



October 30, 2014

Welcome to the Women Legislators' Lobby's (WiLL) October 2014 e-newsletter:

WiLL in the News



During last month's meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, several women leaders urged the UN to employ diplomatic strategies in response to ISIL's recently committed atrocities towards women and girls. **Senator Charleta Tavares** (OH) requested that the UN [take women's needs into account](#) when deciding upon an appropriate course of action. **Representative Joni Jenkins** (KY) echoed her sentiment in [The Courier-Journal](#) and the [Lexington Herald Leader](#), citing the crucial role that women play in peace and adding that women's voices must be included in every step of the peacemaking process.

Representative Pracey Harrison (NC) responded to a [piece in the Raleigh News Observer](#) that called for reductions in Pentagon spending, asking Congress to [rein in war spending](#) and redirect these funds towards programs that benefit communities.

Representative Ellie Hill (MT) participated in the Center for American Women and Politics' "Teach a Girl to Lead" initiative, [encouraging young women at an elementary](#)

[school in Missoula](#) to become leaders in their community.

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).

Upcoming Events

Crisis in the Middle East: Alternatives to War

Join WiLL and WAND on **November 12 at 2pm EST** for a webinar with WAND's Women, Peace, and Security Policy Director Julie Arostegui and Senior Public Policy Director Kathy Robinson who will discuss the perspectives of women leaders working to broker peace in Iraq and Syria as well as alternatives to war. Click [here](#) to register for this free webinar.

Recent Events

On October 28, WiLL was pleased to co-sponsor the Inaugural American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network Minnesota Research Breakfast. **Senator Kathy Sheran** (MN), chair of the Minnesota Senate Health and Human Services Policy Committee, emceed the event. Speakers discussed integrative treatments such as acupuncture and massage to reduce pain in cancer patients, innovative therapies, and the importance of NIH funding.

Capitol Hill Update

Nuclear Weapons

On October 21, *The Los Angeles Times* ran an op-ed written by Ploughshares Fund's president Joe Cirincione called "[How big a nuclear arsenal do we really need?](#)" which highlighted the enormous amount of money that the U.S. is slated to spend in coming years updating and maintaining the nuclear arsenal. WAND's Senior Public Policy Director Kathy Robinson wrote a [blog responding to this op-ed](#), noting the need to carefully scrutinize the nuclear weapons budget.

Iran Nuclear Negotiations

With less than 1 month left to strike a comprehensive agreement, world powers and Iran must stay focused on a win-win solution that prevents nuclear proliferation in Iran.

“Given the great progress we’ve already made, the worst thing we could do between now and [the deadline] is obstruct the negotiators from using all their leverage to get a good deal,” wrote Erica Fein, WAND’s Nuclear Weapons Policy Director, in [The Hill](#). Iran and the P5+1 have until November 24 to strike a deal that verifiably prevents Iran from using its nuclear program to build a nuclear bomb.

Pentagon Budget

After the elections, Congress is expected to return to Washington and address issues of war and peace the week of November 12. It remains unclear if and how Congress will address military actions in Iraq and Syria during the post-election “lame duck” session. WAND is working with others in the peace and security community to plan activities to stop this war and promote alternatives that build peace the week of November 10-14.

During the post-election session, Congress will also have to pass a budget for Fiscal Year 2015 before December 12, when the current stop-gap Continuing Resolution expires. Speculation is that Congress is most likely to pass another Continuing Resolution and leave harder budget decisions for next year. Nevertheless, some discussion about our budget priorities will take place; at the same time that we look towards the prospect of a new war. Will Congress further slash investments in everything else needed to support healthy communities and grow the economy in favor of increased war spending and an even-larger Pentagon budget? As you head to the polls, it’s [a question worth asking](#) those candidates who will make up the next Congress.

Women, Peace, and Security

The day after his inauguration on September 29, President Ghani of Afghanistan signed a long-awaited Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA). The BSA will allow a reduced number of U.S. NATO troops to remain in Afghanistan for at least ten years after the international combat mission formally ends on December 31 of this year. WAND and WiLL have consistently advocated against military intervention, and for increased focus on

humanitarian assistance and support for political solutions to build peace. However, we recognize the important role of the BSA in ensuring the security of Afghanistan's citizens, especially women and children, in order to work toward a political solution. The key now is to define the next steps so that the BSA is limited to what it needs to be and appropriate investments are made for Afghanistan's future.

At the United Nations

WAND serves as a key member of the [NGO Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security](#), which provides key input to the UN Security Council, Secretary General, other UN agencies, and country missions on responding to gender issues in current crises. The NGOWG has also been providing thematic and speaker recommendations to the Security Council for its Open Debate on Women, Peace, and Security, which took place this year on October 28.

Now more than ever, with the crises in Iraq and Syria and the advance of ISIL and other militant groups, women in the region are telling us that it is important to push for the UN and international community to take action. WAND and WiLL members have a role to play in that. We are exploring ways to deepen our engagement and welcome input from members.

During the 69th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in September, the Security Council had the highest number of female ambassadors in history – 6 of its 15 members. During his official address to the UNGA, President Obama reiterated the U.S. government's commitment to ensuring women's inclusion in decision-making. The United States committed an additional \$12 million to its Call to Action campaign to end gender-based violence in conflict. A new [Security Council resolution](#) adopted unanimously concentrates on stemming the flow of foreign fighters to Iraq and Syria, and recognizes the role of civil society, including women, in combating violent extremism.

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 and

upcoming elections!

Sincerely,



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