
Inventory of the Sheila J. Kuehl Papers

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Inventory of the Sheila J. Kuehl Papers

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Sheila J. Kuehl Papers

Dates: 1995-2008

Collection number: LP402

Creator: Sheila J. Kuehl, California Legislator

Collection Size: 20 cubic feet of textual materials and 1 cubic foot of audiovisual materials

Repository: California State Archives

Sacramento, California

Abstract: Sheila J. Kuehl served in the California State Legislature from 1994-2008. The Sheila J. Kuehl Papers consist of 20 cubic feet of textual records and one cubic foot of audiovisual materials reflecting the interests and political activities of Kuehl during her 14 years in the California State Legislature.

Physical location: California State Archives

Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access

Collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Sheila J. Kuehl Papers, LP402:[folder number], California State Archives, Office of the Secretary of State, Sacramento, California.

Acquisition and Custodial History

The California State Archives acquired the Sheila J. Kuehl Papers following her final term in the State Legislature.

Biography

California legislator Sheila James Kuehl was born February 9, 1941 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Her family moved to Los Angeles when Sheila was two years old, and she began working as an actress at the age of eight. From 1959 to 1963 she starred as Zelda Gilroy on the situation comedy *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis*. She graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1962 and from Harvard Law School in 1978. She returned to the Los Angeles area in the late 1970s, practicing family law and teaching at California State University, Long Beach, UCLA, and Loyola University. In 1989, she became the co-founder and managing director of the California Women's Law Center, where she remained legal counsel for several years. As of 2009, she continues to serve on the CWLC Board of Directors.

In 1994, Kuehl ran to succeed retiring State Assemblymember Terry Friedman in the 41st Assembly District; she won the six-way Democratic primary with 41 percent of the vote, then defeated Republican candidate Michael Meehan in the

November general election by a margin of 56 to 41 percent. Her election was notable in that it made her the Capitol's first openly LGBTQ state legislator.

She was reelected with 55 percent of the vote in 1996 and 63 percent in 1998. In 2000, term limits forced Kuehl to retire from the Assembly; she ran for the 23rd Senate District seat of retiring State Senator Tom Hayden. Kuehl defeated fellow Assemblymember Wally Knox in the March 2000 open primary by a margin of 50 to 29 percent, and went on to win the November general election with over 70 percent of the vote. She was re-elected to the Senate in 2004 by a margin of 66 to 29 percent.

During Kuehl's tenure, the 41st Assembly District was located on the north coast of Los Angeles County, and contained the cities of Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Hidden Hills, Malibu, Santa Monica, and Westlake Village, as well as the Encino, Tarzana and Woodland Hills areas of the city of Los Angeles. The Democratic voter registration edge over Republicans remained steady at about 15 percent throughout the 1990s.

The 23rd Senate District contained all of Kuehl's former Assembly district as well as the city of West Hollywood in Los Angeles County, and the cities of Oxnard and Port Hueneme in Ventura County. Like Kuehl's Assembly district, it was heavily Democratic, containing roughly twice as many registered Democrats as Republicans throughout Kuehl's time in office.

According to the Pocket Directory of the California Legislature, Kuehl served on the following committees:

State Assembly, 1995-2000

Standing Committees

Appropriations, 1997-2000

Education, 1996

Health, 1999-2000

Higher Education, 1997-1998

Human Services, 1995, 1997-1998

Information Technology, 1998

Judiciary, 1995, 1997-2000

*Chair, 1999-2000

Local Government, 2000

Natural Resources, 1995

Public Safety, 1995, 1997

Revenue and Taxation, 1996

*Vice Chair, 1996

Rules, 1995

Televising the Assembly and Information Technology, 1997

Water, Parks and Wildlife, 1996, 1999-2000

Select Committees

California's Children, 1996

California's Women, 1997-1998

*Chair, 1997-1998

Construction Fraud, 2000

Domestic Violence, 2000

Earthquake Safety and Preparedness, 2000

Entertainment and the Arts, 1998-2000

*Chair, 1999-2000

Insolvency of Orange County, 1995-1996

San Gabriel Valley Groundwater Contamination, 2000

State Senate, 2000-2008

Standing Committees

Agriculture, 2006-2008

Agriculture and Water Resources, 2001-2004

Appropriations, 2007-2008
Budget and Fiscal Review, 2001-2006
Environmental Quality, 2001-2008
Government Modernization, Efficiency, and Accountability, 2005-2006
Health, 2005-2008
*Chair, 2007-2008
Health and Human Services, 2001-2004
Judiciary, 2001-2008
Labor and Industrial Relations, 2001-2008
Natural Resources and Water, 2001-2008
*Chair, 2001-2006
Subcommittees
Budget and Fiscal Review-Resources, Environmental Protection, Judiciary,
Transportation and Energy, 2002-2006
*Chair, 2005-2006
Environmental Quality-Toxic Materials, 2006
Health-Aging and Long Term Care, 200
Health-Stem Cell Research Oversight, 2005-
Health and Human Services-Aging and Long Term Care, 2003-2004
Health and Human Services-California's Emergency Medical Services, 2003-2004
Health and Human Services-King/Drew Medical Facility, 2004
Judiciary-Anti-Competitive Conduct and the Marketplace, 2006
Judiciary-Bad Faith Liability and Consumer Rights, 2002-2004
Natural Resources and Water-Delta Resources, 2005-2006
Select Committees
California Correctional System, 2003-2006
California's Role in the World Trade Organization, 2001
*Chair, 2001
Children, Youth and Families, 2006
Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health, 2001-2006
Entertainment Industry, 2003-2004
Forestry, 2001-2002
Gender Discrimination and Title IX Implementation, 2008
Genetics and Public Policy, 2001
Genetics, Genetic Technologies and Public Policy, 2002-2004
Health Care Crisis in California, 2005-2006
*Chair, 2005-2006
Health Care for All Californians, 2003-2004
*Chair, 2003-2004
Health Effects of Radioactive and Chemical Contamination, 2007-2008
*Chair, 2007-2008
High School Graduation, 2007-2008
International Trade Policy and State Legislation, 2002, 2004
*Chair, 2002
*Vice Chair, 2004
Investigate Price Manipulation of the Wholesale Energy Market, 2002-2003
Perchlorate Contamination, 2004-2006
Regulation of Talent Agencies, 2002

School Safety, 2001-2008

*Chair, 2001-2008

Urban Economic Development, 2003-2004

Joint Committees

Arts, 1998-2008

Rules, 2007-2008

Kuehl served as Speaker Pro Tempore of the Assembly, from December 1996 to November 1998. She was the first woman to hold this position.

Scope and Content

The Sheila J. Kuehl Papers consist of 20 cubic feet of textual records and one cubic foot of audiovisual materials reflecting the interests and political activities of Kuehl during her 14 years in the California State Legislature. Kuehl's records contain bill files, subject files, hearing files, gay and lesbian media files, and press conferences. Also contained in these papers are the records related to two select committees: the Assembly Select Committee on California's Women, which Kuehl created and chaired, and the Senate Select Committee to Investigate Price Manipulation of the Wholesale Energy Market, on which Kuehl served.

The bill files cover the subjects Kuehl emphasized during her time in the Legislature - women's rights, discrimination against gays and lesbians, health care, domestic violence, and child custody issues. One of Kuehl's most controversial pieces of legislation was the Dignity for All Students Act, which would have prohibited discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in all public school programs, facilities, and teaching curriculum; it failed as Assembly Bill 1001 in the 1995-1996 legislative session, AB101 of the 1997-1998 session, and AB222 of the 1999-2000 session, before passing and being signed into law as AB537 of the 1999-2000 session. Researchers studying gay and lesbian rights should consult the individual bill files of the Dignity for All Students Act, as well as the Dignity for All Students Act subject file, which contains more comprehensive background information and correspondence.

Also of interest to researchers studying gay and lesbian rights will be legislation by Kuehl to expand the rights of registered domestic partners (AB2211 of the 1999-2000 session) and to require public school curricula to educate students about the contributions to society made by prominent members of the gay or lesbian community (SB1437 of the 2005-2006 session).

Kuehl also authored broader anti-discrimination legislation, addressing more than the gay and lesbian community. Her AB821 of the 1995-1996 session would have allowed employees or students found to have been unlawfully discriminated against by a public educational institution to seek civil action and court-ordered damages. AB310 of the 1997-1998 session, her attempt to expand California's Fair Employment and Housing Act, was vetoed by Governor Pete Wilson. She also authored AB1670 in 1999-2000, the California Civil Rights Amendments of 1999.

Health care was a major policy focus for Kuehl. One of her most controversial bills was AB525 of the 1999-2000 session, which implemented disclosure requirements on religiously-owned hospitals which object to providing reproductive services such as birth control and abortion. She also wrote legislation (AB394 and AB695 in 1999-2000), which established nurse-to-patient staffing ratios in hospitals.

In an attempt to encourage the purchase of zero-emissions electric automobiles, Kuehl authored two bills during the 1995-1996 legislative session relating to the use and sale of such vehicles. Assembly Bill 1318 would have exempted the sale of zero-emission vehicles from California state sales taxes; AB2623 would have allowed those driving such vehicles to use High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes on state freeways. This bill file is of particular interest as an early example of public policy dealing with fossil fuel emissions and attempts to reverse the effects of climate change.

The year after voters passed California's controversial "Three Strikes and You're Out" initiative, Kuehl attempted to amend the legislation by requiring that the third "strike" be for a violent felony, rather than any class of felony at all. Her bill, Assembly Bill 1444 of the 1995-1996 legislative session, did not pass.

Also included in this collection are subject files, three of which expand on bill files concerning some of Kuehl's most controversial legislation. Assembly Bill 481 of the 1997-1998 session expanded upon and strengthened California's existing regulations to prevent lead poisoning from facilities and products used by children. Assembly Bill 525 of the 1999-2000 session increased disclosure requirements for religiously-owned hospitals which object to reproductive health services such as birth control and abortion. The Dignity for All Students Act, introduced in the 1995-1996 session but not signed into law until the 1999-2000 session, targeted discrimination against gay and lesbian students in public schools. These three subject files will be of interest to those researching the bill files to which they correspond, for they expand upon the bill files, with newspaper articles, reports, and correspondence. In addition, the subject file on women prisoners will be of interest to those studying this topic, which was a major focus of Kuehl's during her time in the Legislature.

Hearing files contain information provided to legislators attending the hearing that include background information on the legislation being discussed, statistics and studies, hearing agendas, notes taken by Kuehl, and other materials. Many of the hearing files relate to legislation proposed to protect gay and lesbian students from harassment in their schools.

Gay and lesbian media files are composed entirely of audiovisual materials. Several television programs related to homosexuality that were of interest to Kuehl can be found on VHS tapes within this series. Press conferences are also entirely audiovisual and contain discussions of pending legislation during press conferences with the public.

Additionally, this collection includes the files related to two select committees on which Kuehl served: the Assembly Select Committee on California's Women, which Kuehl chaired in 1997 and 1998, and the Senate Select Committee to Investigate Price Manipulation of the Wholesale Energy Market, on which Kuehl served from 2001 to 2003. The select committee files include comprehensive background information on their respective topics such as government reports, publications, and newspaper articles.

Related Material at the California State Archives

Senate Health Committee

Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee

Senate Select Committee to Investigate Price Manipulation of the Wholesale Energy Market

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Kuehl, Sheila J.

Gay rights

Women's rights

LP402:1-188

Series 1 Bill Files 1995-2008

Physical Description: 199 file folders

Arrangement

Bill files are arranged chronologically by legislative session and then numerically by bill number.

Scope and Content Note

Most bill files include all or some of the following items: bill analyses, amendments and resolutions, author's statements, testimony, press releases, newspaper clippings, correspondence, roll calls, and records of votes. Of particular interest are bills relating to discrimination, such as the Dignity for All Students Act (AB1001 in 1995-1996, AB101 in 1997-1998, AB222 in 1999-2000, and AB537 in 1999-2000), AB310 of the 1997-1998 session (which would have strengthened the state's Fair Employment and Housing Act), and SB1437 of the 2005-2006 session (which would have included the contributions to society of prominent gays and lesbians in state-mandated public school curricula). Bills relating to abortion rights include AB525 of the 1999-2000 session, which imposed disclosure requirements on religiously owned hospitals which object to providing reproductive services such as birth control and abortion, and SB1301 of 2001-2002, which established the right to a pre-viability abortion as a positive right in California law.

1995-1996: AB231-AB3332, ACR52, AJR20 (29ff) LP402:1-29.

1997-1998: AB101-AB2692, ACA20 (20ff) LP402:30-48.

1999-2000: AB196-AB2913, AJR64 (35ff) LP402:49-81.

2001-2002: SB55-SB2065, SJR52 (36ff) LP402:82-114.

2003-2004: SB175-SB1465, SJR29 (20ff) LP402:115-132.

2005-2006: SB51-SB1745 (24ff) LP402:133-155.

2007-2008: SB8-SB1765, SCR20-SCR85 (35ff) LP402:156-188.

LP402:189-275

Series 2 Subject Files 1995-2007**Physical Description:** 90 file folders**Arrangement**

Subject Files are arranged alphabetically by subject heading.

Scope and Content Note

Subject Files expand upon topics found in the bill files and include newspaper articles, reports, correspondence, and internal memoranda regarding legislative topics addressed by Kuehl. Three of Kuehl's legislative proposals are included as subjects - Assembly Bill 481 of the 1997-1998 session, Assembly Bill 525 of the 1999-2000 session, and the Dignity for All Students Act, which was proposed as four different pieces of legislation during three different legislative sessions. Additionally, the issue of California's female prisoners is included as a subject file, as this was one of Kuehl's primary concerns in the legislature. Audiovisual materials have been separated to a cold-storage vault for preservation purposes and a separation sheet has been placed in the file to alert the researcher to their existence.

Assembly Bill 481, 1997-1998 (LP402:189-201).

Assembly Bill 525, 1999-2000 (LP402:202-237).

Dignity for All Students Act, 1997-2000 (LP402:238-255).

Gay Marriage, 1996 (LP402:256).

Gay Youth, 1999-2004 (LP402:257).

Santa Susana Field Laboratory, 2007 (LP402:258).

Women Prisoners, 1995-2003 (LP402:259-275).

LP402:276-282

Series 3 Hearing Files 1997-2007**Physical Description:** 8 file folders**Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically by hearing date.

Scope and Content Note

These files contain hearing agendas, internal memoranda from Kuehl's office, and background documents regarding the topics addressed at the hearing, such as newspaper articles, reports, witness testimony, and press releases. On March 7, 1997, Assemblymember Kuehl held a Joint Informational Hearing on Judicial Discretion in Employment Discrimination Cases with Rep. Maxine Waters. Other hearings included in this series are a February 2, 2002 hearing on various bills held by the Women's Caucus and a May 21, 2002 joint hearing between the Women's Caucus and the Assembly Public Safety Committee. In depth hearings on the topic of sexual orientation, gender identity, and school safety were held on October 3 and 10, 2002. Audiovisual materials have been separated to a cold-storage vault for preservation purposes and a separation sheet has been placed in the file to alert the researcher to their existence.

LP402:377-382

Series 4 Gay and Lesbian Media Files 1997-2001**Physical Description:** 6 file folders**Arrangement**

Arranged alphabetically by subject heading.

Scope and Content Note

The files within this series contain videocassette tapes that were created by Kuehl and her staff to provide background information for legislation on gay and lesbian topics. The tapes include a variety of segments from local news programs, press conferences, and documentaries. Topics include gay and lesbian rights, Queer Youth Lobby Day, interviews with Kuehl, gay student rallies, pending legislation, and the Traditional Values Coalition. Audiovisual materials have been separated to a cold-storage vault for preservation purposes and a separation sheet has been placed in the file to alert the researcher to their existence.

LP402:383-384

Series 5 Press Conferences 1997-1999**Physical Description:** 2 file folders**Arrangement**

Arranged alphabetically by subject heading.

Scope and Content Note

This series contains two files, the first containing one videocassette tape concerning the Dignity for All Students Act of 1999. The second file is titled Legislation and includes three videocassette tapes that document press conferences related to specific legislation authored by Kuehl. Of particular note are tapes related to AB101 from the 1997-1998 session, which proposed to amend the Education Code section prohibiting discrimination in public schools to include protection based on sexual orientation. The bill was ultimately refused passage. Audiovisual materials have been separated to a cold-storage vault for preservation purposes and a separation sheet has been placed in the file to alert the researcher to their existence.

Assembly Select Committee on California's Women 1997-1998**Scope and Content**

According to a press release from Assemblymember Kuehl's office, the Select Committee on California's Women was established in 1997 "to receive testimony and evidence on the entire panoply of issues related to the impact of the laws on the lives of California's women and girls and to develop and issue a comprehensive report." Assemblymember Kuehl chaired the Select Committee; other members included Assemblymembers Barbara Alby, Dion Aroner, Jim Cunneen, Susan Davis, Liz Figueroa, Kerry Mazzoni, Grace Napolitano, Kevin Shelley, and Antonio Villaraigosa. The committee addressed the following topics at four separate hearings in 1997 and 1998: crime, punishment, and prevention; the status of girls and women in education; women and the economy; and women's health issues.

LP402:283-331**Series 1 Hearing Files 1997-1998****Physical Description:** 52 file folders**Arrangement**

Hearing files are arranged chronologically by meeting date.

Scope and Content

Hearing files contain transcripts of committee hearings, hearing agendas, press releases sent out by Kuehl's office regarding each hearing, correspondence from individuals and organizations participating in hearings, and background information on the topics addressed by the committee, such as newspaper and magazine articles, and reports.

LP402:332-334**Series 2 Subject Files 1997-1998****Physical Description:** 5 file folders**Arrangement**

Subject files are arranged alphabetically by subject heading.

Scope and Content

Subject files contain information on topics which were relevant to the committee, but which were never addressed on their own in a committee hearing. Included are internal memoranda from Kuehl's office, newspaper articles, and reports. Subject Files include Child Custody (1997), Committee Establishment (1997-1998), and Court Issues (1997-1998).

Senate Select Committee to Investigate Price Manipulation of the Wholesale Energy Market 2001-2003

Scope and Content

The Senate Select Committee to Investigate Price Manipulation of the Wholesale Energy Market was formed in 2001 to investigate the 2000 California energy crisis. It was chaired by Senator Joe Dunn; other members of the committee included Kuehl, Debra Bowen, Wesley Chesbro, Marthua Escutia, Maurice Johannessen, Bill Morrow, and Byron Sher.

LP402:335-366

Series 1 **Background Files 2001-2003**

Physical Description: 32 file folders

Arrangement

Background Files are arranged chronologically.

Scope and Content

Background files contain documents given to committee members prior to hearings; they include memoranda from committee staff, government reports and publications, meeting agendas, correspondence, and newspaper articles regarding the California energy crisis.

LP402:367-376

Series 2 **Agency Files 2001-2002**

Physical Description: 10 file folders

Arrangement

Agency Files are arranged chronologically.

Scope and Content

Agency files contain background information given to committee members on various federal, state and local government agencies dealing with electricity and energy. Agencies covered by these files include the California Independent System Operator, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and the California Public Utilities Commission. Files contain memoranda, reports, and publications.
