

LEGISLATION/PUBLIC POLICY

NEWSLETTER

RAISE OUR UNITED VOICES



GFWC

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GENERAL FEDERATION
OF WOMEN'S CLUBS

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Legislation Action Center (LAC)
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Legislative Support for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

Hope Hockaday, GFWC Southeastern Region Representative

Women across the globe have recognized November 25th as *International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women* since 1981. This date was selected to honor the Mirabal sisters, political activists from the Dominican Republic murdered in 1960 on the order of the country's ruler, Rafael Trujillo.

In 2007, the United Nations adopted a resolution recognizing this date and inviting governments and international organizations to join together and organize activities designed to raise public awareness of the issue.

GFWC recognizes Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention as our Signature Program. As part of our efforts, GFWC dedicated the 2025 International Day of Service to this goal.

Additionally, GFWC advocates for **bi-partisan legislation** supporting our Signature Program through our Legislative Action Center. Remember, it is not only important to sign up for our Legislative Action Center alerts, but also to **RESPOND** to those alerts and send those messages to your Representatives and Senators.

Every member can sign up for the Legislative Action Center at GFWC.org under Advocacy and Get Involved. Members can also find past Legislative Action Center alerts on the website at that location.

In 2025, we have advocated for funding in both the fiscal year 2026 budget and through the Victims of Crime Act.

Our 3 key 2025 legislative priorities related to our Signature Program are:

- Violence Against Women's Act (VAWA) Appropriations – this funding provides safety, access to services, and justice for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, including shelters, rape crisis response centers, legal aid, and counseling.

- Anti-trafficking Legislation – the Trafficking Survivors Relief Act would provide federal criminal relief to survivors of human trafficking who committed a non-violent offense as a direct result of having been a victim of trafficking. Traffickers often force or coerce their victims into committing crimes such as financial fraud, drug-related offenses, and identity theft, among others. As a result, many trafficking survivors face arrest, conviction, and incarceration – often without recognition of their victim status.
- Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) – The Crime Victims Fund is funded with criminal fines and penalties from convictions in federal court. Taxpayer dollars do not finance the fund. The Office of Victims of Crime disburses money from this fund to states and other entities to support victims' compensation and aid programs, including domestic violence shelters, rape crisis centers, child advocacy centers, and other child sexual abuse treatment programs. Specifically, to address the current shortfall, the proposed Crime Victims Fund Stabilization Act would redirect unobligated resources collected through the False Claim Act to the Crime Victims Act for five years, while keeping critical protection and compensation for whistleblowers.

Our partners continue to recognize GFWC as a **strong grassroots organization** with the structure to activate their members efficiently and successfully. These partners share their subject matter expertise, political insight, and legislative strategy with GFWC.

We have had recent successes:

- Our collaboration with the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence urged Congress to enact the Debbie Smith Act to deauthorize funding to law enforcement to analyze untested rape kits, and continuation of federal funding for domestic shelters and rape crisis centers.
- Our work with the National Center of Sexual Exploitation (NCOSE) supported the enactment of the REPORT Act to reauthorize funding and services for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.
- The Project Safe Childhood Act requires federal prosecutors and the Department of Justice to coordinate with state and local law enforcement to develop training materials and strategies to identify and rescue child victims while quickly arresting offenders.
- In April 2025, Congress passed, and the President signed the Take It Down Act which will protect victims, hold technology companies accountable, provide legal recourse to victims, and save lives. This legislation will criminalize the publication of nonconsensual intimate imagery, including AI-generated deepfakes, require social media and other websites to remove such images within 48 hours of receiving notice from the victim, and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable.
- Congress also enacted the SHIELD Act which provides law enforcement with the tools they need to crack down on privacy violations, provide victims with legal protection, and hold exploiters accountable.
- We are currently working to pass the Kids Online Safety Act which will require social media companies to have a duty of care to prevent and mitigate harms to children online. Companies will be required to consider how their designs affect children and ensure their platforms are safe, establishing a legal obligation for child protection.

**There is more work to do, and when we *Raise Our United Voices*
and harness the power of 63,000 strong women,
we can be the catalyst for change!**