Hello AWHONN members,

It was so great to see everyone at the annual conference last week. The conference was exceptional again this year with dynamic speakers, great food, and lots of FUN! I am already looking forward to next year.

As promised, here is an update on my legislative presentation. AWHONN headquarters asked us to champion three reauthorization bills:

        S.2415 – The Preventing Maternal Deaths Reauthorization Act of 2023

        S.1573 – The PREEMIE Reauthorization Act of 2023

        H.R.5568/S.2846 – Community, Access, Resources, Empowerment (CARE) for Moms Act

NOTES:

  These are bills currently in place but have expired or will soon expire.

  There are no Oklahoma cosponsors supporting the reauthorization of these bills.

  Passing these bills does not secure funding. Once passed the bills must then go to the appropriations committee to be considered for funding.

I am including Fact Sheets produced by AWHONN for details along with these notes:

        S.2415 – currently “on hold” by Senator Rand Paul [R-KY]. Dr. Paul feels strongly that there should be some form of Informed Consent attached to this bill.

        S.1573 – Supported by 155 organizations, passed the House last year on Oct. 4, must pass the Senate by Dec. 31 or will have to start over.

        H.R.5568/S.2846 – Drafted as the next stage post the maternal and Morbidity Bill; Requires hospitals to notify HHS before closing birthing units; Funds PQICs in 50 states; Supports Doulas, and Perinatal Collaboratives.

Also presented was H.R. 7141 – Supporting Premature Infant Nutrition Act of 2024 – mandates insurance coverage for human milk fortifier in an effort to prevent NEC in newborns.

So often, many of us have stated “I am just not political”. However, there are bills introduced and passed each session that affect our lives, our children’s lives, our health and/or the health of our patients. You are encouraged to get involved, look at policies at the local, state, and national levels with new eyes. As advocates for women, newborns, and nurses, the first question to be asked about *any* policy is, “How will this policy affect the health of those I care for?” (AWHONN)

This election season, research the candidates at every level of office.  Look at those running for local school boards and ask what agenda or curriculum do they support? Look at incumbents in every office at the state and national level to review past voting records. Are they listening to and supporting their constituents?  Are they being re-elected year after year r/t name recognition or because they are truly advocating for the state that sent them to Congress? Elections have consequences so educate yourself on exactly what you are voting for when casting your ballots. Our voices as nurses must be heard and we need to get LOUDER as trusted advocates for health-related matters.