

## 2010 Legislative Priorities of Georgia Women for a Change, Inc.

### *Advancing progressive public policy that positively impacts the lives of women and girls.*

#### *High Priority Areas*

##### Create Economic Security and Opportunity for Women and Girls

The current economic crisis has disproportionately affected women. We will work to promote policies that help women help themselves and adequately care for their families. Key legislative priorities include: Support **HB 37**, the Parent Protection Act, to provide for unpaid leave from work to attend school conferences and take children and parents to medical appointments.

- Advocate for best practices that help low-income families leave poverty and support work by providing education and training, increase access to childcare subsidies, increase wages, and support Temporary Assistance for Needy Families policies that lead to self-sufficiency.
- Advocate for unemployment insurance reform that removes discriminatory obstacles to benefits for workers who leave work in order to meet urgent family responsibilities.
- Advocate for family caregiver sick days *OR* Support initiatives that allow families to better balance work and family responsibilities by providing flexible leave policies.

##### End Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

Atlanta has long-been recognized as a center for child prostitution and it has spread across the state. Current state laws are inconsistent in the treatment of sexually exploited children thus limiting access to rehabilitative services, special immigration status, and freedom from detention. We will work to end child prostitution and all human trafficking and protect those who have been victimized. Our key legislative priority in this area includes:

- Support **HB 582** to set a minimum age for prostitution and consequently decriminalize children who are currently being arrested. We provided the leadership for this bill in the last session and will continue to work for its passage.

#### *Secondary Priority Areas*

##### Advocate for Transparent, Responsible, and Balanced Revenue and Spending Policies

Economic security for women and their families depends on the state promulgating balanced revenue policies and also providing fundamental services for those who need support. Key legislative priorities include:

- Support adequate funding for health and social services to address the needs of Georgia's women and girls (especially low-income, seniors, children and people with disabilities) in the FY 2010 Supplemental Budget and FY 2011 Budget, e.g., family

planning, pre-natal care, public health services, school nurses, community based services for seniors and people with disabilities, education and training to help people leave poverty, etc.

- Support **SB 206**, which would require a tax expenditure report to be compiled that details the impacts of tax credits, reductions, and exclusions before policy decisions are made.
- Support a balanced strategy of cutting spending and increasing revenue through options that include increasing the tobacco tax, eliminating special interest tax breaks that fail to serve the public interest, imposing a temporary surcharge for highest income earners, and expanding taxes on services.

### End Violence Against Women and Girls

Physical, sexual, and psychological violence against women and girls serves to keep them powerless and deprives them of basic human rights. Key legislative priorities include:

- Ensure adequate funding for critical violence prevention services, shelters and resources.
- Closely monitor initiative to consolidate victim services which could have an adverse impact on victims of rape and battering.

### *Tertiary Priority Areas*

#### Safeguard and Improve Access to Health Care for Women and Girls

We support health care that is affordable and accessible for all and includes all reproductive choices for all women. Key legislative priorities include:

- Protecting insurance coverage mandates for mammograms, pap smears, and birth control.
- Defending against restrictions on abortion, family planning, and comprehensive sexuality education.

#### Ensuring a Better Georgia for Women and Girls

In addition to the above priorities, Georgia Women for a Change will also monitor issues related to:

- Funding provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009
- Domestic violence and sexual assault
- Foreclosure relief and fair lending practices
- Reproductive health and privacy
- Child custody, child support and divorce law