New Jersey State Federation of Women’s Clubs of GFWC

Legislation/Resolutions

**Most Creative**

Several members of the Franklin Woman’s Club were passionate about democracy, voter education and activism. The members formed a committee within the club and named the committee Legislation and Political Activism. The committee met in January 2021 and discussed issues including the resolution their club put forward concerning the banning of the barberry bushes, which are an invasive species in New Jersey. The committee reviewed the history and research of invasive species and contacted other groups in the area for additional research. They also discussed the ban on neonicotinoids (pesticides that kill honeybees). They decided to hold a Candidates Night, in October, 2021 and proposed it at a club meeting with all members in agreement. All these issues were brought before the club through reports and newsletter articles.

The committee also used their newsletter articles to outline ways members could contact their representatives and created a step by step process for members to sign up for the GFWC Action Alert.

1. The Haddon Fortnightly EMD committed their Legislative program this year by familiarizing their members with issues on both NJSFWC and GFWC resolutions. One NJ issue concerning neonicotinoid pesticides which is primarily responsible for killing honeybees was important to the members. The bill passed the NJ Senate and while it was in the Assembly, members wrote letters, emails and made phone calls to their representatives asking that they bring it to the floor for a vote and send it to the governor. The bill was made into law with the governor’s signature in 2021. On the GFWC resolution concerning the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) club members were encouraged to contact their legislators and urge its passage. Club members were given information about the terms of each resolution and bill through reports at club meetings and the club newsletters.
2. The Woman’s Literary Club of Bound Brook educated their members on the two State Referendum Public Questions on the November ballot that dealt with amending the State Constitution to allow all non-profit organizations without political affiliations to hold raffles and allowing the use of those proceeds to support their groups as well as the expansion of sports betting to include colleges. Both topics were researched and pros and cons were then brought to the club members. Members were given time to ask questions and hold discussions during a club meeting.
3. After learning about the attempt to use Caven Point Natural Area at Liberty State Park for a golf course, the Maplewood Woman’s Club prepared information for their members in their newsletter. The bill, which passed the NJ Senate, was also directly referring to a NJSFWC resolution that requested NJ save the park as an urban environmental education area. Members were given talking points and direct contact information of their Assembly representatives, and the Assembly Speaker and asked to contact their representatives through phone calls.
4. The Pines Lake Woman’s Club actively involved their members in discussing various issues that related NJSFWC and GFWC resolutions through unique ways. Besides discussing issues at club meetings and through newsletters and legislative email alerts sent by the Legislation Chairman, they formed Study Circles dealing with Recognize the Red, National infrastructure, voting issues and Equal Pay/Equal work. The study circles also listened to five (5) Zoom programs that provided information on the 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment, a GFWC Legislative/Public Policy workshop, a history of the Constitution, Rock the Vote, and a town hall meeting hosted by their representative on changes in tax law. The information from the Study Circles was then shared with other members through the newsletters.
5. In order to keep their members informed on GFWC issues, the Millville Woman’s Club presented information regarding GFWC resolutions Refugees (015-845), Human Rights (015-970), and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (015-975). They were then given step-by-step instructions on how to access the GFWC Legislative Action Center, so they can send emails to their representatives on those issues.
6. After attending a workshop held by the NJSFWC Legislation/Resolutions Chairman, the Woman’s Club of Paramus, decided to research information about the shortage of school bus drivers throughout their area. Learning that the shortage was contributed to by a national law that stipulated that school bus driver’s licenses included a training called “Under the Hood” which many drivers did not have or was unable to pass due to the complex section requiring a knowledge of mechanics. The law was put into effect in January, 2022, and the club members wished to write a resolution that would be addressed at the NJSFWC 2022 Convention. Unfortunately, the deadline for the resolution had passed and the law was temporarily lifted nationally until March 2022. After discussion with the chairman, it was suggested that the club continue to pursue information and utilize their contacts so they could write a resolution by the deadline in 2022.
7. The Marlton Woman’s Club wanted their club members to have resources that would help them with letter writing, phone calls and emails to their representatives on a state and national level. They created a ‘government official directory’ which included names, addresses and all contact information of their local, state and national government representatives. At a club meeting, their members were also given information on Votesmart.com with an explanation as to the information they would be able to access, such as legislative records, public statements of their representatives and candidate, and ballot measures.
8. The Washington Woman’s Club decided they would focus on legislative issues that supported those who were abused physically or mentally with an emphasis on children, women and veterans. They reported specific legislation in regards to two NJSFWC resolutions dealing with the abuse and rehabilitation practices at the Edna Mahan Women’s Correctional Institution. They also directed their members to the Legislation portion of the GFWC website and requested that members join the Action Center to support the Equal Rights Amendment, Reauthorization of VAWA, the increase of Funds to Prevent Child Abuse, Military Sexual Assault Survivors Seek Fair Impartial System, the Reauthorization of Family Violence Prevention and Services Act, Service Dogs for Veterans, and the Protection of Funding for Victims of Crime. Members joined the Action Center and received emails back from their representatives.
9. The West Essex Woman’s Club researched information from the League of Women Voters and requested brochures and facts about voting. These brochures and facts were then distributed to two senior citizen residences and the local high school library.
10. In December, after reviewing and debating the NJSFWC Resolution concerning the re-entry for women in NJ prisons, the Women’s League of Mt. Holly decided to create a meaningful way of reaching the governor before the next legislature began in January. Members were concerned that the remedial measures on all levels of the state’s corrections system that were endorsed by the U.S. Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division were not being addressed. Twenty-five members created a petition urging the NJ Governor, Phil Murphy, to address these measures and it was sent to the Governor the next morning.

New Jersey State Federation of Women’s Clubs of GFWC Chairman’s Activities

Although the first few months 2021 continued to be characterized by COVID 19, NJSFWC clubs persisted in letting their voices soar in the area of Legislation/Resolutions. Clubs used Zoom meetings and newsletters to inform their members about legislative issues the areas of education, preservation of land, the environment, health, and criminal justice with forty-five (45) clubs reporting 250 projects, volunteering 2,109 hours, donating $83.80 with $6,471 in-kind donations.

This chairman reported at all monthly state board meetings on various projects including how to write a submit a resolution, a summer advocacy project that would help members write letters to their representatives, and specific information about legislative bills that were germane to both the GFWC and NJSFWC. Information from these reports were then disseminated to clubs through their district Vice Presidents.

Every month (except July), this chairman wrote an article for the state newsletter, the Almanac. The articles included topics such as writing resolutions, tips on writing to their legislators and where to find their contact information, how legislators make decisions on sponsoring legislation, alerts concerning legislation that was moving through the Assembly and Senate, and the Protection of the Palisades which is historically significant to NJSFWC. All information given to the clubs related to issues that were germane to the GFWC and NJSFWC resolutions.

At the June and September District Councils, this chairman gave clubs information about the resolutions that were passed at the NJSFWC 2021 Convention and a how-to guide in forming a Legislation Committee within their club.

This chairman discussed with the State President regarding two hands-on projects for clubs that were implemented during 2021. In the wake of a series of rapes, attacks and other alleged abuse at the Edna Mahan Women’s Correctional Facility, New Jersey’s only women’s prison, and after the passing of two 2021 NJSFWC resolutions dealing with this issue, clubs were given up-to-date information and were asked to write a postcard to the governor requesting that NJ women prisoners no longer endure abuse at any correctional institution involving women prisoners. Six (6) clubs sent this chairman separate reports indicating more than 50 postcards were sent to the governor.

The second project involved the Liberty State Park Protection Act and a NJSFWC resolution dealing with the protection of the Park. At the 2021 State Fall Conference this chairman pointed out the historical significance of NJSFWC and GFWC advocacy efforts and how our voices can once again make a difference in protecting this park. Stamped postcards and sample messages were placed at each table at the conference, and members were requested to write to the Assembly Speaker asking that this bill be brought to the floor for a vote. Two Hundred (200) postcards were completed and sent to the Speaker. Additionally, clubs took the project back to their members and sent a separate report to this chairman. Fifteen (15) clubs reported and additional 132 postcards were sent to the Assembly Speaker. Throughout this project, this chairman worked with the Save Liberty State Park volunteer group for current information and advocacy tips.

This chairman was honored to speak at two District Councils in January on the history of GFWC and NJSFWC advocacy and how an issue of concern by club members can become a new NJSFWC resolution.

Proposed resolutions from 2 clubs were received by the December 15th deadline and were prepared along with other resolutions from the committee.