



Welcome to the WiLL (Women Legislators' Lobby) November 2013 e-newsletter!

## WiLL in the News

The women of WiLL have been hard at work writing op-eds and letters to the editor this past month. **Senator Charleta Tavares** had her Oct 15 letter published by *The Columbus Dispatch* titled [“Women, Peace.”](#) She highlighted the 2013 WiLL/WAND Conference and the Women, Peace and Security Act, promoting women in peacebuilding and conflict prevention, protection from gender-based violence, and equitable access to humanitarian aid.

Minnesota Senate President and WiLL Vice President **Sandy Pappas**, together with Minnesota **Senator Patricia Torres Ray**, were published by the *Twin Cities Daily Planet*. The op-ed, [“Women at the Tables of Power Leads to More Sustainable Peace”](#), highlighted our recent national conference, and focused on the Women, Peace, and Security Act in Congress.

*The Lakewood Observer*, an online media source, published a Veteran’s Day op-ed by **Ohio Rep. Nickie Antonio** titled [“Honor Our Veterans by Securing a Stable Economic Future”](#). Rep. Antonio calls for a new commitment in government spending priorities, explaining that spending moved away from unnecessary, expensive programs such as the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter could be shifted toward meeting the needs of our veterans.

On November 14, **Del. Joseline Peña-Melnyk**, one of our 2013 Pacesetters, wrote an op-ed for *The Baltimore Sun* entitled, [“Peace Lasts when Women Help Broker It.”](#) Del. Peña-Melnyk describes the international convening of women parliamentarians and state legislators by WAND and the EastWest Institute, and the Women, Peace and Security Act, urging action to support this critical legislation.

**VT Rep. Valerie Stuart’s** op-ed, [“Congress Should Honor Our Veterans”](#), was published in the *Brattleboro Reformer*. As the mother of a future veteran – Rep. Stuart’s daughter is in the Reserve Officer Training Corps program at American University in Washington, DC – Rep. Stuart cited the enormity of wasteful Pentagon spending, explaining that we should focus on our veterans and needs of our people.

WiLL President **Senator Nan Grogan Orrock** [was awarded the prestigious Monroe Medal](#) by the President and Board of Visitors of the University of Mary Washington (UMW) in Fredericksburg, Virginia. A 1965 alumna of UMW, Sen. Orrock joined the historic March on Washington, launching her participation in the civil rights movement. The award recognizes her continued role as a civil rights activist and her long career in Georgia state government.

## Capitol Hill Update

The Senate is currently debating its version of National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). This bill sets policy and funding authorization for the Pentagon, nuclear weapons, wars and related activities. One major issue expected to be debated during NDAA consideration focuses on how military sexual assaults are addressed. [Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand \(D-NY\) is pushing for the prosecution of military sexual assaults to be handled outside of the military chain of command.](#)

She is currently 10 votes short of the 60 that would be needed for this bill to pass, with a politically diverse group of supporters that includes Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) and Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY).

WiLL/WAND is also following various other measures arising with NDAA debate, including:

- We're *supporting* the Security of Afghan Women and Girls amendment women offered by Sens. Robert Casey (D-PA) and Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) to providing strategy and funding to promote Afghan women and girls' security during the Afghanistan transition.
- We're *opposing* an anticipated amendment from Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL) to ease automatic sequestration cut impacts on the Pentagon – once again giving the Pentagon a pass on fiscal discipline while imposing austerity elsewhere.
- We're *opposing* anticipated amendments that would unreasonably constrain the President from making nuclear weapons reductions that would reduce dangers and save money.

It is uncertain whether the Senate will complete consideration of the NDAA this week, or take it up again after Thanksgiving. Stay tuned to WiLL/WAND for updates.

## **Upcoming Events**

### **Webinar: Moving Money from the Pentagon to the People**

Join us Thursday, November 21 at 4PM EST as we host **Miriam Pemberton**, Research Fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies, **Judith LeBlanc**, Field Director at Peace Action, and Wisconsin **Representative Melissa Sargent**. Learn about efforts in Connecticut, Wisconsin, and other states to develop plans for diversifying defense-dependent economies state-by-state, and steps that can be taken in communities and state-wide to reframe their approach to economic development. [Register here!](#)

## **Connect with WiLL**

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