

Georgia Women for a Change, Inc.

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

2011 Legislative Agenda

High Priority Areas

Create Economic Security, Independence 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 a bill to provide for flexible sick leave that will allow for families to better balance work and family responsibilities
- Advocate for best practices that help low-income families leave poverty and support work by providing education and training, increasing access to childcare subsidies, increasing wages, and supporting 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 elder women who are economically, physically and socially vulnerable as they age due to diminished resources and promote appropriate opportunities for independent living.
- Monitor any proposed changes to child custody, child support and divorce law.

End Human Trafficking

Atlanta and other areas of Georgia have been recognized as an epicenter for child prostitution and other forms of human trafficking including domestic servitude and forced labor. 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, protect those who have been victimized and seek further penalties for traffickers and panderers.

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 without compromising 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 people, seniors, children and people with disabilities) in the FY 2011 Supplemental Budget and FY 2012 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 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.
- Protect specific programs originally targeted for funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, particularly meals for the elderly and subsidized child care to prevent a reduction in services for these vulnerable populations.

Secondary 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.
- Defending Georgians' rights to every benefit offered by the federal health care reform bill.

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.
- Oppose the consolidation of victim services, which could have an adverse impact on victims of rape and battering, to preserve continuity and responsible stewardship of funds.