

Engaging in Federal Advocacy Actions & How NWLC Can Provide Support

For more than 50 years, NWLC has fought for gender justice—in the courts, public policy, and our society—working across issues central to women's and girls' lives. We use the law in all its forms to change culture and drive solutions to the gender inequity that shapes our society and to break down the barriers that harm all of us—especially women of color, LGBTQ+ people, and women and families with low income.

As part of the work, NWLC champions policy solutions that ensure that women and families have what they need to make ends meet, access opportunity, and enjoy economic security throughout their lives. This includes advocating to make child care and early learning opportunities more affordable, accessible, and widely available across families' unique needs and preferences; ensuring high-quality learning experiences for children's development; and championing living wages and benefits for early educators. While NWLC mostly works on federal economic policies, many of those policies directly affect state budgets, programs and services. NWLC's work involves leading or supporting a variety of advocacy tactics and approaches. To support local and state advocates who want to advocate for the economic policies that women and families need, NWLC can provide support in the form of resources and trainings, supporting engagement with congressional delegations, connecting with the broader national advocacy landscape, and sharing invitations to meetings, events, and briefings.

Across NWLC's income security and child care team, staff have organized or provided support with these and other efforts. Please feel free to contact a member of our team if you are working on any actions like those listed below and would like support.

Providing resources or trainings: Do you want to learn more about the federal policy fights around taxes, the federal budget, or public benefits programs this year? Are you interested in a training or webinar for your staff or network on any of these issues?

- Resources: NWLC has developed a wealth of resources, like talking points, graphics, and factsheets, around economic policies. We can identify the resource you need, or create a new one that meets your needs.
- Policy support: Our policy experts are available for calls, webinars or trainings. We can also write newsletter entries or blogs.

Requesting meetings where you live, virtual meetings or calls: Are you wanting to meet with members of your congressional delegation but don't know where to start with the outreach, or have limited staff capacity to schedule the meetings?

- Identifying federal issues for advocacy: Meeting with your congressional delegation and their staff who work on child care and early learning policies and those who work on tax, public benefits programs (like SNAP or housing assistance) and other economic policies is a critical way to elevate these issues, especially as their constituents.
- Contacting congressional staff: NWLC can help you with identifying the right staffers to contact, and figuring out what type of meeting works best for your needs and your specific ask. NWLC's federal team is continuously in contact with Hill offices as part of our advocacy efforts and can help whether we have an existing relationship or would be doing the initial outreach.
- Planning meeting agenda: We can support you as you plan your meeting whether it's in-district or in Washington D.C., during session or during congressional recesses, in-person or virtual.

Hill visits: Are you coming to Washington D.C. soon and hoping to meet with your congressional delegation in-person?

Logistical support: Organizing a day on the Hill, or dedicated time to meet with your congressional delegation and their child care and early learning and/or tax and public benefits staffers, is one way of bringing your stories to Washington D.C. If you are looking to spend some time on the Hill to advocate for child care and income security NWLC can support you as you organize your day on the Hill. This can include logistical elements such as scheduling your meetings with the appropriate office staff, and helping you navigate congressional office buildings.

Meeting planning: NWLC can assist you in ensuring you have a strong agenda and plan for your meeting time, identifying questions you might want to ask Congressional staffers, and supporting you with any follow-up that comes from the meetings.

Invitations to events or site-visits: Are you interested in inviting your Congressional delegation to an event you are hosting, or to do a site visit to see what a day in your life is like?

Planning events for Congressional invitation: Attending local events are critical ways that representatives and senators engage with their constituents and hear from their local communities. If you have an upcoming event, or you would like to organize something that you would like to invite your representative and senators to, NWLC can support your ask to in-district and Washington D.C. offices to try to coordinate with their schedules in an effort to increase the likelihood that they are able to attend in-person.

Increasing chances for engagement: It is important to remember that if you have an event with a fixed date and time, it may depend on whether they will be able to travel home or will be in D.C. as congress might be in session. However, if you are hoping to organize something like a child care center or home-based child care site visit for which the date and time can be adjusted based on the availability of the member or the senator(s), we can support you in coordinating and planning. Additionally, NWLC can provide templates for organizing your site visit and/or ensuring your event has strong engagement and asks for any members of congress who are able to attend.

Plugging into the national advocacy landscape:
Are you interested in learning more about the work happening in child care and early learning coalitions or connecting to other advocates doing similar work in other states?

Connecting to partners in the work: Working together to get things done on the Hill often involves ensuring we are advancing or championing strong policy proposals that work for children, families and educators – and especially for communities with low incomes, communities of color, and other historically marginalized people. NWLC works in coalition with numerous other national organizations to champion strong policies for child care and early learning and in coalitions advancing strong policies on taxes and supports like SNAP, Medicaid, Social Security, and housing assistance that help women and families make ends meet. By working in alignment, we can leverage our strength and power across various elements of child care policy at the federal level.

Receiving updates and relevant information: If you would like to learn more about the national advocacy strategy and how to best align your actions' asks, NWLC can ensure you receive our weekly federal news memo which includes important updates and calls to action. Additionally, our state child care team works with advocates across every state and holds various convenings throughout the year.

Communications Support: *Are you wanting to utilize print and other forms of traditional media, or social media, and need support with these efforts?*

- Receiving support with op-eds: Publishing an op-ed in a local newspaper is a powerful way to draw attention to an issue for the general public and for the congressional offices who track local news stories. If this form of advocacy is something you are interested in starting, or need additional capacity on content or pitching, NWLC's campaigns and communication team can offer direct support. This can include reviewing content and ensuring it has the strongest ask for a congressional delegation and providing support with connecting to local news outlets.
- Other communication support: NWLC's Campaigns and communications team may also be able to support other efforts, such as a press release planned for responding to congressional actions that impact your work and community, providing sample social media content amplifying actions needed for federal policy issues, or amplifying your actions via social media.

Key Messages – Child Care & Income Security

Below are some of the key messages and specific asks that National Women's Law Center, along with other national partners, uses to advance early childhood education policy solutions that help children, families, and early educators.

Key messages: Income Security

- **Families are struggling to make ends meet in this economy.** We have failed to make the investments in care, education, jobs, health and housing that allow people in this country to support their families and succeed in our economy. So families struggle to afford the basics, impacting their health, well-being, and future success.
- **Tax cuts for billionaires and corporations make it harder to invest in families.** Cutting taxes for the wealthiest people and the most profitable corporations comes at the expense of families. We know that wasting federal money on tax cuts at the top means there is less funding for the programs families rely on. And it makes it even harder to make the long-overdue public investments in our families and communities that would truly make a difference for families.
- **Cutting programs and supports that families rely on raises their costs and hurts families.** Cutting basic needs programs like food assistance, healthcare, housing and child care hurts families. It makes it cost more to put food on the table, put a roof over their heads, and pay for child care. Family budgets are already squeezed so families have no option but to do without. This will undermine their health, well-being, and futures. Cutting federal funding for programs like Medicaid and SNAP also shifts costs to states and puts impossible pressure on state budgets, putting other state funding like child care supports, at risk.
- **Instead, we should invest in people and an economy that works for all of us, not just the wealthy few.** Having a tax code that makes the wealthiest and big corporations pay their fair share means we would have enough to invest in our shared priorities – like a fully refundable Child Tax Credit, child care, paid family and medical leave, aging and disability care, supports that help families put healthy food on the table and afford a home, and comprehensive health care. These are investments that would support families' health and well-being, lower their costs, and foster widely shared prosperity.

Key messages: Child Care

- **Child care is essential for the well-being of families, children, and our nation.** It enables parents to work and support their families, or obtain education or training to get a better, more stable job. It gives children a safe, nurturing environment to learn and develop skills they need to succeed in school and in life.
- **Child care is the backbone of our nation's economy.** It is the work that makes all other work possible, generating massive dividends in a range of outcomes, including improved child and family health, bolstered educational outcomes, and economic recovery – yet early educators are among the lowest paid workers.
- **The cost of child care outpaces inflation** and continues to squeeze families' budgets, often edging them (particularly mothers) out of the workforce altogether.
- **It is essential to protect and increase funding for child care and early learning programs** including the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and the Head Start program. Any effort to cut or to keep funding flat harms families' access to child care and providers ability to keep their doors open.
- **Harsh anti-immigrant policies threaten the stability of the child care workforce.** Immigrant workers are a cornerstone of our caregiving system—making up almost one in five child care workers (20%). Anti-immigrant policies will have devastating consequences across our communities, impacting hardworking families, early educators, and entire communities.

Federal advocacy priorities:

- **Fight for a tax code that raises more public dollars to invest in people, instead of giving more tax cuts to the wealthiest:** The wealthiest people and corporations need to pay their fair share in taxes. We can use these new tax dollars to invest in child care, paid leave, and aging and disability care—and more. This would help more families meet their caregiving needs and build their financial security, while helping to grow a robust economy. Expanding refundable tax credits like the Child Tax Credit and the Earned Income Tax Credit in ways that help the families who need them the most would also make our tax code work better for everyday families.
- **Oppose cuts to nutrition assistance, health care, housing assistance, and other supports that help families make ends meet:** Congress has slashed federal spending on supports that women and families rely on, including nutrition assistance and healthcare. Further cuts would bring even more harm. These cuts raise costs for families and undermine their well-being, as well as shifting costs to states that states will be unable to make up.
- **Fight for a tax code that raises more public dollars to invest in care, instead of giving more tax cuts to the wealthiest:** Use tax dollars to build and invest in child care, paid leave, and aging and disability care. This would help more families meet their caregiving needs and build their financial security, while helping to grow a robust economy.
- **Champion the investments that support families, improve well-being, and grow the economy.** Families especially struggle to afford groceries, housing, and care. Boosting funding and tailoring nutrition and housing assistance to meet families' real needs would help families afford the essentials and still be able to meet their other expenses. Long-overdue public investments in child care, paid family and medical leave, and aging and disability care would lower care costs for families, stabilize the workforce, and support underpaid and undervalued care workers. And expanding refundable tax credits would boost families' incomes so they can pay the bills and save for emergencies.
- **Prioritize investments in child care and early learning:** Secure the highest investments possible for child care and early learning in FY26 appropriations, including protecting and increasing funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), Head Start program, IDEA Parts B & C, and the Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program in FY26.
- **Support long-term, robust federal investments in child care:** Commit to robust and sustained support the child care and early learning sector, including additional funding to ensure all eligible families can receive necessary support and that educators receive a living wage.
- **Champion child care as a critical issue for the nation:** Uphold child care as a critical component of our nation's infrastructure by speaking about it on the floor, in committee hearings, to the press, and in community events.