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# LGBTQ+ delegation meets with Federation of Cuban Women

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SLL photo

Havana — The LGBTQ+ delegation included multicultural, multi-generational, gay men, lesbians, bisexual, trans, and gender-nonconforming representatives from all over the U.S. We visited so many organizations, but among the most inspiring for this writer was the visit to the Federation of Cuban Women.

It was inspiring because it provided a beacon of hope as to what is possible for women and gender-nonconforming people in a socialist society. The FCW has been the seat of power for Cuban women and their families for over 60 years.

The structure begins from the base in each neighborhood, municipality, and province. Most members are volunteers, but there are some paid positions, particularly in the municipalities. The FCW is the organization that takes care of all concerns women in Cuba may have.

There is a national mandate for the advancement of women, and the FCW carries this program into action.

The FCW was founded by Vilma Espín, who is honored as the eternal president. But also in the national leadership are the First and Second General Secretaries. The Congress of the Federation of Cuban Women meets every five years and will be held next year in 2024.

### **Health is a priority**

The health of Cuban women and their families is a priority for the FCW and the Cuban government. Health activities are handled by the Hygiene Brigade, which works with the local doctors and nurses living in the communities they serve.

“We must erect a monument to the women in the Hygiene Brigade during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said the First Secretary of the FCW.

Regarding domestic violence, each ministry has created a program to address the victim and the aggressor. After the COVID-19 pandemic, a national leadership was organized to begin addressing and ending gender-based violence, another priority for FCW.

The national leadership develops penal codes and new laws related to gender-based violence.

Violence against women and other oppressed genders is harshly punished. Someone who kills their current or former female partner receives life in prison automatically.

Depending on other extenuating circumstances, they may also receive mental health or substance use services while incarcerated. But some rights afforded to other prisoners may not be granted, i.e., overnight stays in the community.

The principal violence against Cuban women and other gender-oppressed people continues to be the U.S. blockade. This has been made worse by including Cuba on the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

The gall of the worst state sponsor of terrorism in the history of the world, the United States of

Amerikkka, calling this small island a terrorist because they want to live in peace, without interference from any imperialist state. They want to care for their people, educate their children, provide health care from birth to old age, provide housing for all, and share with the rest of the world.

"We don't give our leftovers we give what we have," said the First Secretary of the FCW.



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