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MAJOR PROJECTS:

Women and Equality in California

In *Women and Equality in California: A California Review of Women’s Equity Issues in Civil Rights, Education and the Workplace* (February 1999), SOR documented the development of California laws affecting the civil rights, education, and workplace environments of girls and women in the years after the landmark U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964 barred sex discrimination in employment. The report also identified the social and economic changes that have accompanied these laws, paving the way for more equitable treatment of— and advancements by—girls and women in classrooms, on playing fields, in financial institutions, and on the job. Finally, the report also offered ideas for future legislative consideration in education and employment.

Interestingly, the report noted that as state and federal laws have evolved to recognize and protect the rights and needs of women, they also sometimes have benefited Californians of both genders. For instance, in the 1970s, state laws were enacted to give women a right to obtain credit in their own names and protect them from being denied loans solely because of their gender or marital status. In 1972 and 1982, federal and state bans were adopted on gender discrimination in education that, among other things, gave girls more opportunities to compete in athletics. By the late 1990s, the laws designed to help workers balance the demands of home and work with unpaid time off were offering relief to working parents and family members of both sexes.