

# 2022 Legislative Report

**Our Mission:** CWEALF is a statewide, nonprofit organization that advocates for and empowers women and girls in Connecticut, especially those who are under-resourced or marginalized. Our work supports women and girls who identify as cisgender and transgender, and non-binary individuals, as well as people of all marginalized gender identities systemically and historically oppressed by those in power.

The 2022 legislative session convened on February 9 and adjourned on May 4. This session, you raised your voice for legislation to provide hourly workers with fair and predictable schedules, strengthen our state's paid sick days law, ensure access to menstrual products, and more. While the legislative session may be over, the work has just begun!

We are committed to advocating for policy change that is explicitly anti-racist and anti-sexist, with a justice and reparations lens - and we recognize that transformative change takes time and persistence. As we continue to strive for our shared goal of equity, freedom, and justice for all Connecticut residents, we must be deliberate in recognizing and incorporating the needs, wisdom and lived experiences of women, specifically women of color, into all of our policy efforts and decisions.

## Key Terms:

**H.B.** - House Bill

**S.B.** - Senate Bill

**P.A.** - Public Act (bill that passed & is signed by the Governor into law!)



LABOR COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING  
Testimony on proposed legislation that would expand  
paid sick leave and domestic worker coverage

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## SUPPORT WOMEN, WORKERS AND FAMILIES

**S.B. 312: An Act Concerning the Expansion of Connecticut Paid Sick Days** was one of our top priorities for this year's legislative session. This bill would have strengthened our existing paid sick days law to make sure all workers can access the short term time away from work that they need, regardless of the size of their employer or their job title. The bill also included an inclusive definition of family structures and relationships by allowing workers to take paid sick days to care for a child of any age, as well as their chosen family. The bill was voted out of the Labor and Public Employees Committee but did not receive any further action.

Along with S.B. 312, we advocated for the passage of **S.B. 422: An Act Concerning the Essential Workers COVID-19 Assistance Program** to provide up to 80 hours of paid sick leave for essential workers who need to take unpaid time off from work due to COVID-19 related reasons. Though S.B. 422 did not pass, the [state budget](#) made important changes to the Essential Workers COVID-19 Assistance Program to expand eligibility to the fund to more essential workers, such as domestic workers, and to extend the timeline to apply for benefits. For more information about the Essential Workers COVID-19 Assistance Program, [click here](#).

The state budget adopted by lawmakers also allocates \$30 million to provide pandemic pay, or one-time lump sum payments, to certain private sector essential workers.

CWEALF is an active member of the [Fair Work Week Coalition](#) and supported legislation to provide a fair and stable work week to hourly workers, who are disproportionately women and people of color. **H.B. 5353: An Act Concerning a Fair Week Work Schedule** tackled the real life consequences of unpredictable schedules for hourly workers and their families, including the inability to access reliable child care, budget and pay bills, or attend routine doctors appointments. H.B. 5353 was passed out of the Labor Committee but did not receive further action.



This session, we supported the work of the [Child Care for Connecticut's Future Coalition](#) and several bills to improve our state's [child care system](#). We applaud the passage of **S.B. 1: An Act Concerning Mental and Physical Health Services in Schools**, which includes stabilization grants to child care providers to support higher compensation and provides additional funding for infant-toddler slots.

CWEALF also [testified](#) in support of **S.B. 291: An Act Concerning Certain Protections for Group and Family Child Care Homes**, which would strengthen housing and zoning protections for family and group child care. Without these protections home-based child care providers struggle to become licensed, remain open, and expand. However, the bill unfortunately was not called for a vote.

The state budget also allocates over \$100 million to support Connecticut's child care system. This includes significant investments in stabilization grants to the child care industry and increased funding for Care 4 Kids to support low income families to receive the care that they need.

## **BUILD A MORE EQUITABLE ECONOMY**

As members of [Recovery For All](#), we support the Coalition's efforts to create greater transparency and build equity into our state's current tax structure. The [state budget](#) includes many of the [Coalition's priorities](#) to support working families, including a one year expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to 41.5% of the federal Earned Income Tax Credit, which amounts to about \$300 per household for those making less than roughly \$58,000 per year. The state budget also creates a one year, \$250 per child tax credit for middle and low income families.



We also [testified](#) in support of **S.B. 189: An Act Prohibiting Sex or Gender-Based Differential Pricing for Substantially Similar Goods or Services**, a key step towards combatting the [gender wage gap](#) which would have taken steps to limit gender-based

pricing in our state and put money back into the pockets of women. The bill was not called for a vote in the General Law Committee.

We know that student loan forgiveness is a key solution to closing the gender wage gap, especially for women of color who hold the majority of student loan debt in our country. This year, we supported [H.B. 5130: An Act Concerning Student Loan Debt Forgiveness for Nonprofit Employees](#) and [S.B. 250: An Act Concerning Student Loan Debt Reimbursement for Connecticut Residents Who Graduated from a State University](#). However, neither bill passed.

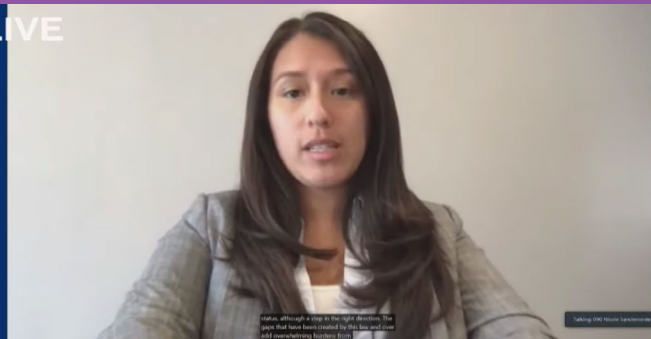
## ENSURE BASIC NEEDS ARE MET FOR ALL

Advancing health and reproductive equity and justice requires supporting legislation that ensures all Connecticut residents have access to quality and affordable health care - including abortion - regardless of gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, [immigration status](#), race, ethnicity, income, or ability. This also includes access to responsive and comprehensive mental health care that is affordable and culturally appropriate.

At a time when the Supreme Court seems poised to overturn nearly 50 years of precedent and gut the protections of *Roe v. Wade*, we also must protect those who seek abortion care and providers assisting patients in accessing abortion. CWEALF is a proud member of the Coalition for Choice and this year we applauded the passage of [P.A. 22-19: An Act Concerning Protections for Persons Receiving and Providing Reproductive Health Care Services in the State](#), which will protect providers and patients seeking abortion care in Connecticut who might be traveling here from other states that have outlawed abortion.

P.A. 22-19 also incorporates language from [H.B. 5261: An Act Increasing Access to Reproductive Health Care](#), which passed out of the Public Health Committee and removes unnecessary barriers that prevent qualified Advanced Practice Clinicians (APCs) from providing abortion in our state.

LIVE

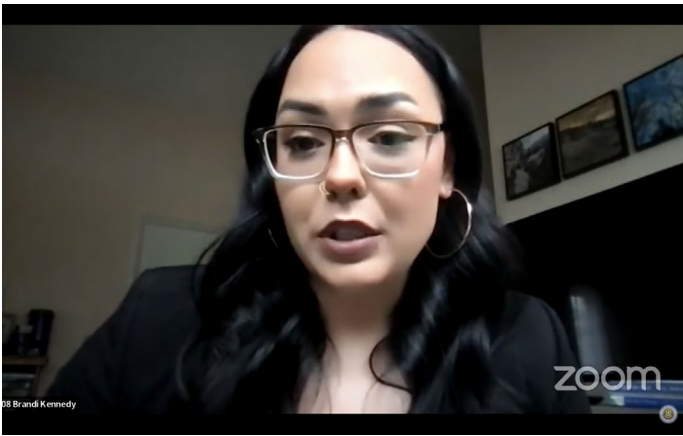


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CWEALF is also a member of the Doulas4CT Coalition. This year, the Coalition advocated for the passage of **H.B. 5500: An Act Concerning the Department of Public Health’s Recommendations Regarding Various Revisions to the Public Health Statutes**, which successfully passed both chambers and is on the way to the Governor’s desk to be signed into law. A component of H.B. 5500 establishes a Doula Advisory

Committee, which will allow the profession to help the state define how to build core standards to certify doulas.

We also supported the leadership of [YWCA Hartford](#) in their efforts to pass **S.B. 448: An Act Concerning the Delivery of Health Care and Mental Health Care Services to Inmates of Correctional Institutions**, which shed light on the need for quality health care services through the Department of Corrections for individuals who are incarcerated.

As members of the [HUSKY for Immigrants Coalition](#), we advocated for **S.B. 284: An Act Increasing the Age from Eight to Eighteen Years for an Income-Eligible Person to Obtain Medical Assistance Regardless of Immigration Status**. While S.B. 284 was not advanced by the Human Services Committee, the state budget extended Medicaid eligibility to children who are undocumented up to the age of 12 and once enrolled, those children will remain eligible for Medicaid coverage until age 19.

This year, we also joined the Menstrual Equity Coalition and [advocated with our partners](#) for the passage of **H.B. 5272: An Act Concerning Menstrual Products**. While the bill did not cross the finish line, the state budget allocates \$2 million for free menstrual products in public schools, colleges and universities, shelters and correctional facilities.

We also applaud the passage of **S.B. 5: An Act Concerning Online Dating Operators, Online Child Grooming and Harassment, Domestic Violence Training and Protections for Victims of**

The poster features the Facebook LIVE logo in the top left and the CWEALF logo in the top right. The main title is "WOMEN CHANGING CONNECTICUT" with the subtitle "A CWEALF FACEBOOK LIVE SERIES". Below the title, it says "WITH" and shows two circular headshots. The first is Janée Woods Weber, Executive Director of CWEALF. The second is Catherine John, Program Coordinator at The Diaper Bank of Connecticut. At the bottom, a purple banner contains a calendar icon and the text "THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 2022 AT NOON".

**Family Violence and Domestic Violence**, which provides critical funding for domestic violence child and family advocates, creates anti-discrimination protections for victims of domestic and family violence in employment, housing, public accommodations and credit transactions and requires state employees to be trained on domestic violence.

We also supported **H.B. 5472: An Act Concerning Sexual Assault and the Absence of Consent** to codify an explicit definition of consent in state statutes. While the bill passed the House, it was not called for a vote in the Senate.



Housing is a human right and is critical to women’s economic security. This session, we testified in support of **H.B. 5208: An Act Concerning Housing Opportunities for Justice-Impacted Persons**, which addresses a discriminating system that will allow formerly incarcerated residents the right to thrive, the right to avoid recidivism and safely live in our communities. We also supported **H.B. 5233: An Act Concerning Evictions for Cause** to require housing providers to have a substantiated cause for evictions, which is imperative for women,

especially women of color, who face intersecting discriminatory practices on a daily basis and serves as an opportunity for Connecticut to begin to address one of the many barriers inhibiting women from self-sufficiency. Unfortunately, neither bill passed.

## WHAT’S NEXT?

➔ Learn more about our and our partners’ advocacy efforts this session by watching our Women Changing Connecticut Facebook Live series

➔ Check out the Legislative Advocacy page on our website to read the written testimony we submitted this session on numerous issues

➔ Sign up for CWEALF’s e-news to stay connected

➔ Become a monthly donor to support our work

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