

Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women



**Fiscal Year 2008
Annual Report**

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**Commissioners
(As of June 1, 2008)**

Marianne C. Fleckner, Chair, Westford
Greer Swiston, Treasurer, Newton
Catherine Greene, Esq., Secretary, Brighton
Ruth Bramson, Dover
Linda Cavaoli, Worcester
Helen Corbett, Middleton
Deborah DiMasi, Boston
Erika Ebbel, Cambridge
Donna Finneran, Mattapan
Elizabeth Houlihan, Falmouth
Dr. Helen Jackson, Brookline
Pamela Malumphy, Pittsfield
Angela Menino, Hyde Park
Madhu Sridhar, Andover

Staff

Linda Brantley, Executive Director
Jill Ashton, Outreach Coordinator
Kimberly Sebastiao, Program Coordinator
Darlene Kelter, Administrative Assistant

Interns

Cecelia Auditore, Emmanuel College
Christy Collins, Hampshire College
Jennifer Dilts, Harvard University
Nola Kosowsky, Wellesley College
Mariely Mejia, Lesley University
Kara Meyer, Emmanuel College
Melanie O'Malley, University of Massachusetts – Boston
Heather Panahi, University of Massachusetts – Boston
Stephanie Rodil, Salem State College
Tsering Wangmo, Lesley University

INTRODUCTION

The MCSW is an independent state agency that was legislatively created in 1998 to provide a permanent, effective voice for women across Massachusetts. The Commission stands for fundamental freedoms, basic human rights and the full enjoyment of life for all women throughout their lives. The Commission strives to advance women of the Commonwealth to full equality in all areas of life and to promote their rights and opportunities.

The Commission is comprised of 19 members who are appointed by the Governor, Senate President, Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Caucus of Women Legislators. Commissioners serve in a voluntary capacity and the work of the Commission is facilitated by a staff of four, assisted by year-round interns.

Under MA Chapter 3, Section 66 of the Massachusetts General Laws the MCSW is empowered to:

- Study, review and report on the status of women in the Commonwealth;
- Advise executive and legislative bodies on the effect of proposed legislation on women;
- Inform leaders of business, education, health care, state and local governments and the communications media of issues pertaining to women;
- Provide referrals and serve as a resource of information on issues pertaining to women;
- Identify and recommend qualified women for positions at all levels of government;
- Promote and facilitate collaboration among local women's commissions and among women's organizations in the state;
- Serve as a liaison between government and private interest groups concerned with issues affecting women.

This 2008 Annual Report includes the Commission's activities and findings for the period of July 1, 2007 to May 23, 2008.

MCSW Committees

The Commission operates through working committees that address various areas and then report back to the full Commission for consideration and action. Each Commissioner is required to work on at least one committee. The committees typically meet once a month.

There are five working committees within the full Commission, including:

1. Executive Committee, comprised of all officers and committee chairs and chaired by the Chair of the Commission Marianne Fleckner
2. Legislative & Public Policy Committee, chaired by Commissioners Cavaioli and Malumphy
3. Outreach & Advocacy Committee, chaired by Commissioner Bramson
4. Personnel Committee, chaired by Commissioner Corbett
5. Unsung Heroine Event Committee, chaired by Commissioner Greene

The full Commission meets regularly on the fourth Wednesday of each month, except in July and August. This year, one full Commission meeting was held off-site, at UMASS Amherst in March, at which time the Commission also hosted a public hearing.

MCSW STANDING COMMITTEES FY 2008

Executive Committee

- Chair
 - Vice Chair
 - Treasurer
 - Secretary
 - Chair, Legislation & Public Policy
 - Chair, Outreach & Advocacy
 - Chair, Unsubsidized Heroine
 - Chair, Personnel
 - Executive Director
 - Chairs, Ad Hoc Committees as Necessary
 - Immediate Past Chair
- Staff Liaison: Executive Director attends/non-voting

Work & Responsibilities:

- Address Operational/Organizational Issues
- Bylaws
- Communications with Appointing Authorities
- Fiscal oversight of Commission's operating and trust fund budgets
- Ensure and advocate for the agency having adequate resources
- Evaluating Executive Director job performance, Staff Hiring Approvals
- Initiating Officer Nomination Process
- Monitor Committee Functioning

Legislation & Public Policy Committee

Work & Responsibilities:

- Recommend legislation to the full Commission for endorsement
- Helps the Commission advise executive, legislative and other bodies of the effect on women of proposed legislation
- Influences public policy through advocacy, including verbal and written testimony and other means of support for bills the Commission has endorsed
- Advise appointing authorities on legislative issues through verbal and written testimony and other means of support for bills the Commission has endorsed
- Monitors state budget using Platform for Action (See Appendix) as a guide

- Advocate for research regarding the status of women in the Commonwealth and for utilizing research to achieve positive action for women

Staff Liaison: Staff Outreach Coordinator

Outreach & Advocacy Committee

Plans and directs implementation of the Commission's statewide activity including:

- Public hearings
- Regional Councils
- Women's Commissions
- Speakers Bureau & Media outreach
- Communications

Staff Liaison: Executive Director

Unsung Heroine Event Committee

Work & Responsibilities:

- Plans the Commission's annual signature event and program
- Oversees the nomination process and Honoree selections
- Solicits event sponsors and in-kind contributions
- Works with assigned staff and interns to implement logistics

Staff Liaison: Staff Program Coordinator

Personnel Committee

Work & Responsibilities:

Commissioners are responsible to hire an Executive Director and staff as needed. The scope of Personnel Committee work includes:

- Hiring
 - Writing and updating job description of the Executive Director
 - Recruiting, Interviewing, Recommending Hire for Executive Director Position
 - Approving job descriptions of all support staff requested by Executive Director
 - Reviewing finalists selected by Executive Director for staff positions
- Evaluation
 - MCSW Chair is the Supervisor of the Executive Director
 - MCSW Chair evaluates the Executive Director year round based on the Fiscal Year cycle utilizing the state's ACES Evaluation system.
 - All Commissioners receive a copy of both the Executive Director's agreed upon Goals for the year and the Executive Director's full annual evaluation at the end of the year.
- Personnel/Office Policy.

Staff Liaison: Executive Director

MCSW BUDGET

Commission on the Status of Women BUDGET FY2008	
Total Income from State Appropriation	\$248,900
Expenses	
Salaries	\$193,255.37
Operating Expenses	\$ 46,573.38
Total Expenses	\$248,900

OUTREACH & ADVOCACY

Public Hearings

In keeping with its mandate to study and report on the status of women in Massachusetts, the MCSW holds statewide public hearings to hear the concerns of women and those organizations that advocate for them. The Commission utilizes the public hearing testimony to shape and influence its work.

University of Massachusetts – Amherst, March 26, 2008

This year the Commission held a hearing at the University of Massachusetts - Amherst in conjunction with the college's Everywoman's Center and will host a hearing focused on women in education at Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Science June 24.

At the Amherst hearing, nearly two dozen women delivered testimony on a wide range of topics including support for adoptive parents, a lack of safe houses in the rural parts of the state, cord blood collection, affordable childcare, a need for lactation facilities on the UMASS-Amherst campus, and better sex education for high school students. Highlights included: (for further detail see attached minutes)

- Lois Ahrens of The Real Cost of Prisons Project testified regarding the startling numbers of women imprisoned at the Chicopee jail who are addicted to drugs or alcohol. She urged the Commission to encourage the Governor to fund community-based rehabilitation programs instead of increasing the size of the Chicopee jail to help treat these women instead of imprison them.
- Several women, from survivors to advocates, cited the nearly tripled domestic violence-related homicide rate between 2005 and 2007 as an obvious reason for much-needed funding for domestic violence and sexual assault programs in the Commonwealth.
- Juliana Morgan-Trostle, a senior at Amherst Regional High School and the co-president of the Women's Rights Club at ARHS, spoke about the need for a better health education system. Morgan-Trostle noted in her testimony that, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, one in four teenage girls has a sexually transmitted disease, a number that could be decreased with proper education as students enter high school.
- Women of Color Leadership Program Director, Hind Mari, spoke regarding several issues facing the women of color on the UMASS-Amherst campus including oppression, childcare, and violence.

The MCSW compiles a full report of the testimony heard and presents it to its appointing authorities and the state legislature with recommendations for addressing these issues. See attached minutes in Appendix for further detail.

Regional Council Network

The MCSW continues to schedule and meet with its Regional Councils across the Commonwealth. Through work with the Cape and Islands Regional Council, action is underway to establish a Cape & Islands Women's Commission. The MCSW offers resources and guidance to support the Councils in these efforts.

Worcester Regional Council

The MCSW's Worcester County Regional Council meets quarterly. This year meetings were held on September 19, and Wednesday, December 05, 2007, and Thursday, April 03, 2008. On April 3 the meeting at the Sterling Inn featured a panel discussion with elected female officials from Worcester County, including Senator Harriette Chandler, Representative Jennifer Flanagan, Representative Anne Gobi, Mayor Konstantina Lukes, Mayor Lisa Wong, and Selectperson Diane McCutcheon. The meeting was attended by public sector and non-profit leaders, as well as local elected officials. Panelists spoke about their path in politics, the challenges of being female in public service, and the reasons they decided to run for elected office. The presentations were followed by an interactive audience discussion, during which time many attendees shared their experiences about running for or serving in office.

Local Women's Commissions

The Commission continues its mandate to promote the growth of local women's commissions throughout the Commonwealth. The majority of local women's commissions are led by appointed volunteers. The Commission is working with interested groups in Bristol County and on Cape Cod and the Islands to develop women's commissions that will work on local and regional issues. Cape and Island Regional Council meetings were held on Thursday, November 29, 2007, Thursday, January 17, 2008, Thursday, February 28, 2008, Thursday, April 10, 2008, and Wednesday, May 21, 2008.

Furthermore, MCSW is a resource for the 10 already-established Commissions in Massachusetts and convenes and leads bi-annual meetings of all to connect them and integrate overarching efforts. This group met at the Brookline Women's Commission on Thursday, December 06, 2007.

Coalitions & Collaborations

In line with the Commission's mission to promote and facilitate collaboration among local women's commissions and among women's organizations, the Commission frequently partners with other organizations to support efforts of joint concern.

Massachusetts Coalition for Women's Wage Equality

According to the MCSW's "State of Women: A County By County Report on the Status of Women & Girls in Massachusetts," women earn less than men in EVERY county in Massachusetts - an average of 77 cents for every dollar earned by a man. Not only does this impact their ability to be economically self sufficient and provide for their families, but it affects women's abilities to access education, housing, healthcare, childcare, investments, retirement, etc.

In response to this profound wage gap, the Massachusetts Coalition for Women's Wage Equality formed as a broad based, statewide coalition of dynamic organizations and individuals committed to endorsing pay equity for women of the Commonwealth.

The Coalition's goal is to support and advocate for equitable compensation for women who are employed in jobs that require comparable skills, efforts, responsibilities, and working conditions to those of men. It annually sponsors an Equal Pay Day Observance.

Equal Pay Day 2008

On April 22 women and the men who support them gathered at the Massachusetts State House to observe "Equal Pay Day", the annual day that women must work into the following year to earn what their male counterparts did the previous year.

During a program held from 10 a.m. to noon, and legislative advocacy visits which followed, the spotlight was shown on the continuing issue of the gender wage gap and what is being done in Massachusetts to address it.

Featured speakers included Senate President Therese Murray, Senators Harriette Chandler, Dianne Wilkerson and Bruce Tarr, Commissioner and Girl Scouts of Eastern MA CEO Ruth Bramson and a panel of women sharing their personal stories with wage discrimination. Specific attention was paid to advocating for the passage of the MCSW's priority of House Bill 2826/Senate Bill 2386.

Women, Wages & Work Policy Conference

On June 9 the Women, Wages & Work Policy Conference will be held at UMASS Boston. Preparation for this event has been ongoing since the fall of 2007. The MCSW is a member of the Steering Committee for the conference, which is being sponsored by The Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy. This all day session will feature Lilly Ledbetter as the keynote speaker. Ledbetter is the plaintiff in the much heralded 2007 Supreme Court case that resulted in the pending federal Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act.

The MCSW maintains active membership in the following coalitions:

Care For Youth Coalition: attend monthly steering committee meetings, testified on legislation, through interns produced research, share and promote information

Disparities Action Network: meets monthly, share and promote information

Paid Sick: meets monthly and advocates for passage of this legislation. MCSW participation has included legislative testimony, advocacy campaigns, information sharing through newsletter and web site

Strategies for Children, the Early Education for All Campaign (EEA): share and promote information

RESOURCES & REFERRALS

Massachusetts Women's Resource & Referral Network

In October 2006 the MCSW launched the Massachusetts Women's Resource & Referral Network (MWRRN), a comprehensive online database featuring profiles of over 2,000 service providers throughout the Commonwealth. Accessed on the Web at www.mcswnetwork.com, the MWRRN allows users to search for what they need by geographic region and/or service area or topic either from their home computers, or in the case of those without computers, at public libraries, colleges, community centers, etc.

One of the charges of the MCSW is to serve as a clearinghouse for information on issues pertaining to women and the MWRRN is our way of providing this service. The MWRRN is continuously augmented and improved. We are always seeking local, community, regional, statewide and in some cases federal resources and providers. This includes, but is not limited to, direct service organizations for such issues as domestic violence, cancer prevention, business networking, GLBT concerns, and healthcare. Statistics between January 2006 and April 2008: (figures in parentheses refer to the last 7 days) reveal successful requests: 269,521 (2,987) or an average of successful requests per day: 323 (426)

MCSW Website

The Commission's Web site (www.mass.gov/women) is a user-friendly tool that constituents can use to learn about the Commission, its work, its publications and resources, as well as other available resources. Features of the Commission's Web site include a list of domestic violence and sexual assault hotline numbers on a local, state, and national level as well as information on topics such as child care, economic issues, education, elder advocacy, health and insurance advocacy, housing advocacy, and legal assistance.

Constituent Contact

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women seeks to assist and serve women in the Commonwealth in their quest for basic human rights and the full enjoyment of life. The Commission office is open to assist constituents who walk in, telephone, or e-mail with questions or concerns. In addition to MWRRN activity, in FY 2008 the MCSW received approximately 75 inquiries. The Commission staff provides either information or referrals, but not direct service. Needs and issues frequently raised include: domestic violence, legal assistance, health insurance, child care & support, employment rights, maternity leave policies, unemployment, financial assistance, child custody and divorce, equal pay, and research questions.

Research

The Commission regularly engages in research on the status of women in Massachusetts, alone and in concert with other organizations. This year the MCSW is updating its "State of Women: A County by County Report on Women and Girls of Massachusetts" which was published last year. Per feedback received, this year's version will specifically examine the state of women living in urban vs. rural areas of the state.

LEGISLATION & PUBLIC POLICY

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women provides information and recommendations to elected officials and the public regarding issues affecting the status of women in Massachusetts. The Legislative Committee gauges its interest and involvement with proposed legislation: Business Development, Children and Family, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, Civil Rights, Criminal Justice and Corrections, Economic Security and Pay Equity, Education, Health Care, Political Participation and Violence Against Women.

Endorsed Legislation – 185th General Court

CHILDREN & FAMILY

An Act Establishing the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Commission (H617/S86)

Lead Sponsors: Senator Michael R. Knapik, Representative John A. Lepper

Endorsed: February 28, 2007

Summary: This bill would establish a commission of experts to assess the challenges and unique needs associated with grandparents raising grandchildren and kinship care providers raising their related children. The Commission would serve as a liaison between grandparents and kinship care providers and organizations and agencies to foster relationships and ensure that caregivers have access to the services and assistance they need to raise and care for children in their care. The Commission would also evaluate the effectiveness of state agencies in assisting grandparents and kinship care providers and advise the state as to how to best assist these unique families.

An Act Relative to Caregiver Medical and Educational Consent (S69/H1151)

Lead Sponsors: Senator Robert Creedon, Representative John A. Lepper

Endorsed: June 27, 2007

Summary: An Act Relative to Caregiver Medical and Educational Consent would allow parents to authorize a caregiver, such as a grandparent or kinship care provider, to consent to medical treatment and educational decisions on behalf of the child that is in their care. The Act would not divest the parent or parents of any guardianship rights, but would give caregivers concurrent authority with the parent or parents.

The act would give caregivers the ability to:

- Authorize medical, surgical, dental, developmental, or mental health treatments upon the advice of a medical or health care professional for the children in their care
- Exercise parental rights to obtain records and other information with regard to health care services and insurance
- Make educational decisions for the children in their care including, assessing the child's educational records, representing the child in enrollment, disciplinary, curricular, or special education matters and signing permission slips for school activities

An Act Relating to Improving Quality in Early Education and Care by Family Child Care Providers (S2286)

Lead Sponsors: Senator Karen Spilka, Senator Joan Menard

Endorsed: November 28, 2007

Summary: This bill promotes the establishment of a system for improving the quality of family child care services in the Commonwealth and to provide collective bargaining rights for providers of such services.

- Licensed Family Child Care Providers in Massachusetts provide children with early education and care in the providers' homes.
- This bill would grant these providers who receive subsidies from the Commonwealth the right to organize.
- Providers would be able to vote to form a union for the purposes of negotiating with the Commonwealth over the terms and conditions of licensed provider services.
- These workers would maintain their status as independent contractors.

ECONOMIC SECURITY & PAY EQUITY

An Act to Further Defining Comparable Work (H1869/S1070)

Lead Sponsors: Senator Patricia D. Jehlen, Representative Alice K. Wolf

Endorsed: February 28, 2007

Summary: This legislation would define comparable work as "solely based on whether the two positions entail comparable skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions between employees of the opposite sex."

An Act to Authorize the Human Resources Division to Undertake a Study of the State's Job Classification System (H2826/S2386)

Lead Sponsors: Senator Harriette L. Chandler, Representative Alice K. Wolf

Endorsed: February 28, 2007

Summary: This bill would require the state's human resources division to establish a job analysis study of state employees of the executive branch to update the current job classification system and review class titles, job specifications, organizational relationships and job qualifications to insure that employee compensation, pensions, and benefits are free from gender and racial bias. It would also establish a Workforce Advisory Council of experts to assist the human resources division with this work.

An Act Supporting Strong Families by Providing Paid Family and Medical Leave, Increasing Tax Deductions, and establishing a Work-Family Council (S114)

Lead Sponsor: Senator Karen Spilka

Endorsed: May 24, 2006

Summary: This bill authorizes the creation of a Work-Family Council whose mission is to identify major work-family issues, design pilot programs, and educate the public. The bill increases tax deductions for working families caring for dependents (children and disabled individuals over the age of 65). The bill further creates an employee funded program, The Strong Families Trust Fund, to provide paid family and medical leave. Eligibility requirements will be based on the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act.

An Act Relative to Equitable Coverage for Annuity Policies (S622/H901)

Lead Sponsor: Senator Therese Murray

Endorsed: March 2006

Summary: This legislation would establish that state-regulated annuity policies sold to residents of Massachusetts must be gender-neutral in all the terms and conditions of the contracts, including premiums, benefits, and rate changes.

An Act to Establish Paid Sick Days (H1803/S1073)

Lead Sponsors: Senator Patricia D. Jehlen, Representative Kay Khan

Endorsed: May 25, 2005

Summary: The current legislation amends the previous bill by adding paid sick day coverage to women who are victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Paid sick day coverage would allow victims to take time off from work to obtain medical care, participate in criminal and civil legal proceedings, and relocate their families. The current legislation also purports that paid sick days are essential in protecting public health because workers in food services, nursing homes, child care centers and retail clerks frequently come in contact with the public yet have no paid sick day protection and are often times forced to work despite being ill with an infectious disease such as influenza.

An Act to Establish a Self-Sufficiency Standard in Massachusetts (H3664/S1133)

Lead Sponsors: Senator Marian Walsh, Representative Daniel E. Bosley

Endorsed: May 23, 2001

Summary: This bill will establish a realistic, independent benchmark of economic status by region throughout Massachusetts. It is meant to provide a measure of the extent to which the incomes of households in Massachusetts are sufficient to support the costs of living, working, raising a family, and paying taxes in Massachusetts. The Self-Sufficiency Standard will calculate the realistic costs of housing, food, child care, transportation, medical care, taxes and miscellaneous items by region within the state. The standard will be used as an official and accurate reference point for policymakers.

An Act to Prohibit Discrimination in Insurance Policies (S2188)

Lead Sponsor: Senator Dianne Wilkerson

Endorsed: February 28, 2001

Summary: This bill prohibits insurance companies from discriminating against women on the basis of their sex when setting policy rates. The current insurance law, which allows distinctions based on sex, does not conform to the Massachusetts Equal Rights Amendment.

An Act Relative to Bullying in the Workplace (H1850)

Lead Sponsor: Representative Ellen Story

Endorsed: June 27, 2007

Summary: An Act Relative to Bullying in the Workplace would amend Chapter 149 of the General Laws to add Section 115A whose purpose is to determine and analyze the direct and indirect costs to workers, families and the companies affected by workplace psychological

harassment. The goal is to then establish a program that requires employers with 50 or more employees to establish policies defining psychological harassment and ways of prevention.

EDUCATION

An Act to Provide Health Education in Schools (H597)

Lead Sponsor: Representative Alice K. Wolf

Endorsed: October 26, 2005

Summary: This bill would provide for the Department of Education to implement health education into its core curriculum. School districts would be required to teach adequate age-appropriate health information, defined as “sufficient self-knowledge and knowledge of his or her mental and physical wellness”¹, for grades K-12. The Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Curriculum Framework outlines this health education which includes nutrition, personal self-care and safety. Health Education is necessary so that youth can make informed, responsible decisions about their bodies and lifestyle choices. (It is noted that current law provides a parental opt-out for sex education, which remains intact).

An Act Relative to Early Education and Care (H3776)

Lead Sponsor: Representative Patricia Haddad

Endorsed: 2002

Summary: An Act Relative to Early Education and Care (H 3776) outlines a comprehensive plan to develop a coordinated system of early childhood education in Massachusetts. The bill builds upon the Massachusetts Universal Pre-Kindergarten (MA UPK) Program which was established under the Acts of 2005. This bill clarifies the powers and responsibilities of the Board, Department, and Commissioner of Early Education in order to create a more streamlined and efficient educational system.

HEALTH CARE

An Act to Eliminate Health Disparities in the Commonwealth (H2234)

Lead Sponsor: Representative Byron Rushing

Endorsed: October 24, 2007

Summary: This bill calls for the establishment of a new Office of Health Equity under the jurisdiction of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. This office would be responsible for researching and addressing how issues of racial and ethnic inequality affect individuals' access to healthcare throughout the Commonwealth. The Office would create an annual “report card” examining the state’s progress in addressing these disparities and educating other executive agencies on their findings and promoting “health literacy” throughout the Commonwealth. The Office of Health Equity would also advocate for greater diversity in the health workforce by awarding competitive grants to community-based health care agencies to help eliminate health disparities amongst disadvantaged populations. In addition, it would be responsible for recruiting and training health workers who have direct knowledge of the communities they serve, and for making health care more accessible by supporting medical interpreter services and wellness education.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

An Act Establishing the Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women (S1172)

Lead Sponsor: Senator Joan M. Menard, Representative Patricia Haddad

Endorsed: February 28, 2007

Summary: An Act Establishing the Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women would create a permanent commission on the status of women in Bristol County consisting of 9 people who will be appointed by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women. The Bristol Commission will be charged with conducting an ongoing study of all matters concerning women in Bristol County and advising local and state officials on their findings and recommended solutions. In addition, findings and recommended solutions will also be reported annually to the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women. The Act would be modeled after legislation which created the Berkshire County Commission on Status of Women.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

An Act Establishing a Campus Rape and Sexual Assault Prevention Advisory Council (S737)

Lead Sponsor: Senator Pamela Resor

Endorsed: January 26, 2006

Summary: This legislation would establish a campus rape and sexual assault prevention advisory council through the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education. This council would support campus groups that assist rape and sexual assault victims. This council would also help to ensure that certain enumerated rights are afforded to rape and sexual assault victim, where 1) the incident took place on campus and where the victims or the alleged perpetrator is a student or 2) the victim is a student involved in an off-campus rape or sexual assault.

An Act to Relating to Anti-Human Trafficking and Protection (S97)

Lead Sponsor: Senator Mark C. Montigny

Endorsed: December 14, 2005

*Previous session name: An Act to Provide for Study About Trafficking of Persons and Involuntary Servitude.

Summary: This bill provides for a study about trafficking of persons and involuntary servitude. The commission study shall include, but not be limited to the following, the prevalence of trafficking and involuntary servitude in the commonwealth, the harms and consequences to victims of such activities, the ability and capacity of existing social service and public and involuntary servitude in the commonwealth, the harms and consequences to victims of such activities, the ability and capacity of existing social service and public benefits programs to respond to the needs of such victims, the effectiveness of existing victim witness laws, regulations, and services to respond to the needs of such victims, the interplay of such programs with federally-funded victim service programs and the ability of state programs and licensing bodies to provide benefits, programs, and licenses to such victims.

An Act to Prevent Harassment (S1002)

Lead Sponsor: Senator Pamela Resor

Endorsed: November 15, 2005

Summary: The act would establish a criminally enforceable Harassment Protection Order by replacing wording in the General Laws with wording that appropriately fills the void when there is a stalking, indecent assault, or battery with a person that does not have a specific relationship to the victim.

An Act to Protect and Enhance the Rights of Child and Adult Victims and Witnesses and Crime (S802)

Lead Sponsors: Senator Frederick E. Berry, Representative Peter J. Koutoujian

Endorsed: October 24, 2007

Summary: This legislation has been created to more comprehensively address the needs, rights and safety of child and adult victims or witnesses of crimes. The bill would not only add new rights to the Massachusetts Victim Bill of Rights, (originally signed into law in 1984 and amended in 1995), but would also clarify, revise and, if necessary, update the language of M.G.L. Chapter 258B, as well as assess and classify the “practices by the criminal justice agencies which have evolved over the last 10+ years.”

An Act Relative to Gender Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes (H1722)

Lead Sponsors: Representative Carl Sciortino

Endorsed: February 28, 2008

Summary: An Act Relative to Gender-Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes of 2007 clarifies and updates Massachusetts’ non-discrimination laws to ensure that they clearly and uniformly protect all people regardless of their gender identity or expression. This bill adds the categories of gender identity and expression to our hate crime laws as well as to the employment, housing, credit, public accommodations, and education non-discrimination laws.

INITIATIVES

With limited staff and resources, the Commission always strives to increase its capacity, reach and results by partnering and collaborating wherever possible. To this end the Commission is a much sought after partner which participates in the planning, outreach and implementation of programs, special event, and conferences. Examples include an annual International Women's Day celebration on March 8 along with some of the highlights below.

Unsung Heroines of Massachusetts

This year the MCSW hosted its Fifth Annual Unsung Heroine Celebration at the Massachusetts State House. This event honored 287 Unsung Heroines from cities and towns across the Commonwealth. Our Unsung Heroines are women who quietly, without fanfare or recognition, make their communities and the Commonwealth better places. Our Unsung Heroines don't make the news, but they make a difference!

The Commission asks the public to help identify women from every community who perform unheralded acts on a daily basis that make our neighborhoods, our cities and our towns better places to live. We seek women of all ages, all economic, political and ethnic backgrounds. After carefully reviewing all of the nominations received, a selection committee chooses one Unsung Heroine from each city and town. All 2008 Unsung Heroine awardees are notified and invited to attend a ceremony in their honor.

MA Conference for Women

On December 7, 2007, the Commission co-sponsored the Third Annual Massachusetts Conference for Women at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center. The Conference is a non-profit, non-partisan, one-day event where Massachusetts women can connect, learn practical and professional strategies from nationally recognized experts, and network with peers. The Commission sponsored an exhibition hall booth, participated in workshops and attended the Speakers luncheon event.

The Conference attracts more than 5,000 attendees and serves to build connections, enhance collaboration and embody community. More than 75 renowned experts in the fields of health and wellness, business and finance, community involvement, career development, and personal growth were featured in breakout sessions throughout the day.

MCSW Creates Commissioner Emerita Program

To strengthen the bond and connections between the MCSW and former Commissioners, the MCSW has created a Commissioner Emerita program.

The Commissioner Emerita program will strive to better inform and engage former Commissioners and encourage them to be involved as they are able in the ongoing work of the Commission.

The Commission is also an active member of the New England Women's Commissions, which is chaired by the MCSW Executive Director, who also sits on the Board of Directors of the National Association of Commissions for Women.

MCSW ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2008

APPENDIX

**Massachusetts Commission On The Status Of Women
BYLAWS**

Amended September 26, 2007

PREAMBLE

Pursuant to Clause E of Subsection 4 of Section 66 of Chapter 3 of the General Laws of Massachusetts, the organization and rules of procedure of the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women shall be as follows:

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of the Commission shall be to advance women toward full equity in all areas of life and to promote rights and opportunities for all women. The mission of the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women is to provide a permanent, effective voice for women across Massachusetts. The Commission stands for fundamental freedoms, basic human rights and the full enjoyment of life for all women throughout their lives. The Commission shall have the following responsibilities:

- a) Study, review and report on the status of women in the commonwealth;
- b) Inform leaders of business, education, health care, state and local governments and the communications media of issues pertaining to women;
- c) Serve as a liaison between government and private interest groups concerned with issues affecting women;
- d) Serve as a clearinghouse for information on issues pertaining to women;
- e) Identify and recommend qualified women for appointive positions at all levels of government, including boards and Commissions, as the Commission deems necessary and appropriate;
- f) Assess programs and practices in all state agencies as they affect women, as the Commission deems necessary and appropriate;
- g) Advise executive and legislative bodies on the effect on women of proposed legislation, as the Commission deems necessary and appropriate; and
- h) Promote and facilitate collaboration among local women's Commissions and among women's organizations in the state, as the Commission deems necessary and appropriate.

ARTICLE III - REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The Commission shall annually, on or before June 2, report the results of its findings and activities of the preceding year and its recommendations to the Governor and to the clerks of the Senate and House of Representatives.

ARTICLE IV - POWERS OF THE COMMISSION

The powers of the Commission shall include but not be limited to the following:

- a) To advise and submit recommendations and policies to the governor, legislature, agencies, and officers of the state and local subdivisions of government on issues relating to women
- b) To collaborate with concerned organizations, groups and state departments on issues of common concern using such voluntary and uncompensated services of private individuals, as may be needed;
- c) To select an Executive Director and to acquire adequate staff to perform its duties, subject to appropriation;
- d) To establish and maintain such offices as it may deem necessary, subject to appropriation;
- e) To enact bylaws for its own governance;
- f) To hold regular, public meetings and to hold fact-finding hearings and other public forums as it may deem necessary; and
- g) To actively pursue outside funding opportunities in support of the MCSW's mission.

The Commission may request from all state agencies such information and assistance as the Commission may require.

ARTICLE V - MEMBERS

SECTION 1. FOUNDING MEMBERS

The initial members of the Commission on the Status of Women shall be appointed for the following terms:

- a) The Governor shall appoint, on or before November 16, 1998, two members for a term of one year, two members for a term of two years, and one member for a term of three years;
- b) The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint, on or before November 16, 1998, two members for a term of one year, one member for a term of two years, and one member for a term of three years;
- c) The President of the Senate shall appoint, on or before November 16, 1998, two members for a term of one year, one member for a term of two years, and one member for a term of three years;
- d) The Caucus of Women Legislators or its successor organization shall appoint, on or before November 16, 1998, one member for a term of one year, two members for a term of two years, and three members for a term of three years.

SECTION 2. MEMBERS

The Commission shall consist of nineteen persons as follows:

- a) Five persons appointed by the Governor;
- b) Four persons appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives;
- c) Four persons appointed by the president of the Senate; and
- d) Six persons appointed by the Caucus of Women Legislators or its successor organization.

SECTION 3. DIVERSITY

Members of the Commission shall be drawn from diverse racial, ethnic, religious, age, sexual orientation, and socio-economic backgrounds from throughout the Commonwealth and shall have had experience working toward the improvement of the status of women in society.

SECTION 4. MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS

Members shall be subject to the provisions of chapter 268A of the General Laws as they apply to special state employees.

SECTION 5. TERMS OF OFFICE

A Member shall serve a term of three years duration and until her successor is appointed.

SECTION 6. VACANCIES

Any Commissioner may resign by delivering her written resignation to the Commission at its principal office or to the Chair of the Board. The original appointing authority will be notified and requested to fill the vacancy with a new Commissioner for the balance of the unexpired term.

SECTION 7. APPOINTMENTS

Appointments shall be made in consultation with women's organizations. Nominations shall be solicited between August 1 and September 16 of each year through an open application process using a uniform application that is widely distributed throughout the state.

ARTICLE VI - FINANCES

SECTION 1. FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the Commission shall be July 1 through June 30.

SECTION 2. FUNDING

The Commission may accept and solicit funds, including any gifts, donations, grants, or bequests, or any federal funds for any of the purposes of the enabling legislation.

SECTION 3. ACCOUNTS

Such funds shall be deposited in a separate account with the state Treasurer, be received by said Treasurer on behalf of the Commonwealth, and expended by the Commission in accordance with the law and the donor or grantors intent.

ARTICLE VII - COMPENSATION AND LIABILITY

SECTION 1. COMPENSATION

The members of the Commission shall receive no compensation for their services, but shall be reimbursed for any usual and customary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

SECTION 2. LIABILITY

No person who is now or who later becomes a member of this Commission shall be personally liable to its creditors for any indebtedness or liability, and any and all creditors of this Commission shall look to the assets of this Commission for payment.

ARTICLE VIII - OFFICERS

SECTION 1. OFFICERS

The Commission shall elect from among its members a Chair, a Vice-Chair, a Treasurer, a Secretary, and any other officers it deems necessary. Only members of the Commission shall be eligible for nomination and election as officers of the Commission. If an officer of this

Commission shall, during her term of office, no longer be a member of the Commission, she shall automatically cease to be an officer of the Commission.

SECTION 2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Officers shall be elected annually, at the first meeting of the fiscal year.

SECTION 3. OFFICERS' TERM OF OFFICE

The elected officers shall serve for a term of one year. The elected officers shall not serve more than two successive terms in any particular office. However, under extenuating circumstances, the Commission's Chair may serve a third consecutive one-year term.

SECTION 4. OFFICER VACANCIES

A vacancy in the Chair's office shall be filled until the next annual election by the Vice-Chair. All other vacancies shall be filled by a majority vote of the members of the Commission.

In the event the Chair and Vice-Chair are both unable to preside, a quorum of the Commission shall elect a temporary Chair.

ARTICLE IX - DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

The duties of the officers are as follows:

SECTION 1. CHAIR

The Chair shall be entrusted to act and carry out policies and decisions of the Commission between meetings of the Commission and the Executive Committee. The Chair shall present actions to the full Commission for ratification. The Chair shall assure that the legislative mandates of the Commission are carried out as prescribed by the Legislature and as formulated in these by-laws to:

- a) Call and preside at all meetings of the Commission and of the Executive Board and conduct these in accordance with parliamentary rules;
- b) Be an ex-officio member of all committees with the exception of the nominating committee;
- c) Call special meetings when deemed necessary or desirable;
- d) Set the agenda for Commission and Executive Committee meetings;
- e) Supervise the work of the Director
- f) Serve as spokesperson for the Commission or direct such representation before the public and governmental bodies. Oversee all recommendations and reports to the Executive and Legislative branches
- g) Perform such other duties as the Commission may prescribe from time to time.

The Chair may appoint a parliamentarian.

SECTION 2. VICE-CHAIR

The Vice-Chair shall perform all duties of the Chair in the event of the Chair's absence or inability to serve, or in the event of a vacancy in that office until it is filled and shall perform other duties as are designated by the Commission.

SECTION 3. SECRETARY

The Secretary shall:

- a) Be responsible for reviewing the minutes of all regular and special meetings of the Commission and of the Executive Board;
- b) Assure that the Commission staff furnish copies of the minutes and of the Treasurer's financial statement to all members within a reasonable length of time prior to the next meeting;
- c) Assure that an attendance roster is maintained for each Commission meeting and committee meeting;
- d) Act as historian to the Commission by assuring that all general correspondence, records of meetings and committees, and business before the Commission is maintained;
- e) Sign such instruments as shall be authorized by the Commission;
- f) Perform all other duties necessary for the maintenance of adequate records, files and communications of the Commission.

SECTION 4. TREASURER

The Treasurer shall:

- a) Ensure that all financial records are maintained and shall oversee budget preparation and reporting.
- b) Monitor the budget and financial records on an ongoing basis and in accordance with the provisions and requirements of the law and state agencies.
- c) Present the Treasurer's report at regular commission meetings
- d) Strategize with the Executive Director and Commission in how to apply for and receive state, local, private and/or individual grants, appropriations and/or gifts in compliance with applicable state laws and regulations in order to further the purposes of the commission
- e) Present an annual financial report to the Commission
- f) Perform all of the duties incident to the office of Treasurer and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned.

ARTICLE X - EXECUTIVE BOARD

SECTION 1. COMPOSITION

The Executive Board shall consist of the elected officers, elected Chairs of the standing committees and the immediate past Chair.

SECTION 2. EXECUTIVE BOARD QUORUM

Between Commission meetings and whenever deemed necessary and immediate, the Executive Board shall act as the governing body on behalf of the full Commission. A majority of the Executive Board shall constitute a quorum. The decisions of the Executive Board shall be decided by a majority vote of those members present. All business shall be presented to the full Commission for ratification at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

SECTION 3. MEETINGS

The Executive Board shall meet once every month, except for the months of July and August at the members discretion. Special meetings may be scheduled at the call of the Chair or of two members of the Executive Board for transaction of necessary business, and act in emergencies reporting in writing all business transacted to the Commission.

“Emergencies” as stated above should be defined as business that may arise between meetings, and which, by reason of action delayed until the regular meeting of the Commission, may cause the loss of an opportunity to promote the best interest of the Commission.

SECTION 4. POWERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board shall, subject to ratification of the Commission, decide such matters as may come before it between meetings. The Executive Board is empowered to approve expenditures to defray necessary expenses that are incurred between the regular meetings of the membership. All such expenditures shall be subject to the approval of the Commissioners at the next meeting of the Commission. It shall also deal with all matters referred to it by the Commission, including monitoring the MSCW finances and the annual evaluation of the Executive Director.

A written record of all of the business transacted by the Executive Board shall be distributed to the Commissioners at the next Commission meeting.

The Executive Board shall not reverse a previous action of the Commission nor take any action pertaining to the membership or to the duties of the Executive Board or the officers.

ARTICLE XI - COMMITTEES

SECTION 1. ORGANIZATION

The Commission may create such committees, as it deems necessary to carry out the work of the Commission.

SECTION 2. STANDING COMMITTEES

The Standing Committees shall be established by the Commission with permanent on-going tasks. The work of the Standing Committees shall be determined by goals and objectives established annually. All committees shall submit their recommendations to the full Commission for approval for such recommendations to be acted upon.

The Standing Committees shall include but not be limited to the following:

- a) Outreach and Advocacy Committee
(Women throughout the Commonwealth as the primary audience);
- b) Legislative and Public Policy Committee
(Politicians or State House as the primary audience);
- c) Events and Programs Committee
(Communities statewide as the primary audience).

Only Commissioners may be members of Standing Committees. Every Commissioner shall serve on at least one committee. Commission members may volunteer to serve on the committee of their choice.

Chairs of standing committees shall be elected by the members of the individual standing committees at their first meeting of the fiscal year.

Chairs of standing committees shall be voting members of the Executive Board.

SECTION 3. SPECIAL COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

The Commission is empowered to appoint committees, taskforces, councils, or other appropriate bodies, to study specialized areas of concern and report their findings to the Commission; disseminate information on issues relating to women; develop and promote programs and services to women; and advocate for women's equity.

Membership on such committees shall not be limited to Commissioners. Special representatives other than Commission members may be appointed by the Chair to serve on task forces for the period of time designated by the Commission and would submit interim reports on their special assignments as the Commission requests.

Only Commissioners may vote to elect special committee Chairs, and only Commissioners may be Chairs of special committees.

ARTICLE XII - MEETINGS

SECTION 1. SCHEDULE

The Commission shall meet once every month, except for the months of July and August at the members' discretion. A calendar of dates shall be set at the first meeting of the fiscal year. This calendar of dates shall be mailed to all Commissioners and can be amended by a majority vote of the Commission. The Chair shall designate the time and place of the meetings.

The all-day planning session shall be the last meeting of the fiscal year (June) and shall be devoted to the goals and direction for the next year's workplan.

The first meeting of the fiscal year (Sept) shall be devoted to Officer Elections and approving the workplan for the year.

At each full commission meeting, there shall be reports from the Chairs of each Standing Committee, report of the Executive Director, reports from any temporary task forces, approval of Executive Board actions, as well as financial reports and any other relevant matters.

SECTION 2. QUORUM

A majority of Commissioners currently holding office shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of Commission business.

SECTION 3. OPEN MEETING LAW

All meetings shall be conducted in compliance with the Open Meeting Law. Executive sessions, as per the law, may be conducted.

SECTION 4. SPECIAL MEETINGS

A special meeting of the Commission can be called by:

- a) The Chair; or
- b) A majority vote of the Executive Board; or
- c) A majority vote of the Commission.

The purpose of the meeting shall be stated in the call. No business can be transacted at the meeting except that stated in the call. Except in cases of emergency, at least three days notice must be given to the membership.

A special meeting can be conducted if a quorum of the Commissioners is present.

SECTION 6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Observers may attend meetings of the Commission and may be granted the privilege of the floor by vote of the Commission members.

Normally, fifteen minutes will be set-aside at the beginning of the meetings for this purpose. In addition, visitors may speak to specific issues as they arise during the meeting at the discretion of the Chair and the Commissioners.

The Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate and designated members of the Caucus of Legislators shall be invited to attend the monthly meeting on a rotating basis.

SECTION 7. ATTENDANCE

All Commissioners are expected to maintain regular attendance at meetings of the full Commission, and to participate fully and effectively in such committees or task forces as are necessary and appropriate to conduct the business of the Commission. The Secretary of the Commission shall maintain a record of attendance at each Commission meeting. The Commission's policy on attendance expectations shall be distributed to each new Commissioner upon appointment.

ARTICLE XIII - VOTING PRIVILEGES

At any Commission meeting or committee meeting, each member of the Commission shall be entitled to one vote. The Chair shall not vote except in the event of a tie. There shall be no proxy voting.

ARTICLE XIV—EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive Director is the senior staff person of the Commission and serves at the pleasure of Commission. The Commission shall appoint the Executive Director who shall be responsible to the Commissioners for the implementation of Commission policies, recommendations, and for all aspects of the Commission's daily operation. The Commission shall undertake an annual review of the job performance of the Executive Director.

The Executive Director shall be responsible to the Commission through the Chair. The Executive Director's duties shall include but not be limited to:

1. Supervising staff and volunteers of the Commission
2. Planning, establishing, and implementing short and long term goals established by the full Commission
3. Coordinating and setting the agenda for regular and special Commission meetings with the Chair/s
4. Preparing and managing the Commission budget
5. Coordinating legislative activity of the Commission in conjunction with the Legislative and Public Policy Committee. Research, write and present testimony on bills adopted by the full Commission in their legislative agenda
6. Serve as the liaison to the Governor's Office, legislature, state and federal agencies, coalitions, taskforces, regarding the Commission's input on policy issues

7. Establish relationships with organizations throughout the state whose mission and goals coincide with the Commission's agenda
8. Research outside sources funding to support the Commission's work
9. Manages Commission communication vehicles, including newsletters, special bulletins, booklets, brochures, exhibits, informational and related materials and the web site to further the Commission's mandate and goals
10. Develops and implements overall public relations and media plan
11. Other duties as the Commission may from time to time assign

ARTICLE XV - AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Commission by a two-thirds vote of the Commissioners present and voting provided that the proposed amendment has been submitted at the previous meeting.

ARTICLE XVI - POLICY ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS

The Commission, as needed, shall adopt policies. Policies may be adopted, amended, or repealed by a majority of all votes cast by the Commissioners present and voting, provided that the proposed material has been submitted at the previous meeting.

ARTICLE XVII - PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

When not in conflict with these bylaws, Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the actions of the Commission.

ARTICLE XVIII – COMMISSIONER EMERITA

Any Commissioner who serves out three years is eligible to become a Commissioner Emerita. To become a Commissioner Emerita, such Commissioners whose terms have expired may request such title from the Commission's Executive Board, which shall be approved at the Board's discretion.

The purpose of a Commissioner Emerita is to remain connected to the work of the Commission and to continue to participate and have a voice. Commissioner Emeritae may participate in all meetings of the Commission but shall have no voting privileges.

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women

Platform for Political Action 2007-2008

A History of Legislative Activity



Mission Statement

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women (MCSW) is an independent state agency that was legislatively created in 1998 to provide a permanent, effective voice for women across Massachusetts. The purpose of the Commission is to advance women towards full equality in all areas of life and to promote rights and opportunities for all women. To this end, the Commission is empowered to advise executive and legislative bodies on the effect of proposed legislation on women.

M C S W COMMISSIONERS:

Ruth Bramson
Azell Murphy Cavaan
Linda Cavaoli*
Helen Corbett
Erika Ebbel
Donna Finneran
Marianne Fleckner, Chair*
Catherine Greene, Esq. *
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Introduction

The **Platform for Political Action** comprehensively reports on the scope of political issues affecting the lives of the women in the Commonwealth today. The Platform is the framework from which the Massachusetts Commission of the Status of Women's political agenda is identified, organized and put into action.

The Platform outlines the myriad of diverse issues that recognize the need for women's full and equal share and participation in areas pertaining to economics, health care, education, civil rights and business development. The legislative agenda and political platform also asserts that proactive policies must be implemented to protect the safety of women, children, and families in areas such as domestic violence, child care, the criminal justice system, and human trafficking.

The Platform for Political Action not only mirrors the diversity of the issues and concerns facing women today, but is reflective of the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of the women of the Commission. Together, we as a Commission are able to draw on our strengths as women leaders, incorporate our varied experiences and work for a sustained and long-term commitment to ensure the rights and equality of Massachusetts women.

We value a collaborative and cooperative approach to our legislative agenda and the Commission is responsive to any ideas, comments, questions and suggestions that would be helpful to making our work more successful. The Commission is also eager to share ideas and form partnerships with other organizations dedicated to the equality of women. For further information or communication, please contact Jill Ashton, Outreach Coordinator at 617-626-6525.

MCSW Legislative Platform for Action

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women provides information, research and analysis to elected officials and the public regarding issues affecting the status of women in Massachusetts. The areas listed below provide the framework by which the Legislative Committee gauges its interest and involvement with proposed legislation.

Business Development

Children and Family

- *Grandparents Raising Grandchildren* – Support creation of a commission that will foster unity and collaboration between grandparents raising grandchildren, groups and organizations.
- *Non-parent Child Medical Care Decision Authority* – Support parents authorizing a caregiver, such as a grandparent or kinship care provider, to consent to medical treatment and educational decisions on behalf of the child that is in their care.

Civil Rights

Criminal Justice and Corrections

Economic Security and Pay Equity

- *Equitable Coverage in Annuity Policies* – Support gender-neutral actions by state-regulated premium and benefits for Massachusetts residents that also prohibit gender discrimination.
- *Self-Sufficiency Standard* – Support improving prospects for the working poor in low-wage labor markets.
- *Comparable Work* – Support definition of “comparable work” to eliminate the wage gap between men and women by ensuring that work requiring comparable skill, effort, and responsibility is compensated equitably without gender bias.
- *Job Classification*- Support comprehensive job analysis study to update current system in order to ensure the financial situation of individuals, families and retirees of the Commonwealth is equitable in terms of race and gender.

Education

- *Health integrated into core K-12 curriculum* – adequate age-appropriate health information, defined as “sufficient self-knowledge and knowledge of his or her mental and physical wellness.”
- *Universal Early Childhood Education* – Support professionally accepted standards and creation of a state system to improve the training, education, and compensation of the early childhood and school-age workforce.

Health Care

- *Medicaid* – Support proposals that improve access and insure adequate coverage of benefits.
- *State Benefit Administration* – Support proposals to institute certain due process rights and protections for enrollees.
- *Health Coverage and Benefits* - Support proposals to provide paid leave time or family leave insurance so that workers can balance work and family responsibilities.
- *Health Education and Prevention Initiatives*

Political Participation

- *Recognize and address needs in Bristol County* – Support the establishment of a permanent women's commission in Bristol County which will be charged with conducting an ongoing study of all matters concerning women there and advising local and state officials on their findings and recommended solutions.

Violence Against Women

- *Human Trafficking* – Support expansion of services directed towards victims, including legal and case management.
- *End abuse in lives of women* – Support ability to punish criminals & provide information, especially on college campuses regarding prevention of domestic violence and sexual assault.
- *Bullying in Workplace* – Support determination and analysis of the direct and indirect costs to workers, families and the companies affected by workplace psychological harassment.
- *Harassment* –Support a criminally enforceable Harassment Protection Order that gives victims access to safety planning, counseling and other services designed to enhance their ability to stay safe.

Endorsed Legislation -- 185th General Court

Children & Family

An Act Establishing the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Commission (H617/S86)

Lead Sponsors: Senator Michael R. Knapik, Representative John A. Lepper
Endorsed: February 28, 2007

Summary: This bill would establish a commission of experts to assess the challenges and unique needs associated with grandparents raising grandchildren and kinship care providers raising their related children. The Commission would serve as a liaison between grandparents and kinship care providers and organizations and agencies to foster relationships and ensure that caregivers have access to the services and assistance they need to raise and care for children in their care. The Commission would also evaluate the effectiveness of state agencies in assisting grandparents and kinship care providers and advise the state as to how to best assist these unique families.

Status: November 19, 2007 House Committee recommended it ought to pass and referred to the committee on House Ways and Means.

An Act Relative to Caregiver Medical and Educational Consent (S69/H1151)

Lead Sponsors: Senator Robert Creedon, Representative John A. Lepper
Endorsed: June 27, 2007

Summary: An Act Relative to Caregiver Medical and Educational Consent would allow parents to authorize a caregiver, such as a grandparent or kinship care provider, to consent to medical treatment and educational decisions on behalf of the child that is in their care. The Act would not divest the parent or parents of any guardianship rights, but would give caregivers concurrent authority with the parent or parents.

The act would give caregivers the ability to:

- Authorize medical, surgical, dental, developmental, or mental health treatments upon the advice of a medical or health care professional for the children in their care
- Exercise parental rights to obtain records and other information with regard to health care services and insurance
- Make educational decisions for the children in their care including, assessing the child's educational records, representing the child in enrollment, disciplinary, curricular, or special education matters and signing permission slips for school activities

Status:

February 4, 2008 Reported favorably by the committee and referred to the committee on House Steering, Policy and Scheduling. On February 13, 2008 it was ordered to a third reading. The bill language was included in S2472, which is currently in conference committee.

**An Act Relating to Improving Quality in Early Education and Care by Family Child Care Providers
(S2286)**

Lead Sponsors: Senator Karen Spilka, Senator Joan Menard

Endorsed: November 28, 2007

Summary: This bill promotes the establishment of a system for improving the quality of family child care services in the Commonwealth and to provide collective bargaining rights for providers of such services.

- Licensed Family Child Care Providers in Massachusetts provide children with early education and care in the providers' homes.
- This bill would grant these providers who receive subsidies from the Commonwealth the right to organize.
- Providers would be able to vote to form a union for the purposes of negotiating with the Commonwealth over the terms and conditions of licensed provider services.
- These workers would maintain their status as independent contractors.

Status:

September 17, 2007 Referred to the committee on House Ways and Means

Economic Security & Pay Equity

An Act to Further Defining Comparable Work (H1869/S1070)

Lead Sponsors: Senator Patricia D. Jehlen, Representative Alice K. Wolf
Endorsed: February 28, 2007

Summary: This legislation would define comparable work as “solely based on whether the two positions entail comparable skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions between employees of the opposite sex.”

Status: January 10, 2007 Referred to the committee on Labor and Workforce Development

An Act to Authorize the Human Resources Division to Undertake a Study of the State's Job Classification System (H2826/S2386)

Lead Sponsors: Senator Harriette L. Chandler, Representative Alice K. Wolf
Endorsed: February 28, 2007

Summary: This bill would require the state's human resources division to establish a job analysis study of state employees of the executive branch to update the current job classification system and review class titles, job specifications, organizational relationships and job qualifications to insure that employee compensation, pensions, and benefits are free from gender and racial bias. It would also establish a Workforce Advisory Council of experts to assist the human resources division with this work.

Status: March 18, 2008 Discharged to the committee on House Rules.

An Act Supporting Strong Families by Providing Paid Family and Medical Leave, Increasing Tax Deductions, and establishing a Work-Family Council (S114)

Lead Sponsor: Senator Karen Spilka

Endorsed: May 24, 2006

Summary: This bill authorizes the creation of a Work-Family Council whose mission is to identify major work-family issues, design pilot programs, and educate the public. The bill increases tax deductions for working families caring for dependents (children and disabled individuals over the age of 65). The bill further creates an employee funded program, The Strong Families Trust Fund, to provide paid family and medical leave. Eligibility requirements will be based on the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act.

Status: November 5, 2007 Referred to the committee on Senate Ways and Means

An Act Relative to Equitable Coverage for Annuity Policies (S622/H901)

Lead Sponsor: Senator Therese Murray

Endorsed: March 2006

Summary: This legislation would establish that state-regulated annuity policies sold to residents of Massachusetts must be gender-neutral in all the terms and conditions of the contracts, including premiums, benefits, and rate changes.

Status: January 10, 2007 Referred to the committee on Financial Services – March 4, 2008 House version reported favorably to House Ways and Means

An Act to Establish Paid Sick Days (H1803/S1073)

Lead Sponsors: Senator Patricia D. Jehlen, Representative Kay Khan

Endorsed: May 25, 2005

Summary: The current legislation amends the previous bill by adding paid sick day coverage to women who are victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Paid sick day coverage would allow victims to take time off from work to obtain medical care, participate in criminal and civil legal proceedings, and relocate their families. The current legislation also purports that paid sick days are essential in protecting public health because workers in food services, nursing homes, child care centers and retail clerks frequently come in contact

with the public yet have no paid sick day protection and are often times forced to work despite being ill with an infectious disease such as influenza.

Status: January 10, 2007 Referred to the committee on Labor and Workforce Development

An Act to Establish a Self-Sufficiency Standard in Massachusetts (H3664/S1133)

Lead Sponsors: Senator Marian Walsh, Representative Daniel E. Bosley
Endorsed: May 23, 2001

Summary: This bill will establish a realistic, independent benchmark of economic status by region throughout Massachusetts. It is meant to provide a measure of the extent to which the incomes of households in Massachusetts are sufficient to support the costs of living, working, raising a family, and paying taxes in Massachusetts. The Self-Sufficiency Standard will calculate the realistic costs of housing, food, child care, transportation, medical care, taxes and miscellaneous items by region within the state. The standard will be used as an official and accurate reference point for policymakers.

Status: January 10, 2007 Referred to the committee on Labor and Workforce Development.

An Act to Prohibit Discrimination in Insurance Policies (S2188)

Lead Sponsor: Senator Dianne Wilkerson
Endorsed: February 28, 2001

Summary: This bill prohibits insurance companies from discriminating against women on the basis of their sex when setting policy rates. The current insurance law, which allows distinctions based on sex, does not conform to the Massachusetts Equal Rights Amendment.

Status: April 5, 2007 Referred to the committee on Financial Services

An Act Relative to Bullying in the Workplace (H1850)

Lead Sponsor: Representative Ellen Story

Endorsed: June 27, 2007

Summary: *An Act Relative to Bullying in the Workplace* would amend Chapter 149 of the General Laws to add Section 115A whose purpose is to determine and analyze the direct and indirect costs to workers, families and the companies affected by workplace psychological harassment. The goal is to then establish a program that requires employers with 50 or more employees to establish policies defining psychological harassment and ways of prevention.

Status: April 7, 2007 Referred to study by the committee on Labor and Workforce Development

Education

An Act to Provide Health Education in Schools (H597)

Lead Sponsor: Representative Alice K. Wolf

Endorsed: October 26, 2005

Summary: This bill would provide for the Department of Education to implement health education into its core curriculum. School districts would be required to teach adequate age-appropriate health information, defined as "sufficient self-knowledge and knowledge of his or her mental and physical wellness"¹, for grades K-12. The Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Curriculum Framework outlines this health education which includes nutrition, personal self-care and safety. Health Education is necessary so that youth can make informed, responsible decisions about their bodies and lifestyle choices. (It is noted that current law provides a parental opt-out for sex education, which remains intact).

Status:

March 13, 2008 Discharged to the committee on House Rules and accompanied a study order

An Act Relative to Early Education and Care (H3776)

Lead Sponsor: Representative Patricia Haddad

Endorsed: 2002

Summary:

An Act Relative to Early Education and Care (H 3776) outlines a comprehensive plan to develop a coordinated system of early childhood education in Massachusetts. The bill builds upon the Massachusetts Universal Pre-Kindergarten (MA UPK) Program which was established under the Acts of 2005. This bill clarifies the powers and responsibilities of the Board, Department, and Commissioner of Early Education in order to create a more streamlined and efficient educational system.

Status: January 11, 2007 Referred to the committee on Education

Health Care

An Act to Eliminate Health Disparities in the Commonwealth (H2234)

Lead Sponsor: Representative Byron Rushing

Endorsed: October 24, 2007

Summary: This bill calls for the establishment of a new Office of Health Equity under the jurisdiction of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. This office would be responsible for researching and addressing how issues of racial and ethnic inequality affect individuals' access to healthcare throughout the Commonwealth. The Office would create an annual "report card" examining the state's progress in addressing these disparities and educating other executive agencies on their findings and promoting "health literacy" throughout the Commonwealth. The Office of Health Equity would also advocate for greater diversity in the health workforce by awarding competitive grants to community-based health care agencies to help eliminate health disparities amongst disadvantaged populations. In addition, it would be responsible for recruiting and training health workers who have direct knowledge of the communities they serve, and for making health care more accessible by supporting medical interpreter services and wellness education.

Status: January 11, 2007 Referred to the committee on Public Health

Political Participation

An Act Establishing the Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women (S1172)

Lead Sponsor: Senator Joan M. Menard, Representative Patricia Haddad
Endorsed: February 28, 2007

Summary: *An Act Establishing the Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women* would create a permanent commission on the status of women in Bristol County consisting of 9 people who will be appointed by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women. The Bristol Commission will be charged with conducting an ongoing study of all matters concerning women in Bristol County and advising local and state officials on their findings and recommended solutions. In addition, findings and recommended solutions will also be reported annually to the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women. The Act would be modeled after legislation which created the Berkshire County Commission on Status of Women.

Status: March, 2008 Reported favorably by the committee on House Ways and Means

Violence Against Women

An Act Establishing a Campus Rape and Sexual Assault Prevention Advisory Council (S737)

Lead Sponsor: Senator Pamela Resor
Endorsed: January 26, 2006

Summary: This legislation would establish a campus rape and sexual assault prevention advisory council through the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education. This council would support campus groups that assist rape and sexual assault victims. This council would also help to ensure that certain enumerated rights are afforded to rape and sexual assault victim, where 1) the

incident took place on campus and where the victims or the alleged perpetrator is a student or 2) the victim is a student involved in an off-campus rape or sexual assault.

Status: March 27, 2008 Passed by the Senate - March 31, 2008 Referred to the Committee on House Ways and Means

**An Act to Relating to Anti-Human Trafficking and Protection.
(S97)**

Lead Sponsor: Senator Mark C. Montigny

Endorsed: December 14, 2005

**Previous session name: An Act to Provide for Study About Trafficking of Persons and Involuntary Servitude.*

Summary: This bill provides for a study about trafficking of persons and involuntary servitude. The commission study shall include, but not be limited to the following, the prevalence of trafficking and involuntary servitude in the commonwealth, the harms and consequences to victims of such activities, the ability and capacity of existing social service and public and involuntary servitude in the commonwealth, the harms and consequences to victims of such activities, the ability and capacity of existing social service and public benefits programs to respond to the needs of such victims, the effectiveness of existing victim witness laws, regulations, and services to respond to the needs of such victims, the interplay of such programs with federally-funded victim service programs and the ability of state programs and licensing bodies to provide benefits, programs, and licenses to such victims.

Status:

March 18, 2008 Bill reported favorably by committee and referred to the committee on Senate Ways and Means

**An Act to Prevent Harassment
(S1002)**

Lead Sponsor: Senator Pamela Resor

Endorsed: November 15, 2005

Summary: The act would establish a criminally enforceable Harassment Protection Order by replacing wording in the General Laws with wording that appropriately fills the void when there is a stalking, indecent assault, or battery with a person that does not have a specific relationship to the victim.

Status: January 10, 2007 Referred to the committee on The Judiciary

An Act to Protect and Enhance the Rights of Child and Adult Victims and Witnesses and Crime (S802)

Lead Sponsors: Senator Frederick E. Berry, Representative Peter J. Koutoujian

Endorsed: October 24, 2007

Summary: This legislation has been created to more comprehensibly address the needs, rights and safety of child and adult victims or witnesses of crimes. The bill would not only add new rights to the Massachusetts *Victim Bill of Rights*, (originally signed into law in 1984 and amended in 1995), but would also clarify, revise and, if necessary, update the language of M.G.L. Chapter 258B, as well as assess and classify the "practices by the criminal justice agencies which have evolved over the last 10+ years."

Status: January 10, 2007 Referred to the committee on The Judiciary

An Act Relative to Gender Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes (H1722)

Lead Sponsors: Representative Carl Sciortino

Endorsed: February 28, 2008

Summary: An Act Relative to Gender-Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes of 2007 clarifies and updates Massachusetts' non-discrimination laws to ensure that they clearly and uniformly protect all people regardless of their gender identity or expression. This bill adds the categories of gender identity and expression to our hate crime laws as well as to the employment, housing, credit, public accommodations, and education non-discrimination laws.

Status: January 11, 2007 Referred to the committee on The Judiciary, and put into study on March 31, 2008.

Endorsed Legislation Successfully Passed

Economic Security & Pay Equity

An Act Relative to the Minimum Wage (H4781/S2632)

Lead Sponsor: Representative J. James Marzilli, Jr.

Endorsed: April 27, 2005

Summary: This bill raises the minimum wage in Massachusetts to \$7.50 an hour on Jan. 1, 2007 and \$8 an hour Jan. 1, 2008

Passed: July 31, 2006

An Act to Ensure Eligibility for Unemployment Insurances for Victims of Domestic Violence (S 1984)

Lead Sponsor:

Endorsed: April 25, 2001

Summary: This bill will help ease the devastating financial impact of domestic violence by assuring employees affected by domestic violence the economic security necessary to secure a safe, stable living situation and obtain suitable future employment.

Passed: August 2, 2001

An Act Providing Equitable Coverage of Services Under Health Plans (S 2139)

Lead Sponsor:

Endorsed: January 23, 2002

Summary: This bill was signed into law by Acting Governor Jane Swift. This bill requires insurance companies to cover contraceptives and hormone

replacement therapy for women to the same degree they cover comparable services for men.

Passed: March 8, 2002

**An Act to Provide Timely Access to Emergency Contraception
(S 2073)**

Lead Sponsors: Senator Pamela Resor & Representative Douglas Petersen
Endorsed: May 25, 2005

Summary: This bill was signed into law on Sept. 15, 2005. This bill will require hospital emergency rooms to make emergency contraception available to rape survivors and will also allow pharmacists to dispense emergency contraception through a collaborative agreement with a physician.

Passed: September 15, 2005

Political Participation

An Act Creating a Commission on the Status of Women (S 142)

Lead Sponsor: Senator Andrea F. Nuciforo, Jr.,

Endorsed: 2003

Summary: This bill established a permanent Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women. The Commission consists of nine persons appointed by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women. Residents of Berkshire County are eligible to serve on the Commission. The Berkshire Commission will operate under the umbrella of the State Commission on the Status of Women.

Passed: September 30, 2004

State Funding for Essential Programs

Introduction

During the budget crisis that began in fiscal year 2002, the state implemented almost \$3 billion dollars in budget cuts.¹ In 2004 the MCSW commissioned a budget analysis report, *Real Cuts – Real People – Real Pain; The Effects of the Fiscal Crisis on Women & Girls in Massachusetts*, to examine the impact that those cuts had on women and girls in the Commonwealth. The report found that women and girls are the primary beneficiaries of many of the essential services that government provides. While some of the most important state services help mothers to raise their families, other equally important services help women to participate successfully in the workplace. Other services help women and girls maintain healthy and safe lives within their communities. For example, by providing child care assistance, state government helps tens of thousands of low-income women to balance work and family obligations. By providing publicly-funded health insurance, state government helps women and girls get access to high-quality health care.

The MCSW continues to monitor the budget and advocate for the restoration of funding to essential programs. In 2005, working with assistance from the Kennedy School of Government, the Commission released *Real Cuts: 2006*. Most notably the report found that while state revenues have increased in recent years, funding for most social services has not reached pre-crisis levels. In the spring of 2008 the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center generously provided the Commission with funding levels for fiscal year 2008, allowing the MCSW to identify the percentage of change from inflation-adjusted 2001 levels.

Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children

Funding for FY2001 adjusted for inflation (FY09 \$): **\$318.0 million**
Fiscal year 2008 funding: \$274.5 million
Percent Decrease: 14%

Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC), Massachusetts' welfare to work program, provides cash and other assistance to families with or expecting children, including job search assistance.

Employment Services Program

Funding for FY2001 adjusted for inflation (FY09\$): **\$30.0 million**
Fiscal year 2008 funding: \$27.2 million
Percent Decrease: 10%

The Employment Services Program (ESP) offers education, training, and job search assistance to TAFDC recipients and former recipients (up to one year after the termination of their benefits).

Subsidized Childcare

Funding for FY2001 adjusted for inflation (FY09\$): **\$491.8 million**
Fiscal year 2008 funding: \$376.8 million
Percent Decrease: 24%

Subsidized childcare funds childcare for families in financial need, allowing parents to work in order to achieve economic security. The need for affordable childcare outpaces the supply from the state.ⁱⁱ Subsidized childcare faces problems not only with the number of openings available, but also because of low salaries, training issues, and the quality of service provided.ⁱⁱⁱ

Childcare Resource and Referral Agencies

Funding for FY2001 adjusted for inflation (FY09\$): **\$15.0 million**
Fiscal year 2008 funding: \$24.9 million

Childcare Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&R) work to give access to reasonably priced, quality childcare while increasing the capacity and quality of the childcare system in Massachusetts.

Community Partnerships for Children

Funding at recent peak adjusted for inflation (FY09\$): **\$117.6 million*FY2001**
Fiscal year 2008 funding: Included above

Community Partnerships for Children (CPC) makes subsidies available to families earning up to 125% of the State Median Income so their children can take advantage of early learning and readiness programs.

Chapter 70 and Department of Education's Grant and Reimbursement Program

Chapter 70

Funding for FY2001 adjusted for inflation (FY09\$): **\$3,681.4 million**
Fiscal year 2008 funding: \$3,725.6 million
Percent Increase: 1%

Chapter 70 makes up part of the support for K-12 education. The funding works to guarantee pupil equity among districts by providing state aid while setting minimum spending limits on school districts.^{iv} The Department of Education's (DOE) grant and reimbursement program funds the rest of K-12 education in Massachusetts. Additionally, they provide specifically targeted grants to the school districts.

Public Higher Education

Funding for FY2001 adjusted for inflation (FY09\$): **\$1,334.2 million**
Fiscal year 2008 funding: \$1,054.7 million
Percent Decrease: 22%

Higher education funding gives Massachusetts's high school students the opportunity to attend one of the state's public colleges or universities, the graduates of which are 68 percent female.^v

Public Health

Funding for FY2001 adjusted for inflation (FY09\$): **\$641.4 million**
Fiscal year 2008 funding: \$554.4 million
Percent Decrease: 14%

Public health services include programs that screen for or prevent diseases, and often provide at-risk people with access to care they cannot normally afford.

Substance Abuse

Funding for FY2001 adjusted for inflation (FY09\$): **\$54.8 million**
Fiscal year 2008 funding: \$82.8 million
Percent Increase: 35%

Substance abuse programs in Massachusetts allow for both prevention and treatment of illicit drug use. Programs are critically needed right now, as the current incidence of drug use among adolescents shows virtually no difference between boys and girls, although traditionally males have a higher rate of substance abuse than females.^{vi}

Tobacco- Smoking Prevention and Control

Funding for FY2001 adjusted for inflation (FY09\$): **\$62.1 million**
Fiscal year 2008 funding: \$12.7 million
Percent Decrease: 80%

Massachusetts' tobacco program, once considered a model for other states to follow, continues to fall on hard times. In FY 2002, Massachusetts was one of only two states noted as having a successful program because it utilized both long-term and comprehensive methods.^{vii} While the evaluation component of the program disappeared during the budget cuts, preventing full assessment,

evidence does show that smoking rates stopped falling following the decrease in funding.^{viii}

Family Planning Services

Funding for FY2001 adjusted for inflation (FY09\$): **\$17 million**
Fiscal year 2008 funding: \$7.2 million
Percent Decrease: 60%

Family planning services in Massachusetts provide birth control devices, pregnancy testing, and primary care, and fund treatment of women's gynecological problems, including screening for cervical cancer. Previous cuts to the program resulted in 20,000 uninsured women losing the reproductive and primary health care provided through the program. Outreach and education also lost funding due to budget cuts.^{ix}

Teen Pregnancy Prevention

Funding for FY2001 adjusted for inflation (FY09\$): **\$6.7 million**
Fiscal year 2008 funding: \$4.0 million
Percent Decrease: 41%

Teen pregnancy prevention programs work to help teens reduce their pregnancy rates.

Healthy Families

Funding for FY2001 adjusted for inflation (FY09\$): **\$19.9 million**
Fiscal year 2008 funding: \$12.7 million
Percent Decrease: 36%

The Healthy Families program helps young parents access information on childbirth, infant care, and life skills through home visits conducted until their child is three years old.

HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, and Related Services

Funding for FY2001 adjusted for inflation (FY09\$): **\$67.9 million**
Fiscal year 2008 funding: 38.8 million
Percent Decrease: 43%

These programs offer preventive options for low-income women at risk of contacting HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C, while also providing care and counseling for people who have contracted them.

Domestic Violence

Funding for FY2001 adjusted for inflation (FY09\$): **\$21.7 million**
Fiscal year 2008 funding: \$23.0 million
Percent Increase: 6%

Domestic violence programs in Massachusetts aim to help survivors of domestic violence receive services, counseling, and interventions. Funding also supports shelters and transitional housing for domestic violence survivors. Part of that increase, however, finances RISE, the Refugee and Immigrant Safety Empowerment Program, which was originally funded by the Department of Social Services. As such, RISE money counts as a transfer as opposed to new funding.^x Even counting the RISE budget, however, domestic violence funding has grown slightly over the past year.

References

ⁱ *State Budget '04: The Long Road Back*, Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation, January 2004, p. 10, available at www.masstaxpayers.org/data/pdf/reports/budget04.pdf.

ⁱⁱ http://www.mhsc.org/cuts_files/DEE&C.pdf 45

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.mhsc.org/cuts_files/DEE&C.pdf 52

^{iv} http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/chapter70/formula05_1.pdf

^v Real Cuts, 34

^{vi} Real Cuts, 55

^{vii} Real Cuts, 62

^{viii} Real Cuts, 65

^{ix} http://www.mhsc.org/cuts_files/MDPH.pdf 238

^x <http://www.massbudget.com/FY06SWMBudgetMonitor.pdf> 12

**Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women
Amherst Public Hearing**

April 26, 2008, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Hearing minutes

Present Commissioners: Linda Cavaoli, Debbi DiMasi, Marianne Fleckner, Pam Malumphy, Azell Murphy Cavaan

Staff: Jill Ashton, Linda Brantley, Kim Sebastiao

Attendees: Lois Ahrens, Anne D. Brossard, Patricia Cardoso, Ann Cormier, Nancy deProsse, Emily Franklin, Ann Ferguson, Karen Gooden, Marjorie Hutter, LaWanza Lett-Brewington, Hind Mari, Mary McCarthy, Nancy Maynard, S. McLaughlin, Juliana Morgan-Trostle, Jessica Montagna, Kristen Palpin, Irene Patch, Nancy Campbell Patteson, Ann Poole, Lena Sclove, Niki Sremac, Toni Troop, Diane Williams

Welcome

Sandra Mandel, Associate Director at the Everywoman's Center, welcomed attendees and the Commission to the hearing. She urged participants to speak truth to power, noting that the women on the Commission have power, but need the truth offered by the people who are willing to testify.

Chair Fleckner thanked the participants for coming to the hearing and introduced the Commission; she spoke about the agency's mission and the purpose of the hearing. At the request of Chair Fleckner, Commissioner Azell Murphy Cavaan, a Springfield resident, briefly reported findings specific to Western Massachusetts included in the MCSW's State of Women report. She noted that the Commission hopes to gain a greater understanding of the status of women in Western Massachusetts by hosting public hearings.

Testimony

Ann Poole representing Tapestry Health advocated for additional funding for family planning services and HIV/AIDS prevention. She noted the high teen birth rate in Hampshire County and that 25% of girls are living with a STI. Chair Fleckner requested additional information about Department of Public Health appropriations.

Nancy Maynard, representing Mass Home Care and Highland Valley Elder Service, read written testimony advocating for elders. The full testimony is included in the appendix.

Hind Mari, representing Women of Color Leadership Network, presented written testimony about the challenges of racism and sexism faced by female students at UMass Amherst. The full testimony is included in the appendix.

Chair Fleckner took a moment to recognize Representative Ellen Story and thank her for attending. Representative Story thanked the MCSW for holding a hearing in Amherst, noting that often constituents are asked to travel to Boston.

Marjorie Hutter, representing the Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts, read written testimony prepared by Julie Kumble, Coordinator of Grants, Programs and Volunteers. She spoke about the challenges facing women in their community and the Women's Fund's commitment to addressing those issues. The full testimony is included in the appendix.

LaWanza Lett-Brewington, Executive Director, Safe Passage, testified about the challenges of providing domestic violence services to the many women in need. Safe Passage is the domestic violence coordinator for Hampshire County much of which is rural. She spoke about how the federal government defines rural, suburban and urban communities and how they allocate funding. She urged a more realistic and informed approach to funding and programming for domestic violence victims. Ms. Lett-Brewington reported that there is a need for broad-based services, more shelter beds, and increases in community services. In addition, she noted there is a need for a more informed court and judicial system, one which recognizes the challenges and needs of victims and supports and protects them throughout the legal process. Ms. Lett-Brewington suggested that it would be beneficial to have the Commission involved in the discussion of domestic violence and sexual assault issues in Massachusetts.

Ms. Mandel read testimony written by **Susan Dorazio** advocating for quality child care. The full testimony is included in the appendix.

Lois Ahrens, presenting the Real Cost of Prisons Project, presented written testimony and requested that the funds which Governor Patrick recommended for expanding the jail for women in Chicopee be redirected to community-based and controlled drug and mental health treatment, job training and child care services. The full testimony is included in the appendix.

Julian Morgan-Trostle, representing the Women's Rights Club at Amherst High School, read and presented written testimony about issues which young women face, including a lack of comprehensive health education. The full testimony is included in the appendix.

Anne Cormier informed the Commission that she would like to raise the issue of storing umbilical cord blood. Cord blood has received much attention lately because of the debate around stem cells. The cells contained in cord blood can grow and adapt into further developed cells. The technology is lifesaving and has advanced health sciences. However, currently there are limited options for donating and banking; storage facilities are few and expensive. Ms. Cormier reported that she has given birth to three children and it was not until the last delivery that she was able to donate. She noted that donation should not be such a challenge. Ms. Cormier reported that legislation exists in Massachusetts that addresses the issue, but has never been adequately funded. Chair Fleckner asked Ms. Cormier to forward additional information about the issue and the legislation which she spoke of in her testimony to the MCSW.

Barbara Melrose testified as a member of the Abortion Rights Fund of Western Massachusetts. She reported that women's reproductive needs remain unmet. There is a lack of comprehensive health education, access to contraception, and access to abortion. Massachusetts is one of only 16 states that provide Medicaid funding for abortions, however women without insurance face significant barriers. The inability to get abortions places women on and keeps them in need of public assistance; often it derails education, keeps them with abusive partners, and bears addicted children. There are four funds in Massachusetts with a total budget of \$128,000 and providing loans and grants for between \$50 and \$650. She recommended innovative thinking to provide contraception and reduce abortions, for example working with community health centers or community programs, such as WIC. Also, access to emergency contraception must be made widely available and affordable. It is counter intuitive to delay access and increase the potential for unwanted pregnancy.

Toni Troop began her testimony by noting that the domestic violence community is currently experiencing great hope and sadness; there have been significant gains and at the same time it is experiencing record rates of domestic violence and domestic violence related homicides. She urged

research on the new causes and factors which have manifested the current crisis. Ms. Troop reflected that domestic violence organizations and law enforcement agencies were, three years ago, aware that there would be increases in domestic violence rates, because funds were being decreased or cut and lawmakers neglected to invest in an adequate infrastructure. She asked why funding has to be either or - either prevention or services, noting that it is more expensive to move a woman to a shelter than to keep her in her home. She recommended that the MCSW work with other state agencies and domestic violence organizations to apply pressure to systems, probate court and law enforcement, encourage community education, address the backlash of the father's rights movement. Ms. Troop concluded by urging a broad, comprehensive, and community engaged approach to preventing and responding to domestic violence.

Ann Ferguson testified that she is a recently retired professor of philosophy and women's studies. She spoke about the discipline of women's studies. Ms. Ferguson noted that she wanted to first emphasize the positive. Women studies programs came into existence in the mid-1970s and focused on the intersection of race class and sexually inequality. Organizations such as the Everywoman's Center have made substantial contributions to the advancement of women. However, in recent years there has been a stalling of process and an erosion of gains. Women are still discriminated against in the workforce, struggle with securing adequate child care, and are victims of domestic violence. Ms. Ferguson asked the Commission to advocate for more funding for higher education and women's studies programs.

Ms. Winters read testimony written by **Daria Fisk** which requested that the Commission study the barriers to advancement that low-income women face. The full testimony is included in the appendix.

Jessica Montagna read and presented written testimony reporting the lack of adequate safe housing for victims of domestic violence. The full testimony is included in the appendix.

Nancy deProsse, representing an informal group of parents with adopted children, presented written and oral testimony advocating for increased support by the state for families such as her own. The full testimony is included in the appendix.

Marianne Winters presented written and oral testimony on the ways that Everywoman's Center, a university-based women's center providing essential counseling and resources, is promoting empowerment and access for women and offered recommendations in the area of policy, funding, and legislation. The full testimony is included in the appendix.

Irene Patch, a R.N working at Soldiers Home in Holyoke, presented written testimony and asked for help resolving a safety issue at work. The full testimony is included in the appendix.

The Commission also received written testimony from an anonymous person advocating for a strengthening of restraining orders in Massachusetts, **Mary McCarthy** urging state support for adoptive families throughout the adopted child's youth, **Mary Valquez** requesting a review of needed changes to WEP/GPO in social security, and **Jess Wolfe** who spoke about living with HIV/AIDS. Full written testimony is included below.

Adjourn

The hearing was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

APPENDIX



Testimony presented on behalf of Mass Home Care and Highland Valley Elder Services, Inc. by Nancy Maynard, Associate Director of Home Care, for Highland Valley Elder Services, Inc., 320 Riverside Drive, Suite B, Florence, MA 01062-2700.

1. All aging issues in our country are predominately women's issues, because most older people are women. The U.S. population, age 65 and over, is expected to double in size within the next 25 years. By 2030, almost 1 out of 5 Americans, which is approximately some 72 million people, will be 65 years or older. The age group, 85 and older, is now the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population.
2. Today, 59% of the population, age 65 and over, are women. However, when you get to the 85 and over population, those most at risk of disability and poverty, 71% are women. For every 100 women over the age of 85, there are only 41 men.
3. Many older women are caring for their spouses, yet spouses are not allowed to be paid as a caregiver in this state. They have to turn to their daughters and sons to provide the care. Allowing spouses to be paid caregivers will help us solve the severe shortage of caregivers for the elderly we will face as the baby boomers age.
4. Changes in the American family have significant implications for future aging. Divorce, for example, is on the rise, and some researchers suggest that fewer children and more stepchildren may change the availability of family support in the future for people at older ages. In 1960, only 1.6% of older men and 1.5% of women age 65 and older were divorced. By 2003, 7% of older men and 8.6% of older women were divorced and had not remarried. The trend may be continuing. In 2003, among people in their early 60s, 12.2% of men and 15.9% of women were divorced. This is one example of the shortage of caregivers we will face.
5. Many daughters who step in to care for their aging parents often are not paid. They also do not know they can become a Personal Care Assistant (PCA) for their parents or a Caring Homes provider, but these programs are only for low income people on MassHealth. Women and their daughters or sons, who are just over the MassHealth guidelines, receive nothing. For a son or daughter to step out of the workforce to care for an aging relative, he or she must get paid enough to survive economically and \$18,000 a year, which is the best we can do now, is just not enough.
6. Most professional caregivers, like homemakers and PCAs, are women. Their wages and benefits are terrible. PCAs have now organized, but most homemakers could make more money working in a fast food restaurant. We need to upgrade the wages and benefits these women receive.

7. More respite care programs are needed to give women a break from their caregiving, or else they will burn out, and leave the state with two people to care for.
8. Nationally, 66% of the people in nursing homes are women. In Massachusetts, 68% of the residents of nursing facilities in 2006 were women, which is almost 7 in 10. Our state has the 2nd highest rate of institutionalization of people over 65, and most of these people are women. They are not being cared for in the least restrictive setting. We need to shift our focus for long term care spending from over-reliance on nursing home care to community care first. Governor Patrick has begun to promote this, but the fact is that today we still spend 66% of our MassHealth dollars, which is more than \$1.6 billion, on institutional care and this is mostly for women.
9. When a woman turns 65 in this state, she may be thrown off MassHealth because of different income and asset rules. We need to standardize these rules, so that older women needing MassHealth are subject to the same eligibility requirements as younger women.
10. The rules for receiving MassHealth assistance with long term care are partially based on "spending down" your income. The current rules favor nursing homes and make it easier to qualify for MassHealth, than if you need care in the community. We need to level the playing field throughout our regulatory system to eliminate such incentives for nursing home care.
11. All of these changes will predominately help older women, because older women are the predominate demographic of aging. Their needs are as compelling as any other age group in our society. However, they are often less visible, because the needs of older women are often misunderstood, or ignored by the media and the public.

lots of budget considerations

Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women

Women of Color Leadership Network (WOCLN),
Office of Programs and Services for ALANA Students
Testimony by Hind Mari, Program Director
(413) 545-1670
hrmari@stuaf.umass.edu

March 26, 2008

I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify to the Commission on behalf of women of color on campus, citing some of the issues they face.

WOCLN was founded in 1993 as part of the Every Woman's Center (EWC) that served as its home until 2005, when it was moved to the Center for Student Development. WOCLN provides advocacy, mentoring and training for University women and community women of color in the 5-college area. Over the years, WOCLN has raised women's consciousness around issues of self-identity, self-care and self-expression through mentoring, workshops, events and programming.

The issues I will concentrate on in my testimony mostly come from anecdotes collected over time from the community of women of color on campus, specifically students. The same themes have been recurring, and the stories are consistent that they deserve to be shared here. They all revolve around Oppression, Access, Childcare, Retention and Violence.

In the Fall of 2007, there were about 18.4% students of color enrolled at UMass, both male and female. Women (white and non-white) comprised 48.8% of the student population (Office of Institutional Research-UMass Amherst). While there are no statistics available specific to the percentage of women of color (WOC) who were enrolled in the fall, anecdotally, women have discussed some of the barriers for themselves and other women of color entering college. Among the most cited obstacles are:

Oppression
Obstacles

- Women of color often report encountering racist behavior from their white peers, such as name calling, ignoring, objectifying and possibly violence
- Women of color experience sexual harassment, violence and other forms of sexism from many of their male peers
- Lesbian, Bisexual, Queer, Questioning and Transgender women of color are often not supported or harassed and have difficulty finding communities that are both compassionate and aware

- Women of color dealing with at least sexism and racism often report feeling alone and internalize the oppression directed toward them, this can result in serious mental, emotional, physical and spiritual harm

Recommendations

- Provide mandatory trainings, workshops and dialogue groups for students, staff and faculty to discuss and learn about oppression, social justice and liberation
- Require the UMass community to go through sexual assault/violence prevention classes
- Provide more financial support and programming that speaks to specific needs of students
- Have therapists/mental health specialist, specifically trained to work with students of color, and be available and accessible for women of color

Access

Obstacles

- Lacks of academic preparation before students get to college
- Lack of funding for school: cuts to federal aid, cost/affordability of attending college as fees are very high; \$17,399 for in-state undergraduate students for the 2007/08 (Office of Institutional Research-UMass Amherst)
- Complex financial aid process and admissions policies
- Federal government's Welfare to Work program makes it harder for women to attend college

Recommendations

- More recruitment of women of color
- Concentrate recruitment where we can find them, like churches, youth organizations, and other places where they are
- Increase federal and state funding to make attending college more affordable
- More college prep programs specifically for students of color

Childcare

Obstacles

- Lack of subsidized childcare options for student mothers
- Cost of childcare is high especially for single parents
- Lack of eligibility for international students for most childcare subsidies

Recommendations

- Provide subsidies for women parents
- Have flex day options for parents; allow childcare to occur around class schedules
- Provide subsidies specifically for international women of color parents

Retention

Obstacles

- Lack of academic advising that is specific for students of color

- Lack of academic, social or cultural programs that are focused on supporting the students holistically, particularly students of color
- Lack of race/ethnicity specific academic programs
- Small number of faculty/staff of color on campus (only 2% are WOC faculty); students don't see enough role model faculty and are more likely to drop out
- Small number of students of color in general on campus. This leaves most students feeling they are the sole representation for their group; in their classes, residence halls, co-curricular activities
- Many students of color, including women of color are the first generation of college students in their families

Recommendations

- Provide adequate financial aid
- Restore academic and social programs that support students of color
- Recruit more faculty and staff of color
- Provide academic advising particularly for students of color
- Listen to student needs/wants and create supportive programs to assist them

Violence:

Obstacles

- Violence and silence around issues of violence on campus have reached extreme highs for all students
- Women are reporting feeling unsafe around campus
- Women who experience sexual or domestic violence are not given proper housing or economic, emotional or psychological assistance.
- Many women of color have reported that the campus environment feels hostile and uncomfortable

Recommendation

- Require all students to go through sexual assault/violence prevention classes
- Restore the Escort Services program for all students no matter what time of day
- Create specific funding for students who have experienced violence that includes costs for food, housing, and rehabilitation
- Provide trainings, workshops and dialogue groups for students to discuss and learn about oppression, social justice and liberation- as they relate to all of us. Anger and violence around difference will be acknowledged, discussed and diffused.

Again, thank you for giving me the opportunity and thanks to the Everywoman's Center for hosting these hearings. Please feel free to contact me if you have further questions.

Subject: testimony on child care
From: susandor@crocker.com
Date: Sun, 23 Mar 2008 23:33:20 -0400 (EDT)
To: smandel@admin.umass.edu

To: Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women
From: Susan Dorazio
Re: Child Care

As far as child care goes, women in Massachusetts are doubly cursed. As parents, they face formidable, sometimes insurmountable, hurdles trying to find affordable, high-quality care for their young children. As child care workers, they commit themselves to a career characterized by low status, low pay, and insufficient benefits. This should be no revelation to those of you serving on the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women. An abundance of documentation exists on both these issues. What needs to happen is for Massachusetts women to unite for quality child care by linking affordability and accessibility to the rights of child care workers to good wages, benefits, and working conditions.

This was the conclusion our Child Care Advocacy Committee at the Nonotuck Community School (a unionized child care center in Florence, Mass) came to a few years ago. Since then, we have been working to expand the definition of child care advocacy to include the quality of the program, the quality of the workplace, and the quality of society as a whole. We have become convinced that demands and action must occur in all these areas if the women of Massachusetts are ever to create and maintain a just, equitable, and compassionate child care system.

Typically, child care advocacy efforts have focused on program quality, according to criteria pertaining to curriculum, teacher-child ratios and interactions, materials, equipment, parent-teacher relationships, and health and safety issues. Countless letters have been written and calls made by members of the child care community to legislators and newspapers calling for major increases in child care funding to ensure accessibility and affordability of child care services.

The Early Education for All campaign is an example of the positive aspects of this advocacy strategy. It is also an example of its shortcomings. While attention has been brought to the needs of young children and their families, the needs of child care workers have been largely ignored. Formal recognition is now routinely given to the critical position of teacher/care givers in the quality-care equation, but somehow our basic needs for financial stability, job benefits, and good working conditions never get specifically addressed. Instead, "training" becomes the panacea for the recruitment and retention of good teachers. Apparently, the "compensation" necessary to provide for oneself and a family will magically proceed from further course-work at night or on weekends. In our view, it's time for advocates both within and outside the child care community to fight a whole lot harder for the rights of child care workers if the system as a whole is to improve. A quality workplace is intrinsic to quality child care.

Last, but definitely not least, in our Nonotuck formulation of quality child care, is the quality of the society we all function in and are impacted by. Policies, programs, and strategies connect directly to visions, values, and priorities. In the U.S., the context for our social, political, and economic behavior is capitalism and militarism. The level of challenge we present to the status quo will determine the degree to which we women in Massachusetts overcome the injustices we face in our personal and work lives.

This process entails close scrutiny of all the systems-within-a-system, including child care. It requires an ongoing analysis of how and why the

various aspects of our society fit together, and the generating of creative solutions. But most of all, it will require energy, daring, and collective action. Deeper bonds need to be created between child care advocates and community activists. Child care issues must be on the activist agenda, and peace and justice issues on the child care agenda. Making connections between our issues will broaden the base of a movement for social change. It will heighten our sense of urgency, and provide allies for our mutual struggle. It will give us resources and support for directing our energy toward attaining our goals.

Demands and actions, based on our commitment to family and worker rights for all women, are essential to uniting Massachusetts women behind quality child care in its most comprehensive, egalitarian sense. For example, high-quality "early care and education for all" will require collective effort. Coalitions of workers in child care, education, health care, and the social services will need to take to the street as well as to the halls of the State House to agitate for progressive sources of revenue, such as a steeply graduated state income tax, and high taxes on luxury items. Only in this way, will child care be fully funded, for the sake of families and workers alike.

At the Federal level, child care advocates and community activists will need to unite in order to redirect national priorities from war to domestic spending. An immediate cut of 50% in the military budget should be our collective demand to politicians at every level of government, since military spending keenly and directly effects state and local programs and services.

Significant changes in the child care situation for children, families, and workers here in Massachusetts and around the country -- a situation that disproportionately affects women, and in particular young women, women of color, and low-income women--will not be possible without significant change in society as a whole.

Those of us in the child care community welcome and encourage the participation of the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women in the effort to significantly improve the lives of women by bringing child care issues into a broad movement for social, political, and economic justice.

Susan Dorazio is a resident of Montague. She recently retired after 30 years as a teacher of young children in Franklin and Hampshire counties. She is also the Convener of the Women's Commission of the Socialist Party USA.

March 26, 2008

The Real Cost of Prisons Project

Lois Ahrens

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Public Hearing Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women
March 26, 2008 at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Thank you giving me the opportunity to speak. My name is Lois Ahrens. I am the director of the Real Cost of Prisons Project, a national project based in Northampton, MA.

In the five minutes allotted, I want to focus on how for women, incarceration is the dominant and costly response to drug and alcohol addiction and crimes committed as a result of addiction. The number of women imprisoned with sentences of more than one year grew by 757% between 1977 and 2004; for men it was 388%. Street drug convictions now account for nearly 1/3 of the women imprisoned. Poor women of color are, along with African American and Hispanic men, the prime targets of the War on Drugs. A report from the Pew Foundation released last month, found that one in 355 white women between the ages of 35 and 39 are behind bars and one in 100 black women are. This is not because African American women use drugs at a higher rate than white women.

Despite the unconscionable wreckage to lives and the always increasing financial cost, Massachusetts, like the rest of the country, continues building jails. Gov. Deval Patrick's bond bill filed in January includes funding for 56 additional cells for women at the Chicopee jail. The new jail has already cost \$26 million to build but that is only the tip of the iceberg since caging one woman in one of the current 210 cells for a year costs more than \$43,200.

Approximately half the women are incarcerated at the Chicopee jail are there because they are too poor to make bail of \$200 to \$500. Often they can be held pretrial for months. Most of the time, they will be homeless and without income upon release, further destabilizing their lives and placing the well-being of their children in serious jeopardy. Jail has become a debtor's prison.

The Massachusetts prison and jail budget did not suddenly grow to 98 percent parity with the state's funding for higher education overnight. It happened over more than 20 years, driven not by a sustained rise in crime but by long mandatory sentencing, use and abuse of school zone enhancements (especially by the district attorney of Hampden County) imprisonment of women and convicted of drug possession and the restrictive employment options due to **CORIS**. For poor women and especially African American and Hispanic women, incarceration is the primary response to substance abuse, mental illness and sexual abuse. Almost 85 percent of all women at the Chicopee jail, pretrial and sentenced, are addicted to drugs and/or alcohol.

No study has ever found that imprisoning women who are addicted to drugs is more effective than community based treatment yet imprisonment remains the model in the U.S. and in western Massachusetts.

Some of you may remember that last year a study was released that recognized MA on its progress for decarceration of women; however, that study was misleading and inaccurate in that it failed to recognize the growth of incarceration of women for up to 2 ½ years in county jails such as the one in Chicopee.

I urge the Commission to recommend to Governor Patrick that the money he requested in the current bond issue for expanding the jail for women in Chicopee be withdrawn and the funding go instead to community based and community controlled drug and mental health treatment, job training, and child care services for women who are addicted to drugs.

My name is Juliana Morgan-Trostle. I am a senior at Amherst Regional High School, and co-president of our school's largest club, the Women's Rights Club. When I was discussing what I should say tonight with Marianne Winters of the Everywoman's Center, she made a vital yet obvious point: why is there the *need* for a Women's Rights Club at our high school? And why are we *stigmatized* by our peers for promoting feminism, defying gender stereotypes, and generally standing up for women?

Yesterday at our weekly club meeting, I asked the 40 or so members what changes they would like to see take place within our school. Students mentioned promoting positive body image and incorporating sexual harassment and violence prevention education into all aspects of the curriculum. Currently, health education is the *only* class in which such topics are discussed, and even then simply touched on. In Amherst Regional High School, health is a mandatory one-trimester course – meaning a mere 9 weeks or so of a class packed with information about drugs, alcohol, how to lead a “healthy” lifestyle, exercising, eating your fruits and vegetables, and of course, reproduction. In my ninth grade health class, we were given *misinformation* about emergency contraception. Now at Amherst Regional, students do not receive any type of health education until the tenth grade, when many of them have already become sexually active without adequate knowledge to protect themselves—a contributing factor to the statistic recently released by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: that one in four teenage girls has an STD.

Our health education system is not up to par. Students do not receive enough information or they receive the *wrong* information. They are not taught peer mediation, violence prevention, or given adequate resources to know what to do in such situations. A frantic mother approached me last year: her daughter, a sophomore, had been raped by a student in the school. When the mother went to the health room to ask the nurses what she should do, they didn't know where to refer her. The mother desperately approached *me*, a junior in high school at the time, for a referral to the Everywoman's Center. There must be a better system established for putting high schools in easy contact with their local rape crisis centers in order to help their students.

Women's Rights Club spends much of our energy on fundraising for local organizations such as the Everywoman's Center, the New England Learning Center for Women in Transition, ^{The Women's} and the Men's Resource Center for Change. These organizations face budget cuts year after year, ^{Fund of} forcing them to close down battered women's shelters or make choices like abolishing their rape ^{W. Mass.} crisis hotlines or cutting funding for youth outreach. There is a problem in our society when teenagers are the ones who must raise money to support the very centers which work to educate them and better their communities!

Amherst Regional High School is privileged to have a Women's Rights Club. The sense of community it creates is truly unique. Students who have grown up in violent homes, been raped, sexually assaulted, or otherwise mistreated have a haven in which they can feel safe, make friends with similar interests, and learn that they are not alone. However, most high schools do not have organizations like a Women's Rights Club, and do not know how to establish one.

We need updated, improved health education for all students as they *enter* high school, as well as violence and sexual assault prevention education in classes other than health. Organizations that work to empower women and eradicate oppression must be supported financially and in constant communication with school administration in order to better serve their youth. Such measures will ensure that teenagers live safer, healthier lives. Thank you.

ARHSwomensrights@hotmail.com

First I'd like to thank the Commission for coming out here to Western Mass and to the University in particular. We really appreciate your reaching out like this and meeting with us.

I would like to speak on behalf of women in some of the lowest paid jobs both here on campus and across Massachusetts. I work with the Labor/Management Workplace Education Program here at the University of Massachusetts where we offer educational opportunities for custodial staff, secretaries and clerical staff, food service workers, and the like, through the AFSCME and USA/MTA bargaining units here on campus and in conjunction with a variety of unions off-campus where we offer programs for employees of area businesses, other colleges, neighboring institutions, and communities.

Many of those we work with are in the lowest paid and entry-level jobs, so it should be no surprise that they are often predominantly women, especially in food service and secretarial positions. Furthermore, in many of these entry-level jobs, workers are new-comers to the U.S., with significant language and cultural challenges. Hence our program offers English language classes, adult basic reading, writing, and math skills, introductory and advanced computer classes, leadership development and communication skills, and so forth.

We are fortunate that our programs negotiate paid release time for employees to attend class as part of their work-day. This makes a huge difference, as so many at the lowest wage scales are using every moment outside of work simply to make ends meet and to fulfill various obligations from family care, to supplementing their incomes with second jobs many times, and working to cover all the bases it takes simply to stay afloat.

These workers are some of the ones most in need of education and training opportunities, as they are not only usually among the

lowest paid, but they are also often the least recognized and little applauded in society. So we should not be surprised that they often feel marginalized, discouraged, and dead-ended. Yet, we have found that with real chances to learn and grow, they blossom and often surprise both themselves and us.

There was the dining hall prep cook, for example, who began to take classes with us and started to think maybe there was another path for her. She eventually left her job and enrolled in a Special Education program at a nearby college. She shone there, got straight A's and went on to work in a local school system where she not only received exemplary teacher awards, but as a gay woman, she also helped organize gay/straight alliances and support systems for students. She's still there and thriving.

But she was one of the lucky ones who got approved to attend our classes. For every person who is allowed to come, at least one or two are denied work release time because the worksite managers feel they can't be spared or they may have already approved others, or in some cases the perception is that a dish-washer or janitor doesn't need even basic skills to do their job, much less more advanced ones..

And there are other reasons these workers struggle. One is that the lowest paid workers are often the most likely to be cut when lay-offs occur or budgets are tight. Hence these work forces are often stretched so thin that the workplace feels they can hardly afford to let even a single person miss work to attend classes.

Higher paid and professional staff, by contrast, have more work and scheduling flexibility and discretion to seek and attend training, and hence to advance. Also the lowest paid are often so short-handed, that stress builds up so much that they can't imagine being able to take any time from the job. And they may feel

vulnerable to lay-offs and worry that taking classes will appear to be shirking their job responsibilities.

Not only that, but even though the United States prides itself as the land of opportunity, many of these positions are looked down upon. If you're an entry-level dish-washer for example, there is often the assumption that you are fairly ignorant, lucky to have any job at all, paid to work and work hard at that, not to think, or to aspire to improve and advance. And you are often treated that way. I've actually heard workers say that they've been told directly by their supervisors when they offer an idea or suggestion, "You're not paid to think, get back to work," – hardly a response to build a person's confidence or sense of possibility.

Some in higher positions may assume, too, that an entry level worker is arrogant to think he or she can advance or participate in education and training opportunities. "Who does she think she is, anyway?" So again, denial, leading to discouragement and inertia. By the same token there can be wonderfully supportive supervisors, and these can make all the difference.

So what is my plea? It would be great if your commission could study the situations of these lowest paid women. What opportunities are there for them? And how could the state improve those, including looking at the larger context they are in related to image, respect, classism, vulnerability to lay-offs, to being systemically short-handed, highly stressed, and the like. And how can we work to build these opportunities so that those at the lowest rungs of the ladders have some hope of advancing, and some real possibilities of living up to their fullest potentials.

Examples that might help include funding educational opportunities to build self-esteem and confidence, funds that pay for fill-in workers to build in a margin in the workplace that allows for some to be absent briefly for training and education, skill

development beyond the most rudimentary, initiatives around classism and its corrosive effect, incentives for managers to encourage their workers to seek learning opportunities, to name just a few.

Thank you for your time and for your hard efforts on behalf of all of us.

Daria Fisk,

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Jessica L. Montagna
Testimony for the
Public Hearing with the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women
Wednesday, March 26, 2008

I have come here today to bring forth the issue of domestic violence and safe housing in Western Massachusetts. There is a lack of safe houses and shelters in Western Massachusetts that exist for women to seek shelter, support, and advocacy when leaving abusive relationships. In all of the four counties (Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden) there are only five shelters for women widely spread throughout Western Mass. located in Springfield, Pittsfield, Greenfield, Northampton, and Westfield. I believe that merely five shelters are not enough to provide the full and comprehensive support and advocacy for the thousands of women who experience domestic violence. Statistics have shown that women are at higher risk of being hospitalized or killed when leaving abusive relationships. Because of this it is imperative that the State of Massachusetts further support existing shelters to provide comprehensive safe housing and aid for women who have left an abusive relationship but also to seriously consider generating funding for the creation of more organizations, specifically those that provide housing, in Western Massachusetts that will provide care for victims of domestic and gender violence.

Testimony before the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women March 26, 2009

My name is Nancy deProsse and I am a working parent. Over the past 27 years I have raised 8 step, foster and adoptive children.

I am here to represent an informal group of parents with adoptive children that meets monthly here in Amherst, which happen to have started as a joint project of the Every Women's Center and the Amherst Family Center. All of our children have been very difficult... they have been arrested, they have run away, they have been to jail, they have been in various school programs, (most of which did not work), they have been hospitalized, they have been sent away (those families that can afford wilderness programs and therapeutic schools). Many of our children no longer attend school even though they are high school age. We are at our wits end. Lucky for us we are all professionals with pretty flexible jobs, we are faculty at Smith and Mt Holyoke, we are nurses and teachers, therapists and early childhood educators, University professional Staff and writers. We have had the time to help our Children many parents do not have jobs that will let them do what we have been able to do and keep our jobs.

So here is what I believe families like ours need.

The state needs to do what it can to keep kids out of the DSS system to begin with--

Families need support to prevent child abuse and neglect

- Parenting programs cut down on abuse and neglect
- Home visit programs with new families,
- Parent support programs like the Amherst Family center
- Parenting programs and parent support programs in the community for school age children - attached to community centers, schools, etc

When children are adopted --

Mothers need:

- good supports to families in the workplace -- paid time off, flexibility
- good supports for their families in an ongoing basis -- community based services

When the children start to fall apart --

- Day treatment and outpatient programs are needed in the community
- Hospitalization, residential programs and other out of home placements are needed
- Educational services need to be available to communities and communities where families take difficult foster and adopted kids need some support to their schools
- 51As filed on parents of difficult children -- whether foster or adoptive children can cause a teacher or nurse to lose their license.

It is the women in the families who most often handle the daily disruptions at school, take children to therapy, etc... and this totally disrupts their careers, and if they do not have a flexible workplace, can cost them their jobs.

Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women

Testimony by Marianne Winters, Director, Everywoman's Center
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March 26, 2008

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to this Commission on the issues faced by women from the viewpoint of Everywoman's Center at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

EWC is a university-based Women's Center providing essential counseling and resource services, with programs on violence prevention and direct services aimed at Hampshire County.

I'd like to focus my testimony today on the ways that EWC is promoting empowerment and access for women and propose some recommendations for you to consider in the areas of policy, funding, and legislation.

Founded in 1973, the primary goals of EWC were to advocate for increased numbers of women to have access to public higher education as well as to improve the conditions and lives of women as they transition first into the university and then into their chosen professions. Now, in 2007, our mission is consistent, yet our goals and strategies have changed with in response to trends, resources, and the needs of new generations of students and community members.

Today women comprise approximately half of the student population at UMass, which on the surface could convince someone that educational equity has been achieved. The reality, however, is that women and minority students frequently report feelings of disconnection and even harassment within educational settings. Also, while the role and commitment of public higher education is to assure access to the education that students need to participate fully economically in society, too often, this promise gets broken due to the fact that most admissions processes do not take into account the needs of poor and working class students, first generation students, students who come from immigrant communities or communities of color, and students with a history of trauma, either abuse or neglect.

We recommend that the MCSOW promote policies and programs that are culturally relevant to young people and to non-traditional aged students which deal with the financial, educational, emotional, and family needs they will need to face when attending college.

We are currently working with a group of students who are new mothers and wish to breast feed their babies while returning to their studies and work. You already heard from one student whose experiences are unfortunately representative of many new moms.

We recommend that the University system establish lactation spaces on its campuses which would provide the space, privacy, hygiene, and comfort that would provide new mothers with the option to return to school and continue to breast feed their babies. And, that the MCSOW support House bill 1568, which would permit breast feeding in public, or as we like to refer to it, decriminalize public eating by infants.

Another area that we focus our attention on is violence against women. We are alarmed, along with many of our colleagues, that the homicide rate due to domestic violence in 2007 in Massachusetts has nearly tripled since 2005 with no end in sight to the escalation. Adequate funding for rape crisis centers and domestic violence programs has never been in place and is now more crucial than ever.

We recommend that the MCSOW support and actively advocate for funding for dv and sa programs at the level recommended by our statewide coalition, Jane Doe Inc.

At EWC, we are prepared to begin to address this alarming trend, but what we lack are the resources. With additional resources we would:

- Build a program that addresses the economic realities faced by survivors of violence so that they won't have to face a decision to live in poverty and homelessness with their children or live in violence.
- Maintain and monitor a system of advocacy within the criminal, civil, and probate courts which would provide survivors of violence with adequate legal representation, and systems that address their needs.
- Incorporate emerging knowledge regarding high risk assessment within our programs by increasing the training and staffing on our hotlines, counseling, and support groups.

Programs that build economic knowledge and self-sufficiency need to account for the safety needs of victims of domestic violence and the effects of financial battering when it has been part of the picture. Job training programs, career counseling, financial management programs that aim to change the financial picture for women need to be trained and account for the needs of women who are victims of sexual assault. Also, workplaces need to develop their effectiveness in assuring safety and job security for victims of domestic violence.

We recommend that a large scale training program be implemented for organizations that support economic development on the effects of domestic violence on financial stability. Additionally, that the Commission promote the development and implementation of workplace policies related to domestic violence that assure that victims of violence do not get penalized for time off for legal, medical, or emotional needs, and get their safety needs identified and supported.

Finally, violence is a large scale issue within Massachusetts. At EWC we hear from 300 individuals each year who have been impacted by sexual assault or domestic violence.

Acts of community violence such as the December 15 riot at the UMass campus, as well as individual assaults have impact in the community as a whole, resulting in a community that feels unstable and dangerous to all. Tragically, even our campuses are not immune to similar attacks as occurred at Virginia Tech.

EWC has embarked on a holistic prevention approach that educates individuals, students, faculty, community members, and administrators as bystanders. This means that violence is presented as a community issue and with specific actions that community members can take that could decrease the incidence of violence. This approach holds promise in interrupting the cycles of interpersonal violence and community violence while holding perpetrators accountable. Since the massacre at Virginia Tech, much of the focus in safety has emphasized gun violence, physical safety measures such as metal detectors and communication systems. While these may be necessary steps to take, a comprehensive violence prevention strategy is needed that admits that centers the discussion on issues of gender, race, sexual orientation, and class which are embedded in these acts of community violence, and that promotes more cohesive ways to live as a community.

We recommend that a widespread prevention campaign be implemented within the University of Massachusetts system that promotes community accountability through a bystander approach to prevention.

Once again, I thank you for this opportunity and invite you to contact me if you have additional questions regarding these recommendations. Thank you for bringing this hearing to western Massachusetts and for listening to the public recommendations as you go about your important work on behalf of women in the Commonwealth.

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My name is Irene Patch I'm a RN working @ Soldiers Home in Holyoke as a staff nurse for 27 years. My testimony pertains to safety issues effecting women at work specifically parking. At present the 3-11:30 shift nursing staff has been told to park in the back lot which is poorly lit burned out bulbs- Upon arriving to work 3- 11:30 shift usually park furthest from the building due to the parking spaces open when nursing staff mostly women leave work @ 11:30 they evit the front door main entrances and walk around building to back lot. One security guard on duty it is impossible for this one guard to monitor the front unlocked door and back parking lot where the employees' cars are located. All doors to the back parking lot are locked if a problem occurs the nurse must run around to the front of the building to enter thru the main entrance. The 11-7 shift nursing staff feels there is a security breech when guard is in the back parking lot and not monitoring the unlocked door. The unions have offered solution but we are at an impasse because the Superintendent Paul Morin. I bring this issue to the commission because I feel security and safety issues for women at the workplace are very important. I hope that my testimony will result in educating employers such as Superintendent Paul Morin on the need for safe and secure parking at work sites.

Personal Testimony To the MA Commission on the Status Of Women

The restraining order system in this state is woefully inadequate in terms of offering women the protection they need. The terms that restraining orders are offered are ridiculously narrow.

From 2002-2005 I lived as a disabled adult in public housing. In 2003 a woman with severe mental health problems moved in next to me. For two years she emotionally terrorized me and put my health at risk and there was no protection anywhere in the system to stop her or protect me.

In the odd sub community that is public housing in this state, it is not the responsibility of the local director of the public housing authority to ensure that the residents are appropriate to one another. Unlike other residential communities, this is the not in any way the director's job. My complaints fell on deaf ears; the director did nothing.

Secondly, because a public housing community is falls under state jurisdiction the local police had no help for me either other than a wrist slap that did not deter this woman's determined sociopathic behavior to stop.

Thirdly, when I tried to get a restraining order against her, JaneDoe.org told me that according to MA law because she was not a past partner and because she did not live with me there was no such restraining order available to me. This is ridiculous and shameful loophole in our system.

Everyday she made it her job to betray my boundaries and emotionally terrorize me. I was a sitting duck and my health took a downward spiral due her unabated attacks. This should not be allowed to happen.

If you want to protect women, restraining orders need to expand the availability of restraining orders and institute enforceable behavioral standards for public housing.

2) The State's attitude toward stoping rape is appalling and infuriating. The MA judicial system allows rapists. **if** they get convicted, to regularly get 18 months or two years whereas the women or child who was victimized will live with extraordinary psychological scars and a host of disabilities for decades of the rest of her life and yet the perpetrator will get a slap on the wrist and will most likely reoffend.

What is the deterrent to men who rape? In Hammurabi's time men were castrated for this crime and knew so in advance. In Native American culture men were banished and shamed for this violation. It just wasn't accepted.

If the Commonwealth truly cares and respects its women, then it would have stiffer long-term mandatory sentences without parole or the option of being reduced to men who rape.

If the State really cared, it would require self defense, martial arts and assertiveness training be provided to little girls at head start, nursery school, kindergarten, elementary school, day camp, junior high and high school, colleges and town recreation programs.

If the State really cared it would institute an ongoing public relations campaign thru the media, school system curriculums, town programs, the workplace, hospitals, etc so that professionals would stop being in denial that sexual assault is going on and training professionals to address and investigate possible warning signs that someone very well may be currently or previously was a victim of sex abuse/violence and may not be able to get out of the situation and needs help. The State needs to stop raising girls/women's to be victims and needs to stop allowing society to look the other way while these atrocities and human rights violations perpetuate.

In addition to sentencing, as part of restitution, perpetrators should be required to pay for at least ten years of psychotherapy for one or two hours a week at the rate of \$100 an hour and if he cant come up with it it should come out of his family or be garnished right from his wages. Requiring his family to kick in will create more incentive for more people to watch out for and prevent rape/sexual assault. The victim will need this money. Actually, ten years is not enough. I have been in therapy since I was 16 and now at 48 am still healing from the long term unintervened affects of childhood sexual violence.

If the State cared about its women, it would also provide profound abundant funding to help MA girls and women recover from the pervasive intrapsychic scars of sex violence. Currently, in my area in addition to the expert therapist I have that I pay out of pocket for, the only adequate help that's available to me is a wonderful Counselor Advocate hotline the Everywomen's Center provides. Other than that, none of the centers offering support to victims of sexual violence have funding to offer group counseling with expertly trained, seasoned skilled therapists. The groups that currently are offered offer peer support or individuals just starting their Masters degrees or individuals that are trained for the hotline but trained psychotherapists. Though I am determined to go to any lengths to speed my recovery from sexual violence and tried these groups, I was not able to get the kind of care, support and safety I needed to heal under those circumstances.

I know of a great deal of survivors in Western Ma and I see very few of them healing and reclaiming the quality of life they deserve and are entitled to and return to full functioning making use of the peer led supports the women's centers offer here. Healing from sexual violence requires much more than that.

The State needs to provide some serious money and have the local centers hire trained, seasoned specialist therapists in helping MA women heal from abuses and crime that they didn't seek out and that should never have happened to them.

All these recommendations would send the message that we don't accept rape, sexual violence or harrassment here in the Commonwealth of MA and wont allow it to go on unabated and unpunished.

If you need extraordinary input from a trained, seasoned expert in the field of psychotherapy for sexual assault/trauma survivors, please contact Marianne Hurley, at 679 Mohawk Trail, Shelburne, MA 01370 or 413 625 8684.

Thank you very much for listening and for your interest in doing better by the women of the Commonwealth.

Anonymous

March 26, 2008

To: Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women

Re: Needs of Adoptive Mothers

Many women in Massachusetts have had the joy of building their families through adoption. In some cases, our children come to us after experiencing early abuse or neglect; they may also have special needs in the areas of learning, social and behavioral interactions, substance dependencies, medical, physical and/or emotional challenges, and in some cases, attachment disorders. The support of schools and social service and adoption agencies becomes important in working to meet our children's needs.

Because of their unique life histories, children who have been adopted will undergo some developmental stages not experienced by their peers. They will go through stages of sadness and loss as they come to understand the finality of their separation from their birth families. Some will feel a drive to search for their birthparents. They will grapple with identity issues, often cross- racially and cross-culturally. During this time period, children will appear distracted in school, which is a normal developmental stage often misunderstood or misinterpreted by teachers. They may be distressed by being presented with insensitive school assignments in genetics or literature. As they become teens, our children can be vulnerable to sexual exploitation or acting out, and to strong emotions of rage and grief. Early abuse experiences may be revisited. Even with supportive families and friends, the stress on mothers and families can be intense. Parental and sibling relationships can be disrupted in attempts to effectively manage the child who is suffering. Some women have had to leave work repeatedly to respond to a child in trouble, thereby jeopardizing their jobs; or have left the workforce entirely to home school their special needs child when the school system has not been responsive. In some cases, when a child has acted out repeatedly, skipped school, or even been sexually assaulted by an adult, 51A reports have been filed on already traumatized mothers who are trying as hard as they can to stabilize their child and family.

There are several ways that schools and adoption and social service agencies can assist struggling adoptive mothers. Education on adoption issues must be provided to the appropriate staff members. Social workers, social service caseworkers, teachers and educational administrators should receive training and continued professional development on the needs of adoptive children and their families. Schools should not expect 'quick fixes' for children with significant emotional issues and educational needs; and should be creative in working to meet their needs. Adoption workers should disclose pertinent information on the medical, psychological, and socio-emotional background of the child and birth parents to prospective adoptive parents. A safe environment must be created for parents to seek help without fear of legal investigation or loss of reputation. Agencies should contact parents throughout their child's developing years, offering support and information on resources and interventions available for respite, stress management, behavioral management, and family support.

Please support women and children.

Mary McCarthy *mccarthym@arpso.org*
Amherst, Massachusetts
March 26, 2008

March 24, 2008

Every Women Center
Re: Women's Issues Forum

I am unable to attend forum, however I would appreciate my voice being heard.

I believe we need change to WEP/GPO in Social Security.- wherein widows like myself are not denied their benefits, nor those of their deceased husband.

I had enough quarter of social security on my own previous earnings because I retired from State of Mass. When my husband was deceased I was denied both my own and my husbands Soc. Security.

I hear from many teachers, social workers, etc. that find themselves having to continue working or return to work because they are denied benefits that are rightfully theirs.

Can some changes be made to our Social Security system to help widows like myself? WEP/ GPO needs to be abolished.

Thank You.
Mary Raimandi- Vazquez
21 Western Drive
Agawam, MA 01001

From: Jess Wolfe [mailto:eljojawi71@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, March 24, 2008 9:45 PM
To: Mcsw (CSW)
Subject: Women air concerns

Good Morning-

I just read about the forum in Amherst to be sponsored by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women. I was wondering if the topic of Hiv/AIDS and Women has ever been addressed? I have been positive for over 15 years and because there is still so much of a stigma attached to this disease, I have found it hard to open and honest about my diagnosis, and therefore, only a few people know. I feel it is very important for young people, especially women, to know that just because they don't participate in risky behavior, pregnancy and STD's are not the only thing they have to worry about. When I read that Hampden County has the highest rate of teen pregnancy, I can see the right message is not getting across. Thank you for your time, I apologize if I sent this to the wrong address.

Sincerely,
Jessica

MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Worcester Regional Council December 5, 2007 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. Asa Water's Mansion, Millbury Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Amy Devlin, WCAC; Regina Edmonds, Assumption College; Heather-Lyn Haley, UMass Medical School/Worcester Women's History Project; Beckley Gaudette, Lisa LeBlanc, Anna Maria College; Jackie Mansfield-Marcoux, Planned Parenthood League of MA; Kathleen McDermott, MOC Inc.; Donna McGrath, WCAC; Patti McKone, Worcester City Manager's Advisory Committee on the Status of Women; Mary Kate McMaster, Anna Marie College; Jen Meyers-Light, Planned Parenthood League of MA; Mable Millner, College of the Holy Cross; Kathleen Walker, Select Board, Charlton, MA; Dana Wolfson, Health Awareness

Commissioners: Linda Cavaoli

Staff: Jill Ashton, Linda Brantley

Welcome

After a brief tour of the Mansion Commissioner Cavaoli introduced herself and the Commission, welcomed the attendees, and thanked them for coming to the event. The attendees introduced themselves and noted their affiliation.

MCSW Updates and Initiative Overview

Executive Director Brantley welcomed new and familiar participants to the meeting and provided a brief overview of the Regional Council Initiative for newcomers. She noted that information gathered at the Council meetings informs the work of the Commission while at the same time provides a forum to discuss innovative approaches to meeting the needs of women in particular regions. The Worcester Council has been the most active council, opting to meet quarterly. At the last meeting the participants indicated that they wanted to expand the format of the meetings to include a speaker. Reflecting on the key themes of April's meeting, Sarah Cardoza Duncan, a career strategist, was approached to speak about women recognizing and using their own power.

Keynote: Recognizing and Utilizing One's Power

Ms. Duncan led a discussion around identifying and articulating one's abilities and assets. Using a "Value Proposition" she detailed how work and personal experience could be used to advance women in their careers. Interacting with the group and offering examples of women who she had worked with during their transitions, Ms. Duncan led the attendees through her presentation, which was followed by a brief discussion.

Council Discussion

Commissioner Cavaoli building on the theme of recognizing and utilizing power said that she was particularly interested in engaging women in her community as agents for change. She noted the power that could be achieved when women's voices were raised together as a group.

Members of the group responded to Commissioner Cavaioli's comments and asked for more information about the work of the Commission. Executive Director Brantley detailed much of the work of the Commission including outreach efforts (the Regional Councils, public hearings, the Speakers Bureau, work with local women's commissions), legislative work (pay equity as a key priority, family friendly workplace policies, child care issues and efforts to address domestic violence), the Unsung Heroine awards and research and reporting on the status of women in the Commonwealth. A number of attendees expressed interest in a specific component of the MCSW's work particularly legislative Initiatives. Staff committed to forwarding additional information to the group.

Evaluation and Adjourn

Commissioner Cavaioli and Executive Director Brantley led an evaluation discussion. Attendees indicated that they wanted to meet again and committed to sharing information about the Council with their colleagues to bring more women to the table. Commissioner Cavaioli proposed holding the next meeting in North County in March and including a panel discussion about women in politics. Staff committed to forwarding meeting minutes, a contact list and additional information about the MCSW's work.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Worcester Regional Council
April 3, 2008
5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Sterling Inn, Sterling
Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Marcia Cairns, Helen Coffin, Kim Dawkins, Shelia Dibb, Linda Doherty, Ann Flynn, Susan Gutwillig, Heather-Lyn Haley, Kim Hopewell, Lisa Larve, Alicia Lenahan, Pasty Lewis, Nancy Lucier, Fran Manocchio, Jackie Mansfield-Marcoux, Kathleen McDermott, Donna McGrath, Mary Philbin, Louis Redding, Joanne Tulonea, Julie Woods

Legislators: Representative Jennifer Flanagan, Representative Anne Gobi, Mayor Konstantina Lukes, Mayor Lisa Wong, Selectperson Diane McCutcheon

Commissioners: Linda Cavaioli

Staff: Jill Ashton, Linda Brantley, Melanie O'Malley Intern.

Welcome

Commissioner Cavaioli welcomed the panel participants and the council attendees. Introductions were made by all.

MCSW Updates and Initiative Overview

Executive Director Brantley briefly spoke about the MCSW and its work. She noted that the Commission was pleased to host a discussion about women in politics. Executive Director Brantley reported that the women in Massachusetts typically enjoy better opportunities in education and employment, but that their representation in government is below average. She thanked the present elected officials for their willingness to speak about their experience and noted her hope that this discussion and others like it may encourage an increased number of and support of female candidates.

Panel Discussion

Commissioner Cavaioli introduced **Representative Jennifer Flanagan**. At 32, Representative Flanagan is the youngest woman state legislator. She was elected at 28 after serving as the Legislative Aide and Chief of Staff to Representative Simmons. After the death of Representative Simmons, Flanagan recognized that she was qualified and prepared, and perhaps had a personal responsibility, to run for the empty seat.

In Flanagan's experience running for office, she met voters who would not vote for her because she did not have children and voters who would vote for her for the same reason. She received a significant amount of support from friends and family. Her education included a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in physiology. Representative Flanagan's passion is focused on at-risk kids.

In the State House, Representative Flanagan is one of two women on the Transportation Committee. She noted the different kinds of sexism on Beacon Hill and her efforts to work through it.

Representative Flanagan spoke about her commitment to her position, even as she works twice as hard to succeed. She noted that the number of women is decreasing and encouraged the support and advocated increased participation of women in politics.

Commissioner Cavaioli introduced **Representative Anne Gobi**, who began her remarks by noting that there is no one path to a political career. She noted that she began in education and became the first woman to represent her district. She echoed Representative Flanagan's comments that there are not enough women in politics at any level. Furthermore, she noted, women have had to wear too many hats for far too long.

Representative Gobi spoke about the importance of public service and advocated increased public involvement in the political process.

Commissioner Cavaioli introduced **Mayor Konstantina Lukes**. The Mayor introduced herself and noted that both her parents were immigrants and when she was enrolled in school she did not speak English. Mayor Lukes was discouraged from the legal profession and was instead trained as a teacher. Her career path included an education at Simmons College, a law degree, and experience at the ACLU.

Mayor Lukes reported that her involvement in politics began with her participation on the School Committee. She reflected that when she decided to run for Mayor she did not have adequate community support or enough money and yet she won, albeit by a small margin. Mayor Lukes concluded by saying, "break all the rules and you can win."

Commissioner Cavaioli introduced **Mayor Lisa Wong**, who at 28 has been elected to lead the City of Fitchburg. Mayor Wong supported the comments of the previous panelists, noting that many of the odds seemed against her as a candidate for Mayor. Also the child of immigrant, she was encouraged to work hard and achieve the "American dream." Her career includes an education in economics, human rights work at home and abroad, work with non-profits.

Mayor Wong made Fitchburg her home, and recognized that she did not like how the city had been run and felt there was a void of innovative and progressive leadership. After she made the decision to run, Mayor Wong reported that her campaign team was confident about success, because they had done the research and secured the resources necessary. Running against a 25 year incumbent, Mayor Wong received 75% of the votes.

Mayor Wong spoke about her style of leadership, noting that it was more collaborative than her predecessor. She concluded by noting that Fitchburg is a great city with a noble history and strong bones, and now it has the right leadership.

Commissioner Cavaioli introduced **Selectperson Diane McCutcheon**, who said regardless of her parents' involvement in politics had not imagined serving in elected office. As a child she was encouraged to be involved in community service, to work hard and give back. When Selectperson McCutcheon chose to run because she was frustrated at the lack of progress in the community, she did lose her first race, but ran again and won the second time by 18 votes.

Selectperson McCutcheon reported on her experience of being elected to chair the select board and her determination to best serve her community, even if it meant that she shook things up a bit. She spoke about the importance of an open process and community buy-in. Selectperson McCutcheon concluded by noting that her experience has taught her that people make people successful.

Council Discussion

A series of questions and answers followed the panelists' comments. Some key points include:

- Women wait too long to run, the median age of female elected officials is 51. They often do not consider the potential contribution that they could make, but rather wait until they see that there is a need to make a difference.
- There is need for a pipeline. The gains that women have made in elected office must be supported, maintained, and expanded. It is discouraging that not more young women are interested in politics.
- The cultural and social differences between men and women is ever present in politics and is a challenge to navigate, but is not impossible to overcome.
- All women face work-family challenges, but those in public service face unique conflicts. Women who are married struggle with caring for their children and their marriages. Single women come under scrutiny for their lack of a husband and often do not have the same opportunities as their friends and family.
- The panelists agreed that public service is socially important and personally rewarding. And that women with a passion to make a difference should be encouraged to take the leap and run. Mayor Lukes concluded that she will know that she has succeeded when there is a quorum in the ladies room.

Adjourn

Commissioner Cavaioli and Executive Director Brantley thanked the panelists for participating and attendees for coming to the event.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Cape and Islands Regional Council
Thursday, November 29, 2007
4:00 p.m. - 6:00p.m.
Barnstable Town Hall, Hyannis
Meeting Minutes

Present: Diane Fay, Estella Fritzingler, CACCI, Connie Nicholson, Marcy Woods, Beverly Johnson, Paula Fay, Pam Pollock, YWCAs, Janice Barton, Barnstable Town Council, Dottie Smith, aide to Rep. Sarah Peake, Kristin Whitfield, Business and Professional Women of MA, Sue Rohrbach, aide to Senator Robert O'Leary, former State Representatives Shirley Gomes and Kathy Teahan, Mary Pat Messner, Cape Cod Child Development Program, Inc.

Elizabeth Houlihan, Commissioner and Cape resident, welcomed the group and asked that all introduce themselves. She noted that at the first meeting of the group, held in May, there was significant interest in working to create a Cape & Islands Women's Commission, which would take up a bulk of the agenda. She added her belief that the meeting should result in concrete action steps.

Executive Director Linda Brantley provided an overview of the MCSW's Regional Council initiative and offered some MCSW Updates.

Council Input and Interactive Discussion

Members were asked to share their key concerns and issues. Diane Fay spoke of comparable worth and pay equity, noting her experiences with salary issues in the service and library industries. She noted that these workforces, heavily filled by women, experience severe wage inequities, particularly salaries on the Cape versus other areas, such as Boston.

She also informed the group about mammography pads used in exams and questioned why these weren't more widely used. The group agreed that they were unaware of these and felt they would be a wonderful tool for women.

It was noted that there should be more diversity in the planned commission group. The group agreed to seek out a group of diverse women to serve.

Beverly Johnson raised the issue of the need for women to participate in the political process, adding that she has been investigating the possibility of establishing a branch of the MA Women's Political Caucus on the Cape. The group discussed the many women's initiatives on the Cape, questioning how much capacity there is for all to be effective. All agreed that having a list of all the women's organizations on the Cape would be useful. It was agreed that integration of efforts and mission would be best.

The Cape's elderly population was noted, and the number living in poverty.

Lengthy discussion ensued about creating a Cape and Islands Women's Commission. Sue Rohrbach suggested that perhaps the group could try doing a joint project to see how folks work together before going forward. The group then divided into committees for follow up.

- 1 **Pay Equity** – Potentially hosting a program on the Cape in conjunction with the MA Coalition for Women's Wage Equality and its 2008 Equal Pay Day observance. Those who agreed to serve on this committee were: Kristin Whitfield, Pam Pollock, Diane Fay and Mary Woods.

- 2 **Women's Health** - Starting with the potential of hosting a program on the Cape around preventative health and coming up with a specific plan around mammography pads and their distribution. Committee members: Shirley Gomes and Diane Fay.
- 3 **Women in Politics** - Volunteering for this committee were: Beverly Johnson, Connie Nicholson, Kathy Teahan, Shirley Gomes, and Pam Pollock.

Next Steps

Enabling Legislation - Sue Rorhbach and Dottie Smith agreed to speak with their legislators about the possibility of Senator O'Leary late filing a bill that would create a Cape & Islands Commission. This committee includes: Janice Barton, Estella Fritzingler, Mary Pat Messner, Paula Fay and Sue Rohrbach.

Membership – All were charged with spreading the word about the Regional Council and possible formation of a women's commission and were encouraged to find women who would be interested to serve. The Barnstable County Human Rights Commission was suggested as a good source to add some diversity to the membership.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 with members agreeing to reconvene early in the new year. Commissioner Houlihan thanked all for attending and commended them on the progress made. She volunteered to continue to serve as a resource to the group from the MCSW.

Cape and Islands Regional Council
January 17, 2008
4:00 p.m. - 6:00p.m.
Barnstable Town Hall, Hyannis
Meeting Minutes

Present: Jill Ashton, Janice Barton, Helen Bresnahan, Alice Burns, Dorothy Cleveland, Diane Fay, Estelle Fritzinger, Shirley Gomes, Liz Houlihan, Christina Kempres, Beverly Johnson, Mary Pat Messmer, Jane Otis, Pamela Pollock, Susan Rohrbach, Jacquie Scarbrough, Jane Secci, Deborah Skinner, Dottie Smith, Kathy Teahan, Evelyn Young

Welcome & Group Introductions

Elizabeth Houlihan, Commissioner and Cape Resident, welcomed the attendees to the meeting and led introductions. Acknowledging that there were a number of new participants, Commissioner Houlihan gave an overview of the MCSW and of the Regional Council initiative. She noted that the Cape and Island Regional Council had met twice previously, and members of the group had indicated that there is a need for a local women's commission. Commissioner Houlihan informed the group that sub-committees had formed to explore issues of interests and the potential for establishing a commission on the Cape and islands.

Committee Reports

Representing the Legislative Committee, Jan Barton reported that there had been an email discussion of proposed legislation to establish a Cape Cod and Islands Commission on the Status for Women. Jill Ashton, MCSW Outreach Coordinator, distributed a draft of a bill developed from that conversation, with points requiring a group decision highlighted. Commissioner Houlihan, moving through the document, presented the items one at a time to the group for discussion and agreement. The following was determined:

- The commission will be established as the Cape Cod and Islands Commission on the Status of Women.
- The commission will consist of 13 persons drawn from Barnstable, Dukes, and Nantucket Counties.
- Appointments to the commission will be made by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women.
- The Commission shall report its findings annually to the MCSW.
- After the completion of 2 consecutive terms, former commissioners may reapply to serve on the commission after a year has passed since their last term.
- Nominations for open commissioner seats shall be solicited annually and shall be widely distributed throughout Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket Counties.
- The Commission shall meet at least 6 times a year.

The draft legislation as it stands after the discussion is included in the appendix. There was additional conversation around how the commission should be structured and how it should execute its mission, but it was agreed many of those recommendations should be included in the bylaws.

Pay Equity Committee

Pam Pollock noted that she and Kristen Whitfield would be working together with the Massachusetts Coalition for Women's Wage Equality to draft a proposal to be presented to the Council. They will

recommend an event to be hosted in observance of Equal Pay Day with the goal of increasing awareness of the wage gap and involving women statewide in the effort to address the disparity.

Women's Health Committee

Diane Fay reported on her efforts to identify the hospitals which are making mammo-pads available to their female patients. She found for the most part that the pads were relatively unavailable and often unknown. Ms. Fay indicated that she would like to continue to pursue this issue and would welcome the support of other interested members.

Women in Politics Committee

Beverly Johnson reported that the committee had met briefly, immediately prior to the Regional Council meeting. She indicated that the committee was interested in exploring the potential for a training program developed for women interested in running for politics. There were a few suggestions from the group as to resources, including the Mass Municipal Association, MWPC and WEMO. Ms. Johnson asked for additional information about WHEN (Women Helping Empower Neighborhoods) and for the contact information for Pam Malumphy, a MCSW commissioner, who was supported by the group during her campaign for selectman.

Next steps, evaluation & wrap up

It was agreed that members will receive follow-up information, including: an overview of the MCSW's Regional Council Initiative, a contact list for the Cape and Islands Council, a roster of sub-committee membership, and minutes from the meeting. Ms. Ashton would make the agreed upon amendments to the draft legislation and work with the Legislative Committee and Susan Rohrbach in Senator O'Leary's office to move it forward. The Legislative Committee will begin to draft organizational bylaws. The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, February 28th from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m and will be held the Barnstable Town Hall in Hyannis.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Committee Listings

Pay Equity Committee

Alice Burns
Diane Fay
Paula Fay
Pam Pollock
Jacquie Scarbrough
Kristen Whitfield

Women's Health Committee

Diane Fay
Paula Fay
Jane Otis

Women in Politics Committee

Helen Bresnahan
Beverly Johnson
Connie Nicholson
Jane Otis
Pam Pollock
Jacquie Scarbrough

Legislative Committee

Jan Barton
Paula Fay
Estella Fritzingler
Mary Pat Messemer
Sue Rohrbach
Deborah Skinner
Dottie Smith

Cape & Islands Regional Council 1/17/08 - Appendix

Draft
ESTABLISHING THE CAPE COD
AND ISLANDS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 66 of chapter 3 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2000 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the word "necessary", in line 61, the following words:- (g) to appoint members to regional chapters of the commission. [This wording already exists in the General Laws as a result of the legislation that established the Berkshire Commission on the Status of Women. Does it need to be included here?]

SECTION 2. There is established a permanent commission on the status of women in Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket Counties consisting of 13 persons who are to be appointed by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women. The commission shall conduct an ongoing study of all matters concerning women on Cape Cod and the Islands. The commission shall report their findings to the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women annually and recommend solutions to the problems facing the women of Cape Cod and the Islands.

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women shall make such appointments to the Cape Cod and Islands commission from a pool of applicants who reside in Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket Counties.

(1) Members shall serve a term of 3 years and until their successors are appointed. Commissioners may be reappointed for 2 consecutive terms. After the completion of 2 consecutive terms, former commissioners may reapply to serve on the commission after a year has passed since their last term. The initial members of the Cape Cod and Islands Commission on the Status of Women shall be appointed for the following terms: 4 members for a term of one year, 4 members for a term of two years, and 5 members for a term of three years.

(2) Vacancies in the membership of the commission shall be filled by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women for the balance of the unexpired term.

3) Appointments by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women to the Cape Cod and Islands Commission on the Status of Women shall be made in consultation with women's organizations. Nominations shall be solicited between each year through an open application that is widely distributed throughout Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket Counties. Members of the commission should be diverse and represent different towns and municipalities in Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket Counties.

(4) Members shall serve on the commission as volunteers and will not be compensated.

(5) The commission shall elect from among its members a chair, a vice chair, a treasurer, a secretary and any other officers it deems necessary.

(6) The commission shall meet at least 6 times a year, at the members' discretion. Members of the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women may attend the meetings of the Cape Cod and Islands Commission on the Status of Women.

(7) The commission may accept and solicit funds, including any gifts, donations, grants, or bequests, or any federal funds for any of the purposes of this section. Such funds shall be deposited in a separate account to be expended at the discretion of the commission.

(8) The powers of the commission shall include but not be limited to the following: a) to use voluntary and uncompensated services of private individuals, agencies and organizations as may from time to time be offered and needed; b) to recommend policies and make recommendations to agencies and officers of the state and local subdivisions of government to effectuate the purposes of the commission; c) to enact bylaws for its own governance; and d) to hold regular, public meetings and to hold fact-finding hearings and other public forums as it may deem necessary.

Cape and Islands Regional Council
Thursday, February 28, 2008
Barnstable Town Hall, Hyannis
Meeting Minutes

Present: Jill Ashton, Janice Barton, Helen Bresnahan, Alice Burns, Sylvia Connor, Diane Fay, Paula Fay, Estelle Fritzinger, Liz Houlihan, Jane Otis, Pamela Pollock, Susan Rohrbach, Deborah Skinner, Dottie Smith, Dorothy Svoboda, Kathy Teahan, Kristin Whitfield, Evelyn Young

Welcome & Group Introductions

Elizabeth Houlihan, MCSW Commissioner and Cape Resident, welcomed the attendees to the meeting and introductions were exchanged.

Ms. Houlihan gave a brief review of the Commission's activities. She noted that the Commission has been very active around equal pay. There was some discussion about specific events to commemorate Equal Pay Day. Diana Fay proposed that Cape Cod and Island towns could be approached to issue proclamations on Equal Pay Day. This recommendation was well received and it was agreed that the Cape Cod and the Islands Regional Council would participate in recognizing the day.

Ms. Houlihan asked Jill Ashton, MCSW Outreach Coordinator, to review the Commission's legislative priorities. Ms. Ashton did so, noting the status of a number of MCSW endorsed bills, including legislation to establish a Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women.

There was discussion about the status of the draft legislation expected to be filed to establish the Cape Cod and the Islands Commission on the Status of Women. Dottie Smith from the office of Representative Sarah Peake and Susan Rohrbach from Senator Robert O'Leary's office have volunteered to coordinate the effort on behalf of the Council. It was agreed that "Dear Colleague" letters will be constructed and distributed to the Cape Cod and Islands delegation asking them to sign on as co-sponsors. It was also recommended that the Caucus of Women Legislators be asked to sign on as well.

The Council members were asked to make recommendations as to how the Council could be racially and geographically diversified. Estelle Fritzinger made a few recommendations and agreed to forward contact information. Ms. Rohrbach noted that she would reach out to the staff of Senator O'Leary's office. She also suggested that tribal councils could be contacted.

Committee Reports

Pay Equity Committee

Pam Pollock reported on her work with the Massachusetts Coalition for Women's Wage Equality and the plans to commemorate Equal Pay Day at the State House, which will include a mini advocacy training, information sessions, and information about regional equal pay events. Kristin Whitfield followed by proposing a regional event on Cape Cod. Ms. Fritzinger volunteered CACCI as a possible location. Helen Bresnahan recommended the Union Hall on Main Street as another potential venue.

Women's Health Committee

Sylvia Connor, speaking on behalf of the Silent Spring Institute, provided an overview of breast cancer research focusing on the Cape Cod women. Sylvia also shared information about Silent Spring Institute and distributed materials to the group. Evelyn Young asked about the reason for the

elevated rate of breast cancer. Ms. Connor responded that there was no smoking gun, but that the current thought is that it is a combination of multiple toxic materials could potentially cause breast cancer.

Women in Politics Committee

Ms. Houlihan informed the group that Beverly Johnson, who had volunteered to organize the Women in Politics committee, is considering a run for office and will not be able to participate in the Council. The Committee is now in need of leadership.

Next steps & wrap up

Ms. Houlihan urged the Committees to meet before the next meeting and asked for volunteers to organize.

- Ms. Pollock with Ms. Whitfield will call the Pay Equity Committee meeting
- Ms. Brenahan with Kathy Teahan will call the Women in Politics Committee meeting
- Jan Barton and Ms. Fritzinger will call the next Legislative Committee meeting
- Diana Fay with Ms. Smith and Ms. Skinner will call the Women's Health Committee meeting

There was discussion around specific actions to support a Cape Cod and Islands Equal Pay Day event. Members volunteered to work with town government to secure Equal Pay Proclamations.

- Ms. Otis – Brewster, Dennis, and Yarmouth
- Ms. Barton – Barnstable
- Ms. Pollock – Bourne
- Ms. Whitfield – Orleans
- Ms. Teahan – Harwich
- Ms. Fritzinger – Barnstable County

Ms. Ashton will assemble a list of Cape Cod and Island towns to ensure that all are contacted and asked to issue a proclamation. Members will be asked to support this effort by reaching out to their select board. It was agreed that a press release would be distributed to advertise the Council's efforts.

Ms. Whitfield asked who from the Commission would be able to serve as a spokesperson. Ms. Houlihan noted that MCSW Executive Director Linda Brantley would be able to speak about the issues. Ms. Whitfield confirmed that the language, "accept on behalf of MCSW Cape Cod & Islands Regional Council" would be appropriate.

Before concluding the meeting Ms. Houlihan asked the members to note if there are other issues which they felt the Council should discuss and/or be made aware of. Ms. Brenahan suggested that the Council should research the status of immigrant women on the Cape. Ms. Fritzinger noted that the Cape Action Committee would be able to offer a speaker to the Council on the issue of domestic violence. Ms. Young, along with Ms. Burns, Ms. Connor, and Ms. Skinner, would like to see a discussion about women's preparation for retirement.

Ms. Teahan informed the group that on April 26th there will be an Echo Green fashion show; food and wine will be served at the event. Tickets are approximately thirty five dollars can be purchased at the G Green store.

Ms. Pollock noted her son, Justin a medic with the Marines, is currently serving in Iraq and asked for the good thoughts of the group.

Adjourn

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday April 10th from 4:00-6:00 p.m. The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Committee Listings

Pay Equity Committee

Alice Burns
Diane Fay
Paula Fay
Pam Pollock
Jacquie Scarbrough
Kristen Whitfield

Women's Health Committee

Diane Fay
Paula Fay
Jane Otis
Deborah Skinner
Dottie Smith

Women in Politics Committee

Helen Bresnahan
Connie Nicholson
Jane Otis
Pam Pollock
Jacquie Scarbrough
Kathy Teahan

Legislative Committee

Jan Barton
Paula Fay
Estella Fritzingler
Mary Pat Messemer
Sue Rohrbach
Deborah Skinner
Dottie Smith

Cape and Islands Regional Council
April 10, 2008
Barnstable Town Hall, Hyannis
Meeting Minutes

Present: Jill Ashton, Claudine Barnes, Janice Barton, Helen Bresnahan, Diane Fay, Paula Fay, Estelle Fritzingler, Liz Houlihan, Shelia Lyons, Jane Otis, Susan Rohrbach, Deborah Skinner, Kathy Teahan, Kristin Whitfield, Evelyn Young

Welcome & Group Introductions

Liz Houlihan opened the meeting at 4:05 and asked for participants to introduce themselves.

MCSW Updates

Ms. Houlihan reported that the MCSW had recently held a very successful public hearing at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. She also noted that the bill to establish a Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women, which the MCSW help to draft and has been supporting for 15 months, has been favorably reported from House Ways and Means and will hopefully move to the floor for a vote. The Commission, in partnership with the Massachusetts Coalition for Women's Wage Equality, will host an event at the State House on April 22 to recognize Equal Pay Day. Ms Houlihan completed her report by noting the Unsung Heroines, the MCSW's signature event, at which women from 287 cities and towns across the Commonwealth will be honored for their contributions to their communities, will be held on May 14th.

Cape Cod and Island Women's Commission

Sue Rohrbach reported the legislation is ready to be filed and a number of Cape legislators have agreed to co-sponsor including Senator Murray, Representative Patrick, Peak, Turkington, and Turner. Members agreed to reach out to the Cape legislators who had not yet signed on, including Atsalis and Perry.

There was brief conversation about new potential members. A number of women were named and Jill Ashton and members of the Council will continue to build the council with a diverse population of women.

Committee Reports

Women in Politics Committee

Kathy Teahan reported on the activities of the Women in Politics Committee. The group is interested in who are the women running for local office on the Cape and have begun to compile a list of candidates. They also are interested in the number of women who have served in the past and have begun to research. The Committee is first goal is to bring attention to the issue of women in politics. Member of the Council offered recommendations on the committee's work as well as resources, Claudine Barnes noted that there might be a student interested in the issue as a research project and Ms. Ashton offered MCSW intern support. Ms. Houlihan noted that the MCSW would be willing to assist with organizing the information that the Committee had gathered.

Pay Equity Committee

Kristin Whitfield reported that the Pay Equity Committee had been busy contacting town select boards to request proclamations recognizing Equal Pay Day. Plans are developing for an Equal Pay event on May 14th from 7 – 9 p.m., which will educate participants about the issue of the wage gap and encourage them to advocate for pay equity. The Committee is hoping for the participation of Annie Houle from The Wage Project. Ms. Barnes agreed to promote the event to the student population.

Ms. Whitfield also noted that the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy will be hosting a policy conference, "Women, Wages and Work," on June 9th. It is hoped that the many events being held across the state will develop a grass roots advocacy effort to promote the issue.

Women's Health Committee

Diane Fay reported on the work of the Women's Health Committee, which had met with a representative from the Company that manufactures Mamo Pads. She shared information about how not only do the pads provide for a more comfortable mammogram, but the result is a better x-ray image. The representative informed the Committee of a number of interesting facts: once a patient has had bruising from the x-ray machine it is likely to reoccur. The company will train hospital staff on the use of the pads and the techs will receive continuing education credit. The pads are recycled into rug pads. Unfortunately, facilities on the Cape do not provide Mamo Pads to their patients. The cost to implement the use of Mamo Pads could be up to \$60-70,000 dollars a year. The representative said that if the Committee could secure the commitment of Cape hospitals the company would be willing to cover the cost for indigent patients.

The Committee has begun to brainstorm about how funding could be secured to ensure that Cape hospitals offer Mamo Pads to their patients. They noted that the cost the pads will be amortize. Diane Fay also reported that facilities in Vermont use the pad and was told that it was because of the efforts of the Vermont Women's Commission.

It was agreed that the Committee will outline its next steps, including who should be contacted and in what order. Ms. Ashton and Ms. Fay will reach out to the Vermont Commission to learn more about its efforts.

Adjourn

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, May 21st from 4:00-6:00 p.m. The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Committee Listings

Pay Equity Committee

Alice Burns
Diane Fay
Paula Fay
Pam Pollock
Jacquie Scarbrough
Kristen Whitfield

Women's Health Committee

Diane Fay
Paula Fay
Jane Otis
Deborah Skinner
Dottie Smith

Women in Politics Committee

Helen Bresnahan
Connie Nicholson
Jane Otis
Pam Pollock
Jacquie Scarbrough
Kathy Teahan

Legislative Committee

Jan Barton
Paula Fay
Estella Fritzinger
Mary Pat Messemer
Sue Rohrbach
Deborah Skinner
Dottie Smith