

NOW

national organization for women
eastern massachusetts chapter
45 newbury st. boston 02116

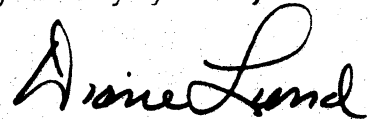
November 1, 1972

Dear Members of the Board:

The Attorney General of the Commonwealth has interpreted the exemption from jury service given by Massachusetts law to mothers of children under sixteen years of age and caretakers of such children as being a waivable exemption. Thus women in this category must now be given the opportunity to choose whether or not to serve. To properly implement this right a city or town should (1) make no distinctions between men and women in selecting the residents to whom jury questionnaires will be sent or whose eligibility to serve is to be otherwise determined and (2) provide for a waiver of the exemption by including a separate question about it on any written questionnaire or, if oral interviews are used, by instructing the interviewer to inform each woman who comes within the exempted category of her right to choose to serve.

If your city or town uses the questionnaire prepared by the Secretary of State's office you are using the procedures you should since the questionnaire, as newly revised, includes a question as to waiver. If you prepare your jury list in some other fashion we urge you to examine procedures to be sure that you are not denying women in your city or town their right to be considered for jury service.

Very truly yours,



Diane Lund
NOW Jury Information Effort

DL/al

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Comm. from Diane Lund, NOW Jury Information
Effort, relative to the law that mothers
with young children cannot serve on the jury.

In city Council
October 30, 1972

Copies