

Oklahoma Women's Coalition Newsletter

February 2011

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AN UPDATE:



The Oklahoma Womens Coalition celebrated its 2nd anniversary at the January Board Meeting and Planning session at the Coalition headquarters in Oklahoma City.

SAVE THE DATE!

Advocacy Day

Tuesday, April 12

Legislative Reception

Monday evening, April 11

Advocate for women and girls
at the State Capitol!

Join us for: Critical Issues,



Momentum!

The Oklahoma Women's Coalition is experiencing great momentum as we work to change the lives of women and girls!



- The election of Governor Mary Fallin is a significant boost for Oklahoma women – it shatters the glass ceiling and sets a phenomenal example for the younger generation. (We need to motivate more women to run for office – we only have 19 female legislators vs. 136 men, putting Oklahoma 49th in the U.S.)
- Our efforts to reduce the incarceration rate of women are paying off as we move into a legislative session where House Speaker Chris Steele has made this a priority.
- We've hired Jan Loftis, a highly-respected Legislative Liaison, to represent the Coalition at the State Capitol.
- We've grown! More than 500 have joined our efforts by making a donation and the numbers are growing daily.
- The Coalition's rapid growth has resulted in the Board approving the hiring of an Executive Director as soon as funds can be raised. You can help by making a donation at www.oklahomawomenscoalition.org

Don't forget: Oklahoma is the third worst state for women and girls. This has to change and the Oklahoma Women's Coalition is determined to lead the charge.

You can help. As the Coalition grows, our voice for women and girls is strengthened, so forward this newsletter. Join us for Advocacy Day on April 12, get to know your legislators, and spread the word about the Oklahoma Women's Coalition.

Together, we will build upon our momentum as we remove barriers that impede Oklahoma women and girls.

Warm regards,

Legislative Hot Topics, and
Advocacy Tips
More Information Coming
Soon!

**LEARN NOW
about the
2011 LEGISLATIVE
SESSION!**

The 2011 Oklahoma Legislative session began on Monday, February 7. Do you know the names of our legislative leaders? How does a bill make its way through session? What is the budget and appropriations process?

The Oklahoma Policy Institute (OK Policy) has answers to those questions and more. OK Policy provides timely and credible information regarding policy issues affecting the state. [Click here](#) to get an overview of the state legislative and budget process for 2011.

**HEART DISEASE
#1 Killer of
WOMEN**

The "heart" truth is heart disease is the leading cause of death among women in the United States. February is American Heart Month -- take time this month to get a physical exam and learn about heart disease prevention. The following are resources for heart health:

[The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

Donna

Donna Lawrence
Chair, Oklahoma Women's Coalition

LOFTIS SERVES AS LEGISLATIVE LIAISON



Jan Gilmore Loftis with Gilmore Communications is helping the Oklahoma Womens Coalition follow bills and other legislative matters this session. Loftis has more than 30 years of experience in the management of government relations, associations and political operations.

A graduate of Oklahoma City University, Loftis began her career at the State Capitol in 1979 as an assistant in the State Election Board. The early experience provided her a solid foundation of government affairs knowledge, which she has built on throughout her career. She later became the executive assistant to the President Pro Tempore of the Oklahoma State Senate for five years, followed by serving as legislative liaison and senior administrative officer in the executive branch for a state agency and the office of the Lieutenant Governor. In 1995, Loftis founded Gilmore Communications, LLC.

Look for legislative updates from Jan Loftis in future newsletters and e-mail alerts.

How You Can Help the Coalition!

You've heard the statistics: We are in the Top 5 for violence against women, incarceration, poor health, low education levels, births to single mothers, poverty, and much more. The Oklahoma Women's Coalition is determined to initiate positive change.

Generous Oklahomans throughout the state, including Coalition board members and community leaders are opening up their homes to host a series of fundraising efforts to support the Coalition's efforts. One of the events was recently held in Tulsa at the home of Sharon King Davis, a long-time champion of causes for women and girls. Tulsan Nancy McDonald, a

The American Heart Association

The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease

Thank you!

The following Community Partners have made a significant impact on the work of the Oklahoma Women's Coalition through a major donation.

Additional Community Partners are listed on the website.



Oklahoma Women's Foundation

well-known community leader, motivated the group to become actively involved in issues of which they are passionate.



(From left to right, Alison Anthony, Nancy McDonald, Sharon King-Davis, and Donna Lawrence)

Twenty events are being planned throughout the state this spring. If you would like to be a host or co-host, contact the Coalition office at: info@oklahomawomenscoalition.org or 405.286.0356. Businesses statewide are also joining our efforts as community partners.

Our goal is to raise \$100,000 to enhance communication with legislators, our members, and other supporters through our website, action alerts, and social media. This level of support will allow us to hire an Executive Director who will guide our efforts as we truly become ONE VOICE for Oklahoma women.

DONATE NOW – You can donate today by visiting the website at www.oklahomawomenscoalition.org

**AN UPDATE:
Oklahoma Women's Coalition Issues Committee on Incarceration
by Committee Chair, Pam Richardson**

The Coalition is diligently supporting efforts to put the Oklahoma SIS Public Agenda Action Plan to work. The Coalition is a participating member of an alliance of advocacy associations called Count the Costs (www.countthecosts.com). The following is an update on the recent and upcoming activities, and current resources on efforts to reduce the rate of incarcerated women in the state.

In January, a group of State Legislative and Department of Corrections leaders attended the Southwest Legislative Branch Council of State Governments Conference in Texas. Highlights of best-practice methodologies were presented at the conference. Texas has experienced significant reductions in prison population growth coupled with reductions in crime. Many of its initiatives are outlined and complimentary to the Oklahoma SIS Public Agenda Action Plan.

President Pro Tempore Brian Bingman and House Speaker Kris Steele along with other organizations will meet in February to explore **Effective Criminal Justice Strategies**. Speakers at the event include the following people: Rep. Jerry Madden (R-Texas) will present examples of the effective 2007 criminal justice reform in Texas which he initiated; Dr. Steve Aos - with the Washington State Institute for Public Policy will present a cost-benefit analysis tool which he developed to assist policymakers in assessing the impact of specific reforms on corrections costs and crime; and Michael Thompson, Director of the Council of States Governments Justice Center, will present state-specific policies to improve criminal justice systems that he has developed. Women in Recovery, a successful Tulsa-based alternative program to incarceration, will also present a panel of women to explain their journeys. Your Coalition will provide an update on this event via newsletter and e-mail.

A national initiative, **The Right on Crime Campaign**, is focused on criminal justice reform to include reductions in prison costs while ensuring that public safety is not compromised. The Right on Crime Campaign looks at the return on the State's investment in the criminal justice system. Taxpayers have watched as the cost to incarcerate people nationwide has grown by 400% without corresponding reductions in crime. You can sign up for the Right on Crime newsletter at www.rightoncrime.com in order to stay informed of criminal justice reform strategies and efforts nationwide.

Thanks to our State Legislative Leadership, an application to the Justice Reinvestment Project of the Council of State Governments has been successfully submitted for the State of Oklahoma. More information on bringing the Right on Crime Campaign leadership to Oklahoma and the Justice Reinvestment Project will be forthcoming this spring.



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If you'd like to learn more about the Coalition's Issues Committee on Incarceration, contact Pam Richardson at prichardson@resonancetulsa.org.

Please visit our website at www.OklahomaWomensCoalition.org.
[Donate to our cause.](#)