

# A Pension Plan For Housewives?

By Patricia McCormack

NEW YORK (UPI) — Heaven helps the working girl but who's looking out for the housewife?

A congressman by the name of Bertram L. Podell, that's who.

He is the architect of H. R. 18868, a bill calling for the establishment of a housewife's pension fund. If the bill gets to the law stage, hubby could pay wife \$25 a week for her very own pension fund.

Hubby's contribution would be tax deductible. This would have the effect of reducing the size of the federal bite on his income annually.

Rep. Podell, D-NY, said the American housewife is not covered by minimum wage and four laws.

"As the traditional saying goes," he said, "her work is never done; her service is essential to the well being of our society.

"I believe that the housewife should be financially secure in her later years, and my plan would insure this security."

Bureau of Labor statistics say 26.8 million women are classified as housewives outside the work force. These women would be eligible to participate in the proposed pension fund.

This number represents 60.4 per cent of all women classified as housewives. The rest of the housewives hold jobs outside the home.

Podell said the money set aside by the housewife could take the form of a trust or non-trust plan. If the housewife chose the latter, the money could be put into an annuity plan, could be lodged with a bank in a custodial account, or be invested in special treasury bonds.

The funds would be redeemable with interest when the housewife reached the age of 59 years and six months.

Podell believes his plan would free the American housewife from the financial insecurity that she has had to face in the past.

If the housewife became widowed or disabled before that time, she could draw on the funds.

How much is a housewife's work worth? Economists at Chase Manhattan Bank in New York, in a report referred to by lawyers in divorce cases almost daily, came up with the figure of \$8,285.68 a year — in 1965.

Adjusting the figure upward to account for inflation in the years between then and now, the bank figures the housewife's work currently worth around \$12,000 a year.

The categories of work and the hours sent in each per week are as follows:

Nursemaid, 44.5 hours; dietician, 1.2 hours; food buyer, 3.3 hours; cook, 13.1 hours; dishwasher, 6.2 hours; laundress, 5.9 hours; seamstress, 1.3 hours; practical nurse, 0.6 hours; maintenance man, 1.7 hours; gardener, 2.3 hours, and chauffeur, 2 hours.

The total hours worked per week: 99.6 — better than the equivalent of two normal work weeks among those who work for pay outside the home.

Podell finds support for the bill among fellow congressmen "overwhelming." He said his bill and the recent passage of the Equal Rights Amendment proposal show that Congress and the country finally are recognizing the worth of women.

His bill isn't a strict interpre-

tation of the women's liberation movement.

"It doesn't free the housewife from the kitchen but it

does recognize her worth in the kitchen," he said.

"I think it has an excellent chance of passing."



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