

LEGISLATION/PUBLIC POLICY

ADVANCEMENT PLAN

2026-2028 GFWC CLUB MANUAL

"IN CRUCIAL THINGS, UNITY. IN IMPORTANT THINGS, DIVERSITY. IN ALL THINGS, GENEROSITY, " — GEORGE H. W. BUSH

For more than 135 years, GFWC members have raised awareness and advocated for change. GFWC members' advocacy efforts are focused on the needs of women and children. Over the years, GFWC members worked to pass laws affecting highway safety, juvenile justice, women's equality, the rights of the disabled, education reform, health care, and increased resources for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. Our empathetic members utilize public policy advocacy to seek solutions to local, state, and national concerns. Our advocacy efforts are based upon our resolutions adopted by delegates during the annual convention. Our efforts can change lives!

During the 2026-2028 Administration, the Legislation/Public Policy Committee is guided by our theme, Unity: The Power of Community. The goals of the Legislation/Public Policy Committee during this Administration include:

- Increasing advocacy through the Legislative Action Center.
- Educating members about GFWC's legislative priorities.
- Promoting Legislative Advocacy as a key component of our members' volunteer work for each of the Special Programs and all the Community Service Programs.
- Building relationships with the local, state, District of Columbia, and federal decision-makers.
- Establishing the GFWC name as a brand that lawmakers and the community recognize.
- Mobilizing our members to raise a united voice to advocate for GFWC legislative priorities.
- Identifying and building relationships with other organizations to advance our Legislative Priorities.



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**GENERAL FEDERATION
OF WOMEN'S CLUBS**

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2026-2028 UNITY PROJECT

LEGISLATIVE BINGO



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GFWC Legislative Bingo

Legislative Bingo

2026-2028 GFWC Legislation and Public Policy

Visited a State or US Capitol Building and posted a photo to social media with GFWC identification in the photo	Visited a State or US Legislator/Staff to advocate on an issue	Acted on a Legislative Action Alert	Received a written response from an elected official about an issue you acted on via the LAC	Posted a photo with a member of the GFWC Legislation/ Public Policy Committee on social media
Drafted a resolution to submit to your State Federation for consideration	Developed a club project to support a GFWC Resolution	Requested a Proclamation from a decision maker recognizing a week promoted in a CSP	Visited a local decision maker to discuss issues relevant to your community	Attended a local town council, state, or national legislative session
Testified at a legislative committee hearing or session.	Took action on a current GFWC/State Resolution (letter, email, spoke at government meeting, etc.)	Held an email writing campaign to a legislative body to advocate for or against an issue	Conducted a program on GFWC's resolutions and why they are important	Matched a project to a GFWC resolution
Posted a photo with an elected official on social media with GFWC identification in the photo	Invited a local decision maker or legislator to discuss issues relevant to your community	Enrolled/verified enrollment in the Legislative Action Center	Prepared a Leave Behind and identified the elected official to whom it was given	Participated in a Day on the Hill at the state or national level
Requested a proclamation from a decision-maker recognizing Federation Day	Conducted a program on the proposed amendments to GFWC or state resolutions	Partnered with another club or organization on an issue relevant to a CSP or special program	Requested a state alert through the Legislative Alert Center	Developed and distributed a directory of contact information for local and state decision makers

During the 2026-2028 Administration, GFWC clubs and individual members are invited to participate in GFWC Legislative Bingo. **Players may complete a "Bingo" either across, up and down, or diagonally.** Certificates will be awarded to clubs and individual members who report proof of the required activity to complete the "Bingo."

Recognition will take place during the 2027 and 2028 GFWC Annual Conventions, with special recognition to those completing a "blackout/coverall" by **March 15, 2028**. The Legislative Bingo card may be found at the end of this section and in the Digital Library on the Member Portal.

FEATURED PROJECTS



CREATING POSITIVE CHANGE THROUGH ENGAGING ACTIVITIES

GFWC Les Amies Juniores of Purvis (MS) members attended a City Hall meeting, inspired additional young people to take an active role in their community, and learned the process for securing city government approval. During the meeting, the club president presented a proposal for organizing a 5K run in town, envisioned to promote health and fitness and to bring the community together. Such initiatives not only benefit the community but also nurture the leadership skills and civic awareness of the young members.



ANTI-TRAFFICKING NOTICES IN PUBLIC RESTROOMS

Identifying the lack of information containing the anti-trafficking hotline in highway rest areas, GFWC Morris Woman's Club (IL) worked to create legislation mandating the placement of this information. Members met with a state representative's staff to clarify the lack of adequate anti-trafficking signage and were asked to develop specific suggested language for potential new legislation. This information was forwarded, along with examples used in neighboring states.



DEVELOPING CLUB CONNECTIONS

By educating themselves on local issues and attending a County Commission for Women Legislative Briefing, GFWC Woman's Club of Bethesda (MD) members gained visibility for their club and networked with other local women's organizations. The club had the foresight to provide membership materials for women attending the meeting, allowing them to learn about the club and explore opportunities for involvement. They saw participation in local legislation and public policy as a positive way to become involved in the community, and enhance membership recruitment and retention.



COFFEE WITH THE MAYOR

Members of the community were invited to attend bi-monthly meetings, originally initiated by the GFWC Fayette County ESO (IN), called "Coffee With the Mayor," with dates listed on the community calendar. Special guests, who may include district or state representatives, were invited to each event. Coffees were planned to advocate for Healthy Fayette County, an effort with other community collaborators to increase the health rankings of Fayette County. Constituents were welcome to have open conversations with the mayor and guests.

MAKING GFWC'S PRESENCE KNOWN: THE 2026-2028 LEGISLATIVE FOCUS

During the 2026-2028 Administration, the Executive Committee approves federal legislative priorities for each of the Community Service Program areas and Special Programs – Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention and Advocates for Children. These will be announced on a calendar-year basis to coincide with the congressional sessions and will be available on the GFWC website. The GFWC Legislative Action Center will be utilized to educate members about timely issues and urge them to contact their members of Congress. It is critical that GFWC members respond to these requests for action. Just being a member on paper is not enough; you must advocate.

THE GFWC LEGISLATIVE ACTION CENTER: A DIRECT LINK TO CONGRESS

The GFWC Legislative Action Center (LAC) is the primary tool that GFWC uses to educate and mobilize its members. Legislative Alerts, approved by the GFWC International President, urge members when to contact their federal elected officials regarding a particular bill. The Alert will include information about the issue and a prepared text so that the GFWC message is consistent, accurate, and timely. Once activated by enrolled members, the message is automatically sent to the member's respective elected officials.

REGISTERING FOR THE (LAC) IS EASY

You can sign up for the LAC by going to the GFWC website (GFWC.org), and going to "Legislative Action" located under the "Advocacy" section www.gfwc.org/legislative-action. On each Legislative Alert, members fill in their name, address, and email address, then click in the boxes under "Remember Me" and "Email Opt-In" to receive the notifications issued by GFWC.

Members are encouraged to share the information from LAC notifications with their family, friends, and the local community.

ACTION PLAN: Make signing up for the LAC a club meeting event. Bring a computer or smartphone to your club meeting to help members enroll. Invite a representative from GFWC, your State/District of Columbia Federation to answer questions. Explain that those enrolled will be notified via email with language for action GFWC would like to see taken on a bill. After reviewing the provided language, members can inform their elected officials simply by clicking "Take Action."

The GFWC Legislative Action Center is now available for use by individual State/District of Columbia Federations. State/District of Columbia Federations may now contact their membership through GFWC to request that they reach out to their elected officials on statewide legislative issues. Before acting, the following GFWC LAC policies and procedures must be followed:

- State/District of Columbia Federations may request that GFWC send state and/or district alerts in the following areas:
 - GFWC Signature Program: Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention.
 - Juniors' Special Program: Advocates for Children.
 - Community Service Program Area: Arts and Culture, Civic Engagement and Outreach, Education and Libraries, Environment, and Health and Wellness.
- Issues must be germane to GFWC Resolutions.



The screenshot shows the GFWC Legislative Action Center interface. At the top, there's a header with the GFWC logo and the text "SECURE FUNDING FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME". Below this, there are three main sections, each with a "Take Action" button:

- Secure Funding for Victims of Crime:** Urge the Senate to pass the Crime Victims Fund Stabilization Act. Without stable and consistent funding, programs that help victims of child abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking, and elder abuse must either triage their services, or worse, close entirely...
- Protect Kids Online:** The Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA, S. 1748) has been reintroduced by Senators Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) with bipartisan support of Senate leadership. Similar legislation passed the Senate last year with an overwhelming vote of 91-3, but was not...
- Improve Maternal and Infant Health:** Urge Congress to pass the PREEMIE Reauthorization Act (H.R. 1197, S. 1562) and the...

On the right side, there are three additional sections:

- View Your Election Center:** Enter your address to view voting resources and your officials & candidates. Includes a ZIP Code input field.
- Sign Up for Alerts:** Enter your information below to sign up. Includes an Email input field and a ZIP Code input field.
- Find Legislation:** View and search for legislation. Includes a Keywords input field.

- The State/District of Columbia Federation President must submit required material to the GFWC Programs Department and GFWC Legislation/Public Policy Chairman as soon as possible, but no later than ten business days from the date the alert is scheduled to be sent.
- All LAC state and/or district alert requests are subject to approval by the GFWC Programs Department, GFWC Legislation/Public Policy Chairman, GFWC Second Vice President, and the GFWC International President.

To realize the full potential of this tool, however, members must sign up for the LAC and then take action.



ADVOCACY AND ISSUE AWARENESS: PROCLAMATIONS

A significant part of advocacy includes bringing attention to a specific issue or group. State/DC Federations and local clubs can help raise awareness by asking their state or local governments for a proclamation recognizing a specific awareness day, week, or month or the anniversary of a club or State/DC Federation. Sample proclamations may be found in the Legislative Toolkit.

Your chances of receiving a proclamation are greatly enhanced if you present a draft of the proclamation. When drafting a proclamation, follow these guidelines:

- Proclamations usually consist of two to five factual statements about the organization, issue, or event being recognized. Each of these statements should be preceded by the word "WHEREAS." (For example: "WHEREAS, The General Federation of Women's Clubs is an international women's organization dedicated to community improvement by enhancing the lives of others through volunteer service.")
- Following the factual statements, you should have one or more sentences that present the organization or event being recognized. The first of the sentences begins with the words "THEREFORE RESOLVED," and subsequent sentences begin with the phrase "AND FURTHER RESOLVED." (For example: "THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Town of Jones recognizes April 24 as Federation Day.")
- When presenting the proclamation to officials, have them sign in descending order of rank. You may request proclamations from more than one entity (e.g., you could ask for a proclamation from your state, your county, and your city).
- For each proclamation ask that the entity apply the state/county/city seal to mark your proclamation as official.
- Promote the fact that the proclamation was issued with a photo on your website and on social media. Send a copy of the photo with a thank you letter to the issuing dignitary, with the request that the photo is shared on their website/newsletter.
- Share the proclamations with GFWC's Legislation/Public Policy Committee Chairman so GFWC can share in your success.

CLUB LEVEL ADVOCACY - UNITY: THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

Individual GFWC clubs can educate members to be effective public advocates. Once a clubwoman becomes an advocate, she plays a vital role in the legislative process and leadership of GFWC

EDUCATE MEMBERS ABOUT GFWC'S ADVOCACY EFFORTS

- Appoint a club Legislation/Public Policy Chairman or designate a member to be responsible for reporting to the club on GFWC's advocacy efforts and resolutions.
- Give a club presentation on the GFWC LAC. Have one or more members bring their computer to the meeting and help club members sign up for this advocacy tool.
- Educate members on the GFWC Resolutions by reading one at every club meeting and asking members why it is important in your community.
- Include a short article about a GFWC Resolution in every club newsletter. Do not just reprint them; instead, discuss what they ask of members and why.
- Give a presentation on the Legislative Priorities for the 2026-2028 Administration.
- Reprint information from GFWC in your club newsletter or forward it to members via email.
- Invite a Legislation/Public Policy Chairman or committee member from the National, State/ District of Columbia Federation level to speak about GFWC's impressive history of advocacy and its current advocacy efforts.
- Provide club members with information about the Women's History and Resource Center and the history of GFWC.

EDUCATE MEMBERS ON THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS AND HOW TO ADVOCATE

- Present a club program on how a bill becomes a law. Consider watching the video "I'm Just a Bill" from Schoolhouse Rock (available on YouTube), which provides an overview of the legislative process.
- Encourage club members to contact their senators and representatives via email, the LAC, or phone calls. Provide them with the tips for communicating with their legislators found in the Club Manual.
- Draft and distribute a sample letter or email for club members to send on a specific issue. Please note: Emails are more effective for time-sensitive matters, and with dangerous items appearing in lawmakers' postal mail, some are not opening letters.
- Bring computers or smartphones (or paper, envelopes, and stamps) to a club meeting and have members write to their senators/representatives, urging passage of a bill, or write to the senator or representative chairing the committee to which the bill was sent, urging it be voted out of the committee. It is helpful to have sample language previously drafted. Do not forget to include the GFWC emblem in your correspondence.
- Write to the senator or representative chairing the committee to which the bill was sent, urging it be voted out of the committee. Do not forget to include the GFWC logo in your email. If your members do not live in that legislator's district, email letters to a local office. This address can be found on the legislator's website.
- Present a program to teach members about the various levels of government (city, county, state, and national) where they can use their advocacy skills.
- Develop and distribute a directory that lists contact information for public officials and their staff. Please include this information in your club directory and update it frequently, as local office addresses often change.

INFORM MEMBERS ABOUT THE ISSUES

- If your club becomes interested in a specific issue, invite an elected official to a meeting to

discuss the issue. Make this an open meeting, where you invite the public to attend.

- Become familiar with women's caucuses at both the state and national levels. Determine what issues they are focused on and if those issues also interest your club.
- Develop information for your members and the community on the effect of budget cuts on programs designed to benefit women and children.
- Ask members to share information on public policy issues that are of interest and/or concern to them. Email these articles to other members or provide them with copies at the club meeting. Use these articles to foster discussion and debate on public policy issues.

ENCOURAGE MEMBERS TO TAKE ACTION

- Make an appointment with a state or national legislator in his or her home office to discuss GFWC's top legislative priorities.
- If there is an issue before a legislative body that you want to advocate for or against, hold a letter-writing (email) campaign in your club.
- Hold a legislative day for your club, visiting your state legislature or local council meeting to advocate for an issue or piece of legislation that is important to you and your community. Consider partnering with other groups. For instance, if the issue is domestic violence, consider partnering with a state or local advocacy group whose sole focus is domestic violence awareness and prevention.
- Sponsor a voter education night in your community to inform voters.
- Sponsor a voter registration drive in your community. Visit NonprofitVote.org (www.nonprofitvote.org) for information, resources, and handouts.
- Ask a GFWC member who works as a public servant to share how her membership encouraged her to seek her current position and/or enhance her skills.

BUILDING GFWC RECOGNITION: USE THE GFWC EMBLEM

GFWC's advocacy efforts raise awareness of the organization as one working to influence change. To maximize this awareness, GFWC encourages members to use the GFWC logo and/or emblem on all communications, promotional materials, and advocacy efforts. Logos and emblems can be found in the Member Portal Digital Library.

GFWC members make a lasting impact on our nation and communities through the power of one. One member telling another, who in turn tells another, is like compound interest – GFWC legislative and public policy initiatives will grow into waves that cannot be ignored! Members can share to their social media accounts and to the social media accounts of legislators when they "take action" on a particular bill.



Primary GFWC Logo



Vertical GFWC Logo

ADVOCACY DO'S AND DON'TS

GUESS WHAT? A 501(C)(3) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION CAN ENGAGE IN ADVOCACY AND IT IS OK WITH THE IRS!

Some members are under the impression that because GFWC (or their State/District of Columbia Federation or local club) holds Internal Revenue Service (IRS) 501(c)(3) status, its members cannot advocate or lobby. IRS guidelines do not ban advocacy activities. Instead, the IRS rules limit the types and amount of lobbying that a 501(c)(3) organization may engage in. A 501(c)(3) organization may advocate to raise awareness of an issue or to lobby for or against a piece of legislation. Lobbying may not be the primary purpose of the organization, nor may it constitute a substantial part of the organization's activities. If organizational funds are spent on lobbying efforts, those expenses must be reported on the organization's IRS Form 990, which all 501(c)(3) organizations may be required to complete. **A 501(c)(3) organization may not endorse or oppose specific candidates or political parties.**

Advocacy by GFWC members is important, and GFWC encourages it!

Here is a list of Advocacy "Dos and Don'ts" to ensure that your State/District of Columbia Federation or local club stays within these guidelines:

DO

- Advocate for action on a specific issue or for a specific piece of legislation.
- Contact your national, state, and local elected officials directly, either in person or via email.
- Hold nonpartisan forums to educate the public about one or more specific issues.
- Sponsor candidate forums, ensuring that all candidates receive a formal invitation to participate.
- Give only facts when referring to or speaking about a specific candidate or incumbent.
- Educate candidates about GFWC's resolutions and legislative priorities.
- Use the GFWC logo when advocating on a GFWC-endorsed issue.

DON'T

- Endorse or oppose a specific candidate or political party.
- Use club funds, facilities, in-kind donations, publications, or events to promote a specific candidate or political party.
- Ask candidates to sign a pledge on any issue.
- Offer opinions about an incumbent or candidate.
- Support legislation that conflicts with a GFWC Resolution unless the GFWC minority opinion guidelines are followed.



NOTE

A State/District of Columbia Federation that takes a position in conflict with any GFWC Resolution must register a minority opinion with GFWC. If a State/District of Columbia Federation takes legislative action on an issue that reflects this minority opinion, it must make clear that its position does not represent that of GFWC.

AWARDS

GFWC recognizes State/District of Columbia Federations for outstanding projects and clubs for creative projects in implementing effective Legislation and Public Policy projects and Affiliate Organization projects as follows:

- **Certificate to one State/District of Columbia Federations in each membership category**
- **\$50 award to one club in the nation for project creativity**

Award winners will be determined by entries into the Award Program. Each State/District of Columbia Federations may submit one State/District of Columbia Federation Award Entry and one Club Creativity Award Entry for the Legislation and Public Policy projects. **Entries should be submitted to the State/District of Columbia Federation Legislation and Public Policy Chairman.** Forms are accessible to the State/District of Columbia Federation Presidents in the Member Portal.

Note: Clubs do not submit entries directly to GFWC or GFWC Chairmen.

Refer to the Deadlines for GFWC Awards and Contests sections of the Club Manual for more information.

LEGISLATIVE BINGO

In addition, a certificate recognizing clubs and individual members that complete the Legislative Bingo will be presented during the 2027 and 2028 GFWC Annual Conventions. Individual clubs and members must submit entries for activities included in the Legislative Bingo no later than March 15 to the Legislation/Public Policy Chairman. See instructions included in the Legislative Bingo Description.

RESOLUTIONS AND ADVOCACY

GFWC advocates for or against an issue only if a resolution on the issue has been adopted by its members. Resolutions can be found on the GFWC website and the Digital Library on the Member Portal. Resolutions are tools that members should use to advocate for and educate others about important issues at the local, state, and national levels. If a GFWC resolution does not address a subject, members may not use GFWC's name to advocate for or against the issue, but they may advocate as concerned individuals. If members feel an issue needs to be addressed by GFWC, any local club can submit a resolution for consideration by its individual State/District of Columbia Federation for adoption according to the State's/District of Columbia's rules. If adopted by the State/District of Columbia Federation, that Resolution can be forwarded to the GFWC Resolutions Committee for consideration. Every resolution currently in effect started with a proposal to the Resolutions Committee.

WHAT TO ADVOCATE FOR: UNLOCKING THE GFWC RESOLUTIONS

GFWC's national advocacy efforts are based on GFWC Resolutions that address issues of national or international scope relevant to the work or interests of GFWC members. GFWC Resolutions address issues encompassing Community Service Programs and Special Programs, including domestic and sexual violence awareness and prevention, education, women's health, the promotion of the arts, conservation, highway safety, and the United Nations/UNICEF. Many resolutions call for GFWC members to advocate not only for federal legislation but also for state laws that address a specific issue.

The GFWC Resolutions are easy to find! Members can download a PDF of the GFWC Resolutions from the GFWC website and the Digital Library on the Member Portal under "Governance."

HOW ARE RESOLUTIONS DRAFTED AND ADOPTED?

Individual GFWC members control the legislative agenda via the resolutions process. Under the GFWC Bylaws, the Resolutions Committee proposes all resolutions to the GFWC membership for adoption or rejection. The Executive Committee, individual State/ District of Columbia Federation, and the GFWC Community Service Program Chairmen, Standing Committee Chairmen, Special Committee Chairmen, and International Liaisons Chairman may submit proposed resolutions to the Resolutions Committee. The committee reviews the proposed resolutions and determines which ones to present to the GFWC membership.

Additionally, the Resolutions Committee may propose resolutions based on its own research or input from GFWC members and/or any of the GFWC committees. Resolutions are debated and voted on by delegates at the GFWC Annual Convention. Before the Convention, proposed new resolutions (as well as any current resolutions proposed to be continued, amended, or rescinded) are posted on the GFWC website and are included in the Call to Convention distributed in the spring. When a


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RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

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resolution is brought to the convention floor, delegates can debate and amend it. If a majority of voting delegates vote in favor of a resolution, it is adopted and serves as the basis for GFWC public policy initiatives and advocacy activities. Attending the GFWC Annual Convention as a delegate makes each member an active participant in GFWC's legislative process. You are the decision makers!

HOW CAN STATES AND CLUBS USE THE GFWC RESOLUTIONS?

In addition to serving as a basis for national advocacy efforts, GFWC Resolutions can be used to advocate in your state or local legislative body. If a GFWC Resolution addresses an issue, members may advocate with respect to that issue at the state and local levels. If no GFWC Resolution covers a state-specific issue, then the State/District of Columbia Federation should draft and adopt a resolution for action. **NOTE: NO STATE/DC FEDERATION MAY TAKE A POSITION OR PASS A RESOLUTION THAT CONFLICTS WITH A GFWC RESOLUTION.**

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN DRAFTING A RESOLUTION?

The Legislative Toolkit found in the Digital Library on the Member Portal has step-by-step instructions.

QUESTIONS ABOUT RESOLUTIONS?

If you have any questions about resolutions, please contact a member of the Resolutions Committee.

LEGISLATION/PUBLIC POLICY TOOLKIT

Found in the Digital Library on the GFWC Member Portal (memberportal.gfwc.org), the Legislation/Public Policy Toolkit offers guidance on writing resolutions, tips for meeting with legislators, current legislative priorities, federal legislative successes, club advocacy help, and more.