A Message from Executive Director
Janée Woods Weber

Throughout 2023 we’re celebrating CWEALF’s 50th Anniversary! As I reflect upon our long and successful legacy of advocating for women and girls, I am in awe of the legion of powerful, courageous women who blazed the trail for us to be here in 2023, marking this milestone moment and looking forward to another fifty years of advancing gender equity and social justice.

Thank you to the women with the vision, the determination, and the plan to create CWEALF in 1973. Thank you to the women who worked long hours as staff, board members, and volunteers to bring the vision to fruition over the next several decades.

Thank you to our generous donors and dedicated supporters of past and present, especially those of you who have been sustaining and cheering us on for years.

The staff and I were inspired by this poem, which is evocative of our gratitude for our history and our hopeful anticipation for the future we want to build with you, a future where every woman and every girl lives a life of abundance, self-determination, prosperity, good health, and joy.

—I stand
on the sacrifices
of a million women before me
thinking
what can I do
to make this mountain taller
so the women after me
can see farther

- legacy by Rupi Kaur
Continued, A Message from Executive Director Janée Woods Weber

Connecticut is a better place for all of us because CWEALF exists, yet we still have more work to do. We hold this precious legacy and this great responsibility with reverence and care. Even as we stand on this pinnacle of fifty years, we can see more mountains ahead that we will need to climb as we journey toward the kind of world we all deserve to live in. The guiding light of those who came before us illuminates our path forward. We can see further because of these women who carved a path for us to follow and gave us the tools to keep pressing forward because they always knew that women can and will change the world.

I was thrilled to announce during our celebration that CWEALF will become SHE LEADS JUSTICE later this year! Our new name is built upon the legacy of the powerful feminists who came before us. Our new name signifies how we are committed to using an intersectionally feminist, anti-racist equity lens to lead us toward a more just, equitable, and liberated Connecticut for women and for girls- for all of us!

Come, stand atop this mountain, and look with me toward the horizon! Our future awaits if we imagine and create it together, for us and for the women who are yet to come who will someday celebrate our legacy.

Truly,

P.S. If you’re excited about our future, please support CWEALF as we become SHE LEADS JUSTICE, and make sure you are signed up for our email newsletter.
Thank you to everyone who joined us for our 50th Anniversary Celebration on April 29, 2023, at Yale University. Our celebration was possible because of the hard work of our event committee and volunteers and our generous donors and sponsors. Thank you for supporting our work and for believing that women can change the world!

**HONORARY CO-CHAIRS**

Connie Royster  
Anne Stanback

**CHAMPION SPONSOR**

[Image]

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Shelley and Gordon Geballe  
Ann Hill  
Anne Stanback and Charlotte Kinlock  
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Gallo & Robinson  
New England Health Care Employees Union, District 1199 SEIU  
Quinnipiac University  
Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut
Dr. Brown-Dean highlighted the life and legacy of Judge Motley during an episode of Disrupted and interviewed our honorary co-chair and Judge Motley's niece, Connie Royster.

Thank you to Avelo Airlines, Cambria Hotel, Back East Brewing, and Karin Rosenthal for your auction donations and support!

HONOREES

CWEALF honored Dr. Khalilah L. Brown-Dean with our first-ever Constance Baker Motley Award for her dedication to promoting greater civic engagement and representation for marginalized and under-resourced communities.

Dr. Brown-Dean highlighted the life and legacy of Judge Motley during an episode of Disrupted and interviewed our honorary co-chair and Judge Motley's niece, Connie Royster.

CWEALF honored our Community Advocacy Manager, Nilda Rivera, with our last Maria Miller Stewart Award for her decades of service. In her 19 years at CWEALF, Nilda’s leadership has helped thousands of women across Connecticut navigate the civil legal system, often during the most challenging and frightening times of their lives.
YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION: LEGISLATIVE SESSION 2023

CWEALF builds community power across the state by creating and sharing capacity-building tools, fostering relationships, and following the lead of Connecticut’s women. To advance women’s economic security in our state, CWEALF leads policy coalitions, offers public testimony, and collaborates with community partners. Our community organizing work and public policy advocacy intersected for an action-packed 2023 legislative session!

The 2023 legislative session convened on January 4 and adjourned on June 7. This session, you raised your voice for legislation to provide hourly workers with fair and predictable schedules, strengthen our state’s paid sick days law, eliminate the subminimum wage for workers in our state, and more.

TOP LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY
Senate Bill 1178: An Act Expanding Connecticut Paid Sick Days

In 2011, Connecticut became the first state in the nation to pass a paid sick days law. However, since then, our law has carved out more than 88% of our state’s workforce from accessing paid sick days. S.B. 1178 would have strengthened our existing paid sick days law to ensure all workers can access the short-term time away from work that they need, regardless of the size of their employer or their job title. The bill also included an inclusive definition of family structures and relationships by allowing workers to take paid sick days to care for their child of any age, spouse, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, or parent, as well as loved ones who were parental figures in their lives or like a child or vice versa. S.B. 1178 would also have extended access to Safe Days so workers could take time to care for a family member who experiences family violence or sexual assault.
**YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION: LEGISLATIVE SESSION 2023**

**Women's Wisdom Circles, Legislative Advocacy Workshops, and Testimony Writing Workshops**

Our Community Organizing Director, Jeniffer Perez Caraballo, facilitated four listening sessions called *Women’s Wisdom Circles* with sixty-seven women from across the state to inform our legislative advocacy work for women’s economic security and to strengthen deliberateness and cohesiveness between our Public Policy and Legal Education programs.

At the end of the sessions, 97% of women responded “Yes” when asked, “Do you feel like you can make policy change?”

Because of our donors, hundreds of people, community organizations, colleges, and schools utilized our updated [Legislative Change Toolkit](#) since its release. The Toolkit is packed with tips and information designed to inspire advocacy and organizing in your community before, during, and after the 2023 legislative session.

Our donors made it possible for CWEALF to host a [Legislative Advocacy Workshop](#) to demystify the legislative process. Attendees learned how the legislative process works, what policies CWEALF advocates for, how to organize your community to advocate for change, and how to use our [Legislative Change Toolkit](#).

We also held a [Testimony Writing Workshop](#) early in the session resulting in over 100 submitted testimonies in support of expanding Connecticut’s [paid sick days law](#). That is a 300% increase from the year before!

You sent more than 250 [letters to legislators](#) to support S.B.1178 to expand access to paid sick days in our state!
YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION: LEGISLATIVE SESSION 2023

Showing up with our partners

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our three Workers’ Equity Agenda Lobby Days at the State Capitol! Together with our community partners, we showed our strength in numbers and shared our personal stories about why we need access to paid sick days and other policies that promote economic security and well-being for working women.

On May 17th, CWEALF, our supporters, and thousands of people showed up to Rally for a Moral Budget!

As an active member of the Recovery For All CT coalition, we rallied to demand that Connecticut’s working families come first in the state budget.

CWEALF collaborated with our community partners, Connecticut Working Families Party, Connecticut AFL-CIO, and Make the Road CT to support the Workers’ Equity Agenda throughout the session. We believe predictable schedules, reliable incomes for tipped workers, and access to paid sick days should be basic standards for Connecticut workers.

Read the Connecticut Mirror op-ed by CWEALF’s Executive Director Janée Woods Weber, CT Working Families, and Connecticut AFL-CIO.
Both the Labor and Public Employees Committee and the Appropriations Committee passed S.B. 1178 out of their committees. The Senate also passed S.B. 1178 in May - but the bill did not receive any further action in the House of Representatives.

Although S.B. 1178 did not cross the finish line this year, CWEALF is extremely proud of the Paid Sick Days Coalition for all the hard work, dedication, and collaboration we collectively put into getting S.B. 1178 passed out of one chamber in the legislature. This was the first time in over a decade that a paid sick days bill was able to get this far, and thanks to your efforts, we will continue to build on this momentum for next year!

Save the Date:
She Leads Justice Birthday Party

THURSDAY
AUGUST 17

THE 224 ECOSPACE
224 FARMINGTON AVE.
HARTFORD, CT

Join us for birthday treats between 5:00 - 7:00 pm at our office for a casual celebration of the launch of our new name, She Leads Justice and the incorporation 50 years ago, on August 17, 1973!

More details to come!
ICYMI

If you missed our Winter Newsletter with our Volunteer Spotlight and Legal Education Program updates - check it out here!

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Meghan Dubois, Development and Communications Director
Jeniffer Perez Caraballo, Community Organizing Director
Nilda Rivera, Community Advocacy Manager
Nicole Sanclemente, Policy and Program Coordinator

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Angie Botero
Claire Chan
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