

# Women's Advocacy Day: Both Physical and Virtual

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N.C. WOMEN UNITED addressed *What's at Stake for Women in the Short Legislative Session?* as the theme of their press conference at the Legislative Building on May 19 in Raleigh. It was the first Advocacy Day during a short session and the first virtual Advocacy Day.

Representative Verla Insko, Dem-Orange, sponsored the press conference. She reported that prior to the event, more than 500 e-mail messages had been received by members of the General Assembly urging their support for legislation of special concern to women. There is still time to contact N.C. senators and representatives and ask them to support one or all of NCWU's priorities; see below\*.

NCWU, a coalition of more than 30 organizations including AAUW NC, recently released its Legislative Report Card and Budget Report Card based on the 2003 session and is focusing on seven major concerns which would improve women's lives if they are passed in the Short Session.

## Concerns made vocal

Paige Johnson, NCWU president, introduced presenters who told their concerns to the press.

- Beth Messersmith, co-director of Democracy NC and member of the Raleigh/Wake County Branch, said women would benefit if the House passes Senate Bill 760 (passed during the previous session) on Local Campaign Finance Report.
- Gloria H. Blanton of Raleigh attended the conference to hear the presenters.
- Arlene McKay of Durham, an AAUW member-at-large, urged passage of House Bill 544 and Senate Bill 747 to form a Legislative Study Commission to collect data about state employees' pay and recommend steps to achieve pay equity for women employees.

## Other priorities

NCWU supports legislative action for these issues, as well:

- Increase Funding for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Programs
- Criminal Background Checks for Long-Term Care Facilities (Rep. Jennifer Weiss and others have introduced a bill about this)
- Increased funding for Rape Crisis and Domestic Violence Centers
- HB 951 Create Civil No-Contact Protection Orders, and
- Support House Select Committee Recommendations on Domestic Violence.

Branch presidents and public policy chairs have received information from Nancy Shoemaker about NCWU's priorities for this legislative session so members can contact their local leaders for information. Nancy, AAUW NC technology chair, has provided information at <http://www.ncwu.org/2004/AdvocacyDay>. She suggests signing up for NCWU alerts about pending legislation. She has contributed a significant amount of time as a NCWU Board member and by using her technology skills to communicate much information.

*\*All AAUW NC members can advocate for the causes focused on during the Virtual Women's Advocacy Day by sending e-mail, postal mail, or faxes to representatives and senators or by telephoning them.*

## N.C. Coalition On Aging Sets Priorities

DR. A. HELEN MARTIKAINEN, AAUW NC representative to the N.C. Coalition on Aging Board of Delegates since 2001, recently reported priorities and highlights to help improve the quality of life for older adults. The coalition seeks to "address [their] needs, and promote their dignity, self-determination, well-being, and contributions."

Women and Money Conference • Kings Park International Church  
Saturday, June 12, 8:15 a.m. - 3:15 p.m. • Research Triangle Park

Web site information: <http://www.treasurer.state.nc.us/WAM00/default.asp>  
and <http://www.treasurer.state.nc.us/WAM00/triangle.asp>

## More Women's Economic Issues

Thanks to Esther Lumsdon for forwarding this information. She says, "When coupled with the report from the Union of Concerned Scientists titled "Scientific Integrity in Policymaking" and the statement of concern from members of UCS, I find this very disturbing. The UCS web site is <http://www.ucsusa.org/index.cfm> - A news article about the February 2004 UCS action is at <http://www.wired.com/news/print/0,1294,62339,00.html>

AT THE LABOR Department's Women's Bureau web site, 25 key publications on subjects ranging from pay equity to child care to issues relating to black and Latina women and women business owners have been deleted with no explanation. Key government offices dedicated to addressing the needs of women have been disbanded, according to a report from the National Council for Research on Women. These include the Office of Women's Initiatives and Outreach in the White House and the President's Interagency Council on Women. At the Pentagon, the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services was slated to be dismantled, but was saved after an outcry.

As of March 2004, the U.S. Attorney General had not conducted and published a study required under the 2000 Violence Against Women Act, to investigate discrimination against domestic violence victims in getting insurance.

See the Reuters article at <http://news.reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml?type=domesticNews&storyID=4977467>



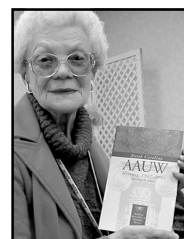
**Making History.** North Carolinians were among more than a million people who participated in the April 25 March for Women: from left, Monika Johnson Hostler, NC Coalition Against Sexual Assault; June Kimmel, speaker at AAUW NC 2004 convention, AAUW MAL, NC Council for Women/Domestic Violence Commission, NOW, and League of Women Voters of NC; Polly Williams, NC Justice and Community Development Center; Triangle Older Women's League; Nancy Shoemaker, AAUW NC; Veronica Butcher, NCCASA; Jo Carol Torrez, NCCASA supporter, DC resident and Goldsboro native. Not pictured: Katie Thompson and her daughter, from Brevard Branch, were there, too. AAUW NC passed a resolution supporting the March at Convention 2004. The event addressed the fact that legislation passed during the past year threatens women's reproductive rights. Read more at <http://www.ncwu.org/2004/march>

In a statement about priorities, the Coalition notes, "In recognition of the severe budget issues faced by the General Assembly at the same time the older adult population and waiting lists for services are increasing, the Coalition submits the following recommendations:

- Increase state revenues to provide services for elderly and disabled, e.g., increase taxes on tobacco, liquor, and soft drinks, close corporate tax loopholes, expand sales tax to some services.
- Comply with the U.S. Supreme Court's Olmstead decision by maintaining funding for the community alternatives program (CAP/DA) and restoring \$1 million in funds for the home and community care block grant.
- Make it possible for all long-term care facilities to receive federal criminal records background checks.
- Make tax credit for long-term care insurance premiums permanent.
- Expand use of Medicaid funds for adult day services.
- Support continued availability of inspection reports and other public records as evidence in litigation against long-term care facilities.

Martikainen also reported highlights of the Coalition's efforts to improve accessibility of products and services for the aging. The Board:

- Agreed the new Medicare prescription drug law raises questions and creates confusion. They found the Kaiser Foundation web site, <http://www.kff.org> - is a good source of updates and unbiased information on this law.
- Noted 50% of N.C. seniors do not have prescription drug coverage.
- Announced the appointment of Professor Florence Gray Soltys by the Speakers of the N.C. House of Representatives to serve on the N.C. Study Commission on Aging. Soltys gave pioneering support to the launching of the study group sessions on aging issues sponsored by Chapel Hill Branch and led by Jean Cleary and Clara Allen. Their efforts resulted in AAUW NC joining the Coalition.
- Enlisted three additional organizations: the N.C. Association of Boards of Health, represented by Dr. Barbara Ann Hughes, Raleigh; N.C. League of Women Voters, represented by Connie Mullinix, Chapel Hill; N.C. Society of Public Health Education, represented by Nicolette Warren White.



## AAUW NC History

Learn about North Carolina women who have worked hard to achieve equity and lifelong education for women and girls. Members will find answers to many questions concerning the state organization. Present copies of this special book commemorating the 2002 75th anniversary of AAUW NC to your local libraries, colleges, and universities. Order from Clara Allen. Send \$17 each (includes shipping) to 442 Crossvine Close, Fearington, Pittsboro, NC 27312.