

Women's Caucus Plans Rights Drive

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BOSTON, June 29—The National Women's Political Caucus elected as its chairman today Audrey Rowe Colom, a Republican from Washington, D.C.

The election of Mrs. Colom and other officers who will direct the multi-partisan caucus for the next two years came on the final day of a four-day convention at which the caucus assigned its highest priority in next year's political campaign to the election of state legislators who will support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.

The convention of the four-year-old political arm of the women's rights movement also moved into some new ground by adopting, for the first time, resolutions aimed at giving women more say in formulating the nation's foreign policy and better representation at the top of its military establishment.

A new theme for this organization and, to some extent, for the women's movement as a whole ran throughout the meeting of the 1,400 delegates from 44 states. That was the theme that a good life for American women cannot be achieved in a world of war or a nation in which some people remain poor.

This theme was sounded by many of the speakers at the meeting, including four Democrats, Lieut. Gov. Mary Ann Krupsak of New York, Representatives Bellas S. Abzug of Manhattan and Patricia Schroeder of Colorado and Barbara Mikulski, Baltimore City Councilwoman.

In contrast, Republican speakers at the convention, who included the Republican National Chairman, Mary Louise Smith, stuck more to traditional women's issues, but there were no open objections and there was only a little grumbling in the corridors over the broader issues addressed by the Democratic speakers.

This contrasted markedly with what happened at the first national convention of the caucus in Houston two years ago, when Mrs. Abzug was sharply criticized by Republican members for attacking President Nixon's war policies.

This time there was no audible adverse reaction when she, Representative Schroeder

and others voiced alarm over what they felt to be President Ford's recent indications that he did not rule out a nuclear "first strike" by the United States.

This absence of criticism took on added interest because the proportion of Republicans attending this convention is believed to be considerably larger than it was in Houston.

In officially designating ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment as its topmost priority, the national women's political caucus tentatively approved a budget of \$213,000, all of which is yet to be raised, to finance the ratification effort. That effort will include campaign contributions to candidates in state legislative races trying to defeat opponents of the amendment.

The constitutional amendment, which would prohibit discrimination based on sex by action of Federal, state or local governments, was defeated so narrowly in so many states this year that those planning ratification strategy believe they could achieve ratification in 1977 by defeating as few as 20 legislators in the right places next year.

Mrs. Colom, who replaced Frances T. Farenthold of Texas as chairman of the caucus, said she believed the strategy for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and other feminist battles ahead should include a policy of "conscious specialization" among the various women's organizations involved.

She said she hoped there could soon be a meeting of all the major women's organizations "to assess what each can do best and how we all fit to-

gether to provide a cohesive front for women's issues."

In that connection, the convention gave its formal approval to a "U.S. national women's agenda," which was worked out 10 days ago by representatives of 70 national women's organizations. The agenda covers topics ranging from day care & health care to the treatment of women by the news media.

Behind the scenes, a group of Democratic women discussed the possibility of organizing now to nominate a woman for Vice President in 1976.

According to those present, the favorite of the group, as of now, is Lieutenant Governor Krupsak.

Representative Elizabeth Holzman, Democrat of Brooklyn, was enthusiastically received by the convention when she delivered a speech denouncing a New York Times editorial that said the focus of the women's movement should be on problems of "the woman alone in American society" rather than on such matters as the achievement of what the editorial, printed Friday, called "exalted executive expectations."

Miss Holzman accused the Times of denying the validity of the drive of women to achieve high positions in corporations and in politics.

In addition to Mrs. Colom, other officers elected included five vice chairmen, Vivian H. Hall, Democrat of California; Rhea Mojica Hammer, Democrat of Illinois; Lee Novick, Democrat of Connecticut; Anita L. Nelam, Democrat of Kentucky, and Betsy Griffith, Republican of Washington, D.C.