



Newsletter

April 2010

ADVOCACY DAY 2010

Our 2010 Day at the Capitol on March 2 drew more than 150 participants from across Oklahoma. Representative Lee Denney and Secretary of State Susan Savage did a wonderful job preparing us for visits with legislators. Our Advocacy Committee chair, Jan Peery and Amy Santee with the George Kaiser Family Foundation gave clear, relevant explanations of our two areas of 2010 legislative focus:

* **Passage of HB2998 to reduce the number of women incarcerated in Oklahoma**

* **Maintain state funding for domestic violence and sexual assault programs**

The legislative feedback we've received confirms the time spent at the State Capitol had an important positive impact.



The day culminated with the top gubernatorial candidates -- **Congresswoman Mary Fallin, Lt. Governor Jari Askins, Attorney General Drew Edmondson and State Senator Randy Brogdon** -- delivering enlightening presentations on how, if elected Governor, they will work to improve the conditions of women in Oklahoma. **Thank you to all who attended!**

“Get to Know your Legislator!”

State Representative Lee Denney knows what a difference a personal relationship can make. In fact, she says the advice of just one or two individuals who are knowledgeable on a subject can influence her vote in the Oklahoma House of Representatives. She shared her perspective at the Oklahoma Women's Coalition's Advocacy Day on March 2.



“Meet your legislator at the grassroots level,” Denney explained. “Introduce yourself every time you see them so they will remember who you are when you call them at the Capitol.”

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Coalition Members,

I'm pleased to report that the Coalition continues to grow and thrive due to our advocacy efforts, special events, and improved communication with members. Advocacy Day was a great success and we thank all those who attended, in addition to those volunteers who planned the day's events.

We are looking forward now to two upcoming events. **The Incarceration Summit is set for April 30 and the Coalition's Annual Business Meeting and Issues Forum will be held on June 24.** These events are great opportunities to become involved in the work of the Coalition.

The Coalition's new website has been launched at www.oklahomawomenscoalition.org -- you'll find legislative priorities, advocacy tips, Coalition events, links to find your legislators, and much more.

Membership continues to grow and our fundraising committee is working hard to assure we can be effective over the coming year. If you haven't already become a financial supporter, please consider making a donation to help us help Oklahoma women.

Kind regards,
Jean Warner, Ph.D.
Coalition Chair

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

Oklahoma Women's Coalition Issues

PILOT PROGRAM FOR INCARCERATED FEMALE OFFENDERS

Allows the Department of Corrections to create pilot programs to reduce the high rate of female incarceration. The diversion and reentry pilot programs will help provide support services, employment opportunities and other needed resources for female offenders and their children.



Denney has served in the State House of Representatives since 2004.

Representative Denney's other tips for building legislative relationships include the following:

- Use email. Be sure to tell them where you are from – which part of their district.
- Don't send a group email. Put it in your own words and make it short.
- Visit your legislators:
 - Call their assistant to let them know you are coming that day.
 - Stop by the office to see if you can visit with them.
 - You can request that they come off the floor of the House or Senate (sometimes they can, other times they may not).
 - Ask their assistant to put you on their email list.

Representative Denney closed her remarks by challenging those in attendance to become involved.

"We need more women in the legislature, so think about running for office," Denney said. "With your work in the grassroots level, we can flip the statistics about Oklahoma women!"

***Annual Meeting and
Issues Forum***

***Thursday, June 24
Francis Tuttle Technology Center - OKC
- All Coalition Members Are Invited -
Advocacy Update/Board & Officer Elections
Issues Briefings***

More details coming soon!

Incarceration of Oklahoma Women:

Solutions Initiative Summit

Friday, April 30 at 8:30-2:00

Okla. National Guard Training Institute, 6500 N. Kelley – OKC

Purpose: To find solutions for prevention, intervention and diversion, and recidivism and reentry with the overall goal to lower the incarceration rate of Oklahoma women. The Summit will conclude with adoption of a statewide action plan that will include specific steps to be accomplished at the local and state levels.

Key participants: Governor Brad Henry, Attorney General Drew Edmondson, Congresswoman Mary Fallin, Lieutenant Governor Jari Askins, Senate Pro Tempore Glenn Coffee, and Speaker-Elect Kris Steele and other statewide leaders

Hosted by the Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women, the Oklahoma Women's Coalition, and the Oklahoma Department of Corrections.

House Bill 2998 by Steele-R, Shawnee, passed out of the Senate Appropriations & Budget Committee. The bill is now awaiting a hearing on the Senate Floor, where it must be advanced by Thursday, April 22.

FUNDING FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES

We are encouraged that this issue may be addressed positively by the legislature; however, we may not know more definite details until near the end of the session in late April or early May. The Coalition is working with the domestic violence advocacy community on this issue, as well, so stay tuned.

GRASSROOTS CONTACTS

At some time in the near future, you may receive an "ACTION ALERT" or a call to action from the Coalition. We may need to activate our grassroots efforts (that's you!) and ask you to make urgent and timely calls to your legislators on these and other issues. So, watch your emails.

IN THE MEANTIME...WHAT CAN YOU DO?

*Reach out to your legislator, if you have not done so this session. **Give your House member a call at (405) 521-2711 – and your Senator can be reached at (405) 524-0126.** Introduce yourself. Let them know that you're interested and support the issues noted above and that you would like their support, as well. We will keep you posted on any developments related to these and any other legislative issues that may arise this session.*

Mother's Day is Sunday, May 9th!

*Give a gift in honor of or in memory of your mother
or that special woman in your life by visiting our website!*

*Go to www.oklahomawomenscoalition.org
and click Donate Now, Gift Information.*

Find registration information at www.oklahomasis.com.
Registration is \$35 and seating is limited.

Leading up to our Oklahoma Solutions Initiative Summit (S.I.S.) on April 30, a 45-member S.I.S. Blue Ribbon Committee is identifying and refining possible goals and strategies to be included in a "Public Action Plan to Reduce the Rate of Women Incarcerated in Oklahoma." You are welcome to provide input. Review the current strategies paper at <http://oklahomasis.com/strategies/>. Then submit your comments and suggestions to oksiscomments@gmail.com.



Oklahoma Women's Coalition
6301 N. Western, Suite 120
Oklahoma City, OK 73118
Telephone: 405.286.0356
Email: info@oklahomawomenscoalition.org

Please visit our website at www.oklahomawomenscoalition.org