



February 19, 2016

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

WiLL in the News



Congratulations!

Representative Gloria Frazier (GA) was recently recognized as "Legislator of the Year" by Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. for her commitment and dedication to education, affordable healthcare, mental health, and her involvement in her district in Richmond and Burke counties.

We would like to congratulate **Senator Rebekah Warren** (MI) for her [election as Board Chair](#) for Equality Michigan and Equality Michigan Action Network.

Applause is also in order for **Representative Vivian Flowers** (AR) [for empowering African-American women](#) by speaking at the TOPPS (Targeting Our People's Priorities with Services) 10th Annual Girls Conference on February 13.

Representative Merika Coleman-Evans was recognized for her outstanding governance recently at the Alabama Young Democrats Black Caucus' Women in Leadership inaugural event.

Capitol Hill Update



President Obama Releases His Final Budget

On February 9, President Obama released his Fiscal Year 2017 budget request. While we were pleased to see [some relief](#) from the draconian cuts to human needs programs, we believe that the Pentagon's budget still [disproportionately](#) eats up the overall discretionary budget (the portion of the budget that Congress controls through the appropriations process on an annual basis). For FY 2017, the national defense budget

request totaled \$582.7 billion while all other non-defense spending, such as spending on education, veterans, diplomacy, transportation, and infrastructure, received a total of \$533 billion.

These numbers can be challenging to put into context, but suffice it to say that current spending on the Pentagon provides that agency with the ability to pay for current operations and plan for an all-of-the-above approach to future contingencies. Meanwhile, needed domestic investments [remain squeezed](#) and are constantly under threat, making it difficult to plan for the future or meet the needs of everyday Americans.

WiLL FY 2017 Budget Letter to Congress

Next week, we will launch an urgent letter to Congress, asking them to prioritize domestic needs and the priorities in our states as they consider the FY 2017 budget. We know all too well that women are disproportionately impacted by cuts to safety net programs. This letter will send an emphatic



message to invest public funds wisely in programs that build our economy and our nation's security and properly invest in the programs that our constituents depend on.

Nuclear Weapons

At the end of January, WAND Nuclear Weapons Policy Director Erica Fein participated in a virtual round table discussion (powered by Google Hangouts) with Reinvent Media and Jim Walsh, Research Associate in the Security Studies Program at MIT; Andy Weber, Former Assistant Secretary of Defense & former Director of the Nuclear Weapons Council; Christine Parthemore, International Affairs Fellow-Japan at the Council on Foreign Relations; and Greg Terry, Policy Analyst at the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation.

The discussion challenged the current state of affairs in nuclear weapons policy, focusing on the outdated idea that America should continue to spend \$1 trillion on a nuclear arsenal for national security. A recording of the roundtable can be viewed [here](#).

Women, Peace, and Security

Although the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), an international bill of rights for women, has not yet been ratified by the U.S. Senate, many cities and states are adopting their own CEDAW ordinances. The Cities for CEDAW campaign is seeking to help improve the lives of women and girls in your communities. You can learn more about this movement by [reading this piece](#) by Lilah O'Brien-Milne, WAND Women, Peace and Security Fellow.

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](#).