

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On behalf of myself and the Washington Premier Group staff, I wish to express our sincere appreciation for the opportunity to support the Federally Employed Women's (FEW) federal legislative program. It has been a privilege to work alongside your esteemed organization in our shared commitment to advancing the rights and opportunities of women in the federal workforce.

At Washington Premier Group, we recognize the invaluable contributions that FEW has made over 50-plus years in championing the cause of gender equality and empowering women within the federal government. The dedication and passion exhibited by the members of FEW align seamlessly with the mission to foster inclusivity, diversity, and equal representation in the workplace.

To provide an overview of our representation and contributions, we have prepared a document that encapsulates the key initiatives, milestones, and collaborative efforts that have defined our partnership with FEW. This summary aims to highlight the positive impact we have collectively made in advancing the rights and professional development of women employed in federal positions. It also provides a snapshot of the bills that are still on the list – including passing the ERA!

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and lack of in-person meetings, Washington Premier Group went virtual and maintained operations by hosting online webinars and participating in virtual meetings. We supplied a rapid response to reporters and appeared on several podcasts in support of FEW. In short, our commitment remains solid as we work to ensure that adequate resources are available to provide the best service to FEW.

## **HIGHLIGHTS 2022-2023**

In respect to highlights from the most recently passed legislation, there are two notable bills we lobbied for that made it to final passage including the [Violence Against Women Act \(VAWA\)](#) which was strengthened by its reauthorization in 2022, and the [Executive](#)

Order on Protecting the Federal Workforce which revoked Schedule F, ensured the right for collective bargaining and increased the minimum wage for federal workers.

Unfortunately, the lack of resources and low income are relevant factors in a lot of domestic violence cases. These recent measures have the potential to enhance the lives of all women, especially improving wages for most women who are in low-wage positions.

Concerning women and families, The PUMP Act and Pregnant Workers Fairness Act both became law in 2022 and federal paid leave was extended to veterans in the 2024 National Defense Authorization Act.

### **2022-2023 FEW LEGISLATIVE SUCCESS**

- 1. Veterans' Access to Paid Leave through the NDAA 'FY2024 - Became Law in 2023**
- 2. Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act - Became Law in 2022**
- 3. Pregnant Women's Fairness Act - Became Law in 2022**
- 4. The PUMP Act - Became Law in 2022 - *fully enforceable as of April 28, 2023***

### **GOALS**

**Our goal is to create and/or support public policy on behalf of FEW and the National Board that eliminates discrimination, promotes diversity, and monitors compliance with existing gender equality laws in the workplace in the federal government. Washington Premier Group, LLC, is proud to provide legislative support and lobbying services in support of the FEW Legislative Focus Area.**

### **WORKING WITH FEW**

Washington Premier Group's legislative strategy provides additional support in coordination with the Vice President for Congressional Relations that is aimed to enhance FEW's advocacy. We provide legislative guidance and oversight, legislative support materials, draft letters, testimonies/statements, press releases, graphic design for webinars, speakers for webinars, legislative training sessions, content development,

FEW Action Alerts, Weekly E-Newsletters, issue papers, arrange Congressional/Federal agency meetings, and participate in FEW's Legislative Quarterly Meetings.

At the end of each Congressional session, our firm provides a Congressional voting record – a scorecard of votes that were cast on the bills that are supported or opposed by FEW. These reports include a letter from FEW's national presidents, House votes/actions, and Senate votes/actions on final passage of relevant legislation to FEW's Legislative Agenda. In addition, we support the grassroots by managing FEW's Advocacy Day events and serve as the Administrator of FEW's Voter Voice (previously CQ Engage) online platform that keeps FEW's membership informed of the latest legislative actions and outreach.

### **CONNECTING FEW TO POLICYMAKERS**

Washington Premier Group arranged two important meetings for FEW's National President, Pamela H. Richards, to exchange ideas and establish partnerships during the month of January. On January 11, 2024, FEW had an introductory meeting with the Chair of the U.S. Equal Employment Office Commission (EEOC), Ms. Charlotte Burrows, and staff to discuss working with the EEOC on training for FEW members on current and future EEOC initiatives that address the federal workforce. During the meeting, held on January 30, 2024, FEW learned that the EEOC is providing more help for federal workers experiencing harassment on the job by increasing the staff who can handle complaints at the EEOC. The second meeting was with Ms. Kiran Ahuja, Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and Ms. Tanya Sehgal who oversees Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) programs for OPM. These meetings allow FEW a seat at the table to voice FEW's support for some recent policies that help advance women in the federal workforce. In addition to Mrs. Richards, both meetings were attended by Ms. Shabiki Clarke, Vice President for Congressional Relations and Ms. Tonya Saunders, FEW's Lobbyist.

### **2024 WHAT'S NEW FOR FEW?**

OPM has *finalized rules* to **bar federal agencies from taking into consideration a new or returning hire's history of salaries with employers other than the federal government when setting a starting salary.**

A GAO report on the *paid parental leave* benefit for federal employees calls on OPM and individual agencies to better communicate its availability and its terms, finding for example that some information is outdated and inaccurate.

### **A Pay Raise for Federal Employees in 2024**

**January 14, 2024, a 5.2 percent pay increase takes effect for federal workers.**

### **A New Proposed Pay Raise for Federal Employees**

The first formal proposal for the January 2025 federal employee raise has been introduced in both the House and Senate, recommending an increase of *7.4 percent*.

Washington Premier Group is currently lobbying/monitoring the following bills:

**5. The Equal Rights Amendment ([ERA](#))**

**6. FAMILY Act ([H.R. 3481](#)/[S. 1714](#))**

- 92 co-sponsors in the House, 34 co-sponsors in the Senate
- Creates a national paid family and medical leave insurance program.

**7. Healthy Families Act ([H.R. 3409](#)/[S. 1664](#))**

- 102 co-sponsors in the House, 43 co-sponsors in the Senate
- Requires that employers allow their employees to earn up to seven paid sick days per year.

**8. Job Protection Act ([H.R. 694](#)/[S. 210](#))**

- 75 co-sponsors in the House, 8 co-sponsors in the Senate
- Expands access to job-protected leave under the FMLA.

**9. Caring for All Families Act ([H.R. 789](#)/[S. 242](#))**

- 17 co-sponsors in the House, 8 co-sponsors in the Senate

- Expands the FMLA's family definition to include a broader set of relationships, including chosen family.

#### **10. Comprehensive Paid Leave for Federal Employees Act ([H.R. 856/S. 274](#))**

- 40 co-sponsors in the House, 12 co-sponsors in the Senate
- Converts unpaid caregiving and medical FMLA leave to paid leave for federal employees (parental is currently paid)

#### **11. Retirement: WEP – The Social Security Fairness Act, H.R. 82/S. 597, introduced in the House by Reps. Garret Graves, R-LA, and Abigail Spanberger, D-VA, and in the Senate by Sens. Sherrod Brown, D-OH, and Susan Collins, R-ME, would fully repeal the WEP and GPO-longstanding policies that have unfairly diminished the retirement benefits of hardworking public servants.**

Summary: The Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) is a formula used to adjust Social Security worker benefits for people who receive “non-covered pensions” and qualify for Social Security benefits based on other Social Security-covered earnings. a **non-covered pension** is a pension paid by an employer that does not withhold Social Security taxes from your salary, typically, state and local governments or non-U.S. employers.

#### **12. Reproductive Health – (IVF)**

Summary: The bipartisan *Family Building FEHB Fairness Act* (sponsors: Rep. **Connolly** and Sen. **Tammy Duckworth**), would require the Federal Employees Health Benefit (FEHB) Program—the largest employer-sponsored health insurance plan in the world—carriers to cover IVF and ART and would give OPM one year to implement its requirements from the date of enactment. The legislation is co-led in the House by Congresswoman Nancy Mace (R-SC), Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), and Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL). The *Right to Build Families Act*

Summary: Along with **Duckworth** and **Murray**, the legislation was co-sponsored in the Senate by U.S. Senators **Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)** and **Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)**. Along with **Wild**, the legislation was co-sponsored in the House by U.S. Representatives **Gerry Connolly (D-VA)** and **Rosa DeLauro (D-CT)**.

As we continue our collaborative journey, Washington Premier Group remains committed to the principles and objectives according to FEW's Mission. We believe that through sustained collaboration, we can effect positive change, create a more equitable workplace, and serve as catalysts for the advancement of women in the federal government.

We look forward to furthering our working relationship in 2024 with Federally Employed Women. Together, we can continue to make meaningful strides towards a more inclusive and equitable work environment for all.

Thank you for the opportunity to work hand-in-hand with you!

Tonya Saunders & Washington Premier Group Staff

