

(Continued)

She also touched on points of her husband's platform, addressing welfare reform, education reform, agriculture and trade.

She stressed giving more power to the states to control their own welfare reform, saying it would save taxpayers an estimated \$60 billion "by not paying Washington bureaucrats."

"Work works," she said. "It gives people the dignity to end the cycle."

She said the nation currently spends about \$285 billion on primary and secondary education and an additional \$16 billion in funding for the U.S. Department of Education. In 1979, Sen. Dole voted against the creation of the department. "We need parents and teachers working together at a local level."

Stressing a "growth oriented policy," Mrs. Dole said her husband's goals also include the opening of foreign trade markets. "Bob Dole doesn't want to build a wall around America," she said. "When four percent of the consumers are in the United States and 96 percent are outside the United States, we need to go for those outside markets."

Thanking Legislators, she said, "The only occasion that I can think of that would top this would be addressing a joint session of the U.S. Congress where my husband is giving a State of the Union address."

## WOMEN'S GROUPS MAKE PLEA FOR INCARCERATED WOMEN

By Shawn Ashley  
Staff Writer

■(GIT) Women's groups from across Oklahoma urged state legislators Wednesday to begin looking for ways to deal with what they described as a developing crisis in Oklahoma's prisons — the incarceration of women for nonviolent offenses and a plan to transfer some of those women to out of state facilities.

According to Mary Tinker, a criminal justice specialist with the League of Women Voters, Oklahoma has the highest incarceration rate for women in the nation, and increasingly, more women are being sent to prison for nonviolent offenses.

Eighty percent of the women serving time in Oklahoma prisons in 1994, Tinker said, were there for nonviolent offenses, including larceny, fraud, drug crimes and other nonviolent crimes.

"Because of this policy," Tinker added, "Oklahoma has crowded prisons well beyond capacity at a continuing danger to employees and inmates. The current solution is to contract for private prison beds. However, there are no private prison beds for women in Oklahoma, not do informed sources at the Department of Corrections anticipate any to be available soon.

"Therefore, 50 women have been sent to a converted city jail in Odessa, Texas, and 80 more are scheduled to go to San Antonio soon."

Jerry Massey, spokesman for the Department of Corrections, said the department oversees some 1,738 women, including 1,169 who are housed in DOC facilities in Oklahoma.

Asked whether the department is planning to transfer more women out of state, Massey replied:

"Yes. Part of our latest proposal before the Board of Corrections asks for bed space for an additional 89 women."

That space, Massey said, would be in private prisons located out of state.

Tinker said the practice of and plan to ship women prisoners from Oklahoma to other states was of particular concern.

"An Episcopal minister who works in prison ministries states that of the fifty (women transferred to Texas), 16 have young children who have been regular weekly visitors to the children and mothers program at Mabel Bassett.

"Since the women went to Texas two months ago, only six have had visits from Oklahoma."

(Continued)