



Advocacy Update

Sent February 27, 2013

Sequestration Update

The biggest update from Washington DC this week is the upcoming sequestration – the automatic spending cuts that will go into effect on March 1 should Congress not agree to a budget deal. By way of background, sequestration was designed to put pressure on Congress to reach an agreement on deficit reduction. Congress gave itself two years to decide how to cut the federal deficit by \$1.2 trillion over 10 years. To give themselves some incentive, \$1.2 trillion in automatic, across-the-board federal spending cuts would go into effect should they not reach a deal in time. The original deadline had been at the end of 2012, but with some legislative maneuvering they pushed it back to March 1, which is now upon us!

Should sequestration go into effect, it will impact many programs that are essential to achieving the policy ends WRJ hopes to reach. The important Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (known as “WIC”), for example, is not immune to extreme cuts. Neither are mental health programs that could play an important role in our gun violence prevention initiatives. Protecting these programs is crucial – and could come down to the advocacy efforts taking place over the next week. Write your member of Congress urging them to fight for the programs we care about in this round of budget negotiations, and encourage those in your congregations and sisterhoods to do the same.

Immigration Reform

In addition to the sequester, the other hot legislative topic of the month is immigration reform. Since the November 2012 election, members of Congress and the Obama Administration have renewed their commitment to passing immigration reform this year, and have even laid out blueprints for what a potential piece of legislation could look like.

WRJ has resolution after resolution on the importance of passing comprehensive immigration reform. The time now is to act. There are many ways of becoming involved in this effort. You can send a letter to your member of Congress. You can connect with students who would be affected by the DREAM Act and invite them to come speak to your sisterhood. You can use a special immigration-themed insert or Haggadah at your Passover seder.

WRJ at NFTY Convention

A few weeks ago, we gave you information about how to watch parts of NFTY convention from home. This week, we're happy to share a reflection on WRJ's participation in the convention! The full text can be found on the WRJ blog:

“I shared a snapshot of 100 years of WRJ accomplishments: building buildings, supporting Israel, donating the most scholarship funds to HUC-JIR, and publishing *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*. And, most importantly, I shared that it was the women who insisted on the creation of NFTY: the North American Federation of Temple Youth; that WRJ pressed our movement's male leaders until NFTY became a reality. I asked them if they knew that WRJ was NFTY's only financial resource for almost 20 years. And I said, “We are SO proud of you NFTY. You have ALWAYS been and will continue to be a priority for WRJ.”

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