

March 3, 2015

The Honorable Nikki Haley
Office of the Governor
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Governor Haley:

On behalf of the two Girl Scout councils operating in South Carolina, we look forward to working with you this year to advance issues that impact girls. Throughout our state, we serve approximately 28,000 girls and adult volunteers.

Girl Scouts continues as the preeminent leadership development organization for girls in the world, with almost 3 million members in the USA and its territories, 17,000 members in over 90 countries around the globe, and an alumnae base of more than 59 million American women. Girl Scouts is open to all girls ages 5 to 17 and values diversity and inclusiveness. For over a century, Girl Scouts has provided leadership experiences that build “girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.”

We continue to serve as a resource to policymakers, courtesy of our national, evidence-informed programming and original research conducted by the Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI). As a follow-up to last year’s national report *The State of Girls: Unfinished Business*, GSRI released *The State of Girls: Thriving or Surviving*, which examines girls’ well-being across each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. This report summarizes some of the key social, economic, and health issues affecting girls ages 5 to 17, and finds that where in the country girls live matters. The *State of Girls in South Carolina* report is enclosed. Among the 50 states, we rank 38th on the overall well-being of girls. Of the five indicators, we are lowest in economic well-being (47th), physical health and safety (46th), and education (40th).

As a leading voice on girls’ healthy growth and development, we serve as a resource for research, information, advice, and support on issues that impact girls – and we welcome the opportunity to work with you.

In our effort to build tomorrow’s leaders Girl Scouts is prioritizing the following public policy priorities:

- **Encourage Healthy Living Opportunities for Girls**
 - Increasing Access to Outdoor Activities
 - Preventing Bullying/Relational Aggression and Building Healthy Relationships
- **Promote Economic Opportunities for Girls**
 - Increasing Girls’ Involvement in STEM
 - Strengthening Financial Literacy and Entrepreneurial Skills
- **Foster Global Citizenship and a Global Voice for Girls**
- **Support a Strong Nonprofit Community and Girl Scout Experience**

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We stand ready to discuss the issues, suggest policy solutions, serve on advisory committees, testify at hearings, and provide valuable research and background information; and are eager to partner with you to benefit girls and their families and communities.

We look forward to working with you to promote the Girl Scout 2015 State Legislative Agenda issues to help girls achieve their full leadership potential.

Sincerely,



Kim Hutzell
President & CEO
Girl Scouts of South Carolina - Mountains to Midlands



Loretta Graham
CEO
Girl Scouts of Eastern South Carolina

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Girl Scouts 2015 STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Girl Scouts is the preeminent organization for girls in the world, with nearly 3 million members in the United States and an alumnae base of more than 59 million American women. Girl Scouts provides the premier leadership development experience for girls ages 5 to 17.

Public policies are needed to support programs that allow young people to grow up healthy and strong, develop skills for today's and tomorrow's jobs, and connect to their communities and their world. Girl Scouts supports policies that let girls know they matter and gain the necessary social and emotional skills to succeed in life.

Girl Scouts is eager to work with state policymakers to create opportunities and environments that foster girl's leadership development and well-being. To advance the cause of girls, Girl Scouts is focusing on the following public policy priorities as reflected in our research and program offerings:

Encourage Healthy Living Opportunities for Girls

Increase access to outdoor activities

Since its beginning in 1912, Girl Scouts has been committed to ensuring every girl has a unique outdoor experience. According to *More Than S'mores* (2013), a report done by the Girl Scouts Research Institute (GSRI), more than 70 percent of the nearly 3,000 girls surveyed said Girl Scouts had allowed them to try an outdoor activity for the first time, and 79 percent of Latina girls say they first tried an outdoor activity through Girl Scouts. Finally, the effects of monthly outdoor exposure on environmental stewardship and leadership traits were even more pronounced for underserved girls.

Girl Scouts supports efforts to:

- *Ensure that all girls get outdoors regularly and in varied ways, particularly underserved girls who may have limited opportunities to experience nature.*
- *Provide opportunities for girls to explore solutions to environmental issues and develop an increased understanding of the natural sciences, natural resource management, and STEM careers.*

Prevent bullying/relational aggression and build healthy relationships

According to the GSRI's *State of Girls* report, about 30 percent of girls have experienced some form of bullying or relational aggression from their peers. In addressing this issue, Girl Scouts gives girls the skills to develop healthy relationships and prevent bullying behavior outright. Our BFF (Be a Friend First) bullying prevention program, designed for middle school girls, focuses directly on reducing bullying, including cyberbullying and relational aggression.

Girl Scouts supports efforts to:

- *Engage youth-serving organizations as partners that can provide education and training programs for middle school (and younger) youth in the interest of reducing relational aggression, bullying, and adolescent violence and creating safe schools and communities.*

Promote Economic Opportunities for Girls

Increase girls' involvement in STEM

Girl Scouts is committed to ensuring that every girl has the opportunity to explore and build an interest and possible career path in STEM-related fields. As cited in the GSRI's *Generation STEM: What Girls Say About Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math* (2012), 74 percent of teen girls show interest in STEM; however, they have low exposure to STEM fields.

Girl Scouts supports efforts to:

- *Expose girls to diverse role models and mentors.*
- *Promote proven techniques for engaging girls in STEM, including single-gender learning environments and hands-on, inquiry-based learning.*
- *Expand out-of-school STEM programming to girls and underrepresented minorities.*

Strengthen financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills

As published in the 2013 GSRI report *Having It All: Girls and Financial Literacy* (2013), 90 percent of girls say it's important for them to learn how to manage money; however, just 12 percent feel confident in making financial decisions. For over a century, Girl Scouts has made financial literacy an integral part of its programming, with 23 percent of the 132 Girl Scout badges related to financial empowerment skills.

In addition to the financial literacy badges, the Girl Scout Cookie Program is often girls' first introduction to business planning, teaching them five key skills: goal setting, decision making, money management, people skills, and business ethics. Starting with the 2015 cookie season, Girl Scouts is offering an online cookie-selling platform as a part of its traditional cookie program. Girls will be able to create their own online presence for cookie sales, learn valuable technological skills, and reinforce the truly unique financial empowerment skills developed by Girl Scouts.

Girl Scouts supports efforts to:

- *Ensure that all girls have financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills.*
- *Bolster the role of youth-serving organizations in providing real-world financial literacy and entrepreneurial experiences for girls.*
- *Leverage educational technology to strengthen financial literacy capabilities for youth.*

Foster Global Citizenship and a Global Voice for Girls

Girl Scouts is dedicated to ensuring that girls have opportunities to understand their relationship to the larger world—even if they don't travel beyond their own community—so they can develop into responsible global citizens. Girl Scouts strives to promote cross-cultural learning opportunities and educate girls on relevant global issues that inspire them to take action. In 2014, more than a quarter of nominations for our organization's highest recognition, the Girl Scout Gold Award, entailed girls taking action on global issues.

Girl Scouts supports efforts to:

- *Provide cross-cultural opportunities for international travel.*
- *Support youth-serving organizations offering educational programs that target global issues.*
- *Support awareness of the impact in investing in girls globally.*
- *Promote a sense of global citizenship.*

Support a Strong Nonprofit Community and Girl Scout Experience

Girl Scouts is proud to partner with organizations and coalitions in the nonprofit sector to ensure that nonprofits not only survive but flourish as employers providing essential services. We support policies that help nonprofits screen, recruit, and retain staff and volunteers, and incentivize charitable giving. Girl Scouts is also committed to supporting policies that help us deliver on our mission and increase our capacity to serve girls.

Girl Scouts supports efforts to:

- *Ensure a healthy, effective, and vibrant nonprofit community.*
- *Maintain the financial stability of the Girl Scout Movement to ensure that the Girl Scout Leadership Experience can be offered to an increasing number of girls.*

For more information on the original research conducted by the Girl Scouts Research Institute used to support our public policy priorities, go to <https://www.girlscouts.org/research/>.

The State of Girls in South Carolina

This profile summarizes some of the key social, economic, and health issues affecting the 384,050 girls ages 5 to 17 living in South Carolina. Girls in South Carolina rank 38th out of 50 states on an overall index of well-being that includes measures of girls' physical health and safety, economic well-being, education, emotional health, and extracurricular activities.

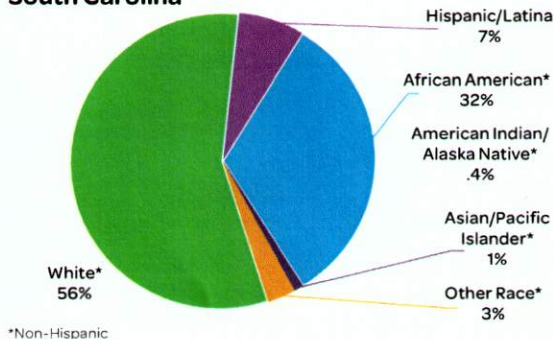
State Rankings of Girls' Overall Well-Being

Top States	Rank
New Hampshire	1
North Dakota	2
South Dakota	3
Massachusetts	4
Vermont	5
South Carolina	38

Areas of Girls' Well-Being in South Carolina

Area	State Rank
Physical Health and Safety	46
Economic Well-Being	47
Education	40
Emotional Health	30
Extracurricular Activities	15

Racial/Ethnic Composition of Girls in South Carolina



In 2012, about 7% of girls ages 5 to 17 in South Carolina were Latina, 56% were white, 0.4% were American Indian, 32% were African American, 1% were Asian, and 3% identified with other racial groups.

About 9% of girls ages 5 to 17 in South Carolina live in immigrant families,* compared with 24% of school-age girls nationwide.

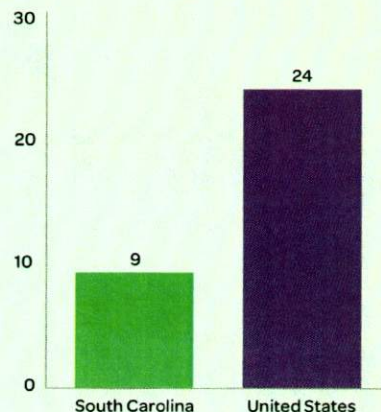
*Children who are foreign-born or who reside with at least one foreign-born parent.

Girls Ages 5–17 in Poverty, by Race/Ethnicity

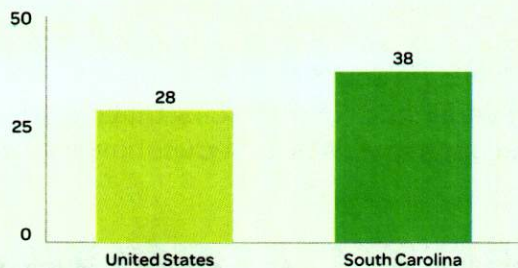
Race/Ethnicity	Percent
All girls	26
White*	17
Hispanic/Latina	37
African American/Black*	40
Other Race*	21

*Non-Hispanic.

Girls Ages 5–17 in Immigrant Families (%)



Girls Ages 10–17 Who Are Overweight or Obese (%)

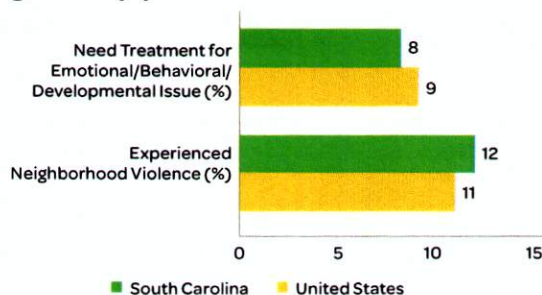


In South Carolina, about 26% of school-age girls are living in poverty.

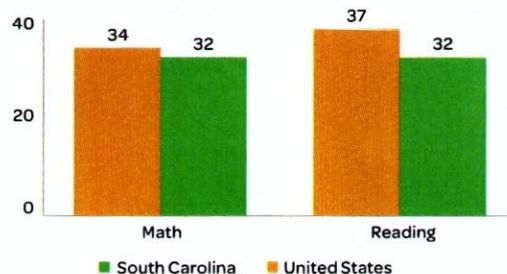
About 38% of girls ages 10 to 17 are overweight or obese.

Roughly 12% of girls ages 6 to 17 have experienced neighborhood violence.

Emotional Health and Safety of Girls Ages 6–17 (%)



Girls Who Are Proficient or Above in 8th Grade Math and 4th Grade Reading (%)

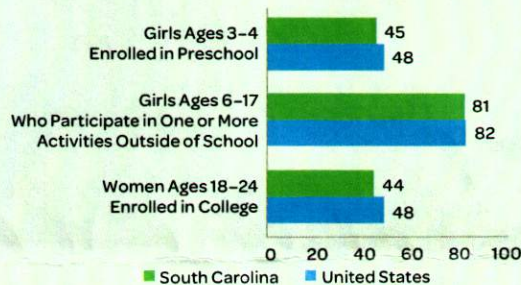


Roughly 32% of fourth-grade girls in South Carolina are proficient in reading and 32% of eighth-grade girls are proficient in math.

In South Carolina, 45% of 3- to 4-year-old girls are enrolled in preschool.

About 81% of girls ages 6 to 17 participate in at least one extracurricular activity.

School Enrollment and Extracurricular Activities (%)



Data is not destiny! As the premier leadership organization for girls, Girl Scouts is committed to ensuring that all girls develop to their full potential. To learn more, visit www.girlscouts.org/stateofgirls.

Source: PRB analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau 2012 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Samples, U.S. Census Bureau 2012 Population Estimates, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011–12 National Survey of Children's Health, and U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). For information about the state-level index of girls' well-being, see www.girlscouts.org/stateofgirls.

Note: ACS and NSCH estimates are based on surveys of the population and are subject to both sampling and nonsampling error.