

The Status Report

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MCSW To Honor 287 Unsung Heroines of Massachusetts May 14th

*They don't make the news...
they make the difference.*



The MCSW is proud to announce its 287 Community Unsung Heroines of 2008. These women come from cities and towns across the Commonwealth and each will be recognized for their selfless contributions to their organizations and communities in a ceremony on Wednesday, May 14, 2008, at the State House in Boston.

These Unsung Heroines were carefully selected from nearly 600 nominations to be honored for making a difference in the lives of others.

"Our Unsung Heroines are women who don't make the news, but make the difference in their communities, businesses, or volunteer endeavors.

They are the women who quietly, without fanfare or recognition and

usually behind the scenes, use their time, talent, spirit and enthusiasm to enrich the lives of others," said Linda Brantley, MCSW Executive Director. "We are awed by the fabulous work women across the Commonwealth are doing and thankful to the many nominators who brought these incredible women to our attention."

The 2008 Unsung Heroines Event will be held from 1 - 4 p.m. at the Massachusetts State House. The ceremony will include a speaking program with a keynote address delivered by Attorney General Martha Coakley, certificate presentations, a collective photo of all Heroines in attendance and a "Just Desserts" reception featuring pastries from some of the best female pastry chefs in the state.

A list of this year's honorees, listed alphabetically by town along with the name of the individual(s) who nominated them is posted at www.mass.gov/women/unsungheroines.htm.

Honorees will be featured in an event program available to all in attendance on May 14th. Family, friends, and co-workers are encouraged to purchase ad space in the program book to congratulate their heroines on receiving this honor. More information on how you can submit a congratulatory message for the event program can be found on our website at www.mass.gov/women. **Program ads are due by April 16th, so make sure you submit yours today!**

Corporate sponsorship opportunities are also available. More information is available at www.mass.gov/women or by contacting the MCSW at 617-626-6520 or by e-mail at mcsw@state.ma.us.

This event would not be possible without the support of the following outstanding companies and organizations: Bank of America, New England Patriots Charitable Foundation, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, Teresa & H. John Heinz Charitable Fund, Agar Supply, Inc., Bagel Alley, and Garber Travel.

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Executive Director's Corner

What I Wish I Knew Then.....

This month we will observe the infamous Equal Pay Day – the annual symbolic day on which women's average wages catch up to men's from the previous year. This wage gap is created by women earning, on average, only 77 cents on the dollar to their male counterparts. Minority women face an even larger wage gap. Thus, to match men's 2007 earnings, women must work from January 2007 to April 2008 — an extra four months. And, this is based on a male working five days a week for twelve months, while a woman must work seven days a week for sixteen months to earn equivalent wages. Pay disparities affect women of all ages, races, and education levels—regardless of their family decisions. These lingering disparities are disturbing more than 40 years after passage of the Equal Pay Act. In recognition of this inequity, Equal Pay Day will be celebrated this year on April 22, 2008.

This is also the time of year when we reluctantly prepare to part with the young women we have had the pleasure and good fortune to work with as college interns, either over the course of a semester, or in some cases, the entire school year. While we are left wondering what we will do without them, many are embarking on the exciting time in every college graduate's life when they spread their wings and fly. Some are focused and have a solid plan to follow. More often, our interns have multiple opportunities and no clear direction in mind. But most will be seeking their first "real" job, even if only as a tide over until law school or post graduate study.

What, you may be wondering, do these two subjects have in common? Money. Economic self sufficiency. The ability of one to adequately take care of themselves and in time, for many, a family.

Behind the Pay Gap, research released last April by the AAUW Educational Foundation, demonstrates that just one year out of college, women working full time already earn less than their male colleagues, even when they work in the same field. Ten years after graduation, the pay gap widens. Over the course of a lifetime of work, this can translate in lost wages of between \$700,000 to \$2 million!

These statistics demonstrate why young women today need to be educated about the gender wage gap and be prepared and equipped to combat it right out of the gate. This information needs to be shared with young women so that they can plan their futures accordingly. When I graduated from college I had a vague notion that I would like to make a lot of money, but no real idea of how to implement that dream. I certainly wasn't aware of the impact that one's first starting salary has on the rest of your career earnings, or of the importance of negotiating for what you are worth, rather than whatever is offered.

So for this year's graduates, we send this advice:

- Pay attention to where you start on the wage scale, as it will have a significant impact on where you end up. Become familiar with what jobs pay and make sure that you are being offered the going rate or better.
- Don't sell yourself short – as a college graduate you can demand a certain level of job. Set your sights high. Know your value and stand up for it. Believe in yourself and what you have to contribute.
- Demand what you are worth and negotiate for it. Many first time job seekers are so intent on securing a job, any job, that they jump at the first thing that comes along. They are afraid to hold out for the best fit, the best salary, the best environment.
- Love what you do and the rest will follow. We spend a significant portion of our lives at work. Happiness and contentment on the job is priceless. When you can have this, and equal pay for equal work, all will be good with the world.



Commissioner's Corner: Spotlight on Commissioner Debbie DiMasi



Deborah M. DiMasi was recently appointed by the Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives as one of the MCSW's newest Commissioners. Mrs. DiMasi is one of our region's most effective advocates for suicide prevention and an outspoken champion for veterans who experience post-traumatic stress disorder, Commissioner DiMasi will serve on the MCSW's Personnel committee.

Motivated by the suicide of her brother Jeff, a soldier and veteran, Deborah has testified publicly before the Massachusetts Legislature, urging a dramatic increase in funding devoted exclusively to suicide prevention, and the creation of a special commission to investigate the effects of war on returning Massachusetts veterans.

She has also managed a small, family-owned business and enjoyed a successful career in the fashion industry. Deborah is the mother of two children, Ashley and Christian, and is married to Salvatore F. DiMasi, Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

Amherst Public Hearing Covers Wide Range of Issues

On March 26th the MCSW, in conjunction with the Everywoman's Center at the University of Massachusetts - Amherst, hosted a public hearing to assess the issues the women of Hampshire County are facing.

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.



Commissioner Azell Murphy Cavaan, Chair Marianne Fleckner, Commissioner Pam Malumphy, Commissioner Linda Cavaioli and Executive Director Linda Brantley listen to testimony.

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 will compile a full report of the testimony heard and present the report to its appointing authorities and the state legislature with recommendations for addressing these issues.

Toni Troop of Jane Doe, Inc. testifies regarding the increase in domestic violence-related deaths in the Western part of the state.

MCSW on Beacon Hill



An Act Establishing the Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women (S1172) has been reported favorably out of House Ways and Means. If passed the legislation 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 bill will move to the House floor for a vote.

Act Establishing Paid Sick Days (HB 1803/SB 1073) is stalled in the Committee on Labor and Workforce Development. The Legislation would ensure that all Massachusetts workers have a minimum of seven days of paid time off annually to take care of their own health needs and those of family members. We need your help to move this important bill forward. Please consider sending a letter to the editor of your local paper.

Below is a draft of a letter-to-the-editor for your use. We strongly recommend that you visit the paper's web site and look for information on submitting a letter-to-the-editor. Many newspapers will tell you to which email, street address or fax number you can submit the letter as well as the maximum length they'll consider. Some papers will allow you submit the letter by cutting and pasting the text of the letter into a box on the web site.

Most papers ask that you include your name, address and contact information when you submit the letter. This information allows them to verify that the letter came from you before they publish the letter. They will not publish your contact information

To the Editor:

Almost half of Massachusetts workers lack a single guaranteed paid sick day. That's nearly 1.5 million workers who risk losing pay or their job if they need to take a sick day. That's not right and it isn't fair.

Last week, the Massachusetts Paid Sick Leave Coalition delivered hundreds of messages to our state legislators urging them to do something about this situation by supporting An Act Establishing Paid Sick Days (HB 1803/SB 1073). The bill would ensure that all Massachusetts workers can earn a minimum of seven paid sick days a year to take care of their own health needs and those of family members.

Senator/Representative [Name/s] deserves a great deal of credit for helping to move this bill forward. He/she/they recognize how important paid sick days are to working families and how they can benefit businesses by reducing the spread of disease at work.

All Massachusetts workers should be able to take the time to recover from an illness or injury or care for sick or injured children, without risking their pay or their jobs. The legislature should pass and the Governor should sign An Act Establishing Paid Sick Days as quickly as possible.

[Your Name]
 [Your Address]
 [City, State, Zip]
 [Your Phone Number]
 [Your Email Address]

For more information about any of the bills listed above, please contact Outreach Coordinator Jill Ashton at 617-626-6520 or Jill.Ashton@state.ma.us.

Mark Your Calendars: MA Women's Wage Equity Events on April 22 & June 9



On April 22 women and the men who support them will gather 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 to be held from 10 a.m. to noon, and legislative advocacy visits to follow, the spotlight will be shown on the continuing issue of the gender wage gap and what is being done in Massachusetts to address it.

Featured speakers will include 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 will be paid to advocating for the passage of the MCSW's priority of House Bill 2826/Senate Bill 2386.

According to the 2007 MCSW report “State of Women: A County by County Report on the Status of Women & Girls in Massachusetts,” women in EVERY county of Massachusetts earn less than men - an average of 77 cents to each male earned dollar. This impacts women's ability to be economically self-sufficient and creates problems with their access to education, healthcare, childcare, housing, investments and retirement.

This year Equal Pay Day coincides with school vacation week. Wanting to coincide with national recognitions, organizers will utilize this timing to remind state legislators that gender pay disparities are not just a woman's issue, but a family issue as well. Women are encouraged to bring their children with them in order to put a face on the Commonwealth residents who are most significantly affected — families. Special outreach is also being done to attract college-aged women to the event to learn about the issue and its potential impact on their lifetime earning.

All are welcome to attend the Equal Pay Day event and are asked to register by e-mailing mcsw@state.ma.us or by calling the MCSW at 617-626-6520. For more information, visit <http://www.mass.gov/women>.

Lilly Ledbetter to Headline June 9 Women, Wages & Work Policy Conference

Legislative advocacy and other outreach and wage equity action will continue through the spring into the summer, to be capped off on June 9 by the *Women, Wages & Work Policy Conference* to be held at UMASS Boston. 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.

Ledbetter worked for nearly 20 years at a Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company facility in Alabama. She was almost 60 years old and on the verge of retiring when an anonymous letter turned up out of the blue and revealed to Ledbetter she was making substantially less money than male co-workers. Ledbetter, who did receive raises throughout her career with Goodyear, found that each raise was substantially lower than that of her male counterparts. The cumulative effects of her disparate treatment grew until she was being paid 15%-25% less than her male colleagues, even those with far less experience. She sued the company claiming pay discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Pay Act of 1963, after learning that she was the lowest-paid supervisor out of a group of 16 supervisors at the facility, despite having more experience than several of her male counterparts. A jury found that Goodyear had discriminated and awarded Ledbetter more than \$3 million in damages.

But Goodyear appealed the case all the way to the Supreme Court and got a reversal of the jury verdict by a 5-4 vote on May 29, 2007. The Court said Ledbetter should have filed her complaint within six months of the original act of discrimination — even though at the time she didn't know the discrimination was happening, let alone have enough evidence to complain. And thus, she could not receive back pay. Ledbetter's case represented a huge setback to women and women's organizations nationwide devoted to pay equity.

For more information on the conference, please visit: <http://www.mccormack.umb.edu/womenwages&work>.

Women and men deserve equal pay for equal work. Join us on both April 22 and June 9 to become involved in the pursuit for gender wage equity!

MCSW Partners with Senator Susan Tucker for Historical Re-enactment



Lani Peterson (Angelina Grimke), Senator Susan Tucker, Susan Lenoe (Sarah Grimke), and Commissioner Catherine M. Greene, Esq.

On Monday, March 24th the MCSW, in collaboration with Senator Susan Tucker, presented a re-enactment of the life and times of abolitionists Angelina and Sarah Grimke.

Exactly 170 years after Angelina Grimke became the first woman to address a legislative body at the Massachusetts State House, nearly 100 people gathered in Nurses Hall to hear the story of the slave-owner's daughters-turned abolitionists.

Performers Lani Peterson and Susan Lenoe gave an entertaining and enlightening performance conveying the intriguing story of these two dynamic historical figures.

At the conclusion of the performance, Commissioner Catherine M. Greene, Esq. announced that the list of the 2008 Unsung Heroines of Massachusetts had been posted.

MCSW Seeks Summer Interns

The MCSW welcomes college and graduate students to intern for course credits! If you, or someone you know is looking for an engaging and gratifying internship opportunity please forward a letter of intent and resume to mcsw@state.ma.us. The following internships are available:

Legislative Advocacy

Researching and monitoring state and national legislation that affects women; Supporting activities of the MCSW's Legislative Committee

Website Design

Creating and implementing new design for MCSW's website; maintaining website with updates and edits

Outreach and Advocacy

Assisting with the coordination of public hearings and regional councils; Supporting activities of the Outreach and Advocacy Committee

MA Women's Resource & Referral Network

Updating & augmenting the MCSW's referral database

Fundraising

Researching potential sources of funding; Grant writing; Special events planning

Communications/Publications

Writing & distributing press releases and media advisories, updating and/or creating media lists, and obtaining media coverage; Assisting with the Commission's monthly newsletter and Web site; Updating the Commission's printed materials

Corporate Sponsors Needed for Unsung Heroines Initiative

Our honorees have been announced. Now it's time for our local, regional, and national corporations and organizations to show their support of these phenomenal women.

Sponsorship levels range from \$150 all the way to \$10,000 with benefits including (but not limited to) advertising space in an event day program book, logo and link on our website, and listings in the hundreds of press releases distributed in the months leading up to the event.

Sponsorship forms are available for download on our website at www.mass.gov/women. We encourage you to pledge your sponsorship early to enjoy the full benefits of your support.

There are also advertising opportunities available in the program book that will be developed. This beautiful publication is a lasting and treasured memento for our honorees and their families and is a great way to gain visibility for your business or organization or to join us in congratulating these special women for their many good deeds.

For more information contact Program Coordinator Kim Sebastiao at Kimberly.Sebastiao@state.ma.us or 617-626-6521.

Take Action. Get Educated. Get Involved.

If you are interested in becoming more involved in the movement to advance women in the Commonwealth you can start by attending any one of the number of events and meetings taking place across the state in the coming weeks.

Saturday & Sunday, April 5 & 6 (9:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.): AAUW-MA Spring Conference & Annual Meeting

Location: Cape Codder Resort & Spa (1225 Iyannough Road/Rt. 132 & Bears's Way, Hyannis)

Details: Saturday's conference, "It's **All** About the Money," will feature Annie Houle, National Director of WAGE Campus and Community Initiatives, as the keynote speaker. Patricia Ho, AAUW Association Board and New England Regional Director will bring us up to date on what is happening on the Association level. On Sunday, in addition to being treated to guest speaker, author Kate Whouley, the AAUW will hold their annual meeting during which the election and installation of new officers take place and awards will be given to branches and outstanding members. For more information please visit: <http://www.aauw-ma.org>.

Monday, April 7 (3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.): Massachusetts Coalition for Women's Wage Equality Meeting

Location: Charles F. Hurley Building, Directors Conference Room 3rd Floor (19 Staniford Street, Boston)

Details: Members of the MA Coalition for Women's Wage Equality will meet to discuss next steps in passing wage equity-related legislation, Equal Pay Day and hosting pay equity events. Anyone interested in joining this growing Coalition should contact MCSW Outreach Coordinator Jill Ashton at 617-626-6525 or jill.ashton@state.ma.us.

Thursday, April 10 (12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.): Girls, Inc. of Lynn 20th Annual Celebration Luncheon

Location: Danversport Yacht Club (Rt. 62, Danvers)

Details: A luncheon celebrating the accomplishments and achievements of Girls, Inc. alumnae and scholarship recipients Fran Dichner, President of R&L Associates, Inc.; Bopha Tum, Branch Service Manager at Enterprise Bank in Lowell; and Patricia Tarrance, 5th Grade Math teacher at Academy of the Pacific Rim Charter School. Tickets are \$60. RSVPs are requested by April 4th. For more information please visit www.girlsinlynn.org.

Thursday, April 19 (12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.): The Money Conference for Women

Location: Western New England College (1215 Wilbraham Road, Springfield)

Details: *The Money Conference* is a **FREE** conference presented by Treasurer Timothy P. Cahill in conjunction with the YWCA. The Conference will focus on money management, retirement and investment strategies for all ages, racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds, and levels of financial knowledge. Space is limited. Register today at www.themoneyconference.com.

Tuesday, April 22 (10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon): Equal Pay Day

Location: Hearing Room A1, Massachusetts State House (Boston)

Details: Did you know that women have to work into April of the following year to earn the same salaries as their male counterparts did the previous year? Join us as we build support for pay equity legislation, discuss the wage gap, and talk to a panel of experts on how women can get the pay they deserve! For more information, or to RSVP your attendance, please contact MCSW Outreach Coordinator Jill Ashton at 617-626-6525 or jill.ashton@state.ma.us.

Wednesday, May 14 (1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.): 5th Annual Unsung Heroines of Massachusetts

Location: Gardner Auditorium, Massachusetts State House (Boston)

Details: An afternoon of celebrating the nearly 300 women who have been selected as their community's Unsung Heroine. Please see our Unsung Heroines page at www.mass.gov/women/unsungheroines.htm for the complete list of the 2008 Heroines and our event sponsors. **Unfortunately, due to the number of honorees, guests and nominators, this event is not open to the public.**

Monday, June 9 (Time TBD): Women, Wages and Work Policy Conference

Location: UMASS Boston Campus Center Ballroom (Boston)

Details: Join us for a day of dynamic speakers and interactive strategy sessions to reduce the wage gap between women and men. Speakers scheduled to appear are: Lilly Ledbetter, plaintiff in Supreme Court gender wage discrimination case; Evelyn Murphy, author of *Getting Even: Why Women Don't Get Paid as Much as Men and What to Do About It*; Rocio Saenz, President of SEIU Local 615; Ann Bookman, Executive Director of MIT Workplace Center; and Ellen Bruce, Director of the Pension Action Center at UMASS Boston. For more information on the conference, please visit: <http://www.mccormack.umb.edu/womenwages&work>.

Do you have an event you would like to see on this list in an upcoming issue of The Status Report? E-mail the details to Program Coordinator Kim Sebastiao at Kimberly.Sebastiao@state.ma.us and we will do our best to include your event in our next issue.

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**Do you have questions or comments about this
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