

2021 Legislative Report

The 2021 regular legislative session adjourned on June 9. This session, you showed up *virtually* for women's economic security and advocated for legislation to combat the gender wage gap, increase access to paid sick days, improve Connecticut's child care system, and more.

Strengthen Connecticut's Care Infrastructure

This session, CWEALF supported the passage of **P.A. 21-17**, which expands eligibility to the state's child care subsidy, Care4Kids, to parents enrolled in a job training or education program.

CWEALF testified in favor of **S.B. 668** to provide predictable scheduling for low-wage, hourly workers which passed the Senate but was not called for a vote in the House.

Key Terms:

H.B.- House Bill

S.B.- Senate Bill

P.A.- Public Act
(bill that passed!)



CWEALF advocated for **H.B. 6537** to strengthen Connecticut's existing paid sick days law to cover all workers regardless of job title or employer size. CWEALF also supported **H.B. 6595** and **S.B. 1002**, which included an additional 80 hours of paid sick leave to all workers for COVID-19 purposes. While these bills did not pass, workers and advocates like you helped build momentum heading into next year!



End Discriminatory Pay Practices & Increase Wages

This year, CWEALF was proud to lead the passage of **P.A. 21-30**, a key step to combat the gender wage gap in our state and increase pay transparency for job applicants and current employers. Connecticut is now one of just a few states with similar legislation and is the only state so far to require employers to provide salary range information to existing employees.

Under **P.A. 21-30**, Connecticut also joins 24 other states in amending its wage discrimination statute to equal pay for comparable work, a more inclusive standard that takes into account the realities of workplaces today. For more information, [read CWEALF's fact sheet](#).

Expand Rights & Protections at Work

CWEALF applauded the bipartisan passage of **P.A. 21-2**, critical legislation that combats racial and gender discrimination at work and prohibits discrimination based on hair style, texture or type.

The legislature also approved **P.A. 21-27** to strengthen the state's existing protections for workers who breastfeed and allocated funding in the state budget to ensure domestic workers know and understand their rights in the workplace.

Ensure Access to Basic Needs

This session, CWEALF supported the passage of **P.A. 21-34**, which provides a right to counsel for individuals in eviction proceedings, and applauded the passage of **P.A. 21-3**, which repeals welfare liens on homes beginning July 1, 2021.

Connecticut became the first state in the country to establish a baby bonds program, a key to breaking the cycle of poverty. The program will invest \$3,200 for every child enrolled in Medicaid born after July 1, 2021 to pursue higher education, purchase a home or start a business in our state once they turn 18.

Lawmakers approved a state budget that expands the earned income tax credit (EITC), a refundable tax credit available to individuals who work and earn income below a certain level, from 23% to 30.5% of the federal credit. The state budget also allocated funding to pay for the lost wages, out-of-pocket medical expenses and burial expenses for essential workers who contracted or died from COVID-19 in the past year.



As Connecticut addresses the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, CWEALF will continue to advocate for a recovery for all that includes investments in public services and a strong safety net that provides ongoing support to those most impacted by this crisis.

Safeguard Access to Justice & Safety

CWEALF supported the passage of **P.A. 21-78** to make Connecticut the third state in the nation to address coercive control in the state's family violence restraining order law. The law also establishes a grant program to provide low income individuals with legal representation when applying for a restraining order and takes several additional steps to strengthen support for victims of domestic violence.

CWEALF testified in favor of **P.A. 21-81**, which protects college students who report being a victim or witness of sexual violence from disciplinary action and establishes a Council on Sexual Misconduct Climate Survey. Lawmakers also approved **P.A. 21-103**, which strengthens protections for victims of human trafficking.

CWEALF applauded the passage of **P.A. 21-15**, the Connecticut Parentage Act, which creates a clearer path for non-biological parents to legally formalize their relationship with their children.

Protect & Improve Access to Healthcare

This session, lawmakers adopted a budget that increases investment in sexual and reproductive health care and extends Medicaid postpartum coverage to twelve months. Lawmakers also passed legislation to provide health care coverage for pregnant people and children up to age 8, regardless of immigration status.

After several years of advocacy, the legislature passed **P.A. 21-22**, an important step to protect patients' privacy and **P.A. 21-17**, which will ensure that all organizations who offer pregnancy-related services and reproductive health care services are clear and honest in their advertising.

CWEALF also applauded the passage of **P.A. 21-35**, which declares racism as a public health crisis, creates a commission to address the impact of racism on public health, and defines the Doula profession in state statutes.



For more information on the bills and public acts discussed in this report or others you are interested in please visit www.cga.ct.gov and use the “Quick Bill Search” bar at the bottom of the page!

What's next?

Because YOU are a champion for women and girls, lawmakers advanced gender equity in our state. But the work is far from finished!

CWEALF remains committed to advocating for an equitable recovery from COVID-19 that ends decades of systemic sexism and racism that provided women of color with little safety net to withstand the impact of the pandemic.

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