, the gal who repairs your copier at work, the one who picks up your garbage at the street, and the gal who sells you new home furnishings are all needed threads of our economy, our cities, and lives! We must include them in our plans and our planning. We must invite them and make it possible for them to be a part of the process. We should listen to their voices --- not just the college graduates. Value the jobs that all of us do for a living ... devalue none of them. How can we include these women in our work?????

Thanks for listening,

*Nancy*

Nancy E. Eskridge  
Commissioner