

2005 North Carolina Women's Legislative Agenda

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

♀ *Senate Bill 38 & House Bill 43 HCCBG Funds*-appropriate funds for the home and community care block grant, as recommended by the NC Study Commission on Aging.

♀ *House Bill 119 Wage Enhancement/Funds*-appropriate funds for labor enhancement payments for nurse aides in non-institutional settings as recommended by the NC Study Commission on Aging.

♀ *House Bill 893 Mental Health Parity*-require parity in health insurance coverage for mental illness and chemical dependency.

NCWU also recommends the following actions:

- Amend the state constitution to recognize health care as a fundamental right.
- Increase funding to Public Health Departments to provide adequate, accessible family planning services and information to underserved women.
- Remove restrictions and adequately fund the State Abortion Fund.
- Restore state funding for pregnancy prevention programs and increase these funds to address the growing needs of the state's adolescent population.
- Correct the medical errors and flaws in the Abstinence Until Marriage Law (GS 115C-81(e1)) and support age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate comprehensive sex education and abstinence-plus sex education programs.
- Safeguard adolescents' access to confidential health care services by preserving the law (General Statute 90-21.5) that allows a minor to consent to limited health services.

ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY

♀ *House Bill 928 & Senate Bill 908 State Government Fair Wage Funds/ Study Fair Pay*-establish a minimum fair wage for state employees subject to the State Personnel Act; creating the state government fair pay study commission; and appropriating funds for these purposes.

♀ *House Bill 330 Living Wage Act*-amend the Wage and Hour Act to raise the state minimum wage to a livable wage.

♀ *Senate Bill 330 & H435 Increase NC Housing Trust Fund*-appropriate funds to increase funding for the NC Housing Trust Fund.

NCWU also recommends the following actions:

- Reform payday lending.
- Institute a state earned income tax credit (EITC).
- Expand funding for childcare subsidies and Health Choice to eliminate waiting lists.
- Increase funding for the Home Protection Pilot Program and support improvements to NC's foreclosure program.

CIVIC PARTICIPATION & EQUALITY

♀ *Senate Bill 1042 Voter-Owned Elections*-to provide candidates for certain council of state offices with the option of financing their campaigns from a publicly supported fund.

♀ *House Bill 851 Same Day Registration at One-Stop Sites*-provide for in-person registration and voting at one-stop early voting sites; and to appropriate funds to the State Board of Elections to implement and study the change.

♀ *Senate Bill 485 Hate Crimes/Matthew Shepard*-to honor the memory of Matthew Shepard by expanding the scope of the hate crime laws and increasing the criminal penalty for committing a hate crime.

♀ *Oppose Senate Bill 8 & House Bill 55 Defense of Marriage*-to amend the constitution to provide that marriage is the union of one man and one woman at one time, and this is the only marriage that is recognized as valid in this state.

NCWU also recommends the following actions:

- Appropriate money for the Secretary of State's office to report and track demographic data on appointees and provide a website to publicize openings on appointed boards and commissions.
- Anti-Discrimination Ordinances giving county and municipal governments with populations of 100,000 or more clear authority to adopt ordinances that prevent discrimination in the areas of housing, employment and public accommodations and gives residents a private right of action.
- Local schools have access to SPLC's "Teaching Tolerance" curricula or other similar materials.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

♀ *House Bill 569 Domestic Violence Recommendations*-create a joint legislative committee on domestic violence, to amend the domestic violence statutes and to study other issues related to domestic violence.

NCWU also recommends the following actions:

- Provide stable funding for new and existing sexual assault programs.
- Create a new law charging a person convicted of two or more sex crimes as a sexual predator.
- Provide mandatory testing for HIV of those charged with a sex offense when requested by victim.
- Improve landlord-tenant laws to protect victims of domestic violence.
- Ensure domestic violence victims are able to opt-out of mediation in equitable distribution cases.
- Work with the Sentencing & Policy Advisory Commission to require mandatory sentences for repeat offenders.
- Require training on domestic violence for prosecutors, magistrates, family law mediators, custody evaluators, and guardians ad litem.
- Improve immigration laws to benefit battered immigrant women.
- Increase access to daycare, transportation, and job training for victims of domestic violence.