



GFWC

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GENERAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS



LEGISLATION/PUBLIC POLICY

NEWSLETTER

RAISE OUR UNITED VOICES

January 2026

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Behind the Scenes at the LAC

Katie Robey, GFWC New England Region Representative

GFWC clubwomen are the true grassroots advocates for GFWC's legislative agenda because elected lawmakers want to hear from their constituents. State federation credentialed delegates to the GFWC Annual Conventions vote on resolutions that establish the public policy agenda for GFWC. The GFWC Board of Directors is responsible for implementing the agenda and individual clubwomen serve a critically important role. We are truly a member-driven organization with volunteer leadership.

GFWC's Legislative Action Center (LAC) is a powerful tool to alert its members to GFWC's public policy issues and advocacy efforts at the national level. This newsletter will take the members behind the scenes to understand from beginning (why an alert is sent) to end (what happens with the data) with a Q &A with Debra Bryant, Federal Government Relations Consultant from Unified Solutions LLC.

Question: GFWC has many resolutions voted on by the delegates each year, who decides which of these becomes a legislative priority? The GFWC Executive Committee approves the annual legislative priorities for the organization, and the document is posted on the GFWC website for our clubwomen and the public. The priorities are organized in the areas of our signature programs, domestic and sexual violence awareness and prevention, and advocates for children, and each of the community service program areas.

Debra Bryant, our GFWC Federal Government Relations Consultant, drafts the legislative agenda to be considered by the Executive Committee based on legislation likely to be considered by Congress in the upcoming year. There must be a GFWC resolution addressing the matter and it is best if there are other like-minded organizations advocating for the same outcome.

Question: Is the federal legislative agenda updated annually? Congress has two calendar year sessions; the current 119th Congress is 2025-2026. As a result, we do

Legislation Action Center (LAC)
registration site



update the federal legislative agenda on a calendar year basis. Even though the GFWC Administration will change in July 2026, our legislative priorities approved by the Executive Committee will not be revised in the middle of the calendar year. During the year, we also have acted on legislative requests from our affiliate organizations that may not be specifically listed on the annual federal legislative agenda but are certainly supported by GFWC. That's just one reason the GFWC International President approves all legislative alerts before they are distributed to the membership.

Question: How does GFWC decide when to send an alert? This takes knowledge of the congressional legislative process and determining that a bill has bipartisan support. For example, advocacy for federal appropriations for violence against women's programs and global vaccines usually require legislative alerts in March when the President's budget is released and agency hearings are held, and again in the fall, when Congress is typically completing the annual appropriations process. Working with our coalition partners requires action throughout the year and may take the form of a legislative alert or GFWC signing a coalition letter urging Congress to act. Especially because of our national presence and local grassroots activism in our communities and at the state level, our collective voice utilizing the GFWC Legislative Action Center to contact lawmakers makes a big difference when amplifying the efforts of subject matter experts.

Question: Who updates the information on "local representatives" that each person receiving an alert sees? GFWC subscribes to VoterVoice which is responsible for maintaining and updating the database of elected officials throughout the year. Recently, there have been resignations and special elections; VoterVoice is responsible for those updates. They are also responsible for contacting members of Congress to ensure they are participating in these types of online services for constituents to contact their elected officials. Of course, we know that some members of Congress reject these methods, so we encourage clubwomen to contact their members of Congress through their official websites and deliver our message in a timely manner.

Question: Why can't the letter to a local representative be personalized? VoterVoice doesn't allow the message to be edited, but it is acceptable for you to copy and paste the message, add a personal note, and then email it to your member of Congress. We hope that you will also send the message through the LAC because that provides GFWC with an accurate participation rate.

Question: What can a member do if they prefer to send a personalized message but include the details from the alert? Can you track those emails? GFWC cannot track an email that you send directly to your elected official through their website or if you personally know congressional staff and communicate with them. That's why we hope you will respond to the GFWC LAC alert and if necessary, share the message again with the congressional office.

Question: What is GFWC tracking - who opens the email, who responds, what else? We closely monitor the number of clubwomen involved in the LAC who act on our alerts. We often share with our coalition partners that we have had thousands of clubwomen contact members of Congress on a given issue. That is very impressive to our partners and adds tremendous value to GFWC's advocacy initiative.

Question: What should a member do if they receive a personal, not a canned response, from their representative? Please share that response with the chairman of the Legislation/ Public Policy Committee. It will be very helpful to the coalition to determine next steps with that member of Congress.

Got other questions? Let us know by contacting the chairman of the Legislation/Public Policy Committee or your regional representative on the committee.