



**PLYMOUTH COUNTY COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF
WOMEN AND GIRLS: ANNUAL REPORT**
May 2023

Commissioners of the Plymouth County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls

Elisabeth Arruda
Tracey Weeden
Laura Buckley
Carolyn M. Riley

Elected Officers
Carolyn M. Riley: Chair
Elisabeth Arruda: Acting Co-Secretary
Tracey Weeden: Acting Co-Secretary
Laura Buckley: Treasurer

Interns
None for 2023

Purpose: The Plymouth County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls (“PCCSW”) was established by House Bill 1110, signed into law on March 15, 2018 as Chapter 45 of the Acts of 2018. The PCCSW’s mission is to provide a permanent, effective voice for the advancement of women and girls in Plymouth County.

The PCCSW is a nine-member body which represents all the towns and cities in Plymouth County including: Abington, Bridgewater, Brockton, Carver, Duxbury, East Bridgewater, Halifax, Hanover, Hanson, Hingham, Hull, Kingston, Lakeville, Marion, Marshfield, Mattapoisett, Middleborough, Norwell, Pembroke, Plymouth, Plympton, Rochester, Rockland, Scituate, Wareham, West Bridgewater, and Whitman.

The PCCSW is responsible for studying, reviewing and reporting on the status of women and girls in Plymouth County, and is charged with offering recommendations regarding policy that would improve access to opportunities and equality for women and girls in the region.

Through public hearings, public meetings, and coordination with resources within and residents of Plymouth County, the PCCSW will assess, take actions, and make recommendations to advance the women and girls of Plymouth County toward full equity in all areas of life and to promote rights and opportunities for all women and girls.

Membership: After approval by the legislature, the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women sought applicants for the PCCSW. Eight members were appointed to the inaugural PCCSW, and sworn in by Lieutenant Governor Karen Polito on July 11, 2018. Those original eight members are: Elisabeth Arruda, of Marion; Laura Buckley of Plymouth; Karis North of Hull; Kathryn Pevzner of Duxbury; Jordan Pouliot Latham of Rochester; Janice Johnson Plumer of Brockton; Carolyn M. Riley of Plymouth; and Kristina Whiton-O’Brien of Kingston.

The current Commissioners are: Elisabeth Arruda, Laura Buckley, Tracey Weeden, and Carolyn M. Riley.

Commissioners Dawn Sibor and Janice Johnson-Plumer did not seek reappointment after their commissions expired in December 2022. Phyllis Ellis resigned in February 2023. A new Commissioner, Karen Canfield resigned shortly after joining the Commission as of April 2023. As a result, there will be five openings for new Commissioners on the PCCSW. The PCCSW hopes that these seats can be filled as soon as possible, by September 2023.

Activities and Accomplishments: In its fifth year, the PCCSW focused on its legislative priorities, the resource guide that was created last year was distributed to our constituents and supporters in Plymouth County. A planned public hearing and discussion did not occur, in part due to lack of quorum and other barriers.

The PCCSW has maintained its website, www.plymouthcountywomen.org so that it has a more effective means of sharing information about its meetings, events, legislative priorities, and goals, and hosting its resource guide. Currently, meeting notices are posted on the MCSW main website and on the PCCSW’s Facebook and Instagram pages. The PCCSW has established a Gmail account: PCCSWMA@gmail.com and Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/Plymouth-County-Commission-on-the-Status-of-Women-2183371068549059/>.

An Instagram page was established @plymouthcountymacsw. Meeting agendas and notices of hearings and other events are posted to the Facebook page and the Instagram page.

Hearings/Public Forums: A planned public hearing and discussion did not occur, in part due to lack of quorum and other barriers.

Legislative Agenda: A copy with descriptions of the PCCSW's legislative priorities and other endorsed legislation is attached hereto.

Priority Legislation:

An Act relative to birthing justice in the Commonwealth (S. 1415)

Lead Sponsors: Sen Miranda

Coalition: Bay State Birth Coalition

Status: Referred to Joint Committee on Public Health

This bill introduces a framework to improve maternal health outcomes and advance recommendations from the Special Commission on Racial Inequities in Maternal Health, including better integrating midwifery care into our maternal health care system to improve access to out-of-hospital birthing options and reducing financial and administrative barriers to the creation of free-standing birth centers.

An Act Supporting Parents Running for Public Office (S. 348/H. 590)

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Patricia Jehlen and Reps. Mike Connolly and Joan Meschino

Coalition:

Status: Referred to the Joint Committee on Election Laws

This bill would allow candidates running for public office can use their campaign funds for their childcare needs.

An Act to increase access to disposable menstrual products (IAM Bill) (S. 1381/H. 534)

Lead Sponsors: Rep Jay D. Livingstone, Rep Christine P. Barber & Sen Jehlen

Coalition: Massachusetts Menstrual Equity

Status: Referred to Joint Committee on Public Health

This bill would provide access to free menstrual products to all menstruating individuals in schools, shelters & prisons.

Preliminary Goals for 2023/2024:

1. Resume annual Legislative Coffee.
2. Continue to refine and establish resources and contacts for the women and girls of Plymouth County. Consider holding a resource fair open to all.
3. Provide education and training related to jobs and salary negotiation.
4. Continue to explore grant opportunities and work to help break down barriers for women and girls who want to attend PCCSW events.
5. Hold a public hearing/discussion targeting constituents of all ages in the fall of 2023.
6. Improve recruitment efforts.
7. Build on everything we have learned so far!

Respectfully submitted,

*Commissioners of the Plymouth County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls, via
its Chair, Carolyn M. Riley*

APPENDIX A

PLYMOUTH COUNTY COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Priority Legislation for 2023-2024
Legislative Session - Final and
Approved

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