

Public Policy Committee of NCFR
Structure, Policy, Issues
May 13, 1987

Board
App'd 11/15/87

Howery
Chair P. P. C.

The Public Policy Committee is a standing committee of NCFR and as such reports directly to the Board of Directors. The Executive Director of NCFR is the liaison between the Board and the Public Policy Committee.

Purposes

The Committee has the following purposes:

1. In addition to looking to the future, the Public Policy Committee is to monitor and advocate for pending legislation and to suggest new legislation relating to:
 - a. the betterment of families.
 - b. the interests of NCFR and its members in areas such as national recognition of family life education, a family focus in the development of public policies, allocation of adequate funds for family research and third party payments for family counsellors and therapists.
2. Public Policy Committee is to work toward increasing communication between the various constituents of the federal government and NCFR.
 - a. to inform NCFR members of pending legislation so they can use this information for advocacy purposes.
 - b. to inform government bodies about the functions of NCFR including its Family Resources database and about the expertise and willingness of its members to serve the government as consultants or witnesses.

Organization

The Committee shall consist of the following officers: Chair, Co-chair, and Secretary. The Chair will preside at meetings of the Committee and represent the Committee to other groups. Whenever the Chair is unable to represent the Committee, the Co-chair will do so. The Secretary will notify members of meetings and record the minutes of the meetings. The Chair will also carry out the functions of treasurer and will collect and disburse funds, and will keep the Executive Director informed of Public Policy Committee activities. The Co-chair will be responsible for maintaining contacts with the Council of Affiliates and the Family Action Section to inform them of Public Policy Committee activities. The DCFR will be asked to send a representative to the Public Policy Committee. Preference for the appointment to the Public Policy Committee will be given to NCFR members who live in the Washington area because of the expense of travel and need to be on hand at short notice. Members will be appointed for three year terms except that the first group will have staggered terms. (The Chair appointed Elaine Anderson and Roger Rubin for a one-year term ending November 1987 at the time of the annual meeting of NCFR. Harold and Margaret Feldman, Carla Howery and Linda Rothleeder were appointed for two-year terms and Hal Wallach and Penny Maza for 3-year terms.) A member may serve two consecutive terms and then must be absent from the Committee for at least one year before being reappointed. The Public Policy Committee will advance nominations for its replacements to the President of NCFR.

NCFR Statement of Belief Concerning Families

Families are the basic units in our society. When families function well, they provide their members with intimate caring relationships and mutual support throughout the life cycle. This enhances the larger society's well-being and ability to function. As families affect the larger society, so also they are affected by that society. Thus, family policy must recognize both directions of cause and affect.

Families need to be supported, not supplanted in their caregiving role of children. The development of individuals who are stable, productive, loved and loving can best come from devoted and sustained parenting.

Public attitudes need to recognize the importance of parenting and support those who are engaged in the vital task of sharing self-actualized, responsible members of society.

Public policy aimed at families is of utmost importance because of the effects on families of the actions of business and other social and political institutions. Public Policy should therefore be designed to combat harmful effects upon families by all such activities. Policies should be coherent and comprehensive to assure that all families needing external supports are appropriately served.

Social and economic conditions which are devastating to family life are poverty, unemployment, inadequate education, catastrophic physical and mental illness, dislocation and unequal opportunity. Means for preventing, alleviating or eradicating these conditions is needed.

Families also provide the setting for the continuing growth of children as adults. Those who enter into and continue in marriage have responsibilities to their spouses. Adults continue their attachment and support of their parents. As children leave the home, the marital relationship resumes its salience and older parents provide support for each other. When one of the parents becomes widowed, their children become their support system. Helping parents deal with their own old age may provide children with an opportunity to come to terms with their own aging and to resolve problems of their own childhood.

Public attitudes need to recognize the importance and the difficulties of parenting--and of caring for spouses, handicapped family members and older parents. Society should value and provide a range of options supporting those who are engaged in these vital tasks.

NCFR recognizes the pluralism of family structures, its complexity of ethnic origins and a number of lifestyle options which characterize North American culture.

Policy Approval Process

The Public Policy Committee will act to implement the NCFR Statement of Beliefs in relation to legislation and will notify the Executive Director of NCFR of pending legislation that the Committee feels it appropriate to act upon. If there are bills where quick action is called for, the Chair of the Public Policy Committee will notify the Executive Director of NCFR who may consult with the President and Executive Committee of NCFR. Unless the Executive Director of NCFR notifies the Chair within a week, the Chair may assume that the action is approved. In rare cases, the Chair of the Public Policy Committee may request quicker action.

Selected Issues Which the Committee will be Following in the Coming Year

1. Family and Medical Leave Act of 1987
2. Welfare Reform Act
3. Pay Equity
4. Spousal Impoverishment
5. Unemployment Compensation, health care, job security, pensions, part-time workers.
6. Child Care
7. Third Party payment for Family Counselors and Therapists
8. Family Research Funds
9. Family Life Education