



**GFWC**  
est. 1890  
GENERAL FEDERATION  
OF WOMEN'S CLUBS

# GFWC Legislation/Public Policy 2024-2026

**“Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.”**

**Harriet Tubman**

**YOU**  
**are GFWC's**  
**unique tool!**



# Legislation/Public Policy Club Manual

- Defines the focus of GFWC Public Policy
- Provides examples how to participate
  - Communication with decision makers
  - Proclamations
  - Resolutions
- Educate, Engage, Empower
  - Educate members about GFWC's advocacy efforts, the legislative process and how to advocate
  - Engage members on the issues
  - Empower members to take action



**GUESS WHAT?**  
**A 501(c)(3) NONPROFIT**  
**ORGANIZATION**  
**(YOUR CLUB AND STATE)**  
**CAN ENGAGE IN ADVOCACY**  
**AND**  
**IT IS OK WITH THE IRS!**



# 2024-2026 Action Plan for Clubs



GFWC clubs are challenged to annually “step up” to EDUCATE, ENGAGE, EMPOWER by tackling varied concrete steps of the Legislative Ladder.

**LEGISLATIVE**  
EDUCATE  
EMPOWER  
ENGAGE  
**LADDER**



# LEGISLATIVE LADDER

## Step 1

Increase LAC enrollment in your club

Presented by

Nancy Dickman

GFWC Great Lakes Region

**LEGISLATIVE**  
EDUCATE  
EMPOWER  
ENGAGE  
**LADDER**






# Increase Sign-up to Legislative Action Center

- Where to sign up: [GFWC.org](https://GFWC.org)
- Click: WHAT WE DO
- Click: Legislation/Public Policy
- Select the blue hyperlink words. You will then be re-directed to the secure [VOTER VOICE.net](https://VOTER.VOICE.net) page for GFWC members.




# Here's the page you will find....

## Shot@Life: Support for Global Immunization Programs in FY25



### Call to Action: Build the Women's Suffrage Monument on the National Mall

Zero national monuments are dedicated to the Women's Suffrage movement. Congress has approved building such a monument; now, they must act to locate the monument celebrating the 19th Amendment on the National Mall. It will be a physical reminder of the steadfast...




### Call to Action: REPORT Act and Kids Online Safety Act

Children are being groomed, enticed, exploited, trafficked, and abused online through the platforms we use every day. Congress should act now to protect children from online child sexual exploitation. Over 99.5% of the reports received by the National CyberTipline in 2022...


#### View Your Election Center

Enter your address to view voting resources and your officials & candidates



#### Sign Up for Alerts

Enter your information below to sign up.





# Advocacy WORKS!

- 
- A wooden rack containing the letters A, D, V, O, C, A, C, Y with subscripts 1, 2, 4, 1, 3, 1, 3, 4 respectively, surrounded by other letter tiles on a wooden surface.





# LEGISLATIVE LADDER

## Step 2

Request a Proclamation

Presented by

Eileen Hageman

GFWC Mississippi Valley Region

**LEGISLATIVE**  
EDUCATE  
EMPOWER  
ENGAGE  
**LADDER**



# HOW TO WRITE A PROCLAMATION:



Hear Ye!  
Hear Ye!



- **Title**: Start with a title that explains your proclamation.
- **Write Reasoning Statements**: What are the reasons for your proclamation?  
Start each statement with “Whereas” followed by a reason.
- **Write the Proclamation Statement**: Explains the proclamation. Start the sentence “Now therefore,” be sure to include author’s contact info, organization, position, city, state, and date. Write in 1st person!
- **Add a Personal Invitation**: Under Proclamation statement, personally invite readers to participate and support your proclamation.
- **Sign and Date the Document**:



# SAMPLE PROCLAMATION:

## Wear Red For Women Day - February 7, 2025

**WHEREAS**, Heart disease is the leading causes of death in women, killing one woman per minute, world-wide, and

**WHEREAS**, 20% of women will die of cardiovascular disease, and

**WHEREAS**, 60 million U.S. woman (44%) are living with heart disease, and

**WHEREAS**, 70% of cardiac events in women are preventable with lifestyle change.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I \_\_\_\_\_ Mayor of the city \_\_\_\_\_, along with the \_\_\_\_\_ Women's Club, in recognition of importance of heart disease prevention, do hereby proclaim, Friday, February 7, 2025 as:

### **Wear Red for Women Day**

I urge citizens, businesses, organizations, and schools to show their support by wearing red and providing educational programs. By increased awareness, nationally, thousands of lives can be saved.



# LEGISLATIVE LADDER

## Step 3

Conduct a Program on GFWC Resolutions

Presented by

Susan Tyler

GFWC Western States Region

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ENGAGE  
**LADDER**





# What is a GFWC Resolution .... and why do we need them?



- Resolutions are the key to GFWC's national advocacy efforts
- Our resolutions address national, state or international issues that are pertinent to the work or interests of GFWC members.
- Did you know...GFWC has 200+ resolutions that cover issues in all our CSP and Special Projects areas?



# Where can I find the current set of GFWC Resolutions?

- Go to GFWC website
  - Login to your Member Portal
  - Select “Digital Library”
  - Search on “Resolutions:
- Download the GFWC Resolutions file to your device



## How do we decide which Resolutions will be considered for adoption?

- Proposed Resolutions can be presented to the Resolutions Committee for consideration by any GFWC committee, chairman, state federation or by members of the Resolutions Committee itself. Individual clubs or members must submit proposals through their state federation.
- The committee studies the proposed resolutions and determines which resolutions to bring before the GFWC membership at the annual convention
- Resolutions to be discussed are posted on the GFWC website and are included in the “Call to Convention” in the Spring issue of GFWC Clubwoman Magazine.



# How will you raise your voice?

- Familiarize yourself with proposed new resolutions and current resolutions proposed to be continued, amended, or rescinded prior to Convention
- Do your homework and if you have a change you'd like made to one of the resolutions under discussion be prepared to present the data in support of your proposed amendment
- If a majority of voting delegates vote in favor of a resolution, the resolution is adopted and is 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!



# GFWC Resolutions “Do’s and Don’ts”

## Do

- Use Resolutions to educate candidates on GFWC’s legislative priorities.
- Use the GFWC emblem when advocating on a GFWC-endorsed issue.
- Use “policy” not “politics” in your legislative advocacy

## Don’t

- Support legislation that conflicts with a GFWC Resolution.

*Note: A State Federation that takes a position in conflict with any GFWC Resolution must register a minority opinion with GFWC.*

*If a State 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*





# LEGISLATIVE LADDER

## Step 4

Invite a Decision Maker

Presented by

Janet Prince

GFWC Southern Region

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ENGAGE  
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# Who we think of first to invite to speak at a club meeting?

- Local State Senator or
- House of Representative Member
- City:
  - Mayor
  - Council Member
  - Chief of Police



# Others to think of inviting to your club meeting

County –

County Sheriff

Local County Council Member

City Hall –

City Manager – upcoming plans for the city

Zoning Commissioner – why wanting change zoning  
of a particular area

Planning Commissioner – what type of businesses  
are considering locating in your area

Local –

Chamber of Commerce Chairman



# LEGISLATIVE LADDER

## Step 5

Develop a Club Project to Support a Resolution

Presented by

Mary Pat Marcello

GFWC Middle Atlantic Region

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# First Step:

## Research the Resolutions

Find a topic that interests your members

OR

Addresses a need in your community





# Here's the basis of your club's project

## Elder Abuse Prevention (Convention 2022)

WHEREAS, Millions of older Americans are victims of physical, sexual, financial, emotional and psychological, and/or neglect each year; and

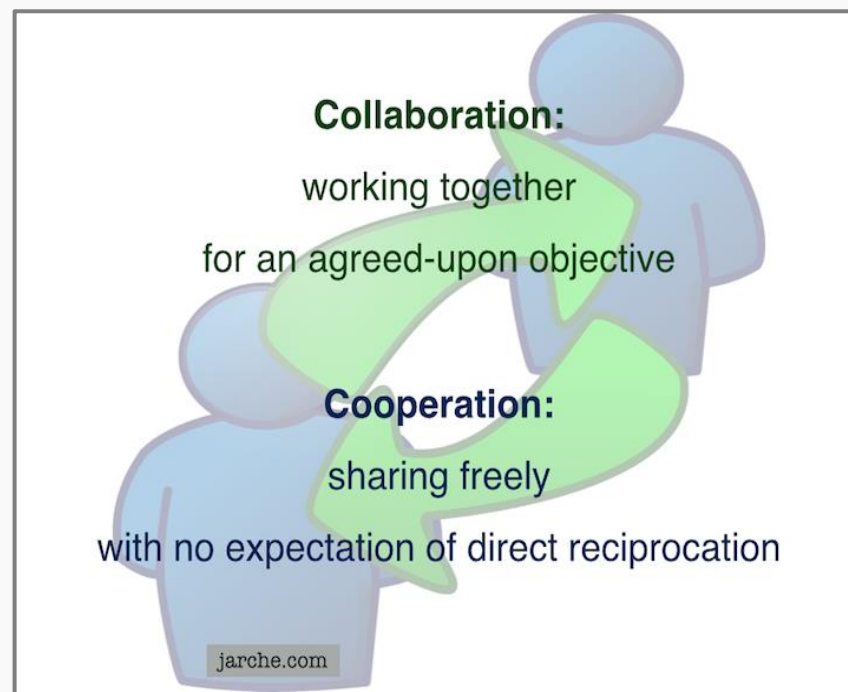
WHEREAS, Many nursing care facilities lack adequate staff to properly care for patients; and

WHEREAS, Perpetrators of elder abuse are seldom identified or punished; therefore

RESOLVED, That the General Federation of Women's Clubs urges it member clubs to support:

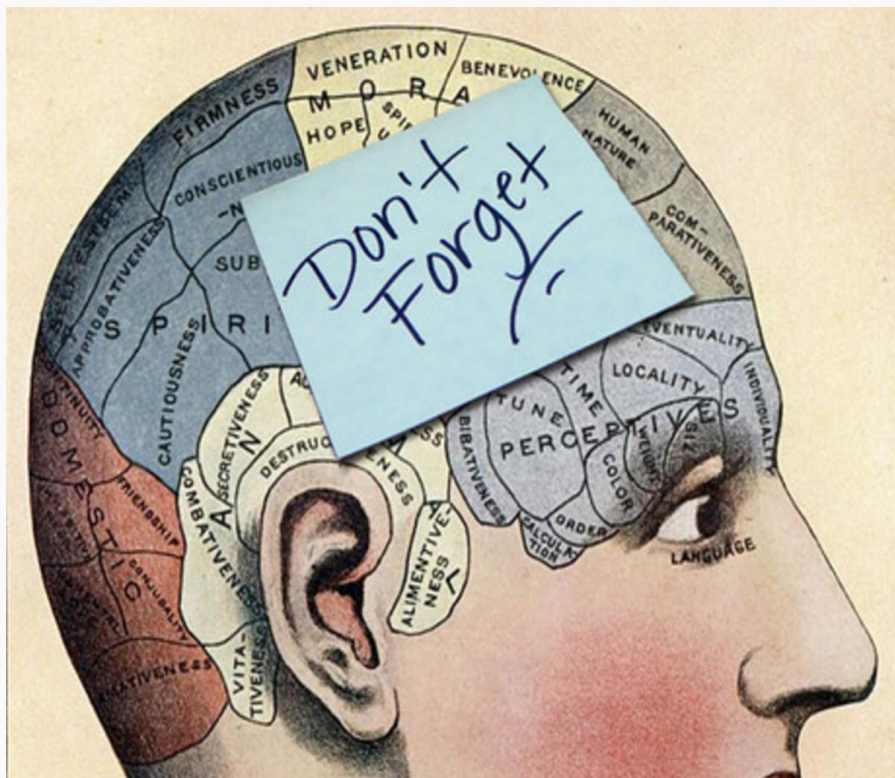
- Programs that educate the community on identifying and reporting suspected elder abuse;
- Training for caregivers on identifying and reporting suspected elder abuse;
- Inter-professional geriatric education and training;
- Legislation that increases the prosecution of and penalties imposed on perpetrators of elder abuse.





- Review the proposed goals listed in the “Resolved” sections to determine how to move forward to support the Resolution.
- Develop a plan of action.
- Enlist like minded community groups.





- Focus on each step to achieve the desired goal(s).
- Use every tool available to communicate the goal (editorials, letter writing/ phone calls/ meetings with “decision makers”, attendance at community meetings, etc.
- Continued communication with other stake holders is essential.



# LEGISLATIVE LADDER

## Step 6

Take Action on a Resolution

Presented by

Hope Hockaday

GFWC Southeastern Region

**LEGISLATIVE**  
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ENGAGE  
**LADDER**

# What is a Resolution?

- Resolutions are tools members should use to advocate and educate about important issues at the local, state, and national levels.
- GFWC resolutions address issues covering the Community Service Programs.





# How do you take action on a Resolution?

- Write an email.
- Send a letter to the editor.
- Call your legislator's office.
- Make an appointment to meet with your legislator.
- Speak at a local government meeting.
- Create a community coalition.
- Educate members of your community.



# Example

- **Resolution 120-020 Keep Children Safe which states:**

- Whereas, A safe, educational, and nurturing environment is essential to the wellbeing and development of children at home and/or in childcare; and
- Whereas, Millions of children are alone in the home before and/or after school; and
- Whereas, Young children are left unattended due to the lack of available, affordable, accessible, and quality childcare, thus putting them at risk; and
- Whereas, Unexplained absences of young children may be overlooked and under-reported; and
- Whereas, Unattended children are vulnerable to the misuse of mass media and/or other forms of technology; therefore
- Resolved, That the General Federation of Women's Clubs urges its member clubs to support:
  - Availability of affordable, accessible, and quality childcare;
  - Health, training, and safety standards for children at home and/or in childcare;
  - Legislation expanding the availability and amount of childcare tax credits;
  - A living wage for childcare providers;
  - Community awareness of the need to ensure children's safety;
  - Establishment of designated neighborhood safe houses;
  - Education of parents and/or guardians, and childcare providers, on the importance of monitoring children's use of mass media and/or other forms of technology;
  - Establishment of out-of-school programs and workplace childcare facilities;
  - State and federal legislation to ensure recovery of unlawfully abducted, detained, or concealed children.



## Remember these tips:

- Contacting a legislator
  - Confirm you live in their district;
  - Use the GFWC emblem;
  - Be specific, succinct and direct.
- Writing a letter to the editor
  - Review the newspaper's guidelines;
  - Be brief with a call to action;
  - Include your contact information.
- Forming a community coalition
  - Create a social media presence;
  - Set measurable goals.



# LEGISLATIVE LADDER

## Step 7

Draft a Resolution

Presented by

Katie Robey

GFWC New England Region

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## Next steps...

- Does your idea fit into a GFWC program?
- Is there already a GFWC Resolution that covers this?
- If there is already a Resolution, can it be amended to fit in your idea?





# Anatomy of a Resolution

Resolution Title

**110-050 Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kits (Convention 2022)**

WHEREAS statements

WHEREAS, Statistics show that *less than 1% of alleged rapists will be convicted* and serve time in prison; and

WHEREAS, Hundreds of thousands of untested Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kits, often referred to as Rape Kits, are stored in police and crime labs in every state, and untested Rape Kits *impede prosecution of perpetrators, adversely affect survivors and prevent healing, and allow serial rapists to avoid identification*; therefore

Resolved statements

RESOLVED, That the General Federation of Women's Clubs *urges its member clubs to advocate for legislation* to:

*Establish a nationwide tracking system for Rape Kits* and requires DNA profile from the kits be entered into the FBI's Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) forensic database.

Submitted by

Identifies who sent in the Resolution.



# *Access to Menstrual Products in Schools*

- There is no current GFWC Resolution
- It can fit into GFWC Community Service Program  
Health and Wellness ~ 170



WHEREAS, "Period poverty" when young girls/women who menstruate, struggle to afford period products, is a reality in our schools. School restrooms provide toilet paper and paper towels for free but aren't outfitted with necessities to accommodate all the women's biological needs; and

WHEREAS, Menstruating is not a luxury but a biological process that necessitates the use of menstrual products that could be cost prohibitive to many students; and

WHEREAS, No student should miss a day of school because they feel ashamed or they do not have access to menstrual products;



RESOLVED, That the General Federation of Women's Clubs urges its member clubs to:

Urge Congress to approve legislation and funding for free menstrual products to be available in all public schools from the school nurse and/or in restrooms and locker rooms.



## Talking points to defend the proposal

Proponents assert that menstrual supplies are basic necessities which some students may not have on hand in school at any particular moment or may not be able to afford in general. They view these items, similar to other products found in nurse's offices or in restrooms, as basic, essential commodities for everyday use that should be available to all students without charge.



# Interested in submitting a Proposed Resolution to GFWC?

- Local Clubs submit to their State Federation for consideration at a state convention.
- Resolutions passed at state conventions are forwarded to GFWC.
- Include supporting documentation.
- Must be submitted to the GFWC Resolutions Committee Chairman by November 1.





# LEGISLATIVE LADDER

## Step 8

Visit a State Legislator/Staff

Presented by  
Val Redington

GFWC South Central Region

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# Why call on your legislator/representative?

- Legislators spend more than half their time in office focusing on re-election. They want to hear from their constituents and what issues are important to them.
- When you contact a legislator, you are adding volume to the amount of voices pertaining to the issue at the grassroots level.
- You are holding your legislator accountable.



# Prepare for Your Visit:

- Set up appointment
- Learn as much as possible about legislator
  - Voting Record
  - Party Affiliation
  - Personal Story
- Study and Learn current environment on issue at hand
- Prepare Information Packet to leave



# What should be included in Packet?

- GFWC Brochure
- GFWC Resolution/position
- Fact sheet on particular issue
- Business Cards



# During the Meeting:

- Be Punctual
- Listen to understand legislator's perspective
- Discuss benefits of how legislation benefits constituent
- Ask for commitment
  - “What steps are you willing to take towards legislation on this issue?”
  - “Will you vote to support this legislation?”
  - “What is your position on this issue?”



# Remember that follow up is key!

- Send a thank you.
- Follow up on questions on issue you may have been unable to answer.
- Build a relationship through future visits.







# The Power of One.... The Potential of Many



**Will you join together to  
RAISE OUR UNITED VOICES?**

**All slides and scripts will be available on Eventsquid  
at the close of Convention**

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**Mary Pat**

Hello my name is Mary Pat Marcello, and it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2024-2026 GFWC Legislation/Public Policy workshop! Before we begin, it is my pleasure to introduce Program and Public Policy Specialist Kynnedi Taylor-Henry.

Welcome Kynnedi; will you please tell us a bit about yourself and your role at GFWC.  
Thank you, Kynnedi; we are all looking forward to working with you.

So, let's begin!

**Slide 1**

The theme for this administration for Legislation/Public Policy Committee will be Raise Our United Voices because that is truly the strength of the membership of GFWC. Our goal is to provide the tools needed for our members to achieve that goal.

**Slide 2**

The Club Manual has been updated for the 2024-2026 administration to enable members to

- Increase advocacy through the Legislative Action Center.
- Educate members about GFWC's legislative priorities.
- Promote Legislative Advocacy as the natural extension of our members' volunteer work for each of the Special Programs and all the Community Service Programs.
- Build relationships with the local, state, regional, and national decision-makers.
- Establish the GFWC name as a brand that lawmakers and the community recognize.
- Mobilize our members to raise a united voice to advocate for GFWC and its legislative priorities.

Examples are included that will assist your members to become educated, engaged and empowered. A new section has been included with specific information concerning developing and submitting proposed Resolutions by clubs and ultimately states for consideration by the GFWC Resolutions Committee. Keep in mind that individuals and individual clubs must submit proposals through their state, using their state's rules regarding proposed Resolutions.

**Slide 3**

Before we move on to the main focus of today's workshop, I wanted to be certain that each of you understand that advocacy is not lobbying. Guidelines are provided in the Club Manual, however, some members are under the impression that because GFWC (or perhaps their State Federation or local club) holds Internal Revenue Service (IRS) 501(c)(3) status, its members cannot advocate or lobby. Please understand that IRS guidelines do not ban advocacy activities. Rather, 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. An important difference is that 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 in lobbying efforts, those expenses must be reported on the organization's IRS Form 990 that 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!

#### Slide 4

So it is exciting to present the newly developed ACTION PLAN for GFWC clubs. Clubs are challenged annually to "step up" to EDUCATE, ENGAGE, EMPOWER by tackling one or all of the varied concrete steps of the Legislative Ladder. Steps do not need to be completed sequentially. Individual steps may be reported only once each reporting year but may be engaged in multiple times during the club year. The point values identified for each step is the total that may be accumulated annually. Certificates will be awarded for clubs reporting activities with point values totaling 35 points or more. Individual club recognition will take place during the 2025 and 2026 GFWC Annual Conventions. Remember, the steps to the Legislative Ladder do not need to be taken in any order. The more steps achieved, the more points to report.

The focus of this workshop is to describe the 8 steps on the Legislative Ladder.

#### **SLIDES 5-8 – Nancy Dickman, GFWC Great Lakes Region E: [nancy-dickman@outlook.com](mailto:nancy-dickman@outlook.com)**

#### Slide 5

Mary Pat: The first step, Increase club member registration in the GFWC Legislative Action Center, will be presented by Nancy Dickman from GFWC Great Lakes Region.

#### Slide 6:

The key to increasing enrollment in your club, district or state is to keep the process simple and painless.

Know where to get the information and what to provide:

From the GFWC.org homepage, go to WHAT WE DO, select Legislation/Public Policy

Scroll to the Legislative Action Center and click on the blue hyperlink words. You'll be redirected to the secure VOTER VOICE.net page for GFWC members.

#### Slide 7:

Please note the header you see on this slide will change depending on the current bipartisan topics that members have been asked to support. Look at the lower right of the slide. This is where to provide key contact information tailored to YOU and then SAVE; you are good to

go. You will receive alerts on key pieces of bipartisan legislation identified as aligning with GFWC and aligning with your voting address. No spam. No phone calls.

Goal of at least 10% increase.

Set up sign up sessions. Here are some suggestions:

- Have a member bring a laptop to a meeting, connect to the Internet and have a few minutes for member sign up to be part of the meeting program.
- Ask members to provide their business cards, collect them, have one person enroll everyone that has provided a card. Or simply use your membership database!
- At district meetings include a little time for collecting signup information and send it to your state Legislation chair for a group registration.

Have a sign-up station at your state conventions; it will spur members to take ACTION!

**Slide 8:**

As club members, we might ask WHY sign up? We aren't a partisan political platform organization.

True; but we do pay attention to issues coming before our legislators that have far reaching impact on our communities. That means the more vigilant we are, the more likely we will act on bipartisan issues that impact us and that are supported by GFWC in our resolutions. On the same page of the GFWC website that contains the link to the LAC there is a link to a terrific 3-page list of bipartisan legislative successes (just from the 2020-2022 administration) that are available on the Member Portal. Imagine the volumes of pages for GFWC since 1890! Also on that page are links for the GFWC Legislative priorities. Of course, currently it lists the 2024 priorities; this however will be updated as the new administration progresses.

Remember that knowledge is our SUPERPOWER. If you need to better understand the L-A-C and its impact, be sure to watch some of the 2023 episodes of the Power of You webinar series at GFWC.org (especially the first 3 episodes if you are pressed for time).

Let's rally our voices and increase the Legislative Action Center participation by at least 10% this administration.

**SLIDES 9-12 – Eileen Hageman GFWC Mississippi Valley Region E: eileen4gfwc@gmail.com**

**Slide 9:**

Mary Pat: The next step, Request a Proclamation, is presented by Eileen Hageman from GFWC Mississippi Valley Region.



**Slide 10:**

Hear ye, hear ye, I have big news! I proclaim that February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025, will be Wear Red for Women Day in our town. I need your help! Everyone on board for a team effort? We can make a difference!

This may have been a great way of getting the word out decades ago. Today with improved communications like social media, and technology advances, we can do so much better!

One way is to issue a proclamation! A proclamation is a great way to educate the public on an issue or cause. You can gain attention and credibility having the endorsement of a city, county, or state official.

Step 2 of our Legislative ladder is writing a proclamation. This is something that can easily be done at the club or state level.

Let's have a show of hands.... How many of you have done a proclamation for a service project or event promotion? That is more/less than I would have expected. It is a very simple document with a few steps that can give you big rewards. This is what is entailed:

1. Contact a local, state, or government office and find out the preferred method of submission, paper or electronic.
2. Follow submission guidelines and include a cover letter that gives event purpose, length of proclamation, a brief history of your organization, and your contact information. Also give them an idea of how soon you need the completed proclamation back. Government can move slowly!
3. Send your proclamation approximately 2 months in advance of the event.
4. Promote your event.
  - Contact the local radio station or newspaper.
  - invite local, county, state officials to a kickoff.
  - Promote your event on social media.

**Slide 11:**

Writing a Proclamation:

1. A proclamation is usually 1 page in length.
  - It consists of a Title, that explains what you are proclaiming. This is followed by 5 or 6 “whereas” or reason statements. A “whereas” statement lists a fact and or statistics that support the urgency of your cause. Keep it simple!
  - A “now therefore” statement follows, summarizing the result that you hope to achieve, what you are proclaiming. It can contain a personal invitation or challenge to your community, or state. It is then signed, dated, and maybe sealed by the official, the mayor, governor, etc.

**Slide 12**

I've assembled a sample proclamation for our event or day.

Wear Red for Women Day – February 7, 2025

As we mentioned, all proclamations start very similarly. They have the same structure. You need a title, that is our Wear Red for Women's Day – February 7, 2025. This is followed by 5 or 6 "whereas" or reason statements, (I have gone with 4 to simplify our slide). These are statistics supporting our cause in this case relating to heart disease in women. These are followed by a "now, therefore" statement with your official's information, an invitation, or maybe a challenge to the public, and of course, a date and signature. I wanted to give you an example of what the drafted proclamation might look like. This would be what you are submitting to your official for signature. When you've gotten the signed proclamation back, publicize, publicize, and publicize some more!

For me, the hardest part has been coming up with a topic. You and your club will need to find a cause that you are passionate about. You could prepare a proclamation for November's Alzheimer's month, April being Volunteers month, Earth Day, or Federation Day. Celebrate your club's anniversary and attend the signing as a club. There are so many possible opportunities! I challenge you to create at least one proclamation at the club level. The second and third will come much easier! Your club can get 5 points on our legislative ladder. You can create awareness of the issue in your community. Your club can gain some needed publicity. Proclamations are truly a way of working smarter rather than harder. Get rid of the hat and bells! Let's do it!

Thank you.

**SLIDES 13-18 – Susan Tyler GFWC Western States Region E: [suewatergirl@comcast.net](mailto:suewatergirl@comcast.net)**

**Slide 13**

Mary Pat: The third step, Conduct a Program on GFWC Resolutions, is presented by Susan Tyler from GFWC Western States Region.

**Slide 13**

Step 3 of the Legislative Ladder brings to mind Margaret Mead's quote, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Let's take a few minutes to talk about one of the main tools we use to achieve the type of change Mead referred to.

#### Slide 14

You may be asking “why are resolutions so important to our work in GFWC? I’m not supporting food drives or collecting supplies for my local shelter because a resolution told me to do that”.

Chances are that the food bank and shelter you’re supporting receive funding based on legislation such as the Violence Against Women Act which authorized funding to states, Tribes, and territories for local prosecutors, law enforcement, and victim advocates to support survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking.

If you’re on the LAC, you’ve most likely received alerts asking you to contact your elected officials when legislation like VAWA comes up for renewal, and those alerts are based on the GFWC Resolutions in the Signature Program area. Resolutions that we all voted on form the backbone of our legislative advocacy. It says we are speaking with one voice when we speak in support of legislation that matters to the work we do in our communities. Our Resolutions – and there are more than 200 on the books – run the gamut of all the GFWC Community Service Programs and Special Programs.

#### Slide 15

Now you may be wondering how you can get your hands on a copy of these very important and useful Resolutions.

Turns out that’s an easy process, and you have the tools you need to access them at your fingertips (or more appropriately, keyboard).

Hopefully by now you’ve all set up your new Member Portal account on the GFWC website.

Once you’re logged in click on the link to “Digital Library” at the top of the page; in the search box enter “Resolutions” and click on Search. Select the icon for the downloadable file and save.

#### Slide 16

Who can submit a Resolution to the Resolutions Committee for consideration? The process for creating a GFWC level resolution is different depending on who is proposing the resolution. For example, State federations vs GFWC committee members, such as The Executive Committee; individual State Federations; GFWC CSP and Standing Committee Chairmen; and Special Committee Chairmen. Keep in mind that individual clubs or members must submit proposals through their state federation and each state has its way of handling resolutions. Be sure to review your state’s bylaws, or contact your state’s Legislation/Public Policy Chairman for exact procedures.

The Resolutions Committee may also propose resolutions based on its members’ research. Once the Resolutions committee has the proposed resolutions in hand, they make sure all the necessary information is included in the resolution and the supporting data is available.

Prior to the Annual Convention, proposed resolutions that have been reviewed and approved by the GFWC Executive Committee for presentation are posted on the GFWC website and included in the “Call to Convention” in the Spring issue of GFWC Clubwoman Magazine.

**Slide 17**

Show of hands – how many of you actually read through the proposed Resolutions, including those to be amended or rescinded that will be discussed at the annual convention and mark them up with your comments? True confession time...I do read them, although sometimes it's on the plane on the way to convention.

I speak from personal experience having spoken twice on resolutions under consideration. It can be intimidating but trust the process and be willing to speak up. Just know what you want to address and why. GFWC values the perspective and experience you bring to the table. When it's time to vote on the Resolution, make your voice heard; participate in the vote. Ultimately, we are all the decision makers on what our organization represents!

**Slide 18**

Now that you have a good idea of what a resolution is, and why they're powerful tools here are a couple of reminders of what you should or shouldn't do:

Do: use our Resolutions to educate candidates and elected officials about our priorities. Meeting with state officials to advocate funding for Alzheimer's disease? Read up on resolution 170-045 (Dementia) beforehand and use that information to make your case. And remind them it's not just your voice. It's the 60,000+ GFWC members who stand together on this issue. Don't forget to advertise who we are; use the GFWC logo whenever possible. Keep in mind an important distinction; our advocacy is based on bipartisan Policy NOT politics. We don't support individual candidates for office; we do support legislation to support our priorities which adhere to GFWC Resolutions.

And at least one major Don't: don't use your GFWC street cred to support legislation that's counter to a GFWC resolution. As an individual, you can obviously support what you want but don't say you're supporting as a member of GFWC.

I hope this broad overview gives you a better understanding of how GFWC Resolutions fit into our shared legislative priorities and how you can use them to “raise our united voices” in common cause.

**SLIDES 19-21 – Janet Prince GFWC Southern Region E: [jhprince@aol.com](mailto:jhprince@aol.com)**

**Slide 19**

Mary Pat: The fourth step, Invite a Decision Maker, is presented by Janet Prince from GFWC Southern Region.

**Slide 19**

When you are asked to be in charge of the program for Legislative and Public issues for your club do you panic! Does your mind normally draw a blank? But not now...I am going to provide you with some ideas for great speakers to choose from.

**Slide 20**

The first person we think of may be someone from your state house, for example a state senator or state house member. They can provide you with information on the big picture in your state; what's on the docket now and any hot topics coming in the future. If your senator or house member cannot attend one of your meetings, be sure to ask one of their staff. They are there to help share what your representatives are doing and are usually easier to get scheduled. Don't forget to consider expanding your meeting to a town-wide event; you may be more likely entice a decision maker to attend!

Look to your local government officials to invite to your meeting. Think about your mayor or city council member and find out what they are working on for your area. Others you could consider are the City Manager, Zoning Chairman and Planning Commission Chairman. From these three you can learn what businesses may be planning to move to your area: where do they want to be located, when they would like to move into your area, is it a business you want in the area. Remember, this is a great opportunity for you to ask questions.

**Slide 21**

Another government official is your Chief of Police or County Sheriff. They can provide you with relevant safety issues in your area such as traffic pattern changes, school/school bus safety concerns, etc. You could also invite your local Neighborhood Watch Leaders.

Don't forget about your County Representatives – County Council Chairman or a local County Council Member. Learn what is going on in your county.

Lastly, don't forget about your Local Chamber of Commerce Chairman. They provide you with a wealth of information on what is going on in your area; plus, you may learn of a way your club could volunteer.

I hope this helps when you are making up your program speakers for the upcoming club year! Remember, by consistently engaging with local decision-makers, your club will come to be seen as a valuable resource for community action.

**SLIDES 22-26 – Mary Pat Marcello GFWC Middle Atlantic Region E: [njsfwcmarypat@aol.com](mailto:njsfwcmarypat@aol.com)**

**Slide 22**

Mary Pat: I will present the next step, Develop a Club Project to support a Resolution, and I represent GFWC Middle Atlantic Region.

**Slide 23**

Once a topical Resolution has been identified, one that resonates with your members and community, review the statements in the Resolved portions, as those are the “action items” the Resolution supports. Researching a Resolution that interests your members, or is an apparent need in your community, is in itself a project.

**Slide 24**

For the sake of this presentation, let’s look at the 2022 GFWC Resolution entitled “Elder Abuse Prevention”. Keep in mind that while this Resolution is found under the GFWC Signature Program Domestic Violence Awareness and Prevention, there are multiple Resolutions found in each of the CSPs.

**Slide 25**

Discuss your strategies and ultimate goals. Remember that the project could grow as progress is made in moving the project forward.

This Resolution advocates not only the passage of legislation but also the concrete measurable steps proposed. Consider working with local law enforcement and mental health agencies to determine how to best educate and train those living and working with elders. Each state has agencies dedicated to preventing elder abuse. Aren’t we fortunate to have google to locate those professionals? Approach church-based support networks or the local AARP chapter to determine best practices to inform families and elders of assistance available locally. In this way, not only will you increase your reach, but the overall effectiveness of your project will be maximized.

**Slide 26**

Your club’s project could be as simple as conducting a letter writing session to support the action of the Resolution or could expand to hosting a community-wide forum to educate residents of the resources available to families and individuals. Perhaps this could then create new systems of support within your community. It may be helpful to schedule project reviews periodically to ascertain the progress toward the goals. Other stakeholders will bring varied perspectives and resources to the table to enable achievement of your goal.

Remember to celebrate and report your accomplishments!

**SLIDES 27-31 – Hope Hockaday, GFWC Southeastern Region E: [hopelynn@gmail.com](mailto:hopenlynn@gmail.com)**

**Slide 27**

Mary Pat: The next step, Take Action on a Resolution, is presented by Hope Hockaday representing GFWC Southeastern Region.

### Slide 28

Resolutions are tools members should use to advocate and educate about important issues at the local, state, and national levels. GFWC's national advocacy efforts are based on GFWC Resolutions that address issues of national or international scope that are germane to the work or interests of GFWC members.

GFWC resolutions address bipartisan issues covering the Community Service Programs such as domestic violence awareness and prevention, education, women's health, promotion of the arts, conservation, highway safety, gun safety, and the United Nations/UNICEF. Many resolutions call for GFWC members to advocate not only for national legislation but also for state laws that address a specific issue.

### Slide 29

How do clubs take the next step up the ladder and "Take Action on a Resolution"?

You can write an email, send a letter to the editor, call your legislator's office, make an appointment to meet with your legislator, speak at a local government meeting, create a community coalition, or educate members of your community. Remember to provide the information on the Resolution and details of the action taken.

### Slide 30

Let's look at an example.

Take Resolution 120-020 Keep Children Safe which states:

Whereas, A safe, educational, and nurturing environment is essential to the wellbeing and development of children at home and/or in childcare; and

Whereas, Millions of children are alone in the home before and/or after school; and

Whereas, Young children are left unattended due to the lack of available, affordable, accessible, and quality childcare, thus putting them at risk; and

Whereas, Unexplained absences of young children may be overlooked and under-reported; and

Whereas, Unattended children are vulnerable to the misuse of mass media and/or other forms of technology; therefore

Resolved, That the General Federation of Women's Clubs urges its member clubs to support:

- Availability of affordable, accessible, and quality childcare;
- Health, training, and safety standards for children at home and/or in childcare;
- Legislation expanding the availability and amount of childcare tax credits;
- A living wage for childcare providers;
- Community awareness of the need to ensure children's safety;
- Establishment of designated neighborhood safe houses;



- Education of parents and/or guardians, and childcare providers, on the importance of monitoring children's use of mass media and/or other forms of technology;
- Establishment of out-of-school programs and workplace childcare facilities;
- State and federal legislation to ensure recovery of unlawfully abducted, detained, or concealed children.

You may know that the Whereas sections of Resolutions state what the issue is; the Resolved statements are the "action items". What can your club do to take action on this resolution? Many of these items have no costs involved.

- Go to a community meeting to show support for a government funded childcare facility opening in your community.
- Write a letter to the editor to support a new after school program in your community. Most weekly papers welcome content their readers submit. In fact, the smaller the newspaper's circulation, the easier it is to get your letter printed.
- Email or call your legislator to advocate for a new childcare tax credit being voted on by the U.S. Congress. Maybe provide a draft letter to all your club members to make a bigger impact. Even better, go to your local legislator's office to advocate for the issue.
- Work within your community to establish designated neighborhood safe houses. Making connections with other like-minded organizations not only helps define your message but can amplify your advocacy efforts.
- Host a community event to educate parents and childcare providers on the importance of monitoring children's use of technology and social media. GFWC affiliate organizations offer unique and customized materials, speakers, kits, etc. designed specifically for GFWC clubs.
- Identify a piece of legislation that supports childcare providers, and work with your state leadership to use the Legislative Action Center to send emails to appropriate legislators.

#### Slide 31

Keep in mind some tips when emailing or calling your legislator:

- If a member has a public email address, it can be found on the member's website. Or the office may provide a form directly on the member's website.
- Include or provide your name and address at the top of the message or call so your representative can confirm you live in the district.
- Address your legislator as The Honorable, Senator, Representative or Congressman/ woman in the greeting.
- Insert the GFWC emblem on your correspondence, if possible, and identify your GFWC affiliation.

- Explain the reason for your correspondence and refer to the specific legislation you want addressed. Only address one issue. Be specific on the action you want your legislator to take. Explain how the issue directly impacts you, your family, and/or your community.
- Keep the correspondence succinct and direct (i.e. short). Include facts citing sources.
- When you call, request a written response from the legislator's office. Do not engage in debate or argument. And do not inundate the phone system with repeated calls.

When writing a letter to the editor,

- Review the newspaper's guidelines for submissions.
- Keep the letter to less than 300 words.
- Be personal, authoritative, and end with a call to action.
- Include your contact information so the paper can validate your identity.
- Put the most important points in the first paragraph.
- Use local statistics and personal stories to grab attention.

When forming a community coalition,

- Consider creating a social media campaign to share information, photos, personal stories, events, and opportunities to connect with elected officials.
- Set concrete, measurable goals for mobilizing supporters and moving legislation forward.
- Define your target audience, select the most appropriate social media, and tailor your message to resonate with them.
- Develop content that taps into the audience's interests and passions. Give them a reason to care about the issue.

**SLIDES 32-40 – Katie Robey GFWC New England Region E: [kdrobey@robeybaur.org](mailto:kdrobey@robeybaur.org)**

**Slide 32**

Mary Pat: The next step, Draft a Resolution, is presented by Katie Robey from GFWC New England Region.

**Slide 33**

You have an idea you think needs some advocacy help via GFWC through its resolutions. What do you do?

**Slide 34**

Susan mentioned the GFWC program areas, does your idea fit into one of those areas? Did you check to see if there is already a GFWC Resolution that covers your idea? Maybe it could be a simple amendment, instead of a new resolution?

**Slide 35**

A resolution submitted to GFWC contains 4 parts.

The first is the title which should be clear, concise and convey the general idea of the topic for the resolution. You can use the legislation title if there is one.

Facts that explain the rationale for the resolution are included in the "whereas" clauses. There should be no more than three and each should contain a specific fact or set of facts, the effect of facts on at least part of the population, and why they demonstrate a need for action.

The action or policy called for by the resolution is included in the "resolved" clauses. There should be no more than two of these. If the resolution calls for action on legislation, include the bill number.

The final part is the "submitted by" which identifies the State Federation, GFWC Committee or GFWC chairman submitting the resolution; this goes in the lower right-hand corner of the last page of the submittal. State Federations submitting should also include the names/signatures of its President and Recording Secretary while committees submitting need the chairman's name/signature

#### Slide 36

This sample resolution is titled *Access to Menstrual Products in Schools*. There is nothing in the current resolutions to cover this topic and it will fit into GFWC Community Service Program Health and Wellness which is Section 170 in GFWC resolutions.

#### Slide 37

There are three "whereas" clauses with all three containing facts. Further research may come up with statistics that could be incorporated.

#### Slide 38

With the "whereas" clauses complete, the "resolved" is next. GFWC's Resolutions all include the same Resolved language ("That the General Federation of Women's Clubs urges its member clubs to") with the specifics then listed in bullets.

#### Slide 39

When resolutions are presented to delegates at a GFWC Convention, those to be amended contain a simple rationale at the end such as "to clarify" but there is no rationale for new resolutions. However, if you begin the resolution process at a state level, they may require you to have talking points to defend your proposal which would be included as a rationale. This language is what could be submitted with the sample resolution.

#### Slide 40

Are you interested in submitting a Proposed resolution to GFWC?

Local clubs or individuals must submit a proposed resolution to their State Federation for consideration at its next state convention. Specific procedures for proposing and adopting resolutions at the state level should be outlined in each State Federation's

bylaws. Resolutions passed at state conventions should then be forwarded to GFWC. Proposed resolutions must be typed and accompanied by supporting documentation. Supporting documentation includes articles, surveys, statistics, reports, and studies that support the facts on which the resolution is based. The Resolutions Committee needs to understand WHY this issue is important to GFWC members. All proposed resolutions must be submitted to the GFWC Resolutions Committee Chairman by November 1 of the year preceding the GFWC Annual Convention at which the resolution will be considered (e.g., resolutions to be considered at the 2025 GFWC Annual Convention must be submitted no later than November 1, 2024).

**SLIDES 41-46 – Val Redington GFWC South Central Region E: [reding2727@gmail.com](mailto:reding2727@gmail.com)**

**Slide 41**

Mary Pat: The final step, Visit a State Legislator or Staff, is presented by Val Redington from GFWC South Central Region.

**Slide 42**

You might be thinking “why would I want to call on my Legislator?” Perhaps some of you have an answer to that question.

1. Our Legislators want to hear from their constituents to determine how to support the varied issues presented for their vote.
2. Through your advocacy, you are telling them what your concerns are and, in that way, may get your vote, so always identify yourself as a constituent.
3. Your message to them increases the volume of an issue conveyed by other grassroots advocates.

**Slide 43**

“Before anything else, preparation is the key to success.” Alexander Graham Bell. First, you will want to set up an appointment. Some legislators may ask for a written request. You also may be meeting with a staff member and that is okay as well if you cannot meet directly with the legislator. Secondly, learn as much as you can about your legislator. What is his/her voting record? Personal Story? Is there anything else you might want to know? Thirdly, learn about the current environment of the issue. If it is domestic violence, for example, you can find statistics on your County or on the State. And don’t assume that the legislator or staff member is fully aware of the issue.

**Slide 44**

Importantly, you will want to create a packet of information to leave behind. What do you think you might want to include in this packet? Be sure to research their history of action on your topic. Be familiar with the pertinent GFWC Resolution and you might include that on

the Fact Sheet that you will put together on the issue. Include a business card. For sure you will want to include a GFWC/State/club brochure.

#### Slide 45

During the meeting: Be sure to be punctual. Be concise and make your points clearly. Discuss the benefits of how this legislation benefits constituents. Listen to understand the Legislator's position. Ask for a commitment such as: What steps are you willing to take towards legislation? Will you vote to support this legislation?

#### Slide 46

Follow up: Send a thank you. Follow up on questions about the issue that you may have been unable to answer. Build a relationship through follow up visits, using the legislator's social media. Following these guidelines will set you up for a successful outcome!!

### **CLOSING**

#### SLIDE 47

Mary Pat: One woman can accomplish much on her own. One woman can also be the motivating force for many women. You can be that Power of One if there is an issue for which you wish to raise your Voice. However, there is the Potential of Many. One may start the process, but it takes many to accomplish the task. Right now, will each of you mentally tally yourself, your spouse and adult children, their spouses, close family, friends and neighbors, and your co-workers? I'm sure you could each easily reach a total of 30+ people; then multiply that by GFWC's 60,000 plus members and you have a total of more than 1 and three-quarter million people. That number of people is a strength that could pass any legislation. Members' consistent use of the tools described in the Legislation/Public Policy Club Manual will cement contemporary recognition of GFWC as an organization of concerned, involved women resulting in decision makers at every level seeking GFWC's voice as a proactive resource.

#### SLIDE 48

Each of you is part of the team necessary to embrace legislative initiatives supported by GFWC Resolutions. Use those initiatives to Educate, Engage and Empower your members to create a better community for all. It has been said numerous times that no other community-based organization has the voice that GFWC has; no one has the structure from grassroots, through the state and then to national. My challenge to you is to Raise your Voice for a Powerful Future.

#### SLIDE 49

There has been a lot of information shared during this session. Happily, all the slides as well as the scripts will be available on the Eventsquid platform following the close of convention. On behalf of the members of the committee, whose contact emails are listed on the screen,

thank you for your attention, and we sincerely hope that each of you will embrace the mission of the Legislation/Public Policy initiatives of GFWC during the coming two years.

We have a few minutes for questions.