



GFWC Federal Legislative Priorities January - December 31, 2021

Signature Program: Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention

Urge Congress to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (HR 1620) and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (HR 2119), approve a formula fix for the VOCA Crime Victims Fund (HR 1652), and provide annual increased funding for programs addressing Intimate Partner Violence, Child Abuse, Teen Dating Violence, Campus Sexual Assault, Elder Abuse, Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women, Military Sexual Assault, and Human Trafficking.

Juniors' Special Program: Advocates for Children

Urge Congress to prevent online sexual exploitation of children by removing the industry's liability protection shield for third-party content which would allow state and federal lawsuits. Urge Congress to reauthorize the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) programs (HR 485) and provide \$750 million for the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) grants to strengthen local resources to families and prevent child abuse and neglect. Congress provided an additional \$250 million in the COVID American Rescue Plan Act (HR 1319) approved March 2021 in response to the extraordinary challenges facing parents and caregivers, including lost wages, lack of adequate childcare, and housing instability.

Arts and Culture

Urge Congress to increase 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. Congress approved \$162.25 million in FY 2020. In response to COVID, Congress provided another \$75 million in the 2020 CARES Act and \$135 million in the American Rescue Plan Act approved March 2021, with forty percent of the funds reserved for grants to state art agencies and regional art organizations, and sixty percent of funds reserved for direct grants that support organizations' programming and general operating expenses.

Civic Engagement and Outreach

ERA: Urge Congress to enact legislation to remove the arbitrary deadline for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The House of Representatives passed House Joint Resolution 17 in March 2021. Senate Joint Resolution 1 is pending action.

Pay Equity: The Paycheck Fairness Act (HR 7) makes it unlawful to require an employee to sign a contract or waiver prohibiting the employee from disclosing wage information, and it would require government collection of employer pay data and ban employers from asking questions about salary history.

Veterans Support: Urge Congress to enact the Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers for Veterans

Therapy Act (PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act, HR 1448) which would authorize a pilot program to provide service dogs to veterans with mental illnesses who do not have mobility impairments.

Education and Libraries

Support 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 community resources.

Environment

Support efforts to ensure access to public outdoor recreational facilities. Urge Congress to provide funding for state and local parks and recreation through the Land and Water Conservation Fund's State Assistance Program, and the National Parks and Public Lands Legacy Restoration Fund to address existing significant maintenance backlog.

Health and Wellness

Food Insecurity: Urge Congress to support the expansion of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and the acceptance of Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) purchases at farmers markets, food cooperatives, local grocery retailers, and convenience stores especially for hot foods. Urge Congress to provide critical funding and resources to food banks, increasing access to food products utilizing the Emergency Food Assistance Program and the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program known as the Farmers to Families Food Box Program, to address the expansive problem of chronic hunger across our nation made even worse during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Suicide Prevention: Urge Congress to strengthen suicide prevention resources for state and local communities by increasing funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) National Center for Injury Prevention and Control programs. FY 2021 funding provided support for state-based comprehensive suicide prevention programs, emergency department surveillance of nonfatal suicides, and tribal and veteran suicide prevention efforts. The goal of suicide prevention is to reduce factors that increase risk, and increase factors that promote resilience.

Global Vaccinations: Urge Congress to fully fund global childhood immunizations. Every 20 seconds, a child dies from vaccine-preventable disease, resulting in 1.5 million deaths every year, and accounting for nearly a third of all childhood deaths. Vaccines are one of the safest, most cost-effective ways to save children's lives, improve healthcare systems, and reach a goal of long-term economic stability. Support 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 also 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.