



Resolution: Regarding the critical importance of continuing to promote civil discourse

Introduced: November 2017

WHEREAS, the National Foundation for Women Legislators (NFWL) has established that political discourse has become increasingly disparaging, voters are frustrated, and there has been a dramatic shift away from bipartisan collaboration that pervades national politics.

WHEREAS, informed by research from The National Institute for Civil Discourse and enriched by our partnership with the State Legislative Leaders Foundation, NFWL has established that participating in democracy requires knowing each other, and recognizes that scheduling formal and informal events as a way to encourage friendships across the aisle is critical.

WHEREAS, the tone of campaigns has an outsized impact. Lawmakers take great note of their often negative campaign experience, and will ascribe those characteristics to the opposing party, resulting in a sentiment that extends accordingly in the legislature. NFWL notes that a way to combat the lingering campaign negativity, it is important to host bipartisan social or orientation events between the end of elections and the beginning of the session to create positive relationships.

WHEREAS, legislative leaders are crucial. Their example, in modeling civil and collaborative behavior in their chamber, or opposing it, will have great influence. By leading by example, NFWL women will raise all boats.

WHEREAS, NFWL recognizes that outside forces are constantly introducing incivility to elected offices. Constituents — both friendly and opposing — are more and more polarized in their thinking. Lobbyists and special interest groups can have forceful expectations and media outlets quickly amplify events and actions. NFWL recognizes it is difficult to maintain civility in troubling times.

WHEREAS, a public demand for civil discourse and a government that works in the best interests of the country as a whole. Your public office has to actively plant civility. NFWL commits to make it a priority to cultivate and protect it.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that members of the National Foundation for Women Legislators commit to

- (1) lead by example to act as models of civility;
- (2) engage in opportunities to understand those with different point of views;
- (3) promote civility in political discourse by speaking the truth and acting with integrity.