

THE STATUS REPORT



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The Equal Pay Push Continues: Next Hearing on July 26!

Interested in helping Massachusetts' women achieve pay equity? If so, mark your calendar for July 26. At 10:30 a.m. that morning, the House Committee on Public Service will be hearing testimony regarding H2826, "An Act to Authorize the HRD to undertake a Study of the State's Job Classification System." A similar study in Minnesota helped spur that state government to shift its wage structure, an act that virtually eliminated the wage gap between Minnesota's government-employed men and women. A strong show of support will help H2826's chances, so don't hesitate to step forward and make your voice heard.

The power of this kind of support was evident on May 8, when the State's Senate Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight held a public hearing for the Senate version of the bill. Members and supporters of the Massachusetts Coalition for Women's Wage Equality presented compelling testimonies, leaving legislators impressed with the bill's potential.

The Coalition met on June 19 to discuss this successful hearing and its other recent projects. All agreed that April 23rd's Equal Pay Day event was another great step forward, raising awareness of the issue among local women and the media. Convened at the State House, the day featured advocacy training, a panel discussion, and an empowering keynote address from former lieutenant governor Evelyn Murphy, author of *Getting Even: Why Women Don't Get Paid Like Men and What to Do About It*. Plans are in the works for another such event next year.

Though the Coalition will not be meeting again this summer, members plan to keep busy throughout the warm months. In addition to testifying at July's hearing, they will be conducting intensive research on both the public and private sectors. Throughout the summer, the MCSW will be searching out and tracking all existing pay equity legislation, as well as contacting companies to discuss their practices related to pay equity. The MCSW hopes to develop a proposal for companies to review pay equity by the end of the summer.

In addition to undertaking these studies, the Coalition is working to increase its membership. Any committed supporters of pay equity, be they women or men, affiliated with an organization or totally independent, are encouraged to join the fight. E-mail mcsw@state.ma.us if you'd like to get involved.



*Pictured at left:
Former Lieutenant Governor Evelyn Murphy
addresses the audience at April 23rd's Equal Pay
Day event at the State House.*

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Executive Director Corner

Summertime, and the living is easy.....well, not *exactly* at the MCSW! Although the summer months do tend to be a bit slower for us and we are able to spend time catching up with loose ends and planning for the year ahead, as we grow with each passing year there seems to be less and less “down time.”

For instance, this summer the MCSW is fortunate to have nine outstanding young women working with us as interns. Under the superb guidance of our outstanding Outreach Coordinator Jill Ashton, these interns allow the MCSW to substantially augment the capacity of the organization. A sampling of their projects include research on the Commission’s priority area of pay equity, preparing for the MCSW’s 10th anniversary in 2008, investigating potential new fundraising and grant ideas, developing a legal handbook for women, augmenting the MA Women’s Resource and Referral Network, building our communications infrastructure and planning for the future and much more. They are an incredible group and bring much energy, enthusiasm and delight to our small office.

Commissioner Catherine Greene and myself just returned from the annual National Association of Commissions for Women Convention in Louisville, Kentucky and were very pleased to bring home the MCSW’s first national Outstanding Achievement Award for the MA Women’s Resource and Referral Network (MWRRN). We are delighted that our work received this prestigious national recognition and also glad that it is a model that can be replicated to benefit women across the nation. As usual the Convention provided a wealth of ideas that we can implement here in Massachusetts... stay tuned!

We are also in the process of hiring a new Program Coordinator to replace Paula Daddona who in June left after six years with the Commission to return to employment in the private sector. We are excited for this new opportunity for her and I am sure that all of you who knew and worked with Paula will join me in wishing her much success and happiness in her new position. As the senior staff member, Paula had invaluable institutional memory and at one time or the other performed every function of the office. Paula was nine months pregnant and serving as the interim executive director when I was hired in February 2003. We were here a week together before she delivered her beloved son and went on maternity leave. Since then we have been through much together and Paula made many contributions to the growth and success of the Commission. She was the brains behind the MWRRN and followed that project through from conception to completion. She was our web “Master”, our communications specialist, our database queen and so much more. She will be missed, but we look forward to welcoming her replacement within the next month.

We are also in the process of firming up our annual plan for fiscal 2008. Our Commissioners put in a prodigious day of planning in June that will well position us to continue many of our ongoing initiatives as well as do a few new things. This will allow us to hit the ground running in September. Until then, we hope that one and all are enjoying a wonderful summer in New England. Isn’t this the time of year that we all live for? Check out the MCSW’s recommendations for summer reading and hit the beach, the hammock or the porch. Now is the perfect time to re-energize and regroup so that we can recommit to fighting the good fight refreshed and rested.

Happy Summer!



MCSW Wins Award at National Women's Conference

The women of Massachusetts have a long history of bringing national awards back to the Bay State. Now the MCSW does, too. On July 14, MCSW Executive Director Linda Brantley accepted the National Association of Commissions for Women's Outstanding Achievement Award for the Commission's creation of a free online women's resource and referral network.

"We are thrilled that our work has received this prestigious recognition," Brantley said. "We are especially glad that it will also serve as a model that can be replicated across the country. The judges noted that they were pleased to see the use of technology to address women's issues and needs."

Awarded in five categories based on Commission annual budgets, the NACW Achievement Awards honor exceptional, innovative projects undertaken by women's commissions throughout the nation. This is the MCSW's first entry and award.

The Massachusetts Women's Resource and Referral Network (MWRRN) was created to provide an accessible tool for Massachusetts women seeking information about local, regional, and state resources. The network's home page, available at www.mcswnetwork.com, displays a map of Massachusetts and allows users to click on their region to view a list of these resources. The categories of information in the database vary widely, from legal to housing to domestic violence assistance.

Launched in October 2006, the MWRRN promises to be a great success. Web statistics and other feedback to the Commission suggest that the Commonwealth's women are using the resource, while the number of organizations associated with the network continues to grow by the day.

The MCSW began its work on the MWRRN in 2005, using funds from its signature Unsung Heroine event. Key partners in making this resource a reality include Verizon, Blue Cross-Blue Shield of Massachusetts, and Tufts Health Plan. Future work will include continued augmentation of resources contained in the database and additional outreach to potential providers and users. To become a part of the WRRN or for more information, contact the MCSW office.

The MCSW Welcomes a New Commissioner!

Jacqueline Lane of Sagamore, Mass. has been appointed to the MCSW by Senate President Therese Murray. Ms. Lane will fill the unexpired term left by the retirement of Commissioner Mary Grant.



*Pictured above:
MCSW Commissioner Cathy Greene (left) and Executive Director
Linda Brantley (right) accept their award at the NACW conference.*

Legislation Updates

Health Education Bill gains recognition

Health education got a boost from the Commission on May 29th, as members attended the public hearing regarding An Act to Provide Health Education in Schools (Bill H597) and presented testimony positive testimony. If passed, this bill would make comprehensive health education part of the core curriculum for Massachusetts public schools. School districts would be required to teach age-appropriate, medically accurate health education in grades K-12. The Commission is excited about this piece of legislation, a bill that has the potential to improve the health and independence of girls throughout the Commonwealth.



Pictured above:

Constituents speak out for health education at the May 29th public hearing for Bill H597 before the Committee on Education.

In support of this bill, proponents will be conducting a letter/phone campaign to the Education Committee in the coming weeks. We invite you to participate in this campaign and show your support for this pivotal piece of legislation by contacting your state legislators either with a letter of support or phone call. For more information on the bill and the campaign, you can go to the CARE for Youth website at <http://www.careforyouthma.org/>. The Commission is excited about this piece of legislation, a bill that has the potential to improve the health and independence of girls throughout the Commonwealth.

Caregiver Bill Hearing Approaches

Recognizing the important-but-legally tenuous role of non-parent caregivers, the MCSW has endorsed H1151, "An Act Relative to Caregiver Medical and Educational Consent." If passed, this legislation would allow parents to authorize a caregiver to consent to medical treatments and educational decisions on behalf of their children. Rather than strip parents of their guardianship rights, the act would give the alternate caregivers concurrent authority to do things like sign school permission forms and authorize checkups.

Given the important role that many grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other non-parent caregivers play in the lives of many young people, this legislation is crucial to assuring these children's health and safety. To testify in support of this bill, you can attend its hearing at 10:30 AM on July 25 in State Hearing Room B-1.

Regional Councils Roundup

In June, the Commission concluded its first round of regular meetings around the state with community leaders. The MCSW Regional Council Network was established to increase the Commission's understanding of the statewide status of women. This year the Commission held Regional Council meetings in Bristol, the Cape and Islands, Essex, Franklin-Hampshire, Hampden, Middlesex, Plymouth, Suffolk-Norfolk, and Worcester.

These Commission meetings sometimes reap local benefits, as well. Last spring's Bristol Council was so inspirational that attendees committed to working to create a Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women. Using the Berkshire Commission on the Status of Women as a legislative model, the women of Bristol County are hard at work to realize their goal of establishing a local governmental body dedicated to promoting the status of women. Bristol's progress has encouraged other counties to consider starting Commissions of their own. Leaders from the Cape and Islands have been particularly enthusiastic, and have begun the work towards establishing a Commission for their county.

The success of this year's MCSW Regional Councils indicates their potential to mobilize local leaders and increase the efficiency and independence of grassroots organizations. Keep an eye out for the date of your local council in future issues of The Status Report.

Summer Reading List

The slower pace of summer means more time for good reading. Below are some of the MCSW's picks for fun, interesting, women-centered literature.

[When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America](#) by Paula J. Giddings

In her elegant testimonial, Paula Giddings chronicles black women's centuries-long struggle against both racism and sexism. The book offers a revelatory look at the particular history of black women, providing invaluable insight into how their tireless battle has shaped the nation. Described by Nobel winner Toni Morrison as "history at its best--clear, intelligent, moving," Giddings' work is considered to be among the best on the subject.

[I Feel Bad About My Neck: And Other Thoughts on Being a Woman](#) by Nora Ephron

Why should you care that Nora Ephron no longer likes her neck, not to mention her thighs and skin? Well, because she's hilarious, for starters. Though most of us don't have a spare \$20,000 to prevent our hair from showing its gray (unlike Ephron), that doesn't mean we should deny ourselves the pleasure of laughing at her anecdotes. Even the solemn moments of this collection of essays on the process of aging prove relatable, even moving in their understated melancholy.

[Full Frontal Feminism: A Young Woman's Guide to Why Feminism Matters](#) by Jessica Valenti

Valenti, a leading contributor to the popular blog [feministing.com](#), uses this fresh, accessible book to send a simple message: feminism isn't dead, it's more relevant than ever. Targeting younger readers, Valenti covers a wide range of topics in simple, blunt language. This empowering book reminds girls and women everywhere why feminism is still cool, and why it's still necessary.

Upcoming Events & Happenings

- July 25, 10:30 a.m. *Hearing for H1151, An Act Relative to Caregiver Medical and Educational Consent.* To be held in the hearing room B-1 at the State House. For more information, call the MCSW office at 617-626-6520, or e-mail MCSW
- July 26, 10:30 a.m. *Hearing for H2826, An Act to Authorize the HRD to undertake a Study of the State's Job Classification System.* To be held at the in hearing room B-2 at the State House. For more information, call the MCSW office at 617-626-6520, or e-mail MCSW

For a complete listing of events please visit www.mass.gov/women/upcoming.htm



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