



HOW TO RESEARCH A RESOLUTION

A resolution on a public policy issue is a formal expression of the opinion of GFWC and guides the advocacy efforts of the organization's membership and leadership. GFWC Resolutions are used to educate and influence the decisions and actions of an elected body, including local governments such as town/city/county councils and school boards, state legislators, governors, or Congress and the Administration.

Identify the problem and the solutions. Make logical arguments expressing your position and urge action by those elected officials who have jurisdiction over the issue.

Research the issue – Is it local, state, or federal? Who has the responsibility to fix the problem? Your goal is to integrate information/findings from various sources, and translate them into a resolution stating the problems and calling for solutions.

If local or state issue, what are surrounding town councils or school boards doing? Does your governor's office, state association of municipalities, county commissioners, association of educators, police or sheriffs' association, parks and recreation directors, arts councils, domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions, or others have positions or recommendations on the issue? Sign up for their newsletters.

Identify national resources – Issue oriented non-profit organizations such as the National Parks Foundation, Environmental Defense Fund, National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence, and Everytown for Gun Safety are examples of organizations very active in the public policy arena. Also explore the websites of those organizations which might oppose your efforts. You must know and be able to answer the opposition.

Press – Are there national press stories from the Washington Post or New York Times? If there are local stories, provide those to your elected officials. The national press often identify the strongest advocates and opponents, and have the responsibility to explain difficult issues with examples of impact.

Federal Legislation – Search for current federal legislation on www.congress.gov. Often there are issue summaries prepared by the Congressional Research Service which provide excellent background information. If congressional committees have held hearings on the subject matter, the testimony of witnesses and committee report on a bill provide valuable information. The website of the member of Congress or congressional committee sponsoring the legislation offers important summaries and legislative updates.

Federal Agency – Identify the federal agency which has jurisdiction and resources available on their websites such as the Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

If the resolution sites numbers of incidents, then you must include the source. Again, this will result in the resolution becoming out-of-date about as soon as it makes its way through the GFWC process. Better to use generalities in the written resolution and use your statistics to urge adoption by GFWC during the convention.

Reminder that issue resolutions should not specifically include a bill number or specifically name the recipient who should receive the resolution because it states GFWC's policy recommendation as an organization and needs to be relevant to elected officials regardless of political party or current office holders.

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