

March, 2025

Zonta USA Caucus Advocacy Bulletin



ZONTA
INTERNATIONAL
USA CAUCUS

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.

ClimateJustice

We are bombarded with the science and numbers of climate change, and for many people the numbers are meaningless. However, through the arts, we can connect with our feelings and emotions and cut through the numbers to better understand the problems and the possible futures we can create. Preview the [Zonta Says NOW Virtual Art Gallery](#) and consider entering a [submission](#), particularly if your district is not already represented. Deadline for submissions has been extended until March 8, International Women's Day, and the gallery will launch on Earth Day, April 22. Check out the new [flyer](#).

The Climate Justice Committee is offering Zoom presentations to clubs on how climate change and gender equality fit together. If interested contact Julie Trone or Angela Brockman.

The Zonta Says NOW to Gender-Equal Climate Action is a movement to focus on climate justice at international, national and local levels. Have you wondered how Zonta Says NOW aligns with Zonta International's Strategic Plan and biennial goals? Join the ZI Advocacy Committee and Zonta Says NOW Working Group Tuesday, February 25, 1:00 PM EST for an inspiring panel discussion webinar: A Closer Look at Zonta Says NOW with the Zonta Says NOW Working Group to learn more. Register [HERE](#).

Note below ZI's presentation at CSW on Thursday, March 13 on "How environment affects the health of millions of women and girls, and what to do about it." The event will be in person only but will be filmed.

NAIDM

Save the Dates June 20 -22, 2025 for the Zonta North American Inter-District Meeting 2025 in Novi, Michigan. Join other Zontians for fellowship and igniting your passion. In addition to four workshop tracks with four sessions each and the Zonta International board sharing updates on board activities, international projects and more, the NAIDM will also feature two longer sessions on Climate Justice and programs to end Human Trafficking, a hands-on service project and fun summer camp activities. Find more information and register [HERE](#). And consider becoming a sponsor of the NAIDM--find details [HERE](#). Contact Cindy Vickery or Bonnie McArthur at info@zontanaidm.org with questions.

Miscellaneous

Join the ZI Council of Europe Committee on Wednesday, March, 26 at 1:00 pm EST to get to know the Council, its values, structure, work program and, most importantly for all Zontians, its impact on gender equality and women's rights. We will hear that gender equality is an integral part of human rights and a fundamental element of democracy, an important policy goal of the CoE. At the end of the webinar there will be time for Q&A. The webinar will be recorded. Register [HERE](#).

As legislative sessions gear up, the Caucus suggests that clubs introduce themselves to their state and federal legislators. Find sample letters for [state officials](#) and [federal officials](#). Let them know about Zonta and what we do now and start building a relationship.

Ending Child Marriage

Among discouraging news on other fronts affecting women, 2025 is currently looking like a banner year for ending child marriage, and Zonta is playing an integral part in state efforts. In late January, the Zonta USA Caucus and the Zonta Club of Cape Girardeau, MO, along with numerous other organizations, submitted testimony in support of HB 1455: Ending Child Marriage, which raises the age of marriage to 18, to The Missouri Senate Committee on Families, Seniors and Health. On February 18 the committee voted the bill do-pass 15-0. This means that legislation in both the Senate and House have made it through their respective committees, an important first step.

Zonta also submitted testimony on SB548, Oregon's bill to end child marriage at a hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee on February 19. Further, Zonta submitted testimony opposing a bill proposing a loophole in the New Hampshire law after Zonta and allies successfully ended child marriage in that state just last year. The new bill would create an exception to the minimum age of 18 if either member of the couple is an active duty member of the military.

Because of the efforts of the Zonta Club of Hilo and the other Hawaii Zonta clubs, Hawaii has a child marriage bill with an age limit of 18 with no exceptions! The Zonta USA Caucus and the Hawaii clubs submitted written testimony to the hearing in the Hawaii House Committee on Health on February 5 and the Hawaii House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs on February 19. Zonta received a shoutout from the National Coalition to End Child Marriage for their efforts. **Kudos to the Hawaii clubs!**

Unchained At Last is seeking sponsors in Maine, Missouri and South Dakota for bills to end child marriage. Contact **Becca Powell** if you know of an organization willing to join these state coalitions. In addition to the states listed above, Arizona, Texas, Kansas, South Carolina and Oklahoma have good bills pending. To help, contact **Katherine Cleland** or **Therese Hartwell**.

UN CSW

The 69th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will be held March 10-21 in NY City with a priority theme of the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly. Learn more on the Zonta **CSW webpage** and through the **recording** of Zonta's presentation on CSW69. And join ZI and the United Nations Committee for a Zoom CSW orientation session on Monday, February 24, at 1:00 PM EST. Register **HERE**.

NGO CSW organizes all the parallel events happening around the UN throughout CSW. The NGO CSW69/Beijing+30 Forum is organized by and for global civil society, non-governmental organizations, and feminists to connect with the official UN CSW process. With hundreds of events, the Forum informs, engages, and inspires grassroots efforts and gender equality advocacy around the world. While the Forum runs parallel to and complements the CSW, it is a separate process with separate organizers. Register for the Forum for virtual, in-person, and hybrid attendance **HERE**. You are also encouraged to submit this **form** to receive additional details from Zonta. Join **HERE** to be a part of the Zonta CSW69 group on WhatsApp. Check below for some Zonta-related and/or recommended CSW events.

CSW--Zonta Events

SATURDAY, MARCH 8

"Special" Zonta Tour at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 W 53rd Street, 4:00-5:00 PM; Open to All Zontians (maximum of 20 people); email **Shannon Reilly** if you would like to attend.

Zonta International Welcome Reception, Pen and Brush, 29 E 22nd Street, 4:00-6:00 PM; Open to All Zontians and Guests; No cost - Receive Zonta CSW69 Zonta Bag; RSVP **HERE**.

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UN Commission on the Status of Women Events

MONDAY, MARCH 10

The Equal Rights Amendment, Driving US Action on the Beijing Declaration, UN Church Center 11th Floor, 2:30--4:00 PM; ERA Coalition and Equality Now

Zonta Club of New York President's Reception, The District Restaurant, 1679 Third Ave/94th St, 6:00--8:00 PM; Invitation; Open to All Zontians and Guests – ticketed at \$60 USD;

TUESDAY, MARCH 11

Cross Cultural Comparison in Disadvantaged Women's Empowerment: Strategies and Practice in Asia, Church Center 2nd Floor, 8:30--10:00 AM; Zonta Districts 31 and 32

The STEM Gap- Where are all the girls? Virtual; 10:30AM-12:00 PM-Zonta Club, Billings

NGO CSW/NY 69 Forum Reception, The Centennial Memorial Temple's Mumford Hall, 120 West 14th Street, 7:30--9:30 PM, **Limited Tickets**, \$65 (Sold out)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12

Meet the UNFPA: Session with Zontians, UNFPA 605 3rd Ave, 9:00--10:00 AM, Opportunity for Zonta Members to learn more about the UNFPA Partner

Mission of the Republic of Korea-Human Rights Protection Through Social Inclusion and Psychological Empowerment for North Korean Women Defectors, UNCC Drew Room, 10:30 AM, ZI, OneKorea Mentoring project, an initiative started by Zonta District 32 S Korea

THURSDAY, MARCH 13

How environment affects the health of millions of women and girls, and what to do about it, UN Church Center 10th Floor, 10:30 AM-12:00 PM, Sponsored by: ZI with speakers from Soroptimist International, United Voices for Global Impact, Soroptimist International of Anchorage, Alaska

Ending Violence Against Girls: Examining Challenges an Uniting Champions, UN Church Center Drew Room, 12:30-1:30 PM, Sponsored by UNICEF USA and ZI

So, what's changed? Reviewing Progress in U.S. on Gender Equity, Church Center, 10th Floor, 2:30--4:00 PM, US Women's Caucus Pres Pam Perraud, Zonta, Houston w/ Rep Carolyn Maloney and Eleanor Smeal guest speakers

Women and Leadership: Accelerating Action for Sustainable Development, Virtual, 6:30--8:30 PM, Speaker: Cece Cole of Zonta Club of Washington DC

Cuba: A Model for the Beijing Platform for Action, Virtual, 6:30--8:30 PM, Calls to Action to Ratify Equality (ERA) and women's human rights (CEDAW) with Cuban Ambassador

FRIDAY, MARCH 14

Zonta Says NOW to Climate Justice Solutions from the Heart, Church Center 8th Floor, 8:30-10:00 AM, Zonta International, Zonta Australia

Zonta USA Caucus 10 Years of Women20 and 30 Since Beijing: Women's Associations on Transformation, Achievements and Future Prospects, Salvation Army Auditorium, 2:30-4:00 PM; Speaker: Zonta International President-Elect Fernanda

From Beijing to Today: Advancing the Platform for Action in a Changing World, Virtual, 6:30 PM -8:30 PM, Speaker: Cece Cole of Zonta Club of Washington DC

TUESDAY, MARCH 18

Emerging Dangers for US Women's Healthcare- A Call to Action, 2:30--4:00 PM, US Women's Caucus – Pamela Perraud President of US Women's Caucus, and member of Zonta Club of Houston

Post CSW Virtual Discussion, Virtual, 3:00 PM, open to all members who attended CSW69 both in person and virtually. Register [HERE](#).