

NC Women United
Draft Women's Agenda 2008-09
Executive Summary

Below is a summary of the Recommendations for Action under each issue area in the Draft Women's Agenda. For a full description of the issues, the challenges, and potential solutions, please see the full [Draft Women's Agenda](#).

Chapter 1: Access to Healthcare

Aging:

- Help North Carolina's older citizens live independent lives by increasing funding for the Home and Community Care Block Grant for services to elderly persons living at home.
- Provide for screening, assessment, and care plans for new admissions to adult care homes and require increased training for aides who work with mentally ill residents.

Emergency Contraception:

- Pass legislation that would require hospitals to provide Emergency Contraceptive to survivors of sexual assault on-site regardless of the physician on duty.

Mental Health:

- Expand comprehensive mental health parity legislation in health coverage ending discriminatory difference between mental and physical health care and add addictive disease to this coverage.
- Urge lawmakers to build on the recent increases in community-based mental health funding to ensure services to those in need especially in the area of crisis services.
- Support polices and programs that connect primary care and mental health services-especially for returning veterans, specifically those in the guard and reserve.

Comprehensive Sex Education:

- The NC General Assembly must restore medically accurate, unbiased comprehensive sex education to North Carolina schools.
- The next governor of North Carolina must reject Title V, federal "abstinence-until-marriage" funding. No school in North Carolina must be allowed to accept funds that deny young people lifesaving information.
- The NC General Assembly must include comprehensive sex education in their high school drop out initiatives in order to address the disproportionate effect that teenage pregnancy has on girls completing high school education.

Chapter 2: Civic Participation and Equality

Equal Educational Opportunity:

- Ensure equity in community college admissions and enforcement of state mandates for equal education opportunity.

Educational Rights:

- Increase funding for the Disadvantaged Student Supplemental Fund and implement criteria defining allowable fund purposes and accountability procedures.
- Ensure that all students who are at risk of academic failure have a written personal education plan that is implemented and monitored regularly.
- Reduce the high suspension and drop-out rates for all students, with particular focus on the needs of minority students, who disproportionately are suspended or drop out.
- Ensure all students are academically prepared to meet the state's new graduation standards by providing them with the resources necessary to be successful.

Equal Political Representation:

- The General Assembly should expand Voter Owned Elections to include state legislative and more Council of State races (including the gubernatorial race) and authorize more cities to sponsor their own VOE programs, while at the same time working to uniformly regulate the money affecting campaigns from 527 and bogus issue advocacy committees.
- The General Assembly should extend the opportunity to register and vote on the same day to Election Day itself and take other steps to make voting more convenient, such as piloting "super-voting" centers in high growth areas without cutting polling places in low density areas, and making Election Day a state holiday.

Driver's License Identification:

- Revoke the 2005 Technical Corrections Act which makes it impossible for undocumented immigrants to get driver's licenses, impossible to register cars, and impossible to get car insurance. Go back to the original criteria of identification required to get a valid NC driver's license.

Chapter 3: Economic Self-Sufficiency**Affordable Child Care:**

- Increase appropriations for subsidized childcare enough to eliminate the waiting list and invest in early childhood educational programs.
- Provide increased reimbursement and funding to childcare centers to promote better educated child-care providers and to keep them in business.

Displaced Homemakers:

- Provide adequate wages and benefits for aides in long term care facilities that would not only benefit the aging, but would also provide an avenue for living wage employment for displaced homemakers.
- Guarantee health care as a fundamental right especially to children at and below the poverty level and the working poor. Many displaced homemakers would be able to accept a smaller living wage if they knew that health care for their children would always be provided.
- Increase cash assistance for low-income families, public assistance and child care subsidies for families while the head of household is completing job retraining or education.

Housing:

- Provide annual funding of \$50 million to the NC Housing Trust Fund to increase availability of affordable housing.
- Expand the NC Home Protection Pilot Program to help displaced workers avoid home foreclosure.

Paid Family Leave:

- The General Assembly should support legislation that requires employers to provide paid family leave for parents with a new child in the home.
- New mothers should receive short-term disability leave for childbirth recovery comparable in scope to other developed nations.

Living Wage:

- Increase the state Minimum Wage to at least \$8.15 per hour and index it to inflation.
- Enact legislation to provide workers with up to seven paid sick days annually to care for themselves or a family member.
- Increase the percentage of the state Earned Income Tax Credit to at least 15% of the federal program.
- Repeal NC's ban on collective bargaining for public employees.

Immigration and Citizenship:

- Comprehensive immigration reform at the federal level that provides a path to citizenship
- Enforcements of existing federal labor laws
- Improvements to the family reunification laws and efforts to reduce backlog
- Provide adequate healthcare for children, including undocumented children.
- Provide reproductive health coverage to all women regardless of economic or immigrant status
- Adoption of the provision of the WISH Act which provides safe harbor and safety net benefits to immigrants victims of sexual and domestic violence.

Chapter 4: Violence Against Women**Domestic Violence:**

- Support the recommendations of the Joint Legislative Committee on Domestic Violence.
- Support the Legislative Agenda of the North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence, (www.nccadv.org).

Sexual Assault:

- Increase funding for the Rape Victim Assistance Program.
- Provide emergency contraceptives to all sexual assault victims presented in the Emergency Departments.
- Clarify and strengthen stalking laws in North Carolina.
- Support HB 223 - Expand the Sex Offender Accountability and Responsibility (SOAR) program.
- Support HB 688 – Increase criminal penalty for Computer Solicitation of a child.