

SUMMARY OF 2006 DRAFT WOMEN'S AGENDA

PART 1 Access to Healthcare Topics

A. Aging

- The elderly and disabled people prefer to remain at home but funding is lacking for home care
- Senior Care prescription drug benefit (state program) ended with the beginning of the less-generous Part D Medicare insurance system in 2006.

B. Access to Healthcare

- The numbers of uninsured North Carolinians grows each year.
- The disparity in health care has devastating results on a statewide basis.

C. Adolescent Pregnancy

- Adolescents are the least likely segment of the population to use health services

D. Mental Health

- It is estimated that one in five persons will, over their lifetime, experience a mental illness
- Those with mental illness are at high risk for homelessness and incarceration.

Action Needed for Part I Access to Health Care

- Advocate providing "pass through" funds for wages and benefits for aides in long term care facilities to improve hiring and retention of trained workers
- Amend the state constitution to recognize health care as a fundamental right
- Restore state funding for pregnancy prevention programs and initiatives to the 2001 funding level
- Enact comprehensive mental health parity legislation in health coverage ending discriminatory difference between mental and physical health care.

PART II CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EQUALITY

A. Emergency Contraception (EC)

- Sexual assault victims living in rural counties will disproportionately encounter hospitals which do not have a standard policy to dispense EC.

B. Employment Discrimination

- Acts of discrimination and hatred are daily occurrences in the lives of American women, particularly women of color, immigrants, poor and disabled women, aging women and lesbian women.

C. Equal Political Representation

- We can help level the playing field by expanding "Clean Elections", increasing voter participation and advocating women's appointment to state and local boards and commissions

D. Hate Crimes

- According to the Southern Poverty and Law Center (SPLC) every hour a hate crime is committed

E. Marriage and Family

- Same sex couples are denied equal protection under the law under the so-called Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)

Action Needed For PART II Civic Participation and Equality

- The General Assembly should support legislation that requires hospitals to provide EC to survivors of sexual assault on site regardless of the Dr. on duty.

Action Needed For PART II Civic Participation and Equality (con't)

- The General Assembly should support Anti-Discrimination Ordinances legislation.
- The General Assembly should expand the Judicial Campaign Reform program to include General Assembly, Council of State and Gubernatorial candidates, and authorize local communities to provide a public funding option in local races.
- Assure that the local school have access to “Teaching Tolerance” curricula or other similar materials
- The General Assembly should oppose any efforts to use the state or federal constitution to diminish the rights of any group of people.

EDUCATION (The *Leandro* Decision)

- The NC Supreme Court reaffirmed in 2004 that every child in NC is entitled to an equal opportunity to receive a sound basic education.
- The disagreement is on the question of how many dollars are needed to provide this equal sound basic education

Action Needed for Education Issues

- Find out how much money your local school is receiving
- Find out the plans for this money
- Find out who is responsible for ensuring that the plans are being followed
- Has education been improved for ALL students in the school district?

PART III ECONOMIC SELF SUFFICIENCY

A. Housing

- Finding affordable housing is a severe problem facing hard-working, but low income North Carolinians.

B. Economic Self-Sufficiency

- North Carolina’s minimum wage will rise from \$5.15 an hour to \$6.15 an hour in 2007
- One third of NC’s low income working families contain at least one parent that does not have a high school diploma or a GED

Action Needed for Part III Economic Self-Sufficiency

- Increase funding for the NC Housing Trust Fund to \$50M yearly to expand affordable housing for low-income families.
- The legislature should pass a state Earned Income Tax Credit

PART IV VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

A. Domestic Violence

- Without appropriate intervention and services, domestic violence often escalates into homicide.

B. Sexual Assault

- Over the last 7 years NC Rape Crisis Centers have seen a 28% increase in victims seeking service, but have only received one increase in funding from the General Fund.

Action Needed for Part IV Violence Against Women

- Support for recommendations of the Joint Legislative Committee on Domestic Violence
- Provide stable and adequate funding for new and existing sexual assault programs
- Criminalize 50C violations