

2023-2024 proposed BPW/FL Public Policy Platform

Introduction:

Since the inception of BPW/FL in 1919, BPW/FL has always supported women's rights. BPW/FL continues to support the ERA as a basic foundation of our Public Policy Platform, even as we understand that passing the ERA grows more difficult with the passage of time. BPW/FL firmly believes that equality of rights under the law should not be abridged or denied by the United States or by any state on account of sex, and the rights of women require constant vigilance.

Item 1: Economic Equity, Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency

BPW/FL supports public policies that:

- ensure pay equity and equal employment opportunities for all women
- promote opportunities for women-owned businesses
- promote affordable, quality dependent care
- promote Social Security and retirement reform options benefiting women
- guarantee a workplace free from harassment and discrimination

Item 2: Health Care

BPW/FL supports public policies that:

- support the expansion of affordable care, including Medicaid, in Florida
- support funding and initiatives that cover women's health care needs
- ensure women's access to all health care and family planning needs, including full access to all forms of reproductive health services, education, and prescriptions

Item 3: Voting Rights and Access

BPW/FL supports public policies that:

- promote free and fair elections
- are aimed at expanding voters' access to the polls
- are designed to protect the right of all American citizens to vote in fairly drawn legislative districts

Talking Points

BPW/FL is committed to ensuring that women are afforded the same freedoms, benefits, and protections from discrimination as all other protected classes in the U.S. Constitution. For over four decades, since the passage of the Equal Pay Act and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, women continue to earn a lower wage than men for equal work. Women in Florida rank 36th nationally in employment and earnings.¹ Nationally, women on average continue to earn substantially less than men do for similar work, with the differential being greater for various segments of the female population. Registered voters continue to overwhelmingly support public policies that would provide women more tools to achieve fair pay in the workplace. BPW/FL continues supporting efforts to secure equal pay legislation. In the U.S., 41% of all businesses are women-owned and they employ more than 10.8 million workers.² Childcare remains out of financial reach for many families where prices per child range from 8% to 19% of median family income.³ BPW/FL supports efforts to provide the infrastructure at an affordable cost. We support strengthening retirement benefits and programs, including pension improvements and protecting Social Security and Medicare from privatization. BPW/FL believes that all workplaces should be free from harassment and discrimination since women's economic equity is dependent on a safe environment in which to work productively.

Good health is also crucial to the ability to reach pay equity. The Affordable Care Act provides for expanded access to the healthcare system. BPW/FL supports public policy funding and initiatives for women's health care with special emphasis on detection, treatment and recovery for heart disease and cancer, especially breast cancer.⁴ Recognizing that working women and their families have the largest need for affordable and accessible health care and that Florida has the fourth-highest uninsured rate in the country⁵, we support the expansion of Medicaid to cover the uninsured gap between those who already qualify for Medicaid and those who qualify for subsidies under the Affordable Care Act.

To ensure women's rights to economic equality and to affordable and accessible health care, we absolutely must have free and fair elections, which are the foundation of our democracy. Therefore, BPW/FL supports public policies to promote the integrity of, and access to, elections via the expansion of early voting and online voter registration. We oppose any public policies designed to restrict or dilute voting access for the members of any segment of the population, whether the discrimination is based on race, gender, or disability.

¹ Florida Policy Institute, <https://www.floridapolicy.org/posts/florida-ranks-36th-on-economic-status-of-women-index>

² National Women's Business Council, <https://www.nwbc.gov/annual-reports/2022/>

³ Dept. of Labor Women's Bureau, https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WB/NDCP/WB_IssueBrief-NDCP-final.pdf

⁴ Centers for Disease Control, <https://www.cdc.gov/women/lcod/2018/all-races-origins/index.htm>

American Cancer Society, <https://www.cdc.gov/women/lcod/2018/all-races-origins/index.htm>

⁵ Kaiser Family Foundation Health Insurance Coverage of the Total Population