

Our Public Policy Commitment

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The Public Issues Leadership Development (PILD) Conference held annually in Washington DC has been a collaborative effort of the Joint Council of Extension Professionals since 1993. This conference provides Extension colleagues from across the country with an opportunity to meet with elected officials face-to-face, telling the story of Extension work and the impact it has on local communities and constituents. It is a conference many attendees consider a highlight of association membership.



Did you know PILD had its beginnings with our association? The first Annual NAEHE (National Association of Extension Home Economists) Forum on Public Policy Education was held March 3-6, 1985, at the National 4-H Center in Chevy Chase, Maryland. Forty-two participants from 40 states attended the session, learning about the public policy process, how to analyze issues and their effects on families and exploring roles for Home Economists in public policy education. That first Forum was much like the current PILD Conference, spending the first two days learning about public policy and meeting federal agency staff, with the third day having “hill” visits with elected officials.

Some years, the Forum used National Issues Forum position papers to “practice” exploring a public policy issue. In 1991 attendees examined: “Regaining The Edge: Are we up to the job? Participants “practiced” exploring issues using three position papers: #1 Motivating the Work Force: Revival of the Work Ethic, #2 Expanding the Work Force: Basic Skills for the Bottom Third and #3 Upgrading the Work Force: New Skills for the Twenty-first Century. As the 1992 Conference concluded, association members learned colleagues from NAE4-HA, NACAA and ESP would be joining NAEHE at the National 4-H Center the following year for a public policy education forum. Since then, the location has changed, additional groups have been added, but the focus remained – a commitment to understanding public policy.

Offshoots of the Forums and PILD Conferences are our Impact Statements and Living Well week – two major efforts over the last twenty plus years for telling our story to elected officials and our constituents. Thanks to our VPs for Public Policy, the Public Policy Chairs, PILD Conference Committee members and NAEHE/NEAFCS Presidents for investing in and promoting our public policy work.

p.s. PILD is also a GREAT way to collaborate with colleagues, learn how to ride the DC Metro and see Washington DC in the spring time!