



GFWC

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**GENERAL FEDERATION
OF WOMEN'S CLUBS**



LEGISLATION/PUBLIC POLICY

NEWSLETTER

RAISE OUR UNITED VOICES

February 2025

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**Legislation Action Center (LAC)
registration site**



How to be an Effective Advocate

Susan Tyler, GFWC Western States Region Representative

Steps for GFWC Advocacy

By drawing inspiration from a GFWC Affiliate Organization, the UN Foundation's "Shot@Life" grassroots advocacy, we can learn how to effectively champion causes that are supported by GFWC Resolutions. Read on to learn more about key strategies and tools to help you advocate for issues that matter to you, whether it be access to vaccines, support for those dealing with Alzheimer's dementia, or eliminating out of pocket costs for breast cancer screenings!

Educate Yourself on the issue

The first tip in effective advocacy is gaining a thorough understanding of the issue and GFWC has a great tool for that! GFWC's Legislative Action Center is a powerful tool that alerts users when bipartisan legislative action is proposed that is supported by GFWC's resolutions. With just a few clicks, users can track bills, contact legislative representatives at all levels and take action on the issues that our resolutions support.

For example, Shot@Life has a link on the "Get Involved" site located under "Advocacy" on the GFWC home page. Simply click on the link "Shot@Life: Support for Global Immunization Programs in FY25", and users are taken to a page that provides basic information on the issue – why it's important; global and local impact; proposed solutions. A link to a message, already pre-addressed with the names of the user's Members of Congress, is located on the site. Users decide this is something they support when selecting "Send Message". A confirmation email from votervoice.net, the platform GFWC uses, is sent, and oftentimes the members of Congress will respond with an email stating their position on the issue, but there is no spam, no requests for donations or intrusive follow-up.

Timing Your Advocacy

Tip number 2 - When you advocate is nearly as important as how you advocate. The Legislative Action Center aligns your efforts, so they coincide when legislation is debated or budget requests are in progress.

Tell Your Story

Tip number 3 - Personal stories are powerful tools in advocacy. Legislators are human, too, and they want to know why you care enough to share your time and passion. For example, if you're advocating with Shot@Life perhaps it's because you have experienced polio or measles within your family, or you believe in the universal right to health. Or if your passion is Alzheimer's Association, you may have firsthand knowledge of the complexities to which families are subject who are dealing with dementia. Your story can inspire others and highlight the human aspect of the issue.

Build Relationships with Your Representatives

Tip number 4 - Developing a relationship with your representatives is essential for sustained advocacy. When meeting with their staff, take the time to ask about *their* background and interests. Understanding their perspectives can help you tailor your message and find common ground.

Follow Up and Say Thank You

Tip number 5 - After your advocacy efforts, be sure to follow up with your representatives and their staff. A thank you note, or email can reinforce your commitment to the cause and leave a positive impression. Social media can also be an important tool for spreading the message to family and friends who can be recruited as allies.

By following these strategies and utilizing the tools provided by GFWC, you can become an effective advocate.

Be recognized for your advocacy at the annual GFWC Convention

You've put in the hard work, and GFWC wants to recognize your club's achievements at the annual convention in Atlanta. Many of the steps in the Legislative Ladder align with the advocacy tips above. Be sure that your club is recognized for the members' advocacy work and email your club's Legislative Ladder (found on the GFWC home page) no later than March 15 (annually) to Mary Pat Marcello, GFWC Legislation/Public Policy Chairman at njsfwcmarypat@aol.com.