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TOP TEN FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE ISSUE FOR WOMEN Denver Women's Commission December 2011

- 1. Social Security**—This is a basic safety net keeping older women above the poverty line. Fixes such as raising the ceiling on earnings taxed can keep this program solvent. There is a strong constituency to protect Social Security.
- 2. Medicaid** – Access to health care or those the private markets do not reach: Low income individuals, people with disabilities and seniors needing long term care. State governments are critical advocates for this program. This program will also be critical to successful implementation of the Affordable Care Act.
- 3. Medicare** – Health care for older adults and some with disabilities. Strong constituency of older adults and health care providers. Needs cost containment measures to stay solvent, like allowing the federal government to negotiate prescription drug costs.
- 4. Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit** – These programs are incredible successful in keeping low wage and middle income children out of poverty. EITC expansions under President Obama and Child Tax Credit Expansions under Presidents Bush and Obama are set to expire December 31, 2012. These credits should also be part of any tax reform overhaul, to help pull children out of poverty. Lacks strong advocacy voice besides President Obama and advocates concerned about poverty.
- 5. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families** – Denver will reduce its program by 10% due to funding losses and high caseloads. Anticipate another 10% cut in the coming year in allocations to counties. Lacks strong advocacy voice besides local governments and advocates concerned about poverty. TANF may be continued or reauthorized in 2012.
- 6. Affordable Care Act** – Full implementation is critical to helping the currently uninsured, scheduled to get coverage in 2014. Some strong political opposition. Pending Supreme Court Case regarding individual mandate. Access to abortion for women was reduced by the Affordable Care Act, and choice is being attacked through the Affordable Care Act implementation. Health Care Industry support for full implementation.
- 7. Care Care Funding** -- Colorado and Denver are facing a child care funding crisis. Low income parents cannot earn enough to pay market rate for child care. TANF funding shortfalls have reduced the transfer of dollars to Child Care. Overall federal child care funding has been stable the last few years, but programs do not serve a majority of those eligible due to insufficient funds. Many programs are vulnerable to federal budget cuts under sequestration.
- 8. Title X, National Family Planning Program**—In Colorado, funds birth control and reproductive Health Services through State Health Department. Political target.
- 9. Violence Against Women Act** –Critical funding for services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking. Currently up for reauthorization.
- 10. Supports for Low-Income Families** – Cuts in discretionary programs such as subsidized housing, Low Income Energy Assistance, Women Infants and Children (WIC) and other nutrition programs, job training , etc. can have a cumulative effect on individual families.