**Chapter 31, Section 2: The Women’s Movement**

**I. A Weakened Women’s Movement** *(pages 926–927)*

**A.** A new feminist movement began in the 1960s. **Feminism,** the belief that men and women should be equal politically, economically, and socially, began as early as the 1920s.

**B.** With the onset of World War II, women joined the nation’s workforce as many men went off to fight the war. When the soldiers returned after the war, many women lost their jobs.

**C.** Women gradually returned to the labor market, and by 1960 made up almost one-third of the nation’s workforce.

**Discussion Question**

What were the two groups of the women’s movement? *(The League of Women Voters promoted laws to protect women and children. The National Woman’s Party opposed protective laws because they thought the laws reinforced workplace discrimination.)*

**II. The Women’s Movement Reawakens** *(pages 927–929)*

**A.** By the early 1960s, women became increasingly resentful of old stereotypes. As more women entered the workforce, the protest for equality increased.

**B.** The women’s movement was brought back to life by a mass protest of women and a government initiative called the **President’s Commission on the Status of Women.** The group, headed by Eleanor Roosevelt, urged President Kennedy to study the status of women.

**C.** In 1963 the **Equal Pay Act** was passed. It outlawed paying men more than women for the same job.

**D. Title VII** of the 1964 Civil Rights Act outlawed job discrimination. It became the legal basis for advances by the women’s movement.

**E.** Attitudes about what was proper women’s work took time to change. The **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission** (EEOC) still held that jobs could be distinguishedby gender.

**F.** In 1963 **Betty Friedan’s** *The Feminine Mystique* stirred up women all across the country. For the book, Friedan traveled around the country interviewing women who had graduated with her from Smith College in 1942. Friedan found that while women reported that they had everything they could want, they still felt unfulfilled. The book became a bestseller.

**G.** In June 1966, Betty Friedan felt it was time for a national women’s organization to promote women into mainstream America. The group was named the **National** **Organization for Women** (NOW). It responded to many issues facing women. It demanded greater educational opportunities for women and denounced the exclusion of women from certain professions and political positions.

**Discussion Question**

What did the President’s Commission on the Status of Women find? *(The commission’s report highlighted problems of women in the workplace and helped to create feminist networks who lobbied Congress on behalf of women.)*

**III. Successes and Failures** *(pages 928–930)*

**A.** The women’s movement experienced many successes and failures as it fought for women’s rights.

**B.** An important success was greater equality for women in the educational system. Lawmakers enacted federal legislation banning sex discrimination in education. In 1972 Congress passed the Educational Amendments. One of the sections, **Title IX,** prohibited federally funded schools from discriminating against girls in nearly all aspects of their operations, from admissions to athletics.

**C.** Implementation of Title IX was slow at many schools and women still had to struggle for equality.

**D.** By the late 1960s, some states began adopting liberal abortion laws regarding a woman’s mental health or in the case of rape or incest. The biggest change came with the 1973 Supreme Court decision ***Roe* v. *Wade.*** The Supreme Court ruled that state governments could no longer regulate abortion during the first three months of pregnancy, a time within a woman’s constitutional right to privacy. This gave rise to the right-to-life movement, whose members considered abortion morally wrong.

**E.** In 1972 Congress passed the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), which protected against discrimination based on gender. In order for it to become part of the Constitution, 38 states had to ratify it.

**F.** Opposition to the ERA amendment began to grow as many saw the act as a threat to traditional American values and social patterns. **Phyllis Schlafly,** one of the most vocal critics of the amendment, organized a national Stop-ERA campaign. The amendment failed to be ratified by 38 states and finally died in 1982.

**G.** In spite of the ERA’s failure, the women’s movement eventually led to profound changes in society. Since the 1970s the number of women pursuing college degrees and careers outside the home has increased a great deal, and employers have begun to offer family-friendly options to their employees.

**H.** Although the women’s movement helped to change social attitudes about women, a large income gap between men and women remains. Most working women still have lower-paying jobs, but professional women have advanced the most since the 1970s. By 2000, over 40 percent of the Americans graduating with law or medical degrees were women.