



March 2020 CWI Newsletter <https://womensclearinghouse.org>

Postponement of Tuesday, March 24, 2020 CWI Meeting, Noon-1:30 PM to April 28, 2020 noon if Covid 19 threat is sufficiently mitigated by then.

Place: The Alliance for Justice, 11 Dupont Circle, 5th Floor; entrance on New Hampshire Ave., NW (Nearest Metro Stop: Dupont Circle, north or south exit)

RSVP is now required. Go to <https://womensclearinghouse.org/rsvp>

Getting ERA in the U.S. Constitution

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) is a proposed amendment to the United States Constitution designed to guarantee equal legal rights for all American citizens regardless of sex. First introduced by Alice Paul and Crystal Eastman in 1923, it seeks to end the legal distinctions between men and women in matters of divorce, property, employment, and other issues. The recent passage of the ERA in Virginia made it the 38th state to ratify and achieved the threshold of $\frac{3}{4}$ of the American states required to add an amendment to the Constitution. While our hearts were buoyed by this long awaited step, the battle may not be over yet.

We have invited three activists to talk about the background, support, and final steps to enshrine the ERA in the US constitution:

Bettina Hager, the DC Director of the ERA Coalition and Fund for Women's Equality, has extensive background in preparing advocacy materials and training lobbyists on the issues of constitutional equality. Bettina will provide the background of the ERA and the ERA Coalition's work that has moved it forward to be placed in the Constitution in the United States. She will explain the three-state ratification strategy legislation sponsored by Sen. Cardin in April, 2014 and how it has gotten us to this point.

We are hopeful that a Delta Sigma Theta Sorority representative will speak about their critical support role in the ERA passage in Virginia. The Deltas- noted for their bright red suits and community engagement works – are an organization of college educated women committed to the constructive development of its members and to public service with a primary focus on the Black community. An integral part in the passage of the 19th amendment which gave all women the right to vote, they have thrown their influence and energy in characteristic fashion to support the Equal Rights Amendment, particularly in VA.

Ellie Smeal, current president of Feminist Majority and past president of the National Organization for Women (NOW), has fought on the frontlines for women's equality for more than three decades. In the 1970s, as president of the NOW, she spearheaded the drive to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment, the largest nationwide grassroots and lobbying campaign in the history of the modern women's movement. Smeal also pioneered the use of the Internet as a feminist organizing and research tool by launching the Feminist Majority Foundation Online in 1995. Always the organizer and practical realist, she will speak about the steps that need to be covered to get the ERA finally placed in the US Constitution in the United States.

CWI meetings are free and open to the public. Bring your own lunch. An RSVP to attend is required. RSVP to womensclearinghouse.org/rsvp. Next possible CWI meeting. Noon Tue. May 26, 2020

CWI Meeting Summary, February 25, 2020

Does Gender Matter in Elections?

On Tuesday, February 25th the Clearinghouse on Women's Issues hosted the meeting, "Does Gender Matter in Elections?" exploring the way gender and race affect our political landscape in our voting demographics and preferences, candidate nomination and selection, and elected officials.



CWI first heard a presentation from **Elyse Shaw** who directs the [Institute for Women's Policy Research](#) (IWPR)'s projects on the Status of Women in the United States, women's political participation, and those related to women and girls of color, which examines the intersectional nature of race and gender on women's lives. Within the framework of IWPR's data collection interviewing female politicians and candidates, Elyse highlighted the gaps and barriers for women entering the political field and staying to win. One of the primary barriers identified is the centrality of money in politics and that, commonly, women feel too daunted by the high demands of fundraising to enter and/or stay in politics. One component of the challenges women face in fundraising for office is simply a feeling that they lack the correct skillset to make the initial ask for donations, but that respondents reported this fear could be greatly diminished if they were provided with a fundraising training opportunity. Elyse's data also found that fundraising is also a central barrier for women because they lack

access to the same established and reliable call lists that male candidates have. Inter-connectedly, female candidates are less likely to have established relationships and support from power brokers, party leaders, and major donors. This also inhibits their ability not just to fundraise, but to be recruited for seats, receive party support, and garner name recognition.

Another key barrier women identified while running for office is what Elyse describes as the overt discrimination of "campaigning while female." This is characterized by inappropriate and sexist treatment from media, donors, and colleagues, and even sexual harassment or violence. This often comes in the form of comments or criticism about the candidates' aesthetic appearances or a double standard surrounding their familial obligations.

A critical finding of Elyse's presentation was to disprove the common rhetoric that women are less likely to run for office because they lack the ambition of men. Among those interviewed by IWPR, ambition was not a determinate issue in their likelihood to run for office. Rather, women found themselves deciding to run because they wanted to respond to a specific problem in their local community.

Moving forward, Elyse identified key steps to tackle these systemic issues barring women and especially women of color from achieving political office. First, Elyse called on all of us to work towards an all-out effort to develop a more powerful political pipeline for female candidates. This requires more intentional efforts to train young women, map out races farther in advance, increased mentorship and sponsorship, a stronger donor-base supporting female candidates. Elyse also called on political parties to place more intentionality and effort into endorsing and recruiting female candidates. Finally, Elyse proposed more systemic reforms that will help uplift women in politics. Anti-discrimination laws and further expansion of campaign finance reform along with policies making campaign work more family-friendly are such examples. Her presentation also discussed the way ranked-choice-voting has shown to increase female electoral success.



Our next speaker was **Janice Mathis**, Executive Director of the [National Council for Negro Women](#). Janice has broad-based experience as a lawyer, negotiator, advocate, administrator and team builder. Janice presented on the role of intersectionality in electoral politics and the way women of color, and different sectors within this demographic, are represented in campaigns and public office. Janice critically pointed out that the representation of not just women, but women of color in Congress have surged in 2016 - with particularly strong representation among black women. In local elections too, the number of women, and women of color, holding elected office has increased at the local level. This is valuable not just in the growth of the sheer numbers, but also the positions of power these women are representing. Specifically, there has been notable growth in the women of color that serve as mayors across the country- generating large impact.

This growth, Janice posits, might be a reaction to the outcome of the 2016 election and outrage in the role white women played in electing Trump. Furthermore, the particular harm this administration has done to women of color has spurred motivation for women of color to act on behalf of their communities by running for office. This, Janice reported, is also working in combination with the inspiration that the Obama administration provided, raising the ceiling of what is possible for people of color interested in politics. Furthermore, Janice argued that this rise is not just a result of the urgency of the present but also the weight of the past. Throughout history in both feminist movements and civil rights movements, women of color have been pushed out. Now, Janice says, women of color are insisting that it has been too long they have been in the backseat. Lastly, Janice argues that the growth of women of color in elected office is due in part to nonprofit fatigue. While there are many notable nonprofit groups initiated and led by women of color, the way these groups can be so easily muffled has served as an impetus for women to want to be the decision-makers, and instead are running themselves.



Our final speaker of the day was **Monique Alcala**, Chief Operating Officer at [Rock the Vote](#), a nonprofit advocacy organization using the power of art, music, technology and pop culture to engage young people in politics. Her area of expertise is on race/ethnicity, inequality, and political participation. Monique also has particular expertise having previously worked in a variety of campaigns. In her discussion, Monique also highlighted the success of the increased participation of women and women of color, but also the continued challenges this population faces when running for office and possible solutions to overcome them. As also mentioned by Elyse, Monique pinpointed fundraising as a key challenge for women of color candidates. As the political system currently exists, Monique explained, donors are largely older white men with limited geographic distribution. These donors, too hold exorbitant power in the recruitment and election process, often being the ones determining the thresholds of what it means to be “electable” or “viable” for a particular seat. These biased terms are particularly harmful

when trying to support female candidates of color. In fundraising especially, female candidates of color have to meet much higher fundraising thresholds and expectations in a network they weren’t raised in order to be considered viable. Even outside the candidates themselves, there is a financial and information bias that is harmful to women of color that affect electoral change. Nonprofits run by women and people of color receive less funding and support, in particular among civically oriented nonprofits and 501 C4s. Young women and people of color are also a large proportion of the non-voting population, meaning their votes are often fought less hard for amongst candidates and in turn, they are further silenced by the political process.

Similarly to Elyse, one solution Monique puts forward is the development of a stronger political pipeline. This involves creating more and better sponsors and advocates for women of color in the political sphere. Monique also emphasized that in order for women of color to be more represented they need more support and this requires those in the network of privilege to call out this privilege when it occurs. Politics, she argues, is too often incorrectly seen as a zero-sum game where those too strongly fear they will lose power if they help open the door for others who have been systemically oppressed. Reversing this involves making smarter policy thinking about those who aren’t represented. Further, it involves the entire political electorate re-evaluating what it truly means to be “electable” or “viable.”

Following the three panelists’ presentations was a discussion inspired by their data, experiences, and observations. Such topics that were debated included the ways in which race and gender are differently prioritized and challenged in elections, and how this overlap affects the strategies and struggles of female candidates of color as well as how race and gender inform assumed beliefs in a candidate or officeholder’s policy priorities and preferences, even when there isn’t data supporting it.

Key statistics highlighted by this meeting’s speakers:

- 126 women serve in the 116th congress
- 47, or 37.3% are women of color, outperforming their representation
 - In addition, a black woman, Latina, an Asian Pacific Islander, and a Caribbean American woman serve as delegates to the house from DC, PR, Samoa, and VI. Women of color constitute 8.8% of the 535 members of congress
- At this rate of representation, women will not reach parity in Congress until 2108

Videos of the meeting will be available on our website: <https://womensclearinghouse.org>

Coming DC Area and National Feminist Events and Resources

Please send your upcoming feminist events to post in CWI newsletters to president@womensclearinghouse.org. LIKE and FOLLOW us on CWI's Facebook www.facebook.com/womensclearinghouse and Twitter www.twitter.com/CWINews pages! Also SUBSCRIBE and LIKE our video sponsor & provider <https://www.youtube.com/user/Hanburycross>. Times are EDT. Paid-up CWI members will receive additional forwarded email messages on feminist meetings and activities.

EXHIBITS

Check out [Washington.org/suffrage](https://www.washington.org/suffrage) and [#suffrage100DC](https://twitter.com/suffrage100DC) *note both the National Archives and the Library of Congress exhibits have been criticized for not showing the full feminist fury against the election of President Trump in photos of the January 2017 Women's March on Washington and around the globe when Hillary Clinton won the popular vote.

Also check out Women Fight for the Vote, Federal Government Events: <https://womenhistorymonth.gov>

Shall Not Be Denied: Women Fight for the Vote Library of Congress Southwest Gallery, Thomas Jefferson Building. 8:30 am - 4:30 pm Handwritten letters, speeches, photographs and scrapbooks, created by American suffragists who persisted for more than 70 years to win voting rights for women, will be featured in a new exhibition at the Library of Congress. [Loc.gov/suffrage](https://loc.gov/suffrage)

Rightfully Hers: American Women and the Vote, National Archives, 10 AM-5:30 PM. [Archives.gov/women](https://www.archives.gov/women)

National Museum of American History Marks 2020 as "Year of the Woman" and "Creating Icons: How We Remember Women's Suffrage" March 6, 2020 to March 2021. [https://Americanhistory.si.edu](https://americanhistory.si.edu).

The Exchange, Dumbarton House to April 2021 in Georgetown. [DumbartonHouse.org](https://dumbartonhouse.org)

Ordinary Equality: DAR Members and the Road to Women's Suffrage, 1890-1920 to April 2021. [Dar.org](https://dar.org)

The Rights of Women and the Legacy of the American Revolution, [American revolutioninstitute.org](https://americanrevolutioninstitute.org)

Special tour, Votes for Women. The Capitol Visitor Center, 1 PM Monday through Saturday, (45 minutes). Meet at Statue of Freedom. visitthecapitol.gov/event-calendar

EVENTS

Sunday March 15, 2020 Deadline to apply for the Women's Media Center's Progressive Women's Voices media and leadership training program in May in Washington, DC. [Application form](https://www.womensmediacenter.com/application-form). Send questions to Kate@womensmediacenter.com.

Tuesday, March 17, 1PM "DC Politics Hour with Former DC Mayor Sharon Pratt". Woman's National Democratic Club, 1526 New Hampshire Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Lunch served at 12:15 PM. [Register](https://www.wndc.org/register) or call 202-232-7363.

Wednesday, March 18, 6:30-8:30 PM, Women's History Month Celebration, Montgomery Co. Business and Professional Women. Rockville Memorial Library, 21 Maryland Ave., Rockville, MD 20850. [For more Info](https://www.bpw.org/for-more-info).

Thursday, March 19, 2020, 4 PM Maryland Women's Hall of Fame Induction and Awards Ceremony to be held in the President's Conference Room East I and II, in the Miller Senate Office Building, 11 Bladen Street, Annapolis, Maryland. Maryland Commission for Women. (Note: NASA Goddard Space Flight Scientist, Dr. Claire Parkinson, nominated by Loretto Gubernatis is one of the inductees. Previous Gender Equity Educator, Leslie Wolfe is another!)

Friday, March 20, 2020, 7:30 PM Word Dance Theater to celebrate suffragist movement. Woman's National Democratic Club, 1526 New Hampshire Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20036. [Register](#) or call 202-232-7363.T

~~**Saturday, March 28, 2020. Valiant Women of the Vote,**~~ Honoree Luncheon, Washington DC. Nationalwomenshistoryalliance.org. Tentatively Postponed to Aug. 22,2020 due to Covid 19.

Tuesday, March 31, 6 PM. Sex, Racism, and Women's Suffrage: A Story of Two Amendments. . Woman's National Democratic Club, 1526 New Hampshire Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20036. [Register](#) or call 202-232-7363.

Tuesday, April 28 Noon tentative CWI Meeting on Getting ERA into the US Constitution. Check <https://womensclearinghouse.org>.

Thursday and Friday May 14 and 15. 5 PM Symposium: 100 Years of Women's Suffrage, Library of Congress, Kluge Center. [For more information.](#)

Friday June 5-Sunday June 7, 2020, Joint National NOW and Feminist Majority Conference: "Fired Up and Ready to Vote" Capital Hilton, Washington, DC, [Register](#)

CWI's newsletter is endowed by friends in loving memory of our previous longtime editor, Roslyn Kaiser

Thanks to National Organization for Women interns (NOW) Jailyn Seabrook and Maia Brockbank for the 2-25 -20 Meeting Summary. Newsletter edited by Sue Klein

CWI BOARD OF DIRECTORS, JULY 2018 – JUNE 2020

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Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

Membership Form

womensclearinghouse.org

Three ways to join or to renew:

1. Bring a check, payable to CWI, and this form to a CWI meeting or
2. Mail form & check to Holly Joseph, CWI Treasurer, 8504 Rosewood Drive, Bethesda MD 20814-1434 or
3. Pay through PayPal, by selecting the desired membership option on our website's membership page <https://womensclearinghouse.org/membership/> & please send this form by USPS or email to treasurer@womensclearinghouse.org

The CWI membership year is **July 1-June 30**. Multi-year memberships are encouraged and discounted! Please fill in the end year (e.g. 2020-2023 for a 3-yr membership). Payment puts you on the email list to receive CWI newsletters and many feminist announcements during your membership.

Membership Years Covered: 2020 - 202__ Date of Payment _____

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NAME _____

EMAIL _____

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CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES - reduced for multiple-year memberships

____\$15/1yr.-for those < 30 yrs. old ____\$25/1yr. ____\$45/2yrs. ____\$65/3yrs.

Virtual membership - only for those outside the metropolitan DC area ____\$20/1yr. ____\$50/3yrs.

ORGANIZATION

NAME _____

NAME & EMAIL of Organization Representative: 1) _____

NAME & EMAIL of Organization Representative: 2) _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ CELL _____

Organization website address (URL) if to be included on CWI website, pending CWI approval: _____

ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIP DUES - reduced for multiple-year memberships

____\$40/1 year ____\$70/2 yrs. ____\$100/3 yrs. (This covers emails to two reps. listed above.)

\$ _____ Dues (from above)

\$ _____ Additional tax-deductible contribution

\$ _____ **TOTAL ENCLOSED**

Membership dues and contributions are tax-deductible to the extent provided by Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Form Rev. 1-16-20