



May 1, 2015

Welcome to the Women Legislators' Lobby's (WiLL) April 2015 e-newsletter:

WiLL in the News



Representative Jennifer DeChant (MN) recognized Women's History Month with an op-ed for *The Times Record* urging that [women domestically and internationally be included at the tables of power](#). WiLL President **Senator Nan Orrock** (GA) was recognized for her bipartisan work with colleague **Senator Renee Unterman** (GA) on ["A Closer Look" with Denis O'Hayer](#). We applaud the efforts of women legislators everywhere working across party lines to successfully pass legislation!

Just before the historic agreement between Iran and the P5 +1 was reached, WiLL Vice President **Senator Sandy Pappas** (MN) and **Representative Phyllis Kahn** (MN) published an op-ed in the *Star Tribune* [in support of continuing diplomatic negotiations with Iran](#). On Tax Day, WAND Education Fund Chair **Senator Charleta B. Tavares** (OH) published an op-ed in the *Huffington Post* expressing [concern about the allocation of our federal taxes](#), while **Senator Sandy Pappas** (MN) [urged Congress to scrutinize the Pentagon budget](#) in the online *Minn Post*.

We want to work with you on writing an op-ed or letter to the editor! Media placement ramps up your profile and educates your voters, with multiple chances to Facebook, tweet, and post on your website. For assistance, please contact Senator Sandy Pappas (sandy@wand.org).

Congratulations!

On March 31, former **Delegate Meshea Poore** (WV) was a keynote speaker at [Marshall University's Women of Color Awards Celebration](#), an annual event that honors women for their contributions towards community or university service as well as promoting multicultural understanding and gender equality. Meshea was also recently named Vice President of the West Virginia State Bar, the first African-American woman to hold that post.

Senator Linda Newell (CO) was recently named Legislator of the Year by the Colorado Nonprofit Association for her work to end human trafficking, provide transitional housing for those with traumatic brain injury, and establish the Suicide Prevention Commission.

Senator Patricia Torres Ray (MN) was recently invited by the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators to lead a National Caucus of Latina Elected Officials. In this new role, Senator Torres Ray will meet with congressional leaders and Latino elected officials from around the country to discuss interstate, bipartisan policy strategies to address the needs of Latino families nationally.

Connecting with Congress



We would like to thank all of the legislators who delivered the [WiLL budget letter](#) to their Members of Congress and discussed other critical national security issues. Meetings took place in Georgia and Minnesota with **Congressman Keith Ellison (D-MN)**, **Senator Al Franken (D-MN)**, **Senator Johnny Isakson (R-GA)**, **Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)**, **Congressman John Lewis (D-GA)**, **Congresswoman Betty McCollum (D-MN)**, **Congressman Rick Nolan (D-MN)**, and **Senator David Perdue (R-GA)**.

Capitol Hill Update

Budget Priorities

The budget debate is in full swing in Congress! On April 29, the House Armed Services Committee began marking up (debating) the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for fiscal year 2016. The NDAA authorizes funding for the Department of Defense, nuclear weapons, and war spending, while appropriations bills will actually allocate funds later this year. The Senate Armed Services Committee is scheduled to markup the NDAA during the week of May 11, when the House version of the NDAA will likely be on the floor for votes.

Nuclear Weapons

The release of the President's FY 2016 Budget calls for an excessive rise in the spending on nuclear weapons. On April 29, the House Appropriations Committee began voting on the Energy and Water bill which contains language on nuclear weapons activities. Stay tuned for more information!

Iran Negotiations



After a year and a half of intense negotiations, the P5+1 (the United States, United Kingdom, Russia, China, France, and Germany) and Iran announced an historic framework for a final agreement to continue to limit Iran's nuclear program. The announcement is a potent symbol of the progress that has been made in guarding against both a nuclear Iran and war. While WiLL and WAND encourage strong legislative oversight of the executive, we have long urged Congress to avoid weighing-in in such a way that could threaten the negotiations and will continue to oppose legislation undermining this significant diplomatic agreement.

Women, Peace, and Security

A bipartisan group of lawmakers in the House and Senate recently reintroduced the International Violence Against Women Act (IVAWA). The passage of this act is vital in ensuring that violence against women and girls around the world is a top legislative priority. Julie Arostegui, WAND's Women, Peace, and Security Policy Director, will be working on creating an IVAWA toolkit that will include information as well as action items that will urge Congress to better coordinate programs to combat gender-based violence across U.S. government agencies.

2015 WiLL/WAND National Women's Leadership Conference: "Women at the Tables of Power"



We are excited to announce the [2015 WiLL/WAND National Women's Leadership Conference](#) will take place October 4-6 at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill in Washington! Our conference will feature briefings with Congresswomen and policy experts, training with strategic communications experts, and a Congressional Lobby Day and luncheon.

[Registration](#) is open now, and travel and lodging scholarships are available. Please contact Adzi Vokhiwa at avokhiwa@wand.org or 202-544-5055 ext. 1 for more information.

It's Time Conference

Thank you to those of you who expressed interest in attending "It's Time 2015: The Partnership Summit to Elevate Women's Leadership." After careful consideration for the safety and well-being of everyone planning to attend It's Time 2015 on May 1-3, the organizers have determined that the summit in Baltimore must be cancelled. For more information, visit the [conference website](#).

Connect with WiLL

For the latest on WiLL events and news, be sure to follow [@WomenLegisLobby](#) on

[Twitter](#) and friend WiLL on [Facebook](#). We wish you well in your current sessions!

Sincerely,



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