

# NCWU Newsletter



NCWU Vice President Veronica Butcher engages in a discussion with Senator Ellie Kinnaird after the December 5 press conference.

## 2005 Legislative Report

### Card Released

North Carolina Women United released the results of their 2005 Legislative Report Card at a press conference on December 5, 2005. In an effort to promote progressive public policy, NC Women United evaluated the progress of the 2005 General Assembly. Of the 23 bills that NCWU supported, 11 passed, 7 failed, and 5 are eligible for the 2006 Legislative Session.

“NC Women United is a key player in making sure that women participate fully in the political process and make their priorities and views heard,” stated Representative Deborah Ross of Wake County. She attended the NCWU press conference held in Raleigh, and she was joined by Senator Ellie Kinnaird (D-Orange), Representatives Linda Coleman (D-Wake), Verla Insko (D-Orange), and Jennifer Weiss (D-Wake). Kinnaird, Coleman, Insko, Ross, and Weiss are among the legislators being honored by NCWU for their courageous leadership on behalf of North Carolina women and families. Because of their efforts, survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault are better protected; NC state employees, many of whom are women, will receive an increase in wages; and more of the state’s poorest families will be able to access Medicaid.

“NC Women United is the only broad based statewide coalition of women making a difference in public policy in North Carolina,” said Veronica Butcher, vice president of the non-profit, volunteer-run group. “Our advocacy is centered on our grassroots,” added Butcher. “The legislative report card reflects the priorities identified by our member organizations and those identified through community-based Women’s Agenda Assemblies that enable more women to get involved with public policy.”

To download an electronic version of the Legislative Report Card, visit [www.ncwu.org](http://www.ncwu.org).

## Emergency Contraception in the Emergency Room

Approximately 25,000 women in the United States become pregnant each year as a result of rape. An estimated 22,000 of these unintended pregnancies—or 88 percent—could be prevented if sexual assault victims had timely access to Emergency Contraception.

Pregnancy prevention is considered by the American Medical Association a necessary component of treatment for women who have been sexually assaulted. Emergency contraception (EC) is a form of birth control that can be taken up to 5 days after intercourse. Several studies both nationally and by individual states have shown that hospitals are not consistently providing EC to survivors of sexual assault in their emergency departments.

A coalition was formed in 2004 by several groups wanting to improve services to victims of sexual assault and to determine whether or not EC was available to sexual assault survivors in North Carolina. Those groups included: North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCCASA), North Carolina Women United, Planned Parenthood of Central North Carolina, Planned Parenthood Health Systems, NARAL Pro-Choice North Carolina, and Ipas.

Together this group wrote and distributed a survey to 115 hospitals with emergency departments in NC. One hundred and two hospitals (89%) responded with information regarding their policies in treating victims of sexual assault.

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## EC in ER continued from page 1

Seventy-six hospitals (75%) reported that it was standard policy to dispense EC on-site to sexual assault survivors.

Nine of these hospitals reported exceptions to their policy based on the refusal of the provider on duty to dispense medication. Twenty-six hospitals (25%) reported that it was not standard policy to dispense EC. In addition, hospitals located in rural counties were less likely to dispense EC than hospitals in urban counties.

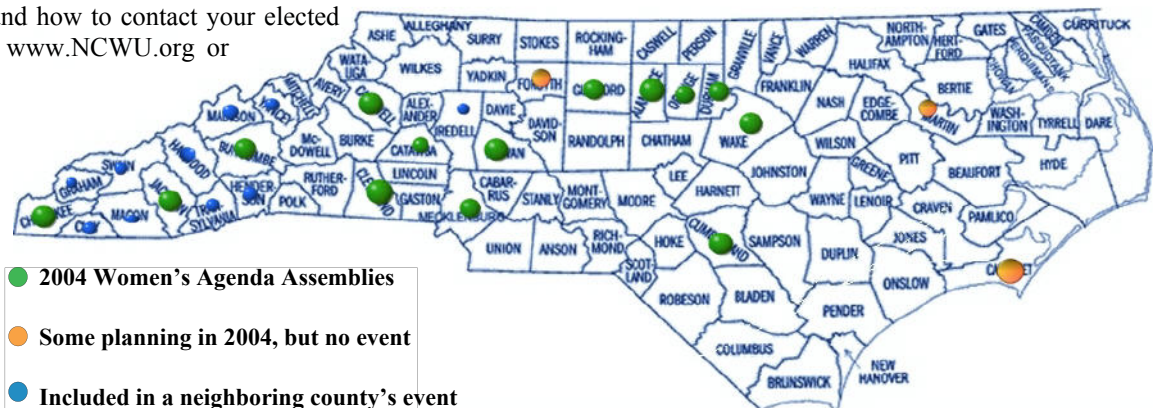
To learn more and to find out what you can do in your county, visit [www.ncwu.org/2004/ecer](http://www.ncwu.org/2004/ecer), or contact NCWU.

## 2005 Women's Advocacy Day

Advocacy Day was a great success with hundreds of visits to legislators and even more e-mail messages from across the state.

The discussions focused on the "2005 North Carolina Women's Legislative Agenda," and included topics such as aging, employment discrimination, pay equity, and sexual assault.

We are currently planning for our 2006 Virtual Advocacy Day, when women across the state can use E-mail, phone calls, and personal visits to their legislators to make their voices heard. To learn more about this year's Advocacy Day or to learn more about the Women's Legislative Agenda and how to contact your elected representatives, visit [www.NCWU.org](http://www.NCWU.org) or contact us.



## Women's Agenda Assemblies

Women's Agenda Assemblies, where diverse women around the state attend local sessions to discuss the Draft Women's Agenda and make recommendations on the group's priorities for the next session of the legislature, were held across the state from August 2004 through March 2005.

Since 1988, women in North Carolina have banded together every other year through the Agenda Assemblies to share information on public policy issues apt to come before the next session of the General Assembly.

This past year, issues that were discussed in local Agenda Assemblies included women and the draft, education, day care, the environment's impact on economic and health issues, as well as inheritance laws and sex education.

The map below reflects locations for Agenda Assemblies in 2004-2005. This year, we are working to include more Assemblies and reach more women across the state. To learn more about hosting an Agenda Assembly, to volunteer to help with a local Assembly, or more more information, contact us or visit [www.NCWU.org](http://www.NCWU.org).

Do you have suggestions for our newsletter?

News about your organization that you would like to see included?

Please contact the NCWU Communication Committee at

[news@ncwu.org](mailto:news@ncwu.org) or 919- 484-1598.