



North Carolina Women United

For our 2019-2020 Legislative Agenda, North Carolina Women United surveyed its member organizations and women across the state to understand the most critical issues facing women today. In August of 2020, we updated this agenda to reflect the needs of North Carolina women in response to the coronavirus pandemic. As an explicitly antiracist organization that takes an intersectional approach to feminism, we have designed this legislative agenda to reflect language and recommendations to increase gender equity and equality while decreasing discrimination. Our priority issue areas reflect many and intersecting streams of marginalization that can manifest in society, be that by gender identity or sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, class, age, immigration status or ability.

We hope that this guide serves to inform and empower women across the state to hold North Carolina policymakers accountable in advancing our rights and well-being through smart policy solutions.

We are thankful to our members for the work they do to inform and advance this agenda every day, and to our policy leads for their efforts to draft this agenda. These recommendations will be based on our 2019-2020 legislative report card, which will be published late in 2020.

- ACLU-NC's Ann Webb;
- Planned Parenthood South Atlantic's Susanna Birdsong;
- NC Black Women's Roundtable's Shemekka Ebony;
- NARAL Pro-Choice NC's Tara Romano;
- NCCADV's Sherry Honeycutt Everett; and
- NCCASA's Skye David,

Charnessa Ridley
NCWU President

Lyric Thompson
NCWU Policy Director

NC Women United (NCWU) is a Coalition of progressive state and local organizations working to achieve the full political, social, and economic equality of all women across North Carolina. NCWU works to build women's power through grassroots activism, community organizing, legislative advocacy and engagement in the political process.

full list of our members appears on page 8 in annex. While every member is not active on each recommendation, together our priorities inform a fuller and more comprehensive agenda reflecting the diversity and scope of our membership and collective efforts to advance a more equitable, united North Carolina

Economic Stability

North Carolina Women United urges policymakers to enhance the economic security of our state and NC families by taking steps to:

- Pay a living wage, including equal pay and raising the minimum wage to \$15/hour, starting with essential workers who are disproportionately women and people of color.
- Guarantee all workers, starting with essential workers, paid sick days for personal or family care, and ensure workers can use FMLA leave to care for a sibling, grandparent, grandchild, stepparent, or parent-in-law.
- Meet or exceed the actions authorized for state employees under Executive Order No. 95 for all NC families by establishing a state-run, 100% parental leave program.

North Carolina has among the lowest services in the country for unemployment support, which is grossly inadequate to meet the needs of families struggling across the state

- Restore unemployment benefits that were slashed in 2013. Increase the amount of benefit, length of benefit, and accessibility for part-time and contract/gig workers.

- Meet or exceed the actions authorized for state employees under Executive Order No. 82 by providing protection for all pregnant workers in NC, requiring employers to make reasonable accommodations to employees who have physical limitations related to pregnancy; and prohibit employers from retaliating or discriminating against a worker who requests a reasonable accommodation.

- Increase funding to the NC Housing Trust Fund and the NC Workforce Housing Loan Fund to ensure that women and working families can pay for housing expenses and still pay for necessities like childcare and groceries.
- Reinstate the state moratorium on eviction notices
- Invest in the education system including, provision of personal Protection Equipment and tools for remote learning, increases in educator pay, most of whom are women, as well as in school abilities to promote smaller class sizes, invest in learning outcomes and promote girls' participation in science, technology, engineering and math.

- Increase pay and provide personal protective equipment for the state's childcare, healthcare, and other essential workers, most of whom live close to poverty or hold insecure jobs.
- Extend the state's waiver of the ban of time-limit waivers for Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs) who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

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NORTH CAROLINA WOMAN AGE

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"I have friends who often are stressed at work since they have to take time off for the child's illnesses and then try to work when they are sick. I have a friend who is a single parent and is not seen favorably at work since she is out often. Supervisors don't understand why she is off so often and that she is the only person to take the child when sick."

Expand Access to Healthcare

North Carolina Women United urges policymakers to ensure women and families can enjoy the highest standard of health and wellbeing by taking steps to:

- Ensure healthcare coverage for the maximum number of North Carolinians by expanding Medicaid.

“Affording healthcare is the number 1 challenge. Most jobs do not come with health insurance, or they come with insurance with super high deductibles, which causes women not to go to the doctor even with insurance. Then, NC has not passed Medicaid expansion, so the poor cannot afford healthcare”

- Provide appropriate health and sexual education and information for students in K-12 schools.
- Protect and expand access to all reproductive health care to include rural areas and ensure that women and all people are able to access the full range of safe and legal reproductive healthcare options, including abortion care and birth control, without government or employer intrusion or restriction, free from judgment and without undue financial hardship;
- Ensure women’s health clinic regulations are based on sound science and medical information rather than political ideology.
- End the diversion of health care public funds to support anti-abortion centers ("crisis pregnancy centers"). These centers exist to push an anti-abortion/anti-choice/anti-LGBTQ ideology, not to provide actual health care
- Investigate, document, and address any health disparities and unintended consequences arising from the move to telehealth during the pandemic, and remove restrictions on telehealth provision for abortion care.

I found myself stuck in a job I might have left to keep a good health insurance plan (this was before the ACA). Later I felt I had to sideline my career plans and step on the mommy track for a while when my husband's job hours and our low combined paychecks made childcare out of reach.”

Ensure NC Women, Girls and Nonbinary people are Safe

North Carolina Women United urges policymakers to ensure the safety of North Carolinians by:

- Prioritizing the sustainability of programs and services that provide immediate care and resources to women and all people that experience gender-based and intimate partner violence.
- Allocation of funding that will enhance the ability of Victim service agencies to provide more comprehensive services.
- Enacting common-sense gun safety regulations such as closing the background check loophole; increasing penalties for unsafe storage; restricting firearms on public and school grounds, and mandating training and background checks in the pistol permitting process.
- Authorize district court judges to order the surrender of firearms in any domestic violence protection order (DVPO) case where the judge finds it an appropriate remedy for the safety of the victim and children.
- Adequately funding the Family Court system to support swifter and better custody outcomes for domestic violence survivors.
- Expanding protection for sexual violence victims by removing statute language that indicates consent, once given, cannot be withdrawn, and clarifying that victims who knowingly drank alcohol or took drugs are “mentally incapacitated” and unable to consent to sexual acts.
- Amending NC General Statute 50B/50C to accept

“I had a 50B protective order from my husband. But through an error by the judge who first issued the order, he was able to go to the sheriff and obtain one of his guns that had been confiscated.”

electronic filing requests from “rape crisis centers” in addition to “domestic violence programs”.

“Censure members of the GA who are convicted of domestic abuse. Pass laws against domestic abusers possessing firearms and put teeth into the laws.”

- Amend NC General Statue 50B to remove the discriminatory “opposite sex” requirement for dating relationships.
- Ending the shackling of pregnant, incarcerated people in North Carolina prisons and jails.

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Ensure NC Women, Girls and Nonbinary people are Safe continued...

- Take actions to end gender-based violence, discrimination, and abuse of girls such as child marriage and female genital mutilation and cutting.
- Take actions to end the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women in North Carolina.
- End and hold to account police violence against Black women and women of color, including sex workers
- Reduce police presence at schools, health clinics and other places where women and girls access state-provided services
- Conduct a gender analysis of and address any unintended consequences for women and girls stemming from the COVID-19 related transition to virtual services in family court and relevant services in the judicial system, such as applications for restraining orders, marriage applications and other measures that impact domestic violence, exploitation or abuse.
- Immediately cease the practice of separating undocumented and incarcerated mothers from newborns, a practice that is reported to have been implemented during Coronavirus response.
- Take steps to address housing, food, and other forms of insecurity for students who have evacuated from campus during school closures.

“As a campus administrator, it was so hard to watch and hear the stories of students who had to abruptly leave campus and return to insecure and sometimes unsafe environments”

Promote an Inclusive, Participatory and Equitable Democracy


North Carolina Women United urges policymakers to protect civic participation, promote equality and eliminate discrimination based on sex, race, class, age, immigration status, sexuality, gender identity, ability, or any other identity, including by taking steps to:

- Expand the authority of local governments to establish citizen review boards to investigate police misconduct.
- Actively defend against racial discrimination by outlawing hair discrimination by supporting the CROWN Act in North Carolina, creating a respectful, open world for natural hair.
- Expand non-discrimination protections in housing, employment (including unpaid internships), public accommodations, insurance, lending institutions, and education.
- Increase accountability in law enforcement by prohibiting discriminatory profiling
- Requiring enhanced reporting on information collected at traffic stops; collecting additional information on use of deadly force by law enforcement regarding characteristics of officers and victims; and updating training and education of law enforcement on issues of discrimination, deescalation of crisis and understanding mental health.
- Increase the scope of and penalties for hate crimes, to demonstrate a commitment to and further enhance the safety and security for all populations in North Carolina.
 - Provide fair treatment to immigrants living in NC by expanding access to state driver's licenses; allowing all residents of NC to pay in-state tuition for higher education; expanding worker protections to include all workers, regardless of immigration status; and repeal laws barring NC municipalities from designating their communities as sanctuary cities.

Guilford County Resident,
Age 34

“My foremothers fought so hard to gain that right for my grandmother, mom, and the women of my generation. We owe it to them to vote every time we can.”

“EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT
PASSAGE WILL GO A LONG
WAY TOWARD A CULTURAL
SHIFT TOWARD ACCEPTING
WOMEN AS FULL CITIZENS.”



“There are barriers at the polls in minority communities like voter ID and limited polling hours “I believe in the importance of voting despite evidence that gerrymandering makes it count less than it should”

- Oppose legislation that seeks to create additional barriers to safety and critical resources for immigrants residing and working in North Carolina and that limits local governments’ and law enforcement’s efforts to better integrate immigrants into their communities.
- Establish an independent redistricting process to draw legislative & congressional districts.
- Streamline voter registration and access through same-day registration, increased voting sites and hours, and expanded online options for voter registration.
- Support laws that create open, transparent elections and promote checks and balances in government, including the provision of absentee ballots and other measures to ensure voters’ ability to exercise their civic duty safely during the time of COVID-19.

Advance Climate and Environmental Justice

Our consultations with members and surveys of women across the state in 2019 identified our lack of attention to environmental and climate justice issues as a gap in our membership and agenda to date. As an intersectional movement that cares about people and the planet, we are working to address this issue and solicit members and content in this area. We hope to publish a series of recommendations on climate and environmental justice in our 2021 legislative agenda.

Annex: NCWU Member List 2019-2020

- [ACLU of North Carolina](#)
- [AAUW of North Carolina](#)
- **Buncombe County Women's Commission**
- [Carolina Abortion Fund](#)
- [Democracy North Carolina](#)
- [Equality North Carolina](#)
- [ERA-NC Alliance](#)
- [General Federation of Women's Clubs of NC](#)
- [Greensboro Commission on the Status of Women](#)
- [Ipas](#)
- [League of Women Voters of North Carolina](#)
- [Mecklenburg County Community Support Services, Women's Commission Division](#)
- [NARAL Pro-Choice North Carolina](#)
- [National Association of Social Workers- NC Chapter](#)
- [NC Business and Professional Women Foundation](#)
- **NC Black Women's Roundtable**
- [NC Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#)
- [NC Coalition Against Sexual Assault](#)
- [NC Justice Center](#)
- **NC MomsRising**
- [NC National Organization for Women](#)
- [NC4ERA](#)
- **Onslow County Council for Women**
- [Planned Parenthood South Atlantic](#)
- [Politica NC](#)
- [Progress NC](#)
- [RATIFY ERA-NC](#)
- [SHIFT NC](#)
- [Women for Women - A Giving Circle](#)
- [Women's Forum of North Carolina](#)
- [WomenNC: NC Committee for CEDAW/CSW](#)
- [YWCA of Asheville and Western NC](#)