

CWEALF is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to empowering women, girls and their families to achieve equal opportunities in their personal and professional lives. As one of the oldest women's rights organizations in the country, CWEALF serves as a vital resource to women and policymakers in CT, ensuring equal rights for women and low-income individuals. CWEALF's legislative priorities recognize the rights of women, children and families across the state.

Priority Issues

Paid Family and Medical Leave

CWEALF co-chaired the Campaign for Paid Family Leave, which applauded the bipartisan approval of S.B. 221: *An Act Concerning Paid Family and Medical Leave* by the Labor and Public Employees Committee. This vote followed the release of the analysis and report of the Institute for Women's Policy Research that affirmed the economic sustainability of the proposed program. Though the bill did not reach any further victories in the legislature, the issue garnered significant support among both legislators and the public. A recent poll of Campaign member AARP-CT indicated that 83% of state voters support paid family and medical leave.

State Legislative Commissions

The state's current fiscal crisis limited the number and scope of bills passed this session to advance the economic security of women and girls in Connecticut. CWEALF strongly opposed proposals to dismantle the state's six legislative commissions, including the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW), a critical voice for women in the state. For forty years, CWEALF worked alongside the PCSW to ensure equal opportunities for Connecticut women. Despite robust lobbying efforts from advocacy groups across the state, the final state budget consolidated the six commissions into two smaller, blended commissions.

Supported Issues

Education and Work

Higher Education and Training Opportunities

CWEALF led the Campaign for a Working Connecticut (CWCT) and advocated for the passage of \checkmark P.A. 16-44: *An Act Concerning Higher Education Certificate Programs*. This act creates a uniform method of reporting for all state certificate and occupational programs and increase the ease of access to program information for interested students. CWEALF also monitored SB 112: *An Act Providing Child Care for Assistance Recipients Enrolled in Approved Higher Education Programs*. This bill proposed expanding childcare subsidies to parents who receive Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) benefits while pursuing a degree at a two or four year college or university, but ultimately did not pass.

\checkmark = bill passed



Fair Chance Employment

CWEALF joined the Fair Chance Coalition and celebrated the passage of *√P.A. 16-83: An Act Concerning Fair Chance Employment*, which ensures equal employment opportunities for individuals with criminal records by “banning the box,” or prohibiting employers from asking about prior arrests, criminal charges or convictions on an initial employment application.

Economic Security

Two proposals to improve the economic security of low-wage workers—H.B. 5370: *An Act Increasing the Minimum Fair Wage* to increase the statewide minimum wage to \$15/hour and S.B. 393: *An Act Concerning Domestic Workers* to strengthen protections for domestic workers against exploitation—did not pass the legislature.



Access to Justice

Protections for Victims of Violence and Trafficking

CWEALF advocated for the passage of *√P.A. 16-34: An Act Protecting Victims of Domestic Violence*, which requires the removal of firearms during temporary (ex parte) restraining orders. The legislature’s approval of this important, common-sense legislation marks a critical step to further the safety of individuals impacted by violence in our state.

CWEALF also supported the passage of *√P.A. 16-71: An Act Concerning Human Trafficking*, a proposal to curb the prevalence of trafficking in Connecticut and strengthen protections for victims; and *√P.A. 16-70: An Act Concerning the Termination of Parental Rights*, which allows victims of rape to terminate the parental rights of their rapists using a clear and convincing evidence standard.

Affirmative Consent

CWEALF collaborated with several partner organizations to advocate for the passage of *√P.A. 16-106: An Act Concerning Affirmative Consent* to create a uniform definition of consent for investigations of sexual assault cases at Connecticut colleges and universities. Affirmative consent shifts the standard for sexual assault adjudications to a “yes means yes” framework and creates safer campus environments for all students of institutions of higher education in the state.



Fair Family Laws and Civil Legal Assistance

√Senate Bill No. 426: An Act Creating a Task Force to Improve Access to Legal Counsel in Civil Matters appointed CWEALF as a member of the task force to study and make recommendations on mechanisms to increase legal representation in civil proceedings. CWEALF also monitored additional legislation that affected family law matters. The General Assembly did not raise legislation regarding spousal support.