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Below is an abbreviated bulleted summary of the remarks and comments made during a South Carolina statewide summit held on February 27th. This report does not attempt to reflect verbatim comments or responses and should not be interpreted as such. Further, there were speakers and comments that were political or editorial in nature. Accordingly, this report should be read in that context. Again, the League of Women Voters - Charleston Area neither endorses nor sanctions the organizations sponsoring the conference nor the views of individual speakers.

## SOUTH CAROLINA STATE OF WOMEN LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT

South Carolina State of  
**Women**  
Best Practices for Improving Women's Lives

Event to be held at the following time, date, and location:

Monday, February 27, 2017 from 10:30 AM to 6:00 PM (EST)

**Hilton Columbia Center Hotel**  
924 Senate Street  
Columbia, SC 29201

**Observer: Kirsten Abrahamson** (supported by Barbara Griffin)

### Introduction - Vickie Ringer, Planned Parenthood (PP)

- PP has often assembled a national conference but this time has provided \$ to states to do it locally

**Charting the Course for Change – A Report on the Status of Women in SC – 2015 Report provided (not yet received at time of posting Julie Hussey, SC Center for Women (also SC LWV president)**

- Issues inter-connected and inter-related
  - Economic Security (including Education)

- Median income for women \$31,518
- Median income for men \$41,381
- Problem with added income is that it is spent on catching up
- Added income flows through our state in spending, state economy issue
- Paid family leave can help the economy
- 1 in 5 SC women between 18 and 64 are working poor – 43<sup>rd</sup> nationally
- SC ranks 40<sup>th</sup> in nation for overall state of childcare – affordability, availability and quality
- 28% stem jobs
- Only 29% in apprenticeships or internships – why not more for women
- Hidden Figures movie was referenced
- Health and Safety
  - National - 7 maternal deaths for 100,000; SC - 25 out of 100,000 births lose their lives
  - 8 out of 1000 don't make 1<sup>st</sup> birthday
  - SC is now #5 in women murdered by men – reduced from #1 – thanks to P & C doing an expose called “Til death do us part” in 2014
  - Governor did a task force and legislature had bills passed; however, for the most part the legislature believes it has addressed the issue and there is little interest in additional legislation. It is now up to women to provide continuing education and information to politicians
- Leadership
  - 36 out of 100 are professional or managerial
  - Only 1 publicly traded company Blackbaud has at least 30% women on their board, 20 have none
  - 3% seats held by women, 2<sup>nd</sup> to last nationally
  - When women run, they win as much as men
  - Women need to donate more (19%), men are donating 52% more
- Other Considerations & Information
  - H3809 House bill proposed for 12 month contraceptives – interconnected, made it through subcommittee,
  - Women are the majority at 51% of SC population
  - Women are good at “change”
  - Head, heart and hands
  - Good to be extra weight on branch
  - 30% critical mass
  - Center for Women has a program on March 25<sup>nd</sup> for learning to run for office
  - Question about states issues? Response – be aware of strong state legislature and what is going on there – pay attention; on some of the bills, used other states bills like contraception to use as basis; photo-id bill created a problem that didn't exist in SC; many things coming in boilerplate bill from

other states and are being Haley said publicly that our businesses don't have a problem with the flag but BMW made a call (Julie asked BMW women if she had a problem and she made a call)

- **Ex. Voting ID – check list to flag immigrants**
- **VoteRunLead website – good for dipping your foot into public participation**
- [advocacy@c4women.org](mailto:advocacy@c4women.org)
- [www.c4women.org](http://www.c4women.org)

### **Women's Healthcare in SC – Ms. Sue Berkowitz**

Affordable Care Act, Medicaid, Women's Health with Sue Berkowitz, ED of SC Appleseed and Attorney; fights for rights of underserved, low-income.

Armies of Darkness

- American Legislative Exchange
  - LWV called them out on voter fraud
- FGA.org
  - Hope act – for getting rid of entitlement programs
  - Paul Ryan's poverty summit – not a town hall meeting but a town hall death
  - Has not been progress since Welfare reform 20 years ago which strangled it
  - Be warned!
- Nationally
  - Palmetto project, ACA navigator – Shelli Quenga, Director of Programs, in audience enrolled \$230,000 (hoping about 200,000 paid)
  - Popular now but not during the process
  - Now when faced with \$20 million
  - Make calls to elected officials– do not repeal without a common sense replacement
  - We have never made them accountable so keep pressure on
  - What does it mean if ACA goes away?
    - 30 million people affected more than just the marketplace
    - We are all the faces of ACA
    - Son had a non-threatening life condition at 2 which he grew out of but was denied insurance
    - Those that have a catastrophic health condition
    - Pre-existing conditions
    - ACA is not perfect, needs tweaks
    - Those who didn't vote for it, now are repealing it but didn't work to improve it during those 6 years

- Being a woman is not a pre-existing condition under ACA
- Packages that are required – such as mammograms, prostate tests, colonoscopies, preventative care – all at risk
- Donut hole for prescription drugs went away under the ACA –
- New plan
  - Reduces the penalties, but without a lot of people, the cost goes up.
  - Get rid of age based cost restrictions
  - Pre-existing conditions ban – new insurance can charge 130% so it can be the same as a pre-existing ban
  - Subsidies – most people in SC get a subsidy – elimination of and replaced by tax credit – need taxable income to get a tax credit, implies that enough money made to pay before the credit comes in. If younger, need less tax credit even though you may have a life threatening condition
  - Not looking at someone's ability to pay, huge spikes in cost
  - Medicaid expansion will be eliminated in 2020 – SC doesn't have it because Haley refused it. SC may have lost opportunity but will still fight for it
  - The bullseye is on poor people, Congress has a bullseye on Medicaid. Block grants mean that congress wants to save a boatload of money so they can fund tax cuts. Entitlements – but can't use that word – means we are entitled to draw down that federal money. 1 million people are on Medicaid including 36,000 kids. 75% of people in nursing homes are supported by Medicaid; 65% of births are paid by Medicaid
  - SC is a donee state \$0.70 is drawn from federal Medicaid for every \$0.30 SC puts out ; nursing homes will compete with women's health care
  - When people are divided, they give away control
  - People need to stick together and not be swayed by the dollars thrown to them upfront and then left with a matching situation
  - Question: Is there anywhere that these hardship stories are shown so that all of the SC citizens can know the truth of people's experiences? Palmetto project does some of this. Hard to have people share their stories but there are some.
  - Question: Is there a visible impact on those with private insurance and how can that be shown? Medicare impact
  - Question: How do we impact those in office – ex: Tim Scott – who are shutting us down and ridiculing those who are telling their stories? The low income community has been facing this for a long time and now the middle incomers are feeling the pain. We need to stick together.
  - Question: IF retire before 62 then people are not covered until 65 for Medicare. 50-65 are the ones hit hardest – new jobs with no benefits. AARP involved

## Beth Bernstein, Richland County, Democrat

- Women focused legislation
  - Contraceptive bill – 12 months – bi-partisan support
  - Tuesday, filing a pregnancy accommodations bill, co-sponsor with pro-life perspective Rep Delaney and Ridgeway – trying to get business community on board and Chamber of Commerce – help her to get local people energized – go to state house, write letters, phone calls – all this helps her do her job
  - Eating disorder awareness week – a group will be at statehouse on Wednesday. The entire women’s caucus could get behind
  - Rep Clarey and Collins, health youth act – expand health and education act, Winthrop poll showed the support of much of this – need to make the general assembly realize that this is what people want
  - Re-districting reform – continue with that conversation – new mapping comes out 2020, so happy that the LWV is making it a priority, 80% support in Winthrop poll.
  - Sen Jackson has filed senate version and reached out to Beth to support– revenge porn – make a level of crime, Winthrop poll supported this
  - Works a lot with WREN, advocacy is good!
  - Comment: Do what irritates them. Show up and watch how the sausage is made.
  - Representative Bernstein sends out a monthly newsletter, she has a website, follow her on twitter and Facebook; beth4house.com
  - Winthrop poll is every quarter

## Keynote Speaker - Susan Smith, introducing Rev. Dr. Betty Deas Clark

### Rev. Dr. Betty Deas Clark

- Transformer toys– change occurred before her eyes – a before and an after
- Many still think women are here for entertainment
- Messages – you are not good enough, you can’t do that, stunted growth, starts at birth
- Dr. Edward P. Wimberley, shares that each of us have positive and negative things within us that impact our relationships with each other, it demands that we re-author are perspective on life. We are not afforded the same opportunities – causing negativity or rising to the challenge – equips us to be **transforming transformers**, we are the change enforcers, we are the must be the ones who make it happen

- 1969 Congresswoman Shirley Chisolm in landmark speech – employers view of women was one of inferiority, etc; men were hired for same job over women, with less skills
- 2014 bureau of women, 83% of men’s salary based on occupation and often worse.
- Avery Works – SC makes history with 4 women in the senate, published 2016 in newspaper, SC now ranks 22 in country for gender equity – up from 46<sup>th</sup> in 2003? 22.4 % is national average? Changing but still problem
- Must partner – every sister needs to get a hook-up, sharpen our tools, no complacency, develop confidence with competence
- Don’t enable others but lend a helping hand to someone in need
- Interdependence and independence
- Transactional independence
- Transformational leadership – a style which can inspire change,
- Wizard of Oz – hopes, Oz a place of equity, a family living a joyless life on a farm in Kansas – isolated, the main character is a woman whose world was turned upside down, 3 new friends – take note of those around you; courage, brain-smarter than you think, heart – passion and bring about change; rather die doing something right than be miserable doing something wrong
- The Wizard brings hope – everything that they needed was already in them. SC has all that we need – it is already in the room
- Fearful of an unreal future, dreams too difficult to fulfill – must say it to possess it!
- Questions and regrets may one day flood your mind – God can I be part of the solution, do you really have a plan for me, Jeremiah 29:11
- I know who I am, my name is Victory.....
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### **Battling Discrimination**

- Jeff Ayers, SC Equality
  - SC Equality 15 years old, lobbying and education for LGBT
  - Last year had 10 anti-LGBT bills by this time. By end of session had 13 anti-bills
  - Former Sen. Lee Bright, modeled after NC HB2 bill – they built a coalition of partner orgs – PP, Wren, ACLU – a lot came to stand along – 75 orgs which slowed and defeated bill in sub-committee. Ongoing issues have united a core group – it expanded - many hide behind religious beliefs at statehouse to enforce discrimination. Continue to add organizations – the secret is about respecting each other’s issues – some need to take back seat sometime
  - Don’t always agree on all things but need to speak in one loud voice together.

- SC Chamber of Commerce surprisingly supported due to economic impact
  - Conservation group, chamber and SC Equality came together to oust Lee Bright
  - Another bathroom proposed by bill Steven Long – friend of Lee Bright
  - SC does not have a hate crimes bill
  - Question: How do they maintain intersectional and ?
  - Question: Sierra Club – who are the stake holders on intersectionality? How do they become more inclusive?
  - Question: Any outreach to foreign based employers? Perhaps more sensitive to concerns. Michelin and BMW all raised questions and pressured the SC Chamber of Commerce
  - Another bill – pro-equality – LGBT workplace fairness – don’t want to jinx it bc some republicans are saying they are going to sign on – very unusual – setting history When bill is posted, please call your elected officials.
  - SC Equality is in support ACA and Medicaid expansion
  - Comment: Be sure to flood phone lines with support not just opposition
  - Comment: Coming into airport – advertising shows big images of guns and gun gaming, is this the image we want to present to the Columbia airport . Anyone can advertise – visual and auditory – consolidate resources to change those messages
- Maya - SC democratic Caucus
    - House 3745 Uniform anti-discrimination act – sponsored by ? – expands definition of discrimination and includes gender identity and sexual orientation,
    - House 3342 bill equal pay, Mcloud and ? prohibiting discrimination for all women in workplace
    - Rep Rutherford sent governor a letter to advocate increase in Medicaid funds, it seems likely that we will go to a block grants, because we didn’t expand Medicaid SC could get less coverage. Response in audience is concerned that this would send a message that the “if block grant” conversation sends a wrong message. Don’t want to tie expansion to block granting. Apples and oranges
    - Question: in HS, any public education speaking to students about LGBT community. Maya said that Rep Rutherford has something that she can follow up on
      - Comment: Teachers can only talk about homosexuality in the context of marriage or HIV/Aids. Her office sees youth with HIV/Aids with no understanding of how they got it. Jeff Ayers is willing to go to the court system if the DoE and legislature is not cooperative. Jeff’s patience is wearing thin.
      - Question: The naming of streets and buildings in Charleston – covered under a history act – landmarks, Jeff says get involved, get engaged and put pressure on city hall.

## The War on Poor People - Sue Berkowitz, ED of SC Appleseed

- Federal block granting – food stamps – nothing filed yet but they are taking programs that work well and as they should when times are bad but they are trying to change it under the guise of saving money
- NEVER CONCEDE TO A BLOCK GRANT – NEVER GOOD EVEN IF SOMETHING GOOD WRAPPED IN IT
- ID bill – two more bills in SC house – 3114 to do drug testing on TANIF – new name for welfare, Clinton block granted the welfare program, \$99 million to lift women and children but most is going to children, 20 years later it is still same amount but poverty has gone up. Now adding drug testing to distribution. Expensive and doesn't work. Other states have done it but it doesn't work – very few people on this program are on drugs Bernstein and King on sub-committee
- 3833 – going to ways and means – change the SNAP or food stamp program – have to be really, really poor 130% of poverty level, family of 4 with \$1000/mo – now they are saying that resources are considered – cannot have a car worth more than \$4500/year. A back door way of getting rid of these programs
- Voucher program is to help pay for childcare but many parents can't touch it and will probably be under attack in DC
- The community eligibility program breakfast and lunch may go away
- How to have conversations about Reproductive Rights and Abortion, Sarah Eldred, Communications Manager, Planned Parenthood South Atlantic
  - Talking about abortion
    - Unprecedented level of anti-abortion legislature at the state level and the federal level will follow.
    - Freeze up, bumper sticker speech (not conversation starters only good for shared vision), get defensive, extreme situations – all don't work
    - People cannot connect to abstract stories or facts. They connect to your beliefs and values. People don't care about how much you know until they know how much you care.
    - PPFA Research
    - Abortion stigma – morally wrong and/or socially unacceptable – most people would not be uncomfortable telling someone that they took off from work to get an abortion vs. mammogram
    - Pro-choice/pro-life is bumper sticker, shuts down conversation, political only and doesn't address health, etc.. doesn't reflect the complexity
    - 40% of people don't identify with those extreme sides
    - Lesson 2: Talk about abortion in terms of personal decision making – a right and safe and legal for all women – worshipping is a personal decision, etc... "Abortion is a deeply personal and often complex decision for a woman, and I don't believe you can make that decision for someone"

else.” “A woman should have accurate information about all of her options. Information should support a woman, help her make a decision for herself, and enable her to take care of her health and well-being.”

- Lesson 3: Invite empathy, not judgement – you are not in her shoes so don’t try to describe them, talk about abortion as a part of a full range of pregnancy options – don’t describe the shoes
- Its not that simple, I am not in her shoes, healthcare is not simple, it is not my business
- Adoption, end of pregnancy or raise child should be discussed with woman, family, faith support, medical support -
- Lesson 4: safe and legal is key, 1 in 4 women has had an abortion in US. Goal for any healthcare procedure – a safe and legal procedure for a woman to consider, if and when she needs it.
- Lesson 5: Who invited the politicians? If 24 hours waiting, script read prior to a typical medical procedure or a primary dr. visit. It wouldn’t be acceptable.
- General Facts
  - 1 in 3 American women will have an abortion closer to 1 in 4 due to increased access to contraceptives due to ACA
  - 60% of women are already parents
  - 3 out of 4 women who have abortions identify as religiously affiliated
- The top two items stay the same when abortion is outlawed
- Need to reclaim the morality that has been taken from us.
- Summary
  - Complex feelings
  - Speak about a woman’s pregnancy – don’t need words like “unplanned” or “unintended”
  - Stop after point is made, further detail pushes people away
  - Best terms are “ending a pregnancy”, “abortion” or “a safe and legal procedure”
- Question: Texas situation but got shot down. Saving babies. But 99% safe outcomes for surgical procedure. They co-opted PP language
- Aggregated facts – PP records come from DHHS

**The Importance of Women in Political Office – Why You Should Run - Susan Smith, SC Democratic Women’s Council, running for SC Dem Party chair**

- Emerge America, a non-profit that recruits and trains women to run for democratic positions. Trying to bring them to SC. They are in other southern states
- Move name tag inside jacket because eye goes to chest and you lose their attention
- Why don't women run? Most don't feel educated. Women don't like to fundraise for themselves. Skeletons in closet
- A different expectation for women. Susan didn't support Clinton in 2008 – she was called too masculine, then cried in NH and was too emotional, Hillary handled the convention with dignity and then Susan said that she was going to support her
- What happened in 2016 for Hillary – 53% of white women voted for Trump
- Speak with authority, approachable but not too, smart but not too, pretty but not too,
- US is ranked in 109<sup>th</sup> in world leadership by women.
- SC is 48<sup>th</sup> in ranking of women in leadership
- Just do it, we can go no where but up! No impediments based on Trump
- Question: A lot of us want to do it but don't know how to navigate it as grad student. Valid point.
- Comment: What did Haley do? Teflon deflection at gubernatorial primary
- More women elected to all positions

### **Elections and Voters in SC - JoAnne Day, President, LWV of SC –**

- 77% are registered to vote – pretty good compared to other states
- 1.7 million women
- 1.4 million men
- Turnout in national elections is higher than general election
  - 38 of 124 house seat were contested in the general election
- Current issues
  - Redistricting after 2020 census
    - In 2017, supreme court will take up issue of partisan gerrymandering
    - Two bills in SC General assembly
      - House H3339
      - Senate S341
    - FL LWV went to court and won on redistricting – 70 years ago started this fight, last 10 years have been in courts – hard fight but they won
    - Power of persistence, added to resistance
  - Money in politics – dark money
  - SC bills to improve voting and elections
    - Eliminate straight party voting
    - Early voting
    - Automatic voter registration

- In audience mentioned someone at another town hall meeting, voted straight democratic and when she submitted it went straight republican – she reported it but don't know outcome
- Barriers to Voting- photo ID, no early voting
  - Concerned with those without driver licenses, students, elderly
  - Photo id is only to prove you are who you say you are, not to permit you to vote
  - 30 days prior to election is cut off for registration
  - Need one of 5 required ids to vote
- Other ideas
  - Instant run off/ ranked choice voting
  - Open primaries
  - Vote by mail
- What can I do?
  - Persist
  - Vote in Every election
  - Support a free and independent press
  - Contact elected officials on issues you care about
  - Attend rallies, events and educational forums on issues
  - Support and work for candidates you believe in
  - 3 T's - Give others your time, treasure and/or talent

### **Progress South - Michael Wukela, Progress South, ED**

- Brother is mayor of Florence and won by 1 so it matters
- Transportation
- 60% of none white voters stayed home
- 900,000 votes of women stayed home
- One trained canvasser can knock on 35 doors knocked on every hour in a day? With friends  
Knocking on doors wins elections
- Worked for Columbia mayor and offered transportation
- 23 state legislators voted against removal of conf. flag and only 8 had opposition, got rid of 3 of them
- Without candidates, who to canvas for, who to vote for
- If more people vote even if uneducated, it works out better for progressives
- 58% support a path to citizenship
- Don't have to live in district to run for congress, just have to live in the state
- State house wins with 6,000 votes

- Special election wins with 3,000 votes
- Has all the makings of a progressive state - look at LA post Hughie Long as an example
  - Shoe leather, message, resources
  - They will put them on a path to run and support them in their efforts. Got to be willing to pick a fight.

### **WREN – Women’s Rights and Empowerment Network - Eme Crawford, WREN**

- Non partisan, non profit
- Look of WREN definition
- 20% of states women lives in poverty
- Worst state to 5<sup>th</sup> worst
- Teen pregnancy is higher
- 2 year legislative session – it has 10 months for bill cycle
- McMaster
- Bryant
- Senate 4 year term, 46 members, 4 women
- House 2 year term, 124 members, 18 women
- Bill process
  - First reading – if sponsored, it is an easy process, read into the records, in charge person sends it to subcommittee
  - Subcommittee – most leverage as constituent, you can show up for meetings, on website but not easy to find with 24 hours notice, TWTH, during work hours 10-12 or 2-4, can give testimony, show up with sticker communicates your support, send emails, phone calls, etc.. 4000 bills but less than 10% became law, start talking about it right before it goes to subcommittee bc there are a lot of bills to keep track of – no testimony by constituents past this, sometime live feed but not required
  - Full committee – can attend but cannot provide testimony
  - Second reading – put pressure on phone calls, etc..
  - Third reading – don’t have to turn up pressure and will then be sent to senate, then same process, then to governor for signature or veto the back to senate or house, if he lets it sit on his desk for 5 days, it will silently pass into law
  - Bills
    - 12 month supply bill of contraception
      - Currently must go month to month
      - Impacts hectic schedules, rural areas with lack of transportation,
      - Insurance would need to cover a 12 month supply

- Bi-partisan support
- SC healthy youth act
  - School districts aren't in compliance with the comprehensive health education act (CHEA)
  - Requires local school districts to use evidence based in interventions
  - ?
- SC Pregnancy Accommodations act
  - Current federal laws too limited
  - Bipartisan support
- 2 million more letters and calls were from men
  - 90% of op-eds in newspapers were from men
  - 70% of surveyed legislators rely on letters, calls and op-eds that they read
- Movement building
- Post cards starts conversation
- Letter is a good follow-up