

# Z District 5 – Legislative Awareness & Advocacy

Amy F. Grubbe, Lt. Governor, Zonta Club of Sandusky Area

Volume No. 1 – Issue 2

January 2007

*Advocacy is the expression of support for or opposition to a cause, argument or proposal.*

*Advocacy may include influencing laws, legislation or attitudes.*

One of Zonta International's (ZI) 2006-08 Biennial Goals is to produce advocacy position papers defining where we – as Zontians – stand on at least two (23) priority issues. By providing such position papers, it is ZI's hope that Clubs and/or Districts will find it easier to become more actively involved in advocacy.

ZI is suggesting these position papers may be used for the following purposes:

- Writing to our local governments/lawmakers for advocacy purposes;
- Promoting the work of Zonta to prospective members, within our communities, and keeping informed of our mutually beneficial activities other organizations with which Zonta is partnering efforts.

As we go to print with this second edition of our Legislative Awareness & Advocacy newsletter, the ZI Board and other Zonta leaders are reviewing and commenting on our first position paper that focuses on trafficking of women – a form of violence against women. A Resolution on trafficking was adopted at the 56<sup>th</sup> ZI Convention held in Gothenburg, Sweden July 2002. ZI has promoted the Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons – especially women and children. I have included the full text of the Resolution below for your background information. Since this will be our first position

paper, ZI is regarding this project a “pilot program” to ensure we achieve a final document that will satisfy Zontians' expectations once an issue is identified as meeting our definition of advocacy when influencing laws, legislation or attitudes that may advance the status of women. As soon as the papers are finalized and made available, you will receive the information in a timely manner for your further follow up and action.

## **ZI Resolution on Trafficking**

Resolution to promote the Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Annex II supplementing UN document A/RES/55/25).

Both documents were adopted by the UN General Assembly in November 2000.

### **The purposes of the Protocol are:**

- a. To prevent and combat trafficking in persons, paying particular attention to women and children;
- b. To protect and assist the victims of such trafficking, with full respect for their human rights; and
- c. To promote cooperation among State Parties in order to meet those objectives.

**WHEREAS:** Zonta International Objects include “to improve the legal, political, economic, education, health, and professional status of women” and “to promote justice and universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms”.

**Be it resolved therefore that:**

Zonta International supports ratification of the Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, **and encourages Zonta Clubs and Zontians to:**

1. Prepare for effective advocacy by informing themselves on the content of the Protocol;
2. Advocate for their governments to ratify the Protocol;
3. Cooperate with other NGOs in monitoring the actions of their governments for the implementation of the Protocol;
4. Advocate to discourage demand and to increase awareness, in particular of parents and guardians, of education, health and law enforcement officials, and of potential victims; and
5. In all actions, emphasize the importance of serious efforts to PREVENT trafficking.

**LETTERS TO REMEMBER**

People who think our representatives pay little or no attention to constituent mail are wrong! Concise, well thought out personal letters are one of the most effective ways we have of influencing our representatives. However, lawmakers – whether at the local level, state level or Congressional level – receive hundreds of letters and e-mails every day. Whether you choose to use snail mail or e-mail, here are some tips that will help your letter have impact and achieve the results you want taken. If you are going to take the time to write to your lawmakers, let's make sure it is a letter they will remember!

**Think Locally**

It is usually best to send letters to the lawmakers representing your local, state or Congressional district or state. **Your** vote helps elect them – or not elect them – and that fact alone carries a lot of

weight. It also helps personalize your letter. Sending the same “cookie-cutter” message to every lawmaker may grab attention due to sheer volume, but rarely much consideration. To find your representatives’ addresses and other contact information, check out your local newspaper. Contact information for your representatives is usually printed on a regular basis.

**K.I.S.S. – Keep It Simple and Short**

- Your letter should address a single topic or issue – typed, one-page letters are best.
- Say why you are writing.
- Say who you are – list your “credentials” and/or any personal experience relating to the topic/issue.
- Provide detail – be factual, not emotional or gushy; provide specific rather than general information about how the topic/issue affects you and others; include specific examples or evidence supporting your position.
- If a certain bill is involved, cite the correct title or number of the bill whenever possible.
- Close by requesting the action you want taken – a vote for or against a bill or a change in general policy.
- If you want a response, tell your representative you want him/her to respond back to you. You should always include your full name, address and phone number in any correspondence – even when using e-mail.
- ***The best letters are courteous and to the point – thank the representative for taking the time to read your letter.***