



*Ladies of Charity of the United States of America*<sup>®</sup>  
Advocacy Committee  
**HOW DO WE ADVOCATE?**

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**Background:**

The Advocacy Committee of the National Board was established in 2009. The charge to the committee is to assist the National Board and Local Associations to engage in advocacy through establishing theme Issues, i.e. *Prevention of Violence Against Women*. Additionally, the Board charged this committee to act in partnership with the “Voice of the Poor” of the SSVDP and Catholic Charities USA to engage the Board and Local Associations in education and legislative advocacy on issues of poverty. The Committee has integrated “systemic change methodology” and collaboration with the Vincentian Family into our Advocacy efforts.

Activities:

- Development of an Advocacy Statement for the 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- Research on Theme Statement and National Assembly Resolutions
- Articles for the Web and *Servicette* “Advocacy Connections”
- Represent the National Board at the USCCB Coalition of Catholic Agencies Against Human Trafficking (Washington DC) and planning for the Catholic Social Ministry Conference of the USCCB.
- Liaison with Voice of the Poor and CCUSA Social Policy
- Education Sessions for the Board
- Workshops at the National Assembly
- Participation in the Vincentian Family Collaborators National and Regional Meetings
- Created the role of Advocacy Liaisons who reach out in the five regions to work with Local Associations on issues and bring issues to the attention of the Advocacy Committee

**Action/Direction:**

We are presently monitoring the following issues: Health Care for All, Supporting Family Caregiving, Preventing Violence Against Women (the connection between guns and Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking) Dreamers Legislation, Education on the Environment, as well as AIC advocacy on Homelessness at the UN.

At national assemblies, the following resolutions were adopted by the delegates.

2017: Welcoming the Stranger: Standing with Dreamers

2015: Caring for Our Common Home

We provide updates on issues through the e-blasts and Facebook of LCUSA and in the *Servicette*.

The advocacy liaisons for each region also help to highlight issues of concern for each region and keep the region updated.

We would also like to hear from you? How can we help you to “*Do charity with Justice!*”

MaryAnn Dantuono  
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2018

**HOW WE DO ADVOCACY! – AN ASSOCIATION PERSPECTIVE**  
**MARIE A. COPELAND** ALBANY, NY ASSOCIATION,  
NE REGION ADVOCACY LIAISON

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In 2011, I was asked by the President to be the liaison for Public Policy/Legislation for the Albany Association of the Ladies of Charity. In this capacity, I report on local/state and federal issues; on using our collective voice to make a difference.

About three years ago, I asked Sheila Morris Barnes to co-chair this Committee. Sheila collects information on local/state issues and emails that information to me for inclusion with my report on national/federal issues. Working with others, we keep the website of our Albany Association up to date, including the Public Policy section. Our Association's Newsletter includes an update of Public Policy/Legislation quarterly. As a result of the Ladies' involvement in advocacy, our local Daughters of Charity, under the leadership of Sr. Donna Franklin, have begun a Public Policy Group. In early September, they will have Kathleen Gallagher, Director of Pro-Life Activities, NYS Catholic Conference, speak to their group about advocacy.

The NYS Catholic Conference is responsible for translating Catholic teachings into action in the public policy arena. The Conference invites and encourages Catholics across the State to become more aware, concerned and active in efforts to shape public policies for the betterment of all society by joining the Catholic Action Network (CAN) and raising our voices on behalf of the voiceless. CAN is the official voice of the Catholic Church in the Empire State. Members of CAN receive Action Alerts on issues of importance to the NYS Catholic Bishops. An email is provided which may be changed or added to before sending it to the Governor and legislators urging action for or against an issue. Associations in other states may have a Catholic Conference in their state and should encourage their members to join the equivalent of their Catholic Action Network. Our collective voice speaks volumes to make changes at the local and state level.

Other sources of information for reports to the Board include AARP New York and the AARP Monthly Newsletter; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB); and Catholic Charities, USA. Ladies of Charity are also encouraged to sign up for VoterVoice on the SSVDP USA website to receive Alerts on national issues.

We try to keep our Ladies and the Daughters informed each month; however, if an issue needs immediate attention, we send an e-blast to all members who have an email address on file.

As the Northeast Region Liaison of the LCUSA Advocacy Committee, I email the monthly report presented at the Albany Board Meetings to keep the Northeast Region Associations informed.

Advocacy works! Thank you for using your voice "to extend our efforts beyond serving the immediate needs of the poor." It is how we fulfill our mission to engage in "social" and "political" charity.

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