

The Status Report



Charles F. Hurley Building, 19 Staniford St., 6th Floor, Boston, MA 02114
Web: www.mass.gov/women Phone: 617-626-6520 E-Mail: mcsw@state.ma.us

Fall River Hearing Generates Public Testimony, Guidelines for Future MCSW Efforts

Dear Friends and Supporters:

The BCCSW and MCSW joint Fall River Public Hearing was held Wednesday, November 17th. After an initial presentation by Co-Chair Juli Parker titled “Tips for Negotiating your Salary”, as adopted from Dr. Evelyn Murphy’s The WAGE Project: \$mart \$tart workshop. The WAGE Project, Inc., is a grassroots-oriented, activist-led national organization that seeks to end wage discrimination against working women. The presentation centered on specific skills women can use in the workplace to increase their salaries in an efficient and fair manner.

Topics discussed during testimonials were diverse and covered many areas; including education, child-care, and poverty issues. Predominantly, the indirect and direct effects of a mother’s education level relative to income and household environments was a topic that was returned to on several occasions.

Undereducated mothers may be unaware of the impact of their negligence towards education, which can impact the child and household environment. Such sentiments can translate to poor support of educational endeavors at home as well as poor interactions with schools. It was noted that is it essential to elevate the education levels of women throughout the Commonwealth, particularly at the collegiate level. Currently, a female with a Bachelor’s degree earns roughly the same as her male counterpart with only a high school diploma.

Furthermore, almost 90% of child coming from single mothers are considered poor. A variety of negative environmental factors become sources of stress for such children, and can lead to poor brain development and significant behavioral problems.

The MCSW and BCCSW are competent vehicles to examine these sociopolitical issues at both the macro and micro levels. The data and testimony collected at the public hearing will be used to generate positive change for women across Massachusetts. Additionally, it will be employed in our efforts to persuade elected officials to pass any future and current legislation that improves the status of women. The public hearing also provided an opportunity for the individuals and organizations of Fall River to share information and network.

The MCSW has been incited by the success and depth of the testimony gathered at the Fall River public hearing, and looks forward to utilizing the information collected in the upcoming 2011 year.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda Cavaioli". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Linda Cavaioli

Chair

New Interim Director for the Winter Months

Please join us in congratulating Jill Ashton, MCSW Director, on the birth of her first child. Jill and Sean had a healthy baby boy on Friday, November 26 at 5:10 am. Kevin Joseph Ashton Kerrigan was born weighing 8 pounds 4 ounces and was 21.5 inches long. Jill expects to return to the MCSW in early March.

While Jill takes maternity leave, Jeni Wheeler will be serving as the MCSW Interim Director. Jeni comes to us with a vast amount of business and political experience. She earned her MBA from Babson in 2005 and was recently elected to their Alumni Board of Directors. Jeni has been actively involved with the Massachusetts political scene for more than 15 years on both the local and state levels. Besides building several companies she has also acted as a consultant to both for-profit and non-profit companies in the areas of operations, management, best practices, fundraising, and strategy. We look forward to utilizing her skills to help us move forward into the New Year.

Commissioner Hanishi Ali Honored by Worcester Business Journal

Please join us also in congratulating MCSW Commissioner Hanishi Ali, who has been selected by the Worcester Business Journal as one of the winners for their Women in Business Awards for 2010. Hanishi is one of six women selected for this award, which was given to its honorees at a ceremony in Worcester in November.

Commissioners Extend Service on Bristol, Berkshire, and Cape Cod and Islands Commissions

Several regional commissioners have been reappointed to the Bristol, Berkshire and Cape Cod and Island commissions. Both Abbie von Schlegell and Tara Jacobs have been reappointed to the Berkshire Commission. Melissa Costa-Doyle, Jean Cotter Fox, and Ellen Heffernan-Dugan of Bristol County will advance their efforts to better the status of women at the local level. Finally, Catherine King, Janet Joakim, and Barbara Dixon will continue to serve the Cape Cod and Islands Commission.

Legislative Progress in the New Year

The MCSW looks forward to connecting with local and state elected officials regarding legislative initiatives in 2011. A portion of the MCSW efforts will be dedicated to further maintaining legislative support for bills that the MCSW has actively engaged in supporting over the past year. While the majority of legislative procedures will begin in January, the MCSW looks forward to generating a dialogue about efficiently advocating for various proposed bills. Currently, such bills potentially include An Act Relative to Workers' Pathways to Self-Sufficiency and An Act Relative to Establishing Family and Employment Security through Temporary Disability Insurance. Further updates regarding MCSW-supported legislation may be found in the January 2011 newsletter.

Commissioner Appointments

The MCSW has recently reappointed two of its standing commissioners. Commissioner Marianne Fleckner, current Treasurer, has been re-appointed by Governor Duval Patrick. Commissioner Elizabeth Hart, current Program and Planning Committee member, has been re-appointed by Senate President Therese Murray. Both serve three-year staggered terms with the MCSW.

The Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators is presently accepting applications for two appointments to the MCSW. The Speaker of the House is also looking for three appointments to serve on the MCSW. All interested applicants should contact the respective appointing authority office for further information regarding applications.

Future MCSW Events for 2011

The upcoming 2011 winter and spring months are full of MCSW events. The formal inauguration of the Essex County Commission on the Status of Women will be held on January 12 at 7 pm, with the location to be confirmed. The Essex Commission on the Status of Women will then begin its efforts in gathering information regarding issues which impact the women, families, and communities of Essex County.

Additionally, the MCSW will be hosting a public hearing in Fitchburg on February 9 at the Fitchburg City Hall. The hearing will begin at 6 pm, and will constitute of various local organizations and residents sharing information with the MCSW relating to the status of women in Fitchburg.

Also, a public hearing will take place in Boston on April 27 at the Rappaport Center for Law and Public Service at Suffolk University.

Finally, the MCSW's eighth annual Unsung Heroines of Massachusetts event will take place on May 18 at the State House. The event seeks to honor one hundred Massachusetts women whose efforts towards social progress and change within their communities have gone unrecognized. Nomination forms for outstanding local residents may be found on the MCSW website; additionally, sponsorship forms for those interested in supporting the event are also available. Sponsorship forms must be received by February 1, and nomination forms by February 25, 2011.

Further details on all upcoming events will be provided via email and on the MCSW website at mass.gov/women. Please contact the MCSW at mcsw@state.ma.us for further questions.