

NCL backing pro-labor federal legislation

Three new bills would give workers more opportunity to organize, form unions

As the nation's only consumer watchdog whose mission is also focused on workers' rights, the National Consumers League (NCL) is uniquely positioned to advocate on issues that hit Americans closest to home—in both the marketplace and the workplace.

Just months into the new Biden-Harris Administration, NCL is backing three important federal bills aiming to even the playing field between workers and employers. The legislation—the Protecting the Right to Organize Act (PRO Act), the Farm Workforce Modernization Act (FWMA), and the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act—would give workers greater opportunities to organize and form unions and help protect the most vulnerable in our labor force.

“Decades of industry lobbying have made it increasingly difficult for workers to organize,” said NCL Executive Director Sally Greenberg. “Employers enjoy unprecedented and unfair advantages during union organizing drives, which has led to far fewer opportunities for workers to have their voices heard in the workplace. These are legislative initiatives



that would help right the course for America's workers.”

According to a recent Gallup Poll, roughly two thirds of Americans approve of unions—a number trending upwards up from about half in 2009.

“Consumers are recognizing that they are harmed when workers do not have a strong voice,” said Greenberg. “Industry abuses are more likely to go unchecked, resulting in unsafe and dangerous products making it to the marketplace. And when workers are fairly compensated on the job, they can afford to buy the products they create, stimulating further demand that benefits the economy.”

The PRO Act would enhance collective bargaining rights, impose penalties on employers if they retaliate against workers who are trying to organize, and update labor laws to protect workers. The bill passed in the House of Representatives with bipartisan support this spring and currently awaits action in the Senate.

The FWMA provides a path to lawful permanent residency for the immigrant workers who pick crops on America's

farms and on which our food systems depend. Under the bill's provisions, farmworkers would be able to improve their wages and working conditions and seek enforcement when their rights are violated. It also makes America more food-secure by ensuring that farmers have workers to harvest their perishable crops. In March of this year, the FWMA (H.R. 1603) passed the House by a bipartisan vote of 247-174.

The Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act (H.R. 3463 and S. 1970) would set a federal standard and help protect the freedom of America's 17M+ public sector workers to join a union and collectively bargain for fair wages and benefits. Currently, 20 states do not provide all state and local public sector workers this right.

“America would be unrecognizable without the gains made by working families and unions,” said Greenberg. “The movement needs an even playing field to do its job. These three bills are a good start, and NCL is proud to support each of them.”

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Seeing the light at the end of the tunnel

Dear Readers,

As we feel the impact vaccinations are having on the world around us after the darkest days at the height of the COVID 19 pandemic, we are seeing light at the end of a very long tunnel. Never before in our lifetimes has the safe and effective production of a vaccine made such an immediate difference in our lives. As consumer advocates, we are excited to see the world opening back up and see the results of our longstanding support for science, advocacy, and collaboration.

With the new Biden-Harris Administration, we have welcomed appointments of a historically diverse Cabinet, including the first Labor Secretary in more than 50 years to come from a union background. The new Department of Labor's withdrawal of the Trump-era "Independent Contractor Rule," which would have taken a toll on American workers, especially women and those who toil in low-wage industries, is welcome progress.

The Food and Drug Administration announced plans—which advocates have wanted for years—to ban menthol-flavored tobacco products, a measure that will address health disparities and stop unfair marketing practices. Consumer and health groups, the NAACP, and others have called upon the FDA to ban menthol tobacco products because they have been marketed aggressively to the black community.

Another issue related to minority health is getting more of our attention this year. The United States is suffering from alarming rates of preterm birth—something that has a significant disproportionate impact on women of color. Babies who are born prematurely face greater risks of a variety of intellectual and developmental complications—and the situation is worsening: in 2020, the U.S. preterm birth rate increased for the fifth year in a row. In partnership with more than a dozen organizations, NCL



Greenberg (upper right) appears in virtual press event on privacy with Congress members.

launched the Preterm Birth Prevention Alliance this spring to combat this disparity and help give mothers a better chance of reaching full term with their pregnancies. Read more about our work on this issue and other maternal and women's issues on pages 8 and 9.

This spring, we hosted the biggest LifeSmarts National Championship event in our program's history—with 57 teams competing—virtually! Due to restrictions on travel, we took the event to the digital world and were blown away at the engagement level of the teens and special volunteers participating from across the country. Read more about it on page 6.

We are celebrating other consumer victories as well. We welcomed the voluntary recall of dangerous treadmills by Peloton, after reports of accidents and even deaths involving children. Our staff can also declare wins in three states so far this year on the live entertainment ticketing front (*see page 3*).

While all these developments are cause for optimism, NCL staff continues to work at reforms. To combat child labor, NCL is convening allies to join us in introducing the CARE Act, the Children's Act for

Responsible Employment and Farm Safety, which would protect an estimated 300,000 to 400,000 children, mostly Latino, who toil in dangerous conditions harvesting fruits and vegetables. We are currently fighting forced marriage in states across the country (*page 11*); obesity, food waste, and confusion over portion control and other guidelines for consumers when it comes to food and nutrition (*page 10*); and predatory lending practices (*page 5*) that target vulnerable communities and leave victims in a cycle of debt and financial ruin. Our response to the coronavirus pandemic and other emerging issues in consumer and worker protection is all here in *The Bulletin*.

The NCL team welcomes your support as we begin to experience the "new normal," with our readers, allies, partners, and friends. It is more crucial than ever in sustaining our work and ability to carry out our mission. On behalf of NCL's staff and Board, I wish you good health, safety, and security, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sally Greenberg

Victories in three states in live event consumer protection

With live events starting up again as the COVID-19 pandemic recedes, NCL is redoubling our efforts to ensure that consumers are treated fairly. In the past few months, we have testified in Colorado, New Jersey, and New York in support of ticketing fairness.

In January, NCL supported a bill in the Garden State called the “New Jersey Ticket Consumer Choice Act.” The bill would extend similar rights to ticket buyers in New Jersey that consumers in New York have enjoyed for six years. Specifically, the bill would protect the right of consumers to transfer, sell, or give away a ticket they purchase for a live event.

Increasingly, ticket sellers have used restrictive ticketing technology to prevent consumers from reselling their tickets, except on platforms where companies control the prices and set the fees. In addition, the bill would prohibit sports team owners from penalizing season ticket holders (such as by revoking their right to purchase season tickets in the future) for reselling their tickets. Thanks to testimony from NCL and other advocates, the bill was approved by the Regulated Professions Committee and now awaits review by the Speaker of the New Jersey General Assembly.

In March, NCL testified before the Colorado Senate in opposition to a bill that included a number of pro-consumer provisions but would have ultimately been bad for consumers. The bill would outlaw the operation of deceptive “white label” ticket resale websites and regulate the sale of “speculative tickets” (i.e., tickets the seller doesn’t actually own). However, at the same time, it would have repealed consumers’ right to resell tickets in a competitive marketplace, so NCL opposed it.

“Fans are right to be upset when they



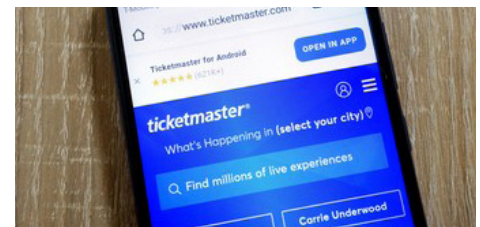
Live events have seen a dramatic global decline since the start of the pandemic in 2020—but with the return to “normal” in sight, the industry may soon be booming.

see tickets to in-demand events offered at prices far above face value,” said John Breyault, NCL vice president of public policy, telecommunications and fraud. “However, allowing the largest ticketing monopoly in the country to artificially restrict resale to platforms they—and only they—control is the wrong way to address that problem.” Following NCL’s testimony, the bill was postponed indefinitely by a Senate committee, effectively killing it for this session.

Finally, in April, NCL joined *Consumer Reports* and the Sports Fans Coalition in testimony before the New York State Senate in support of an investigation of anti-consumer and anti-competitive ticketing practices in that state. NCL’s testimony focused on the harm that undisclosed ticket “holdbacks” and scalpers’ use of ticket-buying “bot” software do to fans.

Holdbacks are a shady practice that often allow more than half of tickets to in-demand events to be diverted to connected insiders like fan clubs, credit card rewards programs, promoters, and artists. Many of these tickets later appear

on the secondary market at vastly inflated prices. NCL urged New York legislators to address the practice by requiring ticket sellers to advertise the number of tickets they will make available to the public in advance of an event’s on-sale date. To combat the continued use of ticket-buying “bot” software by unscrupulous brokers, NCL urged the New York Senate to require ticket sellers to report evidence of illegal bot usage to authorities.



Ticket buying bots and price disparities remain to be glaring issues for consumers on sites like Ticketmaster.

As the live event market gets back to normal this year, NCL will continue advocating in the states and in Congress for consumer protections to reform the rigged live event industry.

NCL joins businesses and members of Congress in call to action on privacy legislation

It's not often that consumer groups like NCL and industry agree on major policy matters. Privacy protections may be a rare exception to that rule. On May 5, NCL joined with our colleagues at the 21st Century Privacy Coalition, the Business Software Alliance, and Common Sense Media in calling on Congress to commit to passing comprehensive privacy legislation by the end of the 117th Congress. In a virtual press conference, the groups, along with Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), and Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), agreed that Congressional action to strengthen consumers' privacy rights is long overdue.

For more than two decades, since the passage of the last major federal privacy bills—the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act in the late 1990s—advocates like NCL and businesses in the ever-growing technology sector have been calling for stronger federal privacy laws. As the Internet and connected technology have become the primary ways for consumers to interact with the marketplace, the need for clear, enforceable privacy rights for consumers and rules of the road for businesses have never been stronger.



“Let's be clear: there is a cost to consumers of Congressional inaction on privacy legislation,” said NCL Executive Director Sally Greenberg at the press event. “While no one here today is eager to bargain away long-held principles, we do believe there is a willingness to find common ground and an acknowledgement that the status quo when it comes to privacy is not



sustainable. At NCL, we are committed to the shared goal of protecting the privacy of each and every American, no matter where they live.”

To move the privacy debate forward, Rep. Schakowsky, the chairwoman of the House Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce, announced at the event that she will be convening a series of bipartisan roundtable discussions to examine ways to pass comprehensive privacy legislation.

“More than 100 years ago, earlier Congresses faced a similar challenge: ensuring that the nation would have access to a free and fair economy—one not controlled by powerful trusts,” said Jon Leibowitz, co-chairman of the 21st Century Privacy Coalition, a coalition of broadband providers that helped organize the event. “They met the moment when they passed the Sherman Act by an overwhelming and bipartisan margin, followed by the enactment of other landmark antitrust



laws for the benefit of American consumers. Today, the challenge that calls us is about a different but no less cherished value: personal privacy. There is little doubt in my mind that all of us will meet this challenge.”

NCL hopes to be involved in Rep. Schakowsky's forthcoming roundtables to help ensure that a comprehensive bill gives all consumers strong, enforceable privacy rights.



The #DataInsecurity Digest is a bi-weekly publication of the National Consumers League, which has been advocating for Congress and the Executive Branch over several administrations to pass comprehensive data security protections.

Sign up to receive this free publication at nclnet.org/did.

Reining in predatory loan interest rates

In a polarizing time when it is often hard to find consensus, American voters are largely united around reining in runaway payday loan interest rates. Last year, with an overwhelming 83 percent of the vote, Nebraskans approved a ballot initiative to cap payday loan interest rates at 36 percent. Nebraska joined the ranks of states across the country that have capped interest rates to protect consumers and small businesses. Today 42 states and the District of Columbia cap the rate on a \$2,000, 2-year loan at a median of 32 percent.

Unfortunately, during the final days of the Trump Administration, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) finalized the “True Lender Rule,” which allows predatory consumer and small business lenders to charge rates of 179 percent or higher and evade state rate caps. The rushed rule protects “rent-a-bank” schemes where predatory lenders (the “true lender”) launder their loans through a few rogue banks (the “fake lender”). Just by putting a bank’s name on the paperwork—exactly as payday lenders did 20 years ago—predatory lenders are exempted from states’ rate caps thanks to this rule.

In January, seven states and the District of Columbia sued the OCC over the True Lender Rule, since it effectively prevents states from enforcing their own rate caps. In Congress, Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) introduced a Congressional Review Act (CRA) resolution to overturn the rule. Sen. Brown stated that the rule “eviscerates state consumer protection laws and allows unregulated payday lending across the nation.” Utilizing the CRA allows the rule to be struck down by a majority vote in both chambers, with limited debate and no possibility of filibuster.

In March, NCL joined a broad coalition of 300+ organizations from all 50 states and the District of Columbia in calling on



Congress to eliminate the “True Lender Rule.” At the time, NCL’s Public Policy Manager Sarah Robinson stated, “States across the country have passed laws to protect their citizens from predatory lending. This harmful rule undoes that progress. We call on Congress to protect consumers from these types of predatory loans that target vulnerable communities and seek to trap borrowers in a cycle of debt.”

In late April, the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee held a hearing primarily focused on the True Lender Rule. Advocates spoke about the ways the rule harms consumers and small businesses. Witnesses who detailed the real ways the rule is hurting members of their community included Senior Pastor of Friendship-West Baptist Church Frederick D. Haynes and North Carolina Attorney General Josh Stein.

In May, the Senate passed the CRA to overturn the True Lender Rule with a bipartisan vote of 52-47. Now, the coalition is pushing for swift passage by the House.

“During such hard economic times when people have lost their jobs, homes and, tragically, friends and family, no one should be subject to predatory lending as they try to get back on their feet,” said Robinson (*Get to know Sarah in a new staff Q&A at right*). “NCL will continue our push to ensure this harmful rule is overturned.”

MEET THE TEAM: Sarah Robinson Public Policy Manager



Joined staff March 2021

What is your background?

Throughout college I interned on both Senate and House campaigns. I viewed participating in the political process as a hands-on way I could make an impact in my community and help promote values I believed in. After taking a course on the economic development of Sub-Saharan Africa in grad school, I became interested in living and working abroad, which led me to join the Peace Corps and volunteer in Burkina Faso. Upon returning to the United States, I worked for Senator Heidi Heitkamp’s re-election campaign and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. After helping protect the Democratic House majority in 2020, I joined NCL, energized to advocate on behalf of workers and consumers.

What drew you to NCL?

As the granddaughter of a union railroad worker and public-school teacher, I was raised to appreciate the value of a good job and treating people with dignity and respect. I was attracted to NCL’s longstanding reputation as an organization that fights for the middle class and vulnerable populations as well as one that continuously pushes the envelope for progress in our society.

What do you love about the job?

I love the opportunity to work with different consumer advocacy groups and Congressional offices to find common ground and work towards our shared values.

LifeSmarts runs largest ever, double-virtual National Championship

Students from Jamestown, ND, and Webster County, KY, were crowned the 2020 and 2021 National LifeSmarts Champions at the virtual competition held in April 2021. Fifty-seven student teams from across the country competed over three days, showcasing their consumer knowledge in the National Consumers League's national event. Students competed hard and showcased great sportsmanship, while making new friends and creating life-long memories.

LifeSmarts is multi-faceted

Each year, the National LifeSmarts Championship focuses on the competition, but the program is more than just a competition for teens. As an academic content provider, LifeSmarts delivers free resources to thousands of educators in the classroom and in extracurricular settings each year. As a partnership opportunity, LifeSmarts offers collaborative opportunities to State Coordinators in 32 states and supportive corporate donors who champion consumer education for youth. And as a scholarship program, LifeSmarts awarded \$50,000 this year to winning students to help them pay for post-secondary education.

LifeSmarts meets the need

When LifeSmarts was created, educators hoped the program would inspire students to become the next generation of smarter consumers, help them avoid pitfalls and scams, and empower them to take charge of their finances, health, and other resources to ensure their bright futures. According to Coach Megan Pintus from West Virginia, the program is meeting its goals:

"LifeSmarts fills in the gaps traditional education leaves, and shows students how what they have learned in class comes into play in the real world," said Pintus. "My students complete many LifeSmarts lessons and activities in class, and, every

year, I have students who are not in my class ask if they can participate as well. LifeSmarts helps my students leave feeling confident that they won't look back and say, 'Why didn't they teach me this in school?'"

LifeSmarts by the numbers

During the 2020-2021 program year 125,000 students participated online, 40,000 competed virtually, 2,500 advanced to state competitions, and 255 competed at Nationals. Students answered 3.5 million questions in LifeSmarts competitions this year!

Congratulations to the Topic winners!

Teens from the champion teams competed as individuals, and the top five scorers received scholarships. The 2020 and 2021 winners were:



Environment

Clement Hilty, RI (2020)
Om Desai, MD (2021)



Personal Finance

Kareem Morsy, PA (2020)
Kylie Fung, CA (2021)



Health and Safety

Owen Sheff, RI (2020)
Rhett Huebner, TX (2021)



Consumer Rights and Responsibilities

Garret Wright, ND (2020)
Wyles Gilfoil, LA (2021)



Technology

Jarron Larson, ND (2020)
Yifan Zhao, CA (2021)

TOP 2020 & 2021 HONORS

Students of the Year



Andrew Gryskewicz, PA (2020)



Lily Martin, KY (2021)

Coaches of the Year



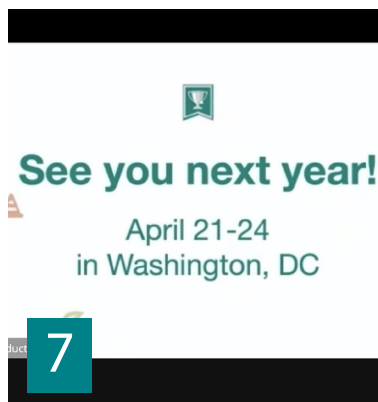
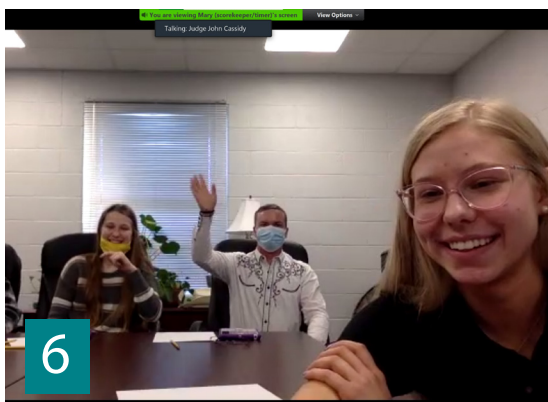
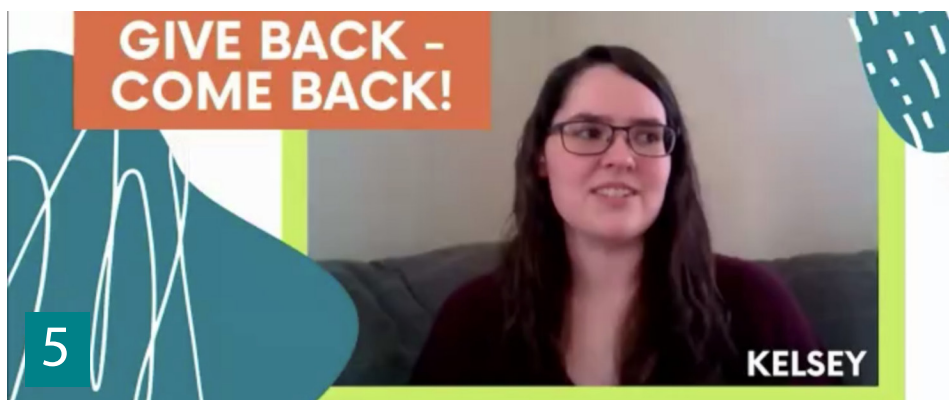
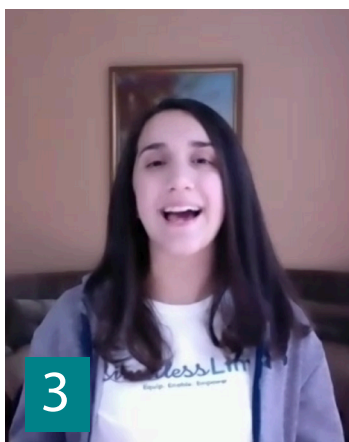
Scott Neu, WI (2020)



Sharon Rash, OK (2021)

Coordinator of the Year

Crystal Kraft, ND



1. LifeSmarts Program Director Lisa Hertzberg kicks off the weekend-long virtual event in April.
2. Hundreds of students from 57 teams logged in via Zoom to represent their states and organizations at the 28th national event.
3. LifeSmarts participants heard from guest speaker Mahsa Riar, who, as an elementary school student, founded Limitless Limb, a company that creates 3-D printed prosthetics for children with limb differences.
4. Students were treated to a variety of non-competition activities as well, including Game Night.
5. LifeSmarts alumni, like former Student of the Year Kelsey Becker pictured here, returned to volunteer and to send encouragement and good luck to the competing teams.
6. The 2021 National Champion team from North Dakota competes.
7. NCL unveiled the 2022 national event destination city: Washington, DC.

Advocating for mothers and infants in the United States

The state of maternal and infant health inequities in the United States is bleak. In recent years, we've seen a troubling rise in preterm birth rates—or when a baby is born before 37 weeks of pregnancy. Babies born early face greater risks of a variety of intellectual and developmental complications. And things are getting worse: in 2020, the U.S. preterm birth rate increased for the fifth year in a row.

Premature birth is also a leading cause of infant death. Last year, preterm birth and its complications were the second-largest contributor to infant death across the country. Preterm birth can be devastating for mothers and families and is very costly to the healthcare system.

Prematurity has a significantly disproportionate impact on black, indigenous, and women of color. According to the March of Dimes, the preterm birth rate among black American women is 50 percent higher than the rate among all other women.



“The United States has the sixth highest rate of preterm birth worldwide, with only India, China, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Indonesia faring worse,” said NCL Director of Health Policy Jeanette Contreras. “Too little research has been done to understand the causes behind these numbers. We are concerned that women of color and their newborns continue to be underrepresented in clinical studies about preterm birth and related conditions.”

Fortunately, there is an FDA-approved treatment available to help pregnant women prevent a recurrent preterm birth after they have already experienced one. It is a prescription medicine called hydroxyprogesterone caproate, which is also known as “17P” or “17-OHPC.” The treatment has played a significant role for thousands of women and their babies in helping mothers carry their pregnancies to full-term.

Recently, however, the FDA has proposed that 17P be pulled from the market in all forms—branded, generics, and compounded. Out of concern for this issue, the National Consumers League and a handful of other advocacy organizations came together to launch

the Preterm Birth Prevention Alliance this spring. The groups are joining forces to raise awareness and begin a dialogue with the FDA about the potential risks and impact of 17P’s withdrawal for at-risk pregnant women and their providers.

“We’re fighting for a more inclusive healthcare system that gives everyone an equal chance to have the best outcomes possible,” said Contreras. “Removing 17P without gaining a better understanding of who could benefit the most from its use is not in the best interests of patients, nor their healthcare providers, particularly as there are no other approved treatment options available.”

This spring, NCL has supported additional advocacy efforts related to protecting maternal health, including the Black Maternal Health “Momnibus,” a package of bills intended to comprehensively address the maternal health crisis that disproportionately impacts Black, Indigenous, and women of color in the United States. NCL also celebrated a provision within the American Rescue Plan that allows states to extend Medicaid coverage to women for up to a year after childbirth.

Preterm Birth Prevention Alliance founding members

1,000 Days

2020 Mom

American Association of Birth Centers

Black Mamas Matter Alliance

Black Women’s Health Imperative

Expecting Health

Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies
Montana

HealthyWomen

Miracle Babies

National Birth Equity Collaborative

National Black Midwives Alliance

National Consumers League

National Partnership for Women &
Families

Sidelines High-Risk Pregnancy
Support

SisterReach

Fighting for access to reproductive health options

Recent advocacy efforts focused on contraceptive coverage, prescriptions via mail

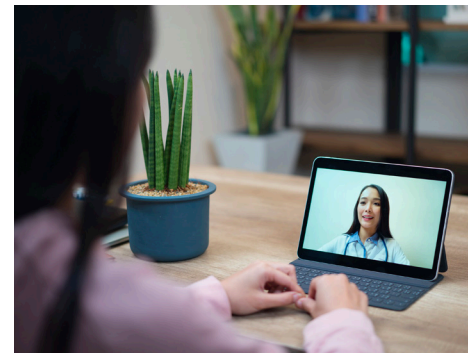
Founded in 1899 by progressive women reformers, the National Consumers League has a long history of advocating for women's reproductive justice. In the spirit of this legacy, NCL continues its commitment to supporting increased access to contraception—regardless of ability to pay. In April 2021, NCL Executive Director Sally Greenberg penned an opinion piece in *The Hill* asserting that, as contraception is an essential part of health care, the full array of FDA-approved contraceptives should be fully covered by insurance.

NCL also applauded the Food and Drug

Administration (FDA) for moving to increase access to the abortion pill, mifepristone. As of April 12, the FDA will temporarily allow mifepristone to be dispensed by mail for the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Patients are now able to obtain a safe and effective abortion pill through a telemedicine consult, without risking exposure to COVID-19 with an in-person visit. While certainly a win for women's health, more importantly



it is a win for women who live in rural and medically underserved communities who rely largely on telemedicine for their health care.



NCL plays strong role in vaccine advocacy

In efforts to counteract vaccine safety disinformation, NCL, joined by nine patient and consumer advocacy organizations, sent a joint letter to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), expressing outrage regarding Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) monies granted to leading American anti-vaccine groups. The letter demanded that the SBA rescind nearly a million dollars' worth of PPP loans from some of the most virulent groups—each of which has spread misleading information about the coronavirus.

Recognizing that Latino communities hardest hit by the pandemic continue to lag in vaccination rates, NCL published a Spanish-language blog addressing vaccine hesitancy and COVID myths and urged consumers to welcome the newly available Janssen vaccine as an additional safe and effective way to curb the pandemic.

NCL continues its advocacy to ensure the safety and equitable distribution of vaccines across the lifespan. Early in 2021, NCL testified before the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee of Immunization Practices (ACIP) to express disappointment in the weakening of recommendations for

the Hepatitis B (HBV) vaccine. Health disparities contribute largely to the burden for Hepatitis B infection, with Asian/Pacific islanders and non-Hispanic black communities having the highest rates of HBV-related death. NCL urges the CDC to support a large-scale education and outreach campaign to raise awareness of the risk of HepB in older adults and called for increased HepB screening in high-risk communities across the country.

NCL testified before the FDA, Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER), Vaccine and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) in support of the responsible use of Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) of the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen Biotech) COVID-19 vaccine, pointing to the benefit the vaccine's one-shot dose would have for rural and medically underserved communities. We followed suit in April when testifying before the CDC ACIP in support of lifting a temporary pause on the administration of the Janssen vaccine, and recognized that the vaccine surveillance systems in place are working as they should to ensure the safety of the American people.



Each year, NCL hosts the *Script Your Future* Medication Adherence Team Challenge, a competition among students of pharmacy, nursing, and medicine to raise awareness about medication adherence, including building confidence about vaccines.

Visit ScriptYourFuture.org to learn more about this year's event.

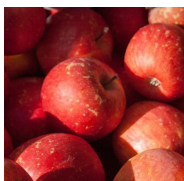
New Dietary Guidelines, pro-nutrition Biden Administration set the stage for action on food policy

Every five years since 1980, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) have issued advice on what to eat and drink to promote good health. But the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025*, released at the end of 2020, were a wakeup call.

Documenting the latest evidence on the link between diet and health, the new Dietary Guidelines underscores an epidemic of obesity and diet-related diseases in the United States. It found that almost 75 percent of adults are overweight or obese, about 40 percent of children and adolescents are at an unhealthy weight, six in 10 adults have one or more diet-related chronic disease, and 7 percent of children and teens have been diagnosed with high blood cholesterol levels.

Reversing these statistics requires new thinking. That is why the newest guidelines stress that, starting from birth, a person's nutritional needs should come from a healthy dietary pattern consisting mostly of nutrient-dense foods and beverages—meaning those that provide vitamins, minerals, and other health-promoting nutrients without consuming too many calories. The new Dietary Guidelines encourage Americans to consume mostly fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fat-free and low-fat dairy products, and lean meats, poultry, and to limit alcoholic beverages and foods and beverages high in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium.

Considering these new recommendations, NCL will raise awareness about a new planning tool from USDA nutritionists called “My Plate” that helps consumers choose options that are full of nutrients and emphasize portion control, lower sodium intake, and mandate transparent and accurate labeling.



Visit dietaryguidelines.gov to download the full Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025 report.

“The new Dietary Guidelines represent a call to action,” said NCL Executive Director Sally Greenberg. “NCL will advance their recommendations to achieve a healthy balance of food choices because the foods and beverages people consume have a profound impact on their health.”

As the food and nutrition policy debate ramped up at the federal level, in March NCL released a 10-step action plan to address the explosion of food-related diseases in the United States and the unprecedented hunger and food safety challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the goal of improving food safety, reducing food insecurity, and addressing food waste, the action plan calls for intensified education and advocacy. Policy priorities include portion control and balance, sodium reduction, labeling of sweeteners and alcohol, and more. Visit nclnet.org/2021_food_priorities to read the policy priorities.

Food Issues Forums

NCL also recently launched—in partnership with the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics—a new series of Food Issues Forums as a unique structure to tackle critical issues from farm to table. In February, the first forum, *Building Back Better in Food and Nutrition Policy: Setting the Agenda for 2021 and Beyond*, previewed plans for the Administration's first 100 days and top policy priorities for consumer and nutrition advocates. Future topics will include serving sizes, caffeine content labeling, and principles for modernizing the standards of what ingredients a food must contain in order to be called a certain thing.



Watch our inaugural Food Forum on YouTube at: bit.ly/3wpUQAQ.

Help us protect child farmworkers by supporting advocate-backed legislation

The “arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice”—a phrase many of us are familiar with. It originated with Theodore Parker, the Massachusetts abolitionist, but was made famous by Martin Luther King, Jr. At NCL, we embrace this teaching.

NCL has been engaged in a long-term fight for human rights and civil rights since our founding in 1899. Florence Kelley, NCL’s first General Secretary, made eradication of child labor in the United States her goal. The legacy of her work goes on today in NCL’s efforts to fight against exploitative child labor. The average American isn’t aware that agriculture was excluded from U.S. child labor laws when the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 was enacted to end most forms of child labor in the United States.

Through its work with the Child Labor Coalition, which NCL co-founded in 1989 and continues to coordinate and staff, we have fought to close that loophole. Going back to the 1990s, NCL has backed legislation to raise the age at which children can begin farm work from the current 12 to at least 14. Legislation supported by NCL would raise the age of the most hazardous farm work from 16 to 18—the minimum age that applies to non-agricultural hazardous work. Children’s Act for Responsible Employment and Farm Safety, the CARE Act, would not apply to children of farmers, but it would help protect an estimated 300,000 to 400,000 children, mostly Latino, who too often work alongside farmworker parents harvesting fruits and vegetables.

This spring, NCL is working with Rep.



Farmworkers harvesting onions in El Centro, California.

Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) to re-introduce the bill and identify a Senate sponsor. Please consider calling your member of Congress to let them know you support this crucial legislation and its protection of children from work that damages their health and education.

Fighting forced, child marriage in America

Many of us would be shocked to learn that child marriage is an American problem. But research shows that that 300,000 U.S. minors—mostly 16 or 17 but sometimes as young as 10—were married between 2000 and 2018. Most were girls wed to men many years older.

Girls who marry before 18 have significantly higher risks of health issues and school dropout. Child marriage often means profoundly reduced lifetime earnings and ultimately divorce.

Three years ago, NCL began working with the group Unchained at Last and learned the compelling personal story of the group’s founder, Fraidy Reiss. The advocacy campaign to end child marriage is being fought at the state level. Many states ban marriage for those under 18 but have exemptions if parents or judges provide permission. That itself is a problem, since

many times parents force their children to marry underage for a variety of reasons. In addition, a dozen states have no minimum age for child marriage when exemptions are considered.

Unchained at Last and its allies, including NCL, have succeeded in passage in four states—New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Minnesota—of bills to ban marriage without exemptions before 18. NCL has testified in several states and continues to raise awareness through social media.

“Most states do not allow children to vote, or to buy cigarettes or alcohol, but 46 states permit children to be married,” said NCL Director of Child Labor Advocacy Reid Maki. “We don’t think that’s right. Marriage is one of the most important decisions in life and should be made by adults and be made freely.”



Child and forced marriage puts the “lock” in wedlock

Fraidy Reiss, activist and founder/director of Unchained At Last, joins us to discuss the silent scourge of child marriage in America.

Find the episode on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, and Stitcher.



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protect and promote social and economic justice
for consumers and workers in the United States
and abroad.

Announcing Trumpeter 2021

NCL is moving forward after a very difficult year, and we are looking forward to celebrating with you our amazing honorees for this year's Trumpeter Awards and Florence Kelley Consumer Leadership Award.

2021 Trumpeter Award



Rohit Chopra
Commissioner
FTC



Dana Nessel
Attorney General
State of Michigan

Florence Kelley Award



April Verrett
President
SEIU Local 1015

Join us on October 12 at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, DC as we pay tribute to these exceptional leaders. For event details and sponsorship opportunities, contact NCL's Director of Development Karen Silberstein at karens@nclnet.org or (301) 538-7885.