

THE ISSUES

How does NCJW determine which issues to address?

NCJW's resolutions guide the organization's actions. The delegate body has an opportunity to vote on the resolutions at the national convention every three years.

A section may not take a position contrary to an NCJW resolution or advocate on an issue on which NCJW has no position.

What are our 2017-2018 priorities?

With the limited time that we have, we cannot advocate on every issue of concern. In order to have the greatest impact some timely issues have been identified as our advocacy focus. These issues tie in with NCJW's advocacy initiatives and may involve legislation that is moving through Congress. The four main priorities are:

- Reproductive Health, Rights & Justice
- Federal Courts
- Civic Engagement (Voting, Elections)
- Israel

What else are we working on?

- Civil Rights
- Sex Trafficking
- Gun Violence Prevention
- Economic Justice
- Religious Freedom
- Human Needs
- Immigration & Refugees
- Gender-based & Sexual Violence

How do sections keep current on critical issues?

NCJW State Policy Advocacy Chairs (SPAs), appointed by the NCJW President, coordinate NCJW advocacy activities in their states on national and state issues and work to educate and mobilize sections and members. SPAs coordinate local advocacy actions. Section involvement in a community may identify the need for legislative or administrative change.

What other resources does NCJW provide to members?

The [NCJW Action Center](#) provides frequent action emailed alerts and a direct, quick and easy way to express views to decision makers in the US and elsewhere. Sign-up at ncjw.org.

NCJW's [website](#), [Facebook](#) page, and [Twitter](#) account has timely information about issues of concern to NCJW, advocacy messages to decision makers, section highlights, and the latest information on NCJW programs, news, press releases, and initiatives.

Can NCJW or its sections endorse or oppose a political candidate or political party?

No. NCJW is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit organization, which limits some of the political activities in which the organization can engage. NCJW sections and members representing NCJW cannot endorse a candidate or party. A member's role in NCJW must be completely distinct from any personal activity endorsing, supporting, or promoting a candidate or party.

ADVOCACY SKILLS

What is advocacy?

Persuasion...problem solving...exerting influence...speaking out for ourselves and others. Advocacy is an important way to make social change.

Who can advocate?

Anyone and everyone who has an informed opinion! In order to be effective, an advocate has to have some basic information but does not need to be an expert. Our congressional leaders want, and need, to hear from their constituents. Always remember that, through your votes, constituents can and do determine whether a legislator or other office holder will keep his or her job — a fact that elected officials know very well.

Why do NCJW members advocate?

As citizens in a democratic society, we have an obligation to be involved in our community through active participation in the governmental process. As NCJW advocates, we speak out in order to make progressive social change. We advocate on behalf of vulnerable members of society, including children, women, and families. We speak in defense of our rights and liberties. We speak on issues of concern to the American Jewish community and for the security of Jews worldwide. As Jews, we have a moral obligation to “repair the world” or practice “*tikkun olam*.”

What makes NCJW's efforts unique?

Decision makers listen to us...

- because for over 125 years, NCJW has been at the forefront of social change
- because our Jewish values inspire us to advocate on behalf of all women, children, and families
- because our membership represents 30 states and the District of Columbia
- because we have a network of State Policy Advocacy (SPA) representing us in almost 20 states
- because our professionally staffed Washington office represents us on our issues on a daily basis
- because our grassroots community action experience enables us to see and document the needs in our communities in a non-partisan manner
- because our advocacy is comprehensive: federal, state, and local

State Policy Advocacy Chair (SPA) — Leaders appointed by the NCJW President each triennium to be NCJW's lead advocate in the state and to coordinate NCJW advocacy activities on federal and state issues. Washington builds on local NCJW work and enhances it at the national level. Sections work locally to improve the lives of women, children, and families, and have first-hand experience and knowledge of the realities facing people at home. This process forms the basis of compelling advocacy for systemic social change. By coming together to collaborate, network, and hone our advocacy skills, advocates gain deeper knowledge and skills to effect social change on the local, state, and federal levels.

The more people we educate and engage around our issues, the more influence and power we have to bring about social justice for women, children, and families. Our members can help spread the word about our work and inspire others to speak out by sharing what they learn, see, and experience at general meetings, awareness events and through our social media outlets.

A FAITH IN THE FUTURE.

A BELIEF IN ACTION.^R