

Legislation and Public Policy Program

OBJECTIVE: Involve GFWC members in grassroots advocacy for GFWC Resolutions and priority issues

ACTION PLAN

ENGAGE

GFWC clubs and members have the opportunity to make an impact on public policy by encouraging civic participation.

- o Encourage members to research GFWC Resolutions to become informed and involved.
- o Invite a national, state, or district public policy chairman to a club meeting to discuss GFWC's impressive history of advocacy and current advocacy efforts.
- o Invite an elected official to discuss the importance of constituent involvement.
- o Hold a letter-writing session after a club meeting. Have each member write a short letter on club stationery to a legislator, stating her perspective on an issue chosen by the club. Provide envelopes that are stamped and addressed, ready to mail the letters.
- o Make an appointment with a state or national legislator in their home office to discuss one or two of GFWC's legislative priorities.
- o Hold a legislative day. Plan a visit for your club to local or state legislatures to advocate for an issue or piece of legislation that is important to you and your community.

EDUCATE

Successful civic participation requires knowledge and understanding of issues, processes, and policies.

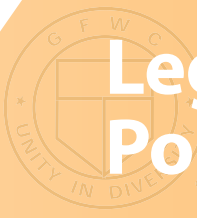
PUBLIC POLICY INITIATIVES AND ISSUES

- o Appoint an interested and informed member to serve as Public Policy Chairman.
- o Become familiar with the public policies of GFWC by reviewing the current GFWC Resolutions.
- o Devote time at club meetings for discussions about existing resolutions, proposed amendments, current events, and news stories of interest.
- o Participate in issue-awareness programs and nonpartisan issue panels in your community.
- o Read the "Watching Washington" and "Program Updates" columns in *GFWC Clubwoman* magazine. Report on this information at a club meeting.
- o Visit GFWC online (www.GFWC.org) to learn more about priority issues and how you can advocate, as well as download information on how to plan a legislative day and how to study an issue.
- o Read the *GFWC Guide to Public Policy and Advocacy*—available for free



"IT IS NOT ENOUGH SIMPLY TO [HAVE] THE RIGHT TO VOTE. Thereupon hangs the necessity for the intelligent and consistent use of this vehicle of expression of the people of a free country." 1918-1920 GFWC International President Ione Virginia Hill Cowles





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at www.GFWC.org/PublicPolicy or for purchase through the GFWC Marketplace (www.GFWC.org/Marketplace)—to learn about the legislative process, how members become involved with Federation advocacy, and opportunities and restrictions as a GFWC advocate.

LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

- Create club programs to learn about the functions of all levels of government and elected officials.
- Distribute or develop a directory identifying public officials and their contact information.
- Educate club members on the legislative process (e.g., how a bill becomes a law).

MOBILIZE

DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE CLUB ADVOCACY STRATEGY

- Develop programs on civic participation at the state, district, region, and club levels.
- Study GFWC Legislative Network alerts and “Watching Washington” articles, choose an issue that is important to your members, decide how to promote public awareness of this issue and how to effect legislation pending before legislative bodies.
- Use advocacy guides and tools such as state and GFWC Resolutions, the *GFWC Guide to Public Policy and Advocacy*, voting records of elected officials, and community and Federation networks.
- Join and become active members of the GFWC Legislative Network. LegNet members are front-line advocates in Federation efforts to affect public policy.
- Network with other groups and establish coalitions for public policy and legislative initiatives within your state and community.
- Attend public forums and meetings on issues of interest and importance.
- Become familiar with and participate in national campaigns supported by GFWC. For more information on special initiatives, contact the national GFWC Public Policy Chairman or GFWC Public Policy Director.
- Encourage women’s involvement in the legislative process; become familiar with the women’s caucuses; educate yourself and others on the effects of budget cuts on programs to benefit women and children; and encourage women to run for elected offices.

HELP FORMULATE AND GUIDE GFWC’S POSITION ON PUBLIC POLICY

- Educate club members on GFWC Resolutions, which provide the foundation for all public policy positions taken by the Federation.
- Involve club members in developing Federation policy positions through participation in your state federation’s and GFWC’s resolutions process.
- Read and discuss proposed resolutions and amendments published in the Call to Convention in the *GFWC Clubwoman* magazine.
- Send a club delegate to meet with your elected state officers about club positions on public policy issues; this enables your state officers to bear your club’s positions in mind as they participate in the debate and vote on proposed resolutions and amendments at Board Meetings and the GFWC Annual International Convention.





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RESOURCES

THE WHITE HOUSE

1600 Pennsylvania AVE NW | Washington, DC 20500

Information: 202/456-1414 | Comments or Opinion Line: 202/456-1111

W: www.WhiteHouse.gov | E: president@whitehouse.gov

UNITED STATES SENATE

Switchboard: 202/224-3121 | W: www.Senate.gov

P: 202/224-8541 (Democratic Cloakroom) | P: 202/224-8601 (Republican Cloakroom)

These phone numbers provide a recorded message with up-to-date reports about activity on the Senate floor.

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

P: 202/225-3121 | W: www.House.gov

P: 202/224-7400 (Democratic Cloakroom) | P: 202/224-7430 (Republican Cloakroom)

These phone numbers provide a recorded message with up-to-date reports about activity on the House floor.

GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

441 G ST NW | Washington, DC 20548

P: 202/512-4800 | W: www.GAO.gov

The General Accounting Office is a non-partisan, investigative arm of Congress. Through reports, Congressional testimony, and legal findings, the GAO advises Congress and federal agencies about becoming more responsive and efficient. These reports are available to the public.

GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

North Capital and H ST NW | Washington, DC 20401

P: 202/512-1800 | W: www.Access.GPO.gov

The Government Printing Office was established by Congress primarily to satisfy the printing and information needs of Congress, but it is also the focal point for all Federal printing. GPO offers a growing number of government publications online and operates regional bookstores.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

10 First ST SE | Washington, DC 20540

P: 202/707-5000 | W: www.Thomas.LOC.gov

Thomas is maintained by the Library of Congress and provides information about all pending federal legislation. This comprehensive site includes bill details such as title, number, statutes, description, text, and co-sponsors. The site also includes bills and laws from recent Congressional sessions.





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C-SPAN

444 North Capitol ST NW, STE 412 | Washington, DC 20001

P: 1-800-523-3174 | www.C-Span.org

C-Span provides televised proceedings of Congress and other public policy programming. Check your local listings for stations.

AWARDS

CLUB

A \$50 award is given annually to one club in the nation to recognize creativity in implementing an effective Legislation and Public Policy Program. The award is based on narrative reports. State chairmen should forward the winning state entry to the national GFWC Legislation and Public Policy Program Chairman by March 15 of each year.

STATE

GFWC certificates are awarded to one state federation in each membership category to recognize outstanding achievement in the GFWC Legislation and Public Policy Program. Award presentations are made annually in honor of junior and general membership participation and are based on quality of work demonstrated in the three areas of action (engaging, educating, and mobilizing) outlined under the program's action plan as described in the narrative.

