

## **NC Advocates Travel to DC for National Advocacy Days**

Advocacy is one of our top priorities for the Alliance, and I'm pleased to share that 15 staff and volunteers traveled to Washington, DC, with our state's lobbying team and one youth advocate to participate in the YMCA of the USA's National Advocacy Days February 12 – 14<sup>th</sup>.

The NC delegation held meetings with both Senator Budd and Tillis' offices and met with seven of our 14 House of Representatives members and their staff.

The focus of this year's National Advocacy Days was, as in most years, funding for childcare through an ask for maximum funding for the Child Care Development Block Grant, which funds child care subsidy vouchers for low-income NC families. We also requested maximum funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, to continue to support our YMCA's work in the Y's evidence-based health programs, Diabetes Prevention Program, Moving for Better Balance (falls prevention), the Y's Weight Loss Program, Healthy Weight and Your Child, Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring, and Enhance Fitness for arthritis treatment. Lastly, we requested members co-sponsor the Charitable Giving Act, which would allow more US taxpayers to deduct charitable gifts from their income taxes.

Our meetings were met with mostly positive reactions from our lawmakers, making it a productive trip.

On the state level, while we will not be hosting State Advocacy Days in 2024 because it is a "short session" year, the Y will be working alongside our partners to identify solutions for the impending childcare funding gap that we will be left with after Child Care Stabilization funds run dry. Additionally, we will continue to advocate for solutions allowing us to serve more school-age children in licensed childcare through proposing easy changes to the rules regulating school-age childcare.

The NC General Assembly's short session begins April 24<sup>th</sup>, and we anticipate it being a truly short session, given that 2024 is an election year. We, of course, will be watching for any legislation on either the federal or state levels that could benefit or harm our mission to serve all and strengthen communities.

Be sure you are signed up to support our advocacy efforts by registering for the YMCA Advocates Action Network at [ymca.net/action](https://ymca.net/action).