April, 2025

Zonta USA Caucus Advocacy Bulletin

The USA Caucus is a place for clubs and districts in the US to align on key issues and provides a platform for coordinated advocacy actions within the US.

Climate Justice

All the information about climate change can be overwhelming. The data can seem meaningless and lost in conversation. How do we express our concerns about climate change with all the noise? Through the arts, we can connect with our feelings and emotions and cut through the numbers to better understand the problems and the possible futures we can create. The **Zonta Says NOW Virtual Art Gallery**, created ~~for~~ this purpose, will launch on Earth Day, April 22. Share this **flyer.**

The Climate Committee is offering Zoom presentations to clubs on how climate change and gender equality fit together. If interested contact **Julie Trone** or **Angela Brockman.**

ZI held a presentation at the United Nations 69th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) on March 13 on "How environment affects the health of millions of women and girls, and what to do about it." The event was filmed by a volunteer from the Men's Engagement Network and will be shared soon.

The next Zonta Says NOW Intercontinental Think Tank will be held on May 11 at 4:00 AM Eastern Time and will be hosted by Zontians from Europe and Africa. (If the time is a bit early for you to get up, watch for the link for the recording on the ZI website.) Register **HERE.**

If you are attending the NAIDM, don't miss The Climate Justice Committee's panel discussion Friday morning and workshop on Sunday.

NAIDM

Save the Dates June 20 -22, 2025 for the Zonta North American Inter-District Meeting 2025 in Novi, Michigan. Join other Zontians for fellowship and igniting your passion. In addition to four workshop tracks with four sessions each and the Zonta International board sharing updates on board activities, international projects and more, the NAIDM will also feature two longer sessions on Climate Justice and programs to end Human Trafficking, a hands-on service project and fun summer camp activities. Find more information and register **HERE**. And consider becoming a sponsor of the NAIDM--find details **HERE**. Contact Cindy Vickery or Bonnie McArthur at **info@zontanaidm.org** with questions.

Civic Engagement

Join the ZI Council of Europe (CoE) Committee on Wednesday, March, 26 at 1:00 pm EST to discuss its structure, work program and, its impact on gender equality and women's rights. We will hear that gender equality is an integral part of human rights and a fundamental element of democracy, an important policy goal of the CoE.. The webinar will recorded. Register **HERE.**

As legislative sessions gear up, the Caucus encourages clubs to introduce themselves to their state and federal legislators. Find sample letters for **state officials** and **federal officials**. Let them know about Zonta and start building a relationship so they want to hear from Zonta on important issues.

Ending Child Marriage

Congratulations Washington, DC! Thanks to a robust DC coalition including Zonta, DC has ended child marriage. Congress took no action on the bill, so DC joins the wave of states and territories ending child marriage in the United States.

Several bills to end child marriage continue to make waves with Zontians playing a key role in coalitions. Missouri has several bills related to child marriage with SB66 passing the senate, and HB1200 going to the full house for a vote after it unanimously passed out of committee. In Oregon, the Senate voted nearly unanimously to pass SB548, and now the House will vote to end child marriage. Hawaii's House has also passed a bill to end child marriage , and the issue now goes to the Hawaii Senate. **Congratulations to Zonta clubs in Missouri, Oregon, and Hawaii for making your voices heard and increasing the chances of these bills being passed.**

Unfortunately, the South Dakota Senate voted "no" on ending child marriage. The Caucus, NH Zonta clubs, and Unchained continue to oppose a bill that creates a loophole for military members. You can voice your concern **HERE**.

If you know of an organization in one of the above mentioned states that could join a state-coaltion to end child marriage, then contact **Becca Powell** Unchained At Last is still seeking a sponsor for Maine for a bill to end child marriage. If you know anyone in Arizona, Texas, Kansas, South Carolina or Oklahoma who can help bring the moementum there, then contact **Katherine Cleland** or **Therese Hartwell.** Find email campaigns and other ways to help **HERE.**

Unchained At Last hosted a hybrid side event at CSW69 alongside Sierra Leone and the Dominican Republic. Chelsea Clinton, along with other global allies, discussed both successes and setbacks in the global effort to ban child marriage and achieve gender equality by year 2030. Despite agreements like U.N. Sustainable Development Goal 5.3 and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, much of the world still falls short in protecting girls from forced and child marriage.

Equal Pay

On this year's Equal Pay Day, March 25, t.he Paycheck Fairness Act will be reintroduced by Rep. Rosa DeLauro and Sen. Patty Murray with no substantial changes from the previous bill introduced in the last Congress (H.R. 17 / S.728.) The Zonta USA Caucus has signed on to a **letter** asking Congress to support the bill. also signed by manny other organizations. Once the bill is introduced, watch for a Fast Action Friday.

US Women's Caucus

Learn about Zonta's participation in the 69th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in a post-CSW Discussion on March 31 at 1:00 PM EST. Register **HERE.** Did you attend? We want to share your story!

The US Women's Caucus has new Beijing +30 shadow reports on Women and Education, Women and the Environment, and Women and the Media on their **website.**

Although CSW69 attendees report a great deal of enthusiasm and determination displayed at CSW, some disturbing developments occurred. The US Mission has rejected the CSW69 declaration that was negotiated for months. You can read the reasons the US has given for the rejection **HERE.** Further, the US announced Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are inconsistent with US sovereignty, even though nearly every nation has supported the SDGs. The SDGs serve as a comprehensive global framework for inclusive development, human dignity, and the promise of a better future for all. ZI has issued a statement that "**Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG5)**, which aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, has been the foundation of our global service and advocacy efforts since the SDGs were adopted in 2015." ZI states that the US denouncement "risks reversing decades of hard-won progress and betrays the collective effort to build a more just and peaceful world" and "urgently calls on the United States and all nations to reaffirm their commitment to the SDGs, particularly the critical pursuit of gender equality."

Equal Rights Amendment

On March 25, Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) , Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-HI), along with Rep. Ayanna Pressley (MA-07), Rep. Madeleine Dean (PA-04), Rep. Sylvia Garcia (TX-29), Rep. Sydney Kamlager-Dove (CA-37), and Rep. Jennifer McClellan (VA-04), reintroduced a bipartisan joint resolution to overcome the arbitrary deadline, a significant obstacle, to the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Read the full press release **HERE**.

Stay tuned for upcoming Fast Action Fridays on the ERA. In the meanwhile, you can contact your elected officials and ask them to support this joint resolution affirming gender equality.

Dear [Staff name],

I am writing as a constituent of Representative /Senator [Insert last name] to request they sign on supporting the Joint Resolution to recognize the ERA as the 28th Amendment to the Constitution as it has been ratified by three-fourths of the States.

Please let me know if there is any further information that would be helpful for me to share with you or if you have any questions I can help answer.

Best wishes,
Your name
Name of your club

The key message of the ERA Coalition is that the ERA IS the 28th amendment, and we are trying to get official recognition of what is already the case.

If you need some incentive to fight for the ERA, read a Forbes **article** on "Why U.S. Isn't A Top Country For Working Women."

At the state level, several state Legislatures have introduced bills that would ratify the ERA, including GA, KY, NC, AZ, FL MA and MN have state constitutions. GA has a resolution to affirm that it is considering a bill to rescind their ratification of the ERA, although many legal scholars say states cannot legally rescind.

The Coalition will launch their Correct the Constitution campaign in April with a fun interactive event in Washington, DC that demonstrates resistance to the government's failure to recognize the ERA's ratification by 38 the Constitution. This year-long campaign will educate and raise awareness about the status of the ERA as the 28th Amendment to the Constitution. The campaign hopes to broaden and deepen their movement and build universal recognition for the ERA as the 28th Amendment.

ERA supporters will use community building strategies to spread the word that the ERA is the 28th Amendment. Some ideas include hosting house parties where they use a stamp to update their pocket size Constitutions that the ERA is the 28th Amendment, hosting a table at community events, conferences, even in libraries by leaving business-size cards in library books stating that the ERA is the 28th Amendment. Some groups might host powerpoint parties. The ERA Coalition will be making available talking points, an action kit, a Correct the Constitution party in a box toolkit, and 28th Amendment merch on the ERA Coalition website soon.

The ERA Coalition continues to encourage partners to share information about ERA federal and state litigation, and use their tracker to share information **HERE.** For more information, contact **Bettina Hager**. The ERA Coalition itself will not pursue litigation because it does not have the capacity to do so.