



April 21, 2016

Welcome to the Women Legislators' Lobby's (WiLL) April 2016 e-newsletter:

## WiLL in the News



In recognition of Women's History Month, **Representative Brenda Gilmore (TN)** reflected on the unique economic challenges that women face and the importance of [prioritizing federal budget investments to help women and working families](#).

We want to assist you with op-eds and letters-to-the-editor! Media placement ramps up your profile and educates your voters, with multiple chances share your message online. For assistance, please contact WiLL Vice President Senator Sandy Pappas ([sandy@wand.org](mailto:sandy@wand.org)).

## Congratulations!

Colorado House **Majority Leader Crisanta Duran** was recently named the [2016 Gabrielle Giffords Rising Star by Emily's List](#). Majority Leader Duran is the first Latina and youngest woman to serve as a party's majority leader in Colorado, and has also been recognized for her work across the aisle on workforce development, affordable housing, and rural economic development issues.

**Senator Karen Carter Peterson** was [re-elected chairperson of the Louisiana Democratic Party](#) for another 4-year term. Senator Peterson was first elected to the position in 2012.

**Senator Diane Snelling** recently concluded her 15-year tenure in the Vermont Senate to serve as the [new chairwoman of the Vermont Natural Resources Board](#). Senator Snelling was appointed by Governor Peter Shumlin.

## 291 Women State Legislators Raise Their Voices for Better Budget Priorities

In response to the President's budget request in February, [WiLL circulated a letter signed by nearly 300 women state legislators](#) to the full U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S.

**WE URGE YOU TO RESPONSIBLY RESHAPE THE PENTAGON BUDGET TO FIND SIGNIFICANT COST SAVINGS AND ENSURE THAT INVESTMENTS TO STRENGTHEN AMERICA ARE OUR PRIORITY.**

291 WOMEN STATE LEGISLATORS  
LETTER TO CONGRESS, APRIL 2016



Senate. The letter, delivered on April 13, urged Congress to prioritize funding for domestic needs and true human security over excessive and wasteful Pentagon spending. Thank you to all of the women state legislators who added their names to this critical message and for everyone who encouraged their colleagues to sign the letter!

## Capitol Hill Update

### Women, Peace, and Security Springs Up

On March 22<sup>nd</sup>, the House Committee on Foreign Affairs held their first ever full committee hearing on WPS topics. This hearing was historic not just because it was the first of its nature, but also because it was organized by Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA), signifying bipartisan support for the broader WPS agenda. One of the major recommendations of the panelists testifying at the hearing was that the House supports the WPS Act when it is introduced. WAND continues to work to support the [parallel bipartisan bill in the Senate](#). Meanwhile stay tuned for developments in the House, where we are hopeful that the bill will be introduced later this spring! For more on the hearing, see the [blog](#) written by WAND WPS Fellow Lila O'Brien-Milne.

In March, WAND celebrated Women's History Month and International Women's Day. WAND also continued our weekly series on important women in public policy including civil and voting rights activist [Fannie Lou Hamer](#); [Shirley Chisholm](#), the first African-American woman elected to Congress and first major-party black candidate for the U.S. Presidency; and the trailblazing first female self-made millionaire in America [Madame C.J. Walker](#).

### Congress to Consider Nuclear Weapons Spending

In the next two weeks, both the House and Senate are expected to consider legislation that provides funding for nuclear weapons at the Department of Energy. (Nuclear weapons delivery platforms, like missiles, submarines, and airplanes are mainly funded through the Department of Defense.) On the table for consideration is the Obama Administration's plan to shutter the Mixed Oxide (MOX) Fuel Fabrication Facility at the Savannah River Site in South Carolina, for which it has ear-marked \$270 million. The MOX program was initially expected to cost \$1 billion; current estimates are \$8 to \$12 billion for construction and an enormous \$30-\$50 billion for its lifecycle.

At a recent Senate Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee hearing, Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN) announced that MOX would be funded at the President's request level. He also said that the Armed Services Committee, which authorizes the program (rather than appropriates the funds), would be holding a MOX-specific hearing. In addition, the House Energy and Water subcommittee released its [draft legislation](#); the bill includes \$340 million in funding for MOX, well above the president's request. As the consideration of this legislation moves forward, WAND will be working with our colleagues to support the Obama Administration's efforts to close the facility. In addition, these committees will consider funding for programs to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons while at the same time spending billions per year on nuclear weapons production. Join WiLL and WAND in [opposing](#) excessive spending on an excessive nuclear arsenal.

### Recent Events

We recently partnered with the **Institute for Women's Policy Research** for the webinar "Advancing the Status of Women in the South" on April 21. This webinar discussed the inequalities that persist for many women – including high unemployment, a large gender wage gap, abuse of reproductive rights, and low levels of political representation – and strategies to improve these markers for women in the South. If you missed this exclusive opportunity, a recording will be available soon!

## **Join or Renew Your Membership in WiLL!**

We invite you to join the Women Legislators' Lobby (WiLL) or renew your current membership in WiLL and share our resources to support your effectiveness as a leader.

The Women Legislators' Lobby (WiLL) is a national nonpartisan network of women state legislators who work together to influence federal policy and budget priorities. WiLL provides state legislators with valuable resources and services:

- WiLL shares timely materials with you about how critical state programs and services are affected by federal policy and budget decisions.
- WiLL provides simple, effective ways for you to influence federal decisions that will impact your constituents.
- WiLL offers highly-rated national conferences, policy briefings, communications trainings, and other professional development programs designed to help you become more effective in your leadership role.

When women state legislators join WiLL, we strengthen our ability to make our voices heard. We become more informed and more effective.

## **Connect with WiLL**

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