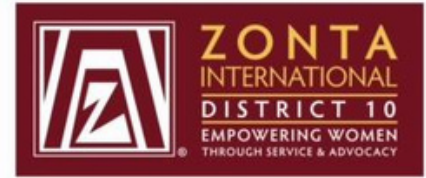


November, 2023

Zonta District 10

Advocacy Bulletin



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.

Ending Child Marriage

On International Day of the Girl, October 11, the Biden Administration **announced** the U.S. Government would join the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage and outlined financial commitments to support efforts to address child, early and forced marriage globally. USAID will invest \$42 million, and the Department of State will provide \$2.45 million to prevent and respond to child, early, and forced marriage globally. These programs will focus on equipping girls and young women with education and workforce readiness skills; mitigating harmful effects of child marriage through education, health, legal, and economic support; and raising awareness of the risks and harms associated with child marriage. In addition, for the first time, the United States will contribute to the UNICEF-United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Global Programme to End Child Marriage, which works in 12 countries in Africa and South Asia to promote the rights of adolescent girls.

ZI is the first and only PRIVATE-SECTOR donor to the Global Programme to End Child Marriage and, as such, is a pioneer in addressing child marriage globally. As Zonta clubs advocate for child marriage at the state level, we can now reference the U.S. Government's support for ending this human rights violation.

Zonta clubs are now helping organize state coalitions to end child marriage in **California** and **Washington**. If you have contacts with

organizations in these states that might be interested in joining the coalitions, contact **Katherine Cleland**. Zonta clubs in Southern California held a press event on child marriage on October 5 at Burbank City Hall that included an appearance by the Mayor of Burbank. View some of the event **HERE**. The Zonta Club of North Puget Sound (aka Zonta Club of Everett) is planning a webinar on child marriage on November 18.

Unchained at Last has partnered with Columbia University researchers to launch **MOVE** (Marriage, Orthodoxy and a Vision of Empowerment), a three-year, survivor-co-led, first-of-its-kind project to study and combat forced marriage, forced marital sex and forced parenthood in the U.S. MOVE is a three-year project expected to conclude at the end of 2025.

California still does not have a minimum age for marriage allowing children of ANY age to be wed. More than 8,000 children in California are married each year, giving thousands of get-out-of-jail-free cards to child rapists -- since sex with a child under age 18 is a crime in California, unless the perpetrator first marries the child. Why is California clinging to child marriage? Read this **article** in the Sacramento Bee by Unchained founder Fraidy Reiss addressing the issue.

If you aren't sure about the marriage age in your state, you can find the status on your state on the Unchained website **HERE**.

Equal Rights Amendment

The ERA coalition is moving toward a new structure with greater emphasis on focused sub-groups, presenting new opportunities for ad hoc participants in the Zonta USA Caucus to be involved. The Caucus is looking for more Zonta volunteers, especially at the state and local level. If you or someone in your district is interested in being involved in ERA actions, contact [Bobbee Cardillo](#) or [Katherine Cleland](#).

Current ERA initiatives:

House/Senate: H.J. Res. 25/S.J. Res.4: – Affirms ratification of the ERA and removes time limit for passage--207 co-sponsors. Rep. Ayanna Pressley's discharge petition to bring HJ Res 25 to the House floor for a vote added 14 new signers to 196 during September. Keep the pressure on to reach the desired 218 signatures. Check out the Democrats to contact [HERE](#) and Republicans [HERE](#).

[H.J. Res. 82/S.J. Res 39](#) states that the ERA has been validly ratified and is enforceable as the 28th Amendment and calls on the Archivist to certify and publish without delay. See the Outreach list for [H.J. Res.82](#). Ask your **state** legislature to pass a state bill affirming the ERA as the 28th Amendment, as have [California](#), [Colorado](#), [Minnesota](#), Michigan, Hawaii and Illinois.

Check out this [survey](#) on the impact of reproductive rights and the ERA on the 2024 elections.

Attend Dendrofemonology: Tree Ring on the National Mall in person or online and the activation week in D.C. November 1-4. On Nov 3: from 1-4 PM the ERA Coalition will hold an interactive program event in DC at Vital Voices headquarters with a cocktail reception to follow from 4 - 5:30 pm. RSVP [HERE](#) and use the [Partner Toolkit](#) to amplify the event information to your community.

SIGN-4-ERA Petition is a national petition campaign led by Hunter College students supporting the Equal Rights Amendment, calling on Congress to recognize the fact that the Equal Rights Amendment has already been ratified by the necessary 38 states. Over 73,000 individuals have signed the petition. The Campaign is an easy way to get members, friends and colleagues more involved in getting the ERA across the finish line. Sign the petition [HERE](#) and use this [toolkit](#) to share with others.

A related effort, Mayors for the ERA, was conceived by former NY Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney and her students at Hunter College. Through this campaign mayors are joining the thousands who have already signed the Sign4ERA petition. During a news conference at the 2023 Women's Political Caucus Convention, Harrisonburg Mayor Deanna Reed and Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney became the second and third members of Mayors for the ERA with their signing of the petition. Learn more [HERE](#).

The [New Yorkers for Equal Rights'](#) Ballot Initiative will build support among voters for a comprehensive **state** Equal Rights Amendment, expanding state constitutional protections for New Yorkers on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, and sex, including sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, and pregnancy outcomes, reproductive health care and autonomy. The state ERA is on the ballot for voters in Nov 2024 after already passing in the State Legislature twice. NY State ERA Grassroots Leaders and Stakeholders meet regularly over Zoom and those interested in joining the Committee can sign up/rsvp [HERE](#).

As we approach the 16 Days Campaign, [learn about](#) how the ERA can empower survivors of domestic violence.

Health

Period. and Think have released the **2023 State of the Period Study**--the only publicly available study tracking the study of period poverty among US teenaged students. The latest study shows that almost a quarter of teens still struggle with affording period products, but students did report a 7% increase in availability of period products at school and a decrease in period stigma. Some progress at least.

Period Action Day, this year October 14, was a global day of advocacy to take action against period poverty and stigma. The global menstrual movement succeeded in collectively donating ONE MILLION period products to communities in need. It's not too late to **virtually donate** period products or directly donate to a local non-profit.

US Women's Caucus

The US Women's Caucus, of which the Zonta USA Caucus is a member, has issued its **CSW 68 Advocacy Statement**, drafted by Zontian, Pam Perraud, for the upcoming Commission on the Status of Women next March. The statement will be used as the framework for advocacy during the CSW. The UN priority theme concerns gender and poverty, and highlights some of the most important issues, i.e. the gender pay gap, unpaid childcare, lack of access to banking, girls' education, lack of health care, and land inheritance customs. The Women's Caucus has also composed a series of **Gender and Poverty Briefs** for discussion at the CSW. The briefs cover the following topics: Disability, Poverty, and Gender; Poverty and Female-headed Households; Women's Employment and Poverty; Rural Women and Poverty; Financial Institutions and Infrastructure Perpetuating Poverty; Health, Poverty, and Gender; The Intersection of Gender, Education, and Poverty; The Impact of Poverty on Native American Women and Girls; Older Women, Widows, and Poverty; and Race, Poverty, and Gender.

Climate Action

Join the Zonta Says NOW USA Think Tank, "Severe Winter Weather: How to Deal with the Storm" on Sunday, November 5, at 5:00 p.m. Central Time for a discussion on disaster preparedness and adaptation to extreme cold and winter weather. Speakers from the Zonta USA Caucus will present how vulnerable populations, particularly women and girls, are affected. Guest speaker Melissa Venable, executive director of the Northern Colorado Red Cross, will discuss disaster readiness when faced with extreme weather that displaces families, individuals and our most vulnerable. Register **HERE**. Before the Think Tank read a blog post that provides lead-in information and covers service/advocacy projects that Zontians can do **HERE**.

The Climate Committee is planning Think Tanks on financial preparedness and the economic impact of climate change in February and on warm weather disasters and heat, fire, hurricane and flood preparedness in April/May. The Committee also plans 10 Days of Activism, March 1-10. Watch for information packets in February.

As ZI and the Caucus develops our focus on Climate Change and Gender Equity, we are learning more about the specific ways that climate issues disproportionately impact women that are not always immediately evident. Consider an article, **"Climate change is destroying public housing and displacing women of color."** In addition, as the frequency and severity of climate- and weather-related disasters have steadily increased, additional attention has been given to the prevalence, causes, and consequences of sexual violence in connection with such disasters. Accordingly, the National Sexual Violence Resource Center has compiled a report on **"Sexual Violence in Disasters."** Learn more about the intersection of climate change and sexual violence and efforts to minimize the impact.

Gender-Based Violence

Make your plans now for the [**2023 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence**](#). Watch the recordings of ZI's meetings launching the campaign [**HERE**](#) (passcode nAZ3++Y=) and [**HERE**](#) (PC B2i#g48B) and find the presentation slides [**HERE**](#). ZI urges clubs to make their activities for the campaign visible so that more people learn about Zonta and to share their stories on this easy-to-use [**form**](#).

Kick off the 2023 Zonta Says NO Campaign with ZI's annual [**virtual summit**](#) November 6–8. Sessions will feature speakers, panel discussions and workshops. Don't miss this year's keynote speaker, Chanel Miller, best known for her book [**Know My Name: A Memoir**](#), which has been credited with sparking national discussion in the US about the treatment of sexual assault cases and victims by college campuses and court systems. Single day tickets for the summit are \$10 each or \$25 for all three days [**HERE**](#).

D10 has adopted the assembly of [**Beloved Bundles**](#) and related advocacy activities around sexual assault as a district-wide 16 Days service/advocacy project. The bundles are funded by [**Project Beloved**](#), founded by a TX mother in response to her daughter's rape and murder. Volunteers assemble and deliver the bundles locally—a simple and rewarding volunteer activity. The bundles go to sexual assault survivors who have a forensic exam (rape kit) and include simple clothing, undergarments, small hygiene products and stress-relieving items.

D10 clubs are asked to find local facilities that do rape kits or accompany survivors to such exams that do not currently have but want bundles, and assemble them for the groups. D10's [**toolkit**](#) provides detailed instructions on the project as well as educational materials to raise awareness about sexual assault and suggestions for ways to address it legally at the federal, state and local levels for sharing with your club and the community.

Project Beloved Founder, Tracy Matheson, gave a virtual talk for D10 on October 3 to discuss her story, what she has learned about sexual assault, and the related laws she has helped get passed in Texas. If you missed Tracy's moving presentation you can view the recorded talk [**HERE**](#). Consider sharing it or a portion of it with your club. Also check out "Dateline"'s [**episode**](#) about Tracy's daughter's case which addresses the serial nature of rape and the need for law enforcement agencies to communicate with each other. Please let [**Therese Hartwell**](#) know if you are planning to do an assembly and contact her with any questions.

Research shows that the presence of a gun in a domestic violence situation makes it five times more likely that the victim will be killed, and that guns magnify power and control used by abusers. Find statistics [**HERE**](#).

Half of all intimate partner homicides are committed by dating partners. Alarming, federal law includes a "boyfriend loophole," which allows abusive dating partners—even when subject to protection orders—and convicted stalkers to purchase firearms. The bipartisan and bicameral Strengthening Protections for Domestic Violence and Stalking Survivors Act of 2023 would strengthen provisions closing the boyfriend loophole. Use our [**pre-drafted letters**](#) to urge your senators and representative to co-sponsor and support the legislation.

The Supreme Court is also taking up a major domestic violence case in November, US v. Rahimi, which will decide **whether domestic abusers have a right to own firearms under the Second Amendment**. Read [**MORE**](#) about this important case, and sign a [**petition**](#) demanding the Supreme Court protect domestic violence survivors by ensuring that their abusers cannot obtain a firearm.

Watch this [**video**](#) to learn how being alert and aware could save someone from Human Trafficking.