DALLAS – February 6, 2017 – The recent Women’s March on Washington – and Sister Marches around the globe – showcased the formidable power of the female voice in spotlighting major issues, such as inequality and discrimination, that affect our country and our people.

Yet, in order to effect major change, particularly as it relates to parity, it is imperative that more women not only engage in their communities and in issues-related discourse, but, more importantly, engage in political leadership, where the levers of power to make change actually reside.

IGNITE, a national non-profit, non-partisan organization focused on doing just that by building a pipeline of next-generation leaders and a movement of women who are politically ambitious. IGNITE trains young women from high schools, colleges and universities across the United States how to think critically about policy, better understand the role of political leadership in effecting change, become civically involved, and, ultimately, step into public service.

IGNITE will host its annual Texas Young Women’s Political Leadership Conference, on Saturday, February 25, 2017, from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., at the Mack Ballroom on the Southern Methodist University campus in Dallas. The conference is free for high school students and their parents; registration for college students is $10.00 per person.

Organizers anticipate 175 young women to attend, in addition to 30-40 elected officials, including State Representative Linda Koop, who will deliver the keynote address. The conference will also honor Judge Tonya Parker of the 116th Civil District Court, and attorney John Palter. Conference sessions will focus on topics ranging from Immigration to Campus Carry. Students will be introduced to careers in public service and learn tangible campaign skills like fundraising and communicating your message.

With only 19 percent of U.S. Congressional positions held by women, according to the Center for American Women and Politics, there is a dire need for women to engage in the political process.

“Without significant intervention, the United States won’t reach gender parity for at least another century,” said Dr. Margo McClinton Stoglin, director of Texas’ IGNITE program. “Our mission is to inspire political ambition in girls and young women when they are forming their identities and aspirations in an effort to turn the tide. We want them to have the tools, resources, and mentors to prepare them to serve in public office.”

IGNITE’s annual conference, in addition to ongoing programming at the high school and college levels, focuses on building leadership skills, helping young women deepen their expertise on
public-policy issues, and exposing them to a powerful network of elected women who serve as role models and help the young women gain access opportunities to exercise political leadership and prepare to run and lead.

Since 2009, IGNITE has trained more than 5,000 young women in their own communities. Forty-six percent of IGNITE’s college women have gone on to volunteer or intern in the office of an elected official, and 73 percent report that they feel driven to run for public office.

“I joined Ignite because she wanted to further develop her research and presentation skills, and become civically engaged,” Megan Hanson, University of Texas in Austin IGNITE President.

“These young women are exceptional, and have the power, intellect and drive to make a difference not only in their own communities, but in the future for all Americans,” added Dr. McClinton Stoglin.

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