



**March 26, 2015**

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

### **WiLL in the News**



On March 14, WiLL President **Senator Nan Orrock** (GA) was interviewed on [Women Media Center's Live with Robin Williams](#) podcast. The interview focused on promoting women's leadership at the state level as well as bringing women to peace-making tables internationally. WAND, Inc. board member **Representative Diane Russell** (ME) was featured in a [Washington Post](#) story about her journey to public office.

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](mailto:sandy@wand.org)).

### **Budget Letter to Congress**

The President's \$4.1 trillion Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Request was released on February 2. As state legislators, we know all too well the impact that federal budgeting has on the states. In response to the President's budget, [WiLL sent a letter signed by nearly 300 women state legislators](#) to the full U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate

urging consideration and prioritization of domestic needs and true human security over excessive and wasteful Pentagon spending. Thank you to everyone who signed the letter!

## **Capitol Hill Update**

### **Budget Priorities**

As the 2015 WiLL budget letter hits Congress this week, the state of our federal budget remains unsettled. The Republican majority in both the House and the Senate have devised a budget resolution plan which, in all actuality, is no resolution at all. Their plan calls for stark cuts in much-needed areas such as healthcare and education, while adding even more funds to the Pentagon budget, which already accounts for a huge piece of the budget.

An alternative budget blueprint has been presented by the Congressional Progressive Caucus that gives to our communities rather than taking away from them. The blueprint is called the [People's Budget: A Raise for America](#) and it focuses on the wellbeing of the people. This blueprint is a step forward as it regulates excessive military and nuclear spending. Although the People's Budget was defeated, we want to thank everyone who called Congress and asked them to vote for the budget which would have better met the needs in our communities!

### **Nuclear Weapons**



The release of the President's FY 2016 Budget calls for an excessive rise in the spending on nuclear weapons. On Monday, March 23, U.S. Senator Ed Markey (D-MA) and Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) introduced the Smarter Approach to Nuclear Expenditures (SANE) Act, bills which would save U.S. taxpayers about \$100 billion over ten years by scaling down, delaying, or

canceling a variety of nuclear weapons programs and facilities. [Urge your Members of Congress to support the SANE Act today!](#)

### **Iran Negotiations**

In spite of 47 Senators sending an "open letter" to Iranian leaders on March 9 aimed at blowing up the nuclear talks between Iran and six world powers including the United States, we know that diplomacy with Iran is the best route to guard against a nuclear-armed Iran and prevent military escalation.

We appreciate all of you who lent your voices (and social media accounts!) in condemning these actions and urging diplomacy. It's time Senate Republicans start to play a constructive role for peace and security rather than attempt to sabotage the President at every turn.

Negotiations between the P5+1 are continuing this week in Europe. We will continue to support a diplomatic agreement with Iran over its nuclear program.

### **Women, Peace, and Security**



March 8th was International Women's Day!

As we celebrate the strength, fortitude, and advancement of women everywhere, a [Huffington Post blog](#) coauthored by WAND's Executive Director Susan Shaer and WAND's Women, Peace, and Security Policy Director Julie Arostegui reminds us that we should focus on continuing to advance the status of women year-round.

You can also check out this month's [NGO Working Group's Monthly Action Points](#) to the Security Council. The Commission on the Status of Women took place from March 9-20,

marking the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Additionally, the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at Notre Dame University has recently released its online [Peace Accords Matrix](#), a valuable tool that looks at different types of provisions in peace accords, including those related to democracy, development, human rights, and women's rights.

## **Events Update**

### **Past Webinars**

Recently, WAND hosted a webinar featuring WAND's Women, Peace, and Security Policy Director Julie Arostegui and Inclusive Security's Policy Adviser Allison Peters to discuss the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Act of 2015 which would ensure that the U.S. promotes women's meaningful inclusion and participation in mediation and negotiation processes in order to prevent, mitigate, or resolve violent conflict. A recorded version of the webinar is available [here](#).

## **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!

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Sincerely,



Senator Nan Grogan Orrock (GA),  
WiLL President  
[willpres@wand.org](mailto:willpres@wand.org) | 404-524-5999



Senator Sandy Pappas (MN),  
WiLL Vice President  
[sandy@wand.org](mailto:sandy@wand.org) | 651-247-8698

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**Women Legislators' Lobby (WiLL)**

691 Massachusetts Avenue | Arlington MA 02476

322 4th Street NE | Washington, DC 20002

250 Georgia Avenue S.E. Suite 202 | Atlanta, GA 30312

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