

March, 2022

Zonta USA Caucus Advocacy Bulletin



ZONTA
INTERNATIONAL
USA CAUCUS
EMPOWERING WOMEN
THROUGH SERVICE & ADVOCACY

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.

Equal Rights Amendment

The fight to have the ERA added to the Constitution continues. The Zonta USA Caucus recently signed on to an ERA Coalition letter to President Biden asking him to express his support for the ERA in his State of Union address, which unfortunately did not happen.

The USA Caucus has launched a new campaign: [Archivist, You've Got Mail](#). Help send postcards and emails using pre-prepared templates to Archivist, David Ferriero, letting him know that we want the ERA published.

Remember that the Caucus has an entire [toolkit](#) for advocating for the ERA with details on needed actions and [information](#) on reasons why the ERA is important. Assistance is still particularly needed from members in Alabama, Alaska, Iowa, Louisiana, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Utah, West Virginia and Wyoming to contact critical senators asking them to support S.J. Res 1, removing the deadline for ratification.

If you are interested in learning more about why the Caucus, the ERA Coalition and many constitutional scholars take the position that the ERA has met the requirements of Article V and is now the 28th Amendment to the US Constitution, listen to this clear [explanation](#) from Kathleen M. Sullivan.

Child Marriage

The Zonta USA Caucus has raised enough funds to trigger a matching grant for billboards promoting an end to child marriage in the US. Through the efforts of Megan Radavich and Gina Meeks, the Caucus has obtained three free PSA digital child marriage billboards in Myrtle Beach, SC until the end of March, and we are obtaining quotes for billboards in Boston.

The UNA-Greater Lansing Chapter and Zonta District 15, along with the UNA-Detroit Chapter and MSU Center for Gender in Global Context, and in conjunction with Unchained at Last, will host a webinar March 7, 7:00 pm EDT on the effort to end child marriage in Michigan and what you can do to help. All Zontians are welcome to [register](#).

The Idaho Supreme Court recently heard oral arguments in the case of a Boise mother seeking full custody of her daughter and the annulment of her daughter's marriage. The woman's ex-husband married off their then-16-year-old daughter to a stranger in a sham marriage so the daughter would be emancipated, and he could bypass the courts regarding custody and child support. Read [more](#) about this additional complication of child marriage: parents forcing children into marriage to avoid child support and/or impact custody decisions.

Commission on the Status of Women

CSW66 will take place virtually March 14–25. The NGO CSW Forum is the civil society side of CSW and runs parallel to the official CSW sessions taking place at UN Headquarters. Registration is required to access any of the events. Zontians can [register](#) for the Forum free. CSW66's priority theme will be "Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes."

The Forum provides a plethora of events on a broad range of topics related to the status of women globally, including several hosted by Zonta:

[Zonta Says Now to Gender Equality and Climate Change–3/15; 7:00–8:30 am CDT](#)

[When It Rains, It Pours--How Climate Affects Women and Girls--3/16; 11:00–1:00 pm CDT](#)

[Gender Equity and Climate Change: A Holistic Approach to Ensuring Women and Girls are at the Forefront--3/16, 11:00–12:30, CDT \(with UNICEF\).](#)

Zonta will also have an [Exhibit Booth](#) at CSW, and Zontians are invited to meet with Marion Bethel, the CEDAW Commissioner for the Bahamas on March 17 at 10:00 am CDT to discuss why the US hasn't ratified CEDAW.

Unchained at Last will screen "[Woman](#)," a film that examines the lives and experiences of hundreds of women around the world and a discussion on the plight of women with Unchained's Fraidy Reiss. March 17, 11:00--1:00 CDT.

The US Women's Caucus at the UN, of which Zonta is a member, will host a Virtual Open Meeting, Toward a Feminist Foreign Policy for the US, 3/17, 2:00–4:00 CDT. See flyer below.



US WOMEN'S CAUCUS AT THE UN



Toward a Feminist Foreign Policy for the US

Virtual Open Meeting
Wednesday, March 17th
3 PM - 5 PM EDT

Register as an advocate at: <https://ngocsw.org/ngocsw65/>

Guest Speakers



Lyric Thompson
Senior Director of Policy and Advocacy,
International Center for Research on
Women (ICRW)
Chair, Steering Committee on Feminist
Foreign Policy in the US



Aria Grabowski
Policy and Advocacy Manager, International
Center for Research on Women (ICRW)

After registering, you will receive a link via e-mail to sign up for this meeting and other NGO CSW events
Contact us: uswomenscaucus@gmail.com

Climate Change

The recently formed USA Caucus Climate Change subcommittee plans to host recurring 90-minute interactive Think Tanks on gender equality and climate action. We invite US Zontians to join both to share their expertise with climate issues and to learn more about climate change and gender equality.

The [first Think Tank](#), focusing on water, will be held on March 12, noon EDT with a second planned for May. Speakers will include the originator of the Zonta Says Now program in D23, Australia, Carole Theobald; Kay Meyer D12, Treasurer of US Women's Caucus at the UN; Jane Austin D7, Emeritus Biologist, US Geological Survey; Julie Trone D12, Chair Gender Equality & Climate Action Committee; and Teena Halbig, UNA USA, Microbiologist. Please join us to help adapt Australia's model and create a uniquely American campaign.

Upcoming Events

The theme of [International Women's Day](#), March 8, is [#BreakTheBias](#). Check out the website for the official pose. And learn about UN Women's IWD [theme](#): "Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow", recognizing the contribution of women and girls around the world, who are leading the charge on climate change adaptation, mitigation, and response, to build a more sustainable future for all.

The [Institute for Women's Policy Research \(IWPR\)](#)'s ["Power Summit"](#) April 27-28 features prominent women speakers, including Jennifer Klein of the White House Gender Policy Council, and will address persistent gender and racial gaps in the US. Register to attend virtually for \$25.

Hand Signal for Help

The fight to end gender-based violence (GBV) can often feel overwhelming and hopeless. The USA Caucus is sharing a new resource that can help make a real difference in individual women's lives.

In 2020 the [Canadian Women's Foundation \(CWF\)](#) started the [Signal for Help](#) in response to the increased risk of GBV during Covid. The Signal is a way for a person in need to quietly ask someone to reach out to them safely.

You may have [read](#) about a 16-year-old girl who was rescued from a kidnapper when a passerby recognized her making the signal out a car window. This example involved engaging authorities, since the signaler was a stranger. However, if the signal comes from someone you know, the Foundation suggests that instead you reach out to the signaling person **safely** to find out what they need—a listening ear, help finding services, etc.. Let the signaler take the lead!

We encourage clubs to involve your community, educate others and train responders through social media, table tents, postcards, etc. Learn more in this [video](#) and on the Caucus [website](#).

Good news: in February, a bipartisan group of U.S. senators introduced a [proposal](#) to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act after it lapsed in 2019. Let's make sure it gets passed!

