



GFWC 2023 Federal Legislative Priorities

Signature Program: Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention

VAWA Appropriations: The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was reauthorized in March 2022, and the FY 2023 Omnibus Appropriations bill provided historically high funding levels for these programs. GFWC urges Congress to provide significant increases in federal funding for FY 2024 to meet the needs of survivors and strengthen education and prevention.

Anti-trafficking: GFWC urges Congress to pass the Trafficking Survivors Relief Act that establishes a process to vacate convictions and expunge arrest records for certain non-violent criminal offenses committed by victims of human trafficking that directly result from or relate to having been a trafficking victim. GFWC also urges passage of the Frederick Douglas Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act which enhances Department of State activities to combat human trafficking internationally.

Strengthening Protections for Domestic Violence and Stalking Survivors Act: GFWC urges Congress to pass bipartisan legislation to fully close the “dating loophole” in federal firearms law which allows dating partners subject to final protective orders to legally possess firearms, and the “stalking loophole” which allows people convicted of misdemeanor stalking to legally possess firearms. This bill (S. 321) is in response to a February 2023 ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit in *United States v. Rahimi* which struck down 30 years of federal law prohibiting those under a protective order for domestic violence from possessing firearms.

Family Violence Prevention and Services Act: GFWC supports increased funding for domestic violence shelters and services for survivors, increased access to programs and services for tribes, communities of color, and underserved communities, investment in 24-hour hotlines, prevention programs for local communities, and enhanced victim services through training and technical assistance.

Juniors' Special Program: Advocates for Children

Online Safety: GFWC strongly supports efforts to prevent online sexual exploitation of children. The Eliminating Abusive and Rampant Neglect of Interactive Technologies Act (EARN IT Act) removes the technology industry's liability protection shield for third-party content which would then allow state and federal lawsuits. The Kids Online Safety Act sets out requirements for covered platforms to protect minors from online abuse. The Internet Platform Accountability and Consumer Transparency (Internet PACT) Act is bipartisan legislation which requires social media companies to establish clear content moderation policies and holds them accountable for content that violates their own policies or is illegal.

Arts and Culture

GFWC supports increased funding for the National Endowment for the Arts to enhance state and local programs that help transform communities into beautiful and resilient places through strategies that incorporate arts and culture.

Civic Engagement and Outreach

ERA: H.J. Res. 25 and S.J. Res 4 remove the deadline for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. In January 2020, the necessary three-quarters, or 38 states, voted to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment, yet the United States Archivist has not certified the ratification. While most believe the requirements of ratification have been met, advocates acknowledge the deadline must be removed to clear any remaining barriers, so that ratification by the United States Archivist can take place and gender equality will be protected by the United States Constitution. Except regarding the right to vote, the U.S. Constitution does not guarantee women the same legal status and protections guaranteed to men.

Pay Equity: Wage discrimination based on sex should be prohibited. It should be unlawful to require an employee to sign a contract or waiver prohibiting the employee from disclosing wage information, which is of course the way you find out if you are making the same as your coworker.

Education and Libraries

STEAM: GFWC supports federal funding for STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) programs, broadband infrastructure to enable learning for every family, and increased funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services to strengthen local community resources.

Health and Wellness

Global Vaccinations: GFWC urges Congress to fully fund global childhood immunizations. GFWC supports funding the CDC's polio eradication and measles elimination programs through the Health and Human Services appropriations bill, and funding for the US Agency for International Development (USAID), UNICEF, the World Health Organization, and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance) programs through the State Department/Foreign Operations appropriations bill. These efforts improve global disease detection systems that enable other nations to effectively detect and efficiently respond to a range of other diseases. Preventing diseases at their source is the most cost-effective approach, saves the most lives, and makes the world more resilient to new viruses that could cause the next pandemic.

Veterans and Caregivers: The Elizabeth Dole Home and Community Based Services for Veterans and Caregivers Act (S. 141) expands community-based services for aging and homebound veterans. Providing health services and assistance in home settings improves health outcomes and delays, if not prevents, nursing home placement for the elderly and people with disabilities.

Paid Family and Medical Leave: GFWC supports policies that support families and reduce health disparities in the workplace such as parental leave, paid family and medical leave, and pregnancy accommodations.

Nutrition: GFWC urges the reauthorization in the Farm Bill of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) which helps more than 40 million children, seniors, working adults, veterans, and people with disabilities buy food to feed their families. Programs like SNAP Nutrition Education and the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program or Double Up Bucks will strengthen health outcomes.

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