

the museums and galleries should tell the whole story of our culture—our real culture, not just the white male part,” the Guerrilla Girls explain.

This doesn't mean an implementation of quotas in which museums are forced to begrudgingly host equal numbers of men and women; it means a redefinition of art itself. “We've never, ever mentioned quotas. We've never attacked an institution for not showing 50% women and artists of color but we have humiliated them for showing less than 10%,” said one Guerrilla Girl. She pauses for a moment, smiles and continues, “To make up for what's happening so far in art history, every show should be 99% women and artists of color, but only for the next 400 years. We're not going to forget about Rembrandt and Michelangelo. We just want to move them over to make room for the rest of us!”

In the meantime, the Guerrilla Girls continue to distribute posters and protest award ceremonies; they host letter-writing campaigns to museums and encourage others to do the same. Crowded outside one awards ceremony, the Guerrilla Girls have been warmly received by the crowds who chant along and hold up the signs they've been handed. The police are careful to keep the Guerrilla Girls behind ropes; the celebrities are confused as they arrive. For the Guerrilla Girls, confusion is the best thing next to revolution. FP

Kate Rockwood doesn't identify as a Guerrilla Girl. Yet.

Waging War on Working Women

Bush administration slashes women's initiatives in Washington

by Kristen Blue Shelby

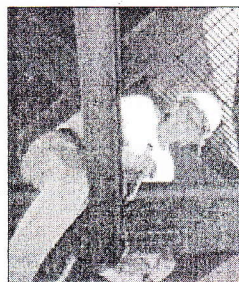
The Bush administration's proposed budget involves an attack on the only unit in the federal government dedicated exclusively to the concerns and rights of working women, the Department of Labor Women's Bureau. Established by Congress in 1920, the DOL Women's Bureau played an integral role in promoting the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, and has continued to address the needs of working women in the form of educational campaigns to teach women about discrimination issues, pay equity, health and child care, and other issues that concern working women. The Women's Bureau also works with local women's advocacy groups to promote fairness in the workplace and high skill and wage work for women. The Women's Bureau was designed to “formulate standards and policies which shall promote the welfare of wage-earning women, improve their working conditions, increase their efficiency, and advance their opportunities for profitable employment.” Clearly, the elimination of this bureau demonstrates the direction of the Bush administration's agenda with regard to women and is an attack on women fighting to achieve equality in the workplace.

Currently, women comprise 46% of the total American work force, a huge expansion since the foundation of the Women's Bureau. Yet, the large number of women in the workforce makes the job of this bureau even more important, as there are still major issues for working women that must continue to be addressed. One-third of all working women do not have paid sick leave and many benefits have declined over the last generation, such as health care and retirement benefits. In addition, the Women's Bureau plays an integral role in making the welfare-to-work transition effective.

This is not the first time women's organizations within the government have come under attack by the Bush administration. Just last month, a group of women in the military expressed discontent at the

administration's abandonment of a board that reported to defense leaders about women's issues and pressed for women's full participation in the military. Last January, the Bush administration closed down the White House Office on Women's Initiatives and Outreach, which acts as a liaison between the government and women's groups and worked to advance the Family and Medical Leave Act. Karen Nussbaum, the former director of the Women's Bureau, says, “getting rid of these offices is another way the Bush administration is cutting off working women from solutions to their problems.”

While the proposed budget cuts do not eliminate the bureau entirely, they do close many of the regional offices of the Women's Bureau, thus centralizing the organization and rendering it incapable of fostering local initiatives. Melissa Josephs, of the Chicago-based Women Employed, says, “We see this as a step to eliminating the Women's Bureau completely.” Clearly, these attacks on women's organizations within the government are more than just budget cuts; they are calculated attempts by the government to weaken the power of women. The cutbacks on the Woman's Bureau are only an indication of the greater war at hand, and we must struggle against such setbacks in the battle for gender equality. FP



The DOL encourages women in nontraditional fields. photo courtesy of National Association of Women Construction

Kristen Blue Shelby loves Agamemnon, her *Dino Chia* pet.