

Table of Contents

List of Commissioners and Staff	1
Mission Statement	2
Introduction	3
Staff	3
Commission Administration	4
Officers and Working Subcommittees	4
Budget Subcommittee / Financial Expenditures	5
Education / Public Relations Subcommittee	5
MCSW Web site	6
MCSW Clearinghouse & Database Activities	6
Executive Subcommittee	7
Legislative Subcommittee	7
Personnel Subcommittee	8
Planning & Task Force Subcommittee	8
Task Forces on Violence Against Women and Child Care	8
Public Hearings	8
Worcester, October 3, 2001	9
Brockton, November 14, 2001	10
Fitchburg, April 17, 2002	10
Lynn, May 8, 2002	11
Direct Constituent Information and Referral	11
Coalition Building	11
Local Women's Commissions	13
Events	13
Attended Conferences, Events, and Meetings	14
Additional Commission Activities	14
Summary	14
Appendix	
Subcommittee List	
Summary of Top Ten Issues Raised at Commission Hearings 2001	
Newspaper articles	
Brochure & Newsletter	

Commissioners
(As of June 1, 2002)

Marianne C. Fleckner, Chair
Elaine Guiney, Vice-Chair
Jo Anne Thompson, Secretary
Kathleen Casavant, Treasurer
Minosca Alcántara
Nilka Alvarez-Rodriguez
Jennifer C. Braceras
Donna Finneran
Barbara Gomes-Beach
Mary Clare Higgins
Frances Hogan
Susan Howards
Dr. Helen Jackson
Dianne Luby
Dr. Roseanna Means
Angela Menino
Mary Reardon Johnson
Susana Segat
Kateri Walsh

Staff

Priscilla Golding, Executive Director
Paula A. Daddona, Program Coordinator / Web Master
Sonia Shah, Administrative Assistant

Mission Statement

The mission of the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women (MCSW) 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.

Introduction

This fiscal year 2002 Annual Report for the Commission on the Status of Women includes the Commission's activities, accomplishments, and important findings for the past year.

This year the Commission continued to build a strong internal and external organization. Administrative, fiscal, and personnel procedures were further developed and administered. Subcommittees were fully operational and chaired by various Commissioners.

Most importantly, the Commission's work was guided by the Commission's mandate "to provide a voice for women in the Commonwealth." The Commission listened to the voices of women and girls in Massachusetts by continuing to hold public hearings in various regions of the state. The Commissioners then used the testimony offered at these hearings to guide them as they decided on the priority issues for this year. Based on the feedback from women and girls in the Commonwealth, violence against women and child care were selected as top priorities for the Commission's work this fiscal year.

The Commission carefully considered activities and projects before undertaking them, to ensure that they reflected the Commission's commitment to the betterment of the lives of women and girls in Massachusetts. Guided by its priorities, the Commission has endorsed and supported six pieces of legislation to date. The Commission collaborates with and supports numerous community events that strive to help improve the lives of women and girls. Collaborative events included the annual International Women's Day breakfast at Simmons College which highlighted the accomplishments of women visual artists and the State Treasurer's Money Conference for Women which educated women on personal financial management.

The Commission is made up of nineteen appointed Commissioners who represent a diverse group of committed women. The Commissioners volunteer their time to work with the Commission's staff on programs, legislation, and constituent services. We look forward to the coming years as we build on this year's strong foundation activities.

Staff

In February 1998 when the Commission was created the Commissioners set out to build the infrastructure of the organization. Their main goal was to create the Commission as an independent and productive agency in the Commonwealth. One of the Commission's most important objectives was to recruit and hire three full-time staff members.

Following the Commonwealth's hiring guidelines, the Commission filled the vacant staff positions. With the office fully staffed, the Commission was ready to establish and execute goals and policies. The staff includes Priscilla A. Golding, Executive Director, Paula A. Daddona, Program Coordinator / Web Master, and Sonia Shah, Administrative Assistant.

The Commission and staff also welcomed interns and volunteers to work in the Commission's office. This year the Commission hired two part-time Winter/Spring interns, Alison Mitchell from Northeastern University Law School and Valerie Taing from Simmons College. The Commission thanks them for their invaluable contributions and hard work.

This spring, the Commission recruited throughout the Commonwealth for a summer intern. More than thirteen candidates applied for this position. Jennifer Nash was selected and she is a Law student at Harvard University Law School.

Commission Administration

The Commission is an independent state agency. The Commission staff is responsible for all personnel and fiscal administration but receive ongoing assistance from the Office of the State Comptroller and the Human Resources Department.

The Commission also complied with state-mandated policies. All invoices were paid within 30 days. The Office of the Comptroller presented the Commission with an award of excellence for 100% bill paying practices. In addition, the Commission maintained a balanced budget.

The Commission maintained its growing momentum, notwithstanding the changes in membership. The following Commissioners ended their terms this year: Sandra Jesse (appointed by the Caucus of Women Legislators), Mary Ann Glendon (appointed by the Speaker of the House) and Gwendolyn Tyre (appointed by the Senate President). The following Commissioners were appointed to new terms: Nilka I. Alvarez-Rodriguez (appointed by the Caucus of Women Legislators), Jennifer C. Braceras (appointed by the Speaker of the House), and Dianne Luby (appointed by the Senate President).

The official Commission brochure and newsletter were designed, printed and distributed this year. They are enclosed in the appendix of this report.

Officers and Working Subcommittees

The Commission is governed by bylaws that outline the election of officers and the committee structure. Officers for fiscal year 2002 are: Marianne C. Fleckner, Chair; Elaine Guiney, Vice-Chair; Kathleen Casavant, Treasurer; and Jo Anne Thompson, Secretary.

The Commission operates through working subcommittees that take on various tasks. The subcommittees then report back to the full Commission for approval and support. There are six working subcommittees within the full Commission.

The subcommittees are as follows:

1. Budget Subcommittee, chaired by Treasurer Casavant
2. Education/Public Relations Subcommittee, chaired by Commissioner Walsh
3. Executive Subcommittee, which is made up of all of the officers and subcommittee chairs and is overseen by the current Chair of the Commission, Commissioner Fleckner
4. Legislative Subcommittee, chaired by Commissioner Hogan
5. Personnel Subcommittee, chaired by Commissioner Finneran
6. Planning and Task Force Subcommittee, chaired by Commissioner Johnson

The Planning and Task Force Subcommittee is made up of two task forces, Violence Against Women and Child Care. These task forces were created to focus on the full Commission's two major priorities for the year.

Every Commissioner sits on at least one subcommittee. The subcommittees usually meet once a month. The full Commission meets regularly on the fourth Wednesday of each month, except in July and August.

Special guests and speakers are often invited to the monthly full Commission meetings to educate Commissioners and help broaden their perspectives. This years guest speakers included Margaret Blood and Christine Lopes from the Early Education for All (EEA) campaign sponsored by Strategies for Children; Jacqueline Cooke, Regional Administrator for the US Department of Labor Women's Bureau, the only federal agency that advocates for the rights of working women; and Beverly Kennedy, Executive Director of the Governor's Commission on Domestic Violence.

This year, two full Commission meetings were held off-site. In January 2002, the meeting was held at Rosie's Place in Boston. Rosie's Place provides shelter and various programs for women. The Commissioners took a tour of Rosie's to learn more about the organization.

In April 2002, the full Commission meeting was held in Northampton, MA and was chaired by Commissioner Clare Higgins, Mayor of Northampton. Several guests spoke about child care and domestic violence issues in the Western part of the state.

Since the full Commission meets once a month, the majority of the work is done in the subcommittees. A brief description of each subcommittee follows.

Budget Subcommittee / Financial Expenditures

The Budget Subcommittee works with the Executive Director and the Treasurer to monitor and track the Commission's budget allocations and spending.

Expenditures to date for fiscal year 2002:

Commission on the Status of Women	Monthly Summary	Expenditures to date	
	BUDGET FY2002	ACTUAL July 1 - May 15 2002	BALANCE
Total Income from State Appropriation	\$165,000.00		
Expenses			
Salaries	\$131,067.26	\$113,556.44	\$17,510.82
Hearings Budget	\$4154.23	\$4,029.15	\$125.08
Office Expenses	\$15,705.63	\$14,779.01	\$926.62
Media	\$2,375.00	\$1,179.03	\$1195.97
Travel/Consultants/Fees/Reception	\$11,297.88	\$10,212.83	\$1,085.05
Miscellaneous	\$400.00	\$337.75	\$62.25
Total Expenses	\$165,000.00	\$144,094.21	\$20,905.79

The Commission's original FY'02 budget was \$195,000. In November 2001 the budget was cut to the current \$165,000. Approximately 77% of the budget is allocated to salaries, both for the three Commission's full-time staff and paid interns. At this time, the Commission's budget line item has not yet been determined for fiscal year 2003.

Education / Public Relations Subcommittee

The goal of the Education / Public Relations Subcommittee is to educate the public and to raise awareness of the Commission and its accomplishments. The subcommittee achieved this task in several ways, which included overseeing the creation and publishing of the Commission's Newsletter, Brochure, Web site, and the continued maintenance of the Commission's extensive clearinghouse database of resources for women and girls.

The Commission's Newsletter, *The Update*, is published twice a year and is distributed to constituents to inform them of the activities of the Commission. The brochure is published once a year and contains information pertaining to the Commission's mission and goals.

MCSW Web site

The Commission's Web site (www.mass.gov/women) is a user-friendly tool that constituents can use to learn about the Commission. 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. A list of Massachusetts' hotline numbers offers information on topics such as child care, economic issues, education, elder advocacy, health and insurance advocacy, housing advocacy, and legal assistance. For the month of March, National Women's History Month, the Web site featured a calendar of activities sponsored by women's commissions around the state.

The Commission's Web site also contains information about the Commission itself, such as a list of current commissioners, contact information for all the local women's commissions in Massachusetts, the Commission's mission statement and goals, as well as a calendar of upcoming Commission meetings and events. A page on innovative projects in Massachusetts's government is updated regularly.

The section of the Web site that focuses on the Commission's public hearings contains a summary report of each hearing, a copy of pre-hearing survey results, photos of the public hearings, and. Other Commission publications are also available for PDF download on the Web site, such as the Commission's brochure and newsletter.

The Commission obtains a monthly Web server statistics report that details the number of hits the site has received. Those reports indicate that traffic to the Commission's Web site has increased dramatically in the past year. For instance, in the month of July 2000, the Web site had 445 hits, and in the month of April 2001, 3,672 hits were recorded. Fiscal year 2002 hits were as follows:

MCSW FY 02 Web Hits

Directory	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	Totals
/women	441	469	490	638	604	789	608	521	571	599	601	613	6944
/women/aboutus	212	311	404	660	467	699	503	397	552	528	395	568	5696
/women/calendar	259	336	266	596	408	433	375	291	369	333	220	304	4190
/women/contactus	95	136	101	158	130	185	141	113	126	144	77	105	1511
/women/hearings	209	1	272	385	256	309	318	335	321	386	350	476	3618
/women/images	851	284	693	911	658	1589	2457	1956	2478	2559	2305	2653	19394
/women/legislation	0	707	0	332	271	141	95	65	92	95	83	119	2000
/women/programs	167	228	218	487	357	346	266	183	200	186	239	230	3107
/women/pubs	318	546	401	604	721	1480	1215	1081	1256	1355	1042	1999	12018
/women/resources	142	227	296	719	627	753	678	445	522	503	410	795	6117
Totals	2694	3245	3141	5490	4499	6724	6656	5387	6487	6688	5722	7862	64595

MCSW Clearinghouse and Database Activities

During this past year, the clearinghouse and database of women's organizations and issues has been maintained and expanded by the Commission's interns and staff. On-site interviews were conducted at organizations that serve ethnic populations. The visits conducted this year were to: the Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence, the Association of Haitian Women and The International Institute of Boston. The purpose of these interviews is to facilitate a dialogue between the Commission and community-based organizations that assist women of color and immigrant communities. By speaking with agency workers

the Commission is able to get a better sense of the issues facing women, as well as the services being directly offered to address them. Domestic violence and immigration were the central issues that arose from these interviews. Visits to organizations serving the Native American, Somali, and Latina communities will be held this summer.

The clearinghouse database has been a resource for outside researchers as well as the Commission staff. It holds an array of topics and information pertaining to women's issues. Staff acquires information from a wide range of sources including: current newspaper and journal articles; reports from research agencies such as the Institute for Women's Policy Research and from numerous Internet sources. The information is organized thematically and alphabetically, making it accessible for the reference and research.

Another outreach activity this year is the compilation of a directory of state boards and commissions that have appointed positions. It includes the type of activities and the contact for the appointment process. By making the information on how to get appointed more accessible, the Commission hopes to see a larger representation of women on state professional boards and commissions.

Executive Subcommittee

The Executive Subcommittee is composed of the four officers, the chairs of the other subcommittees, and the past chair of the full Commission. It meets once a month to review Commission activities and plan for the full Commission meeting.

Legislative Subcommittee

The Legislative Subcommittee considers legislation to endorse. When making decisions on endorsement, the Legislative Subcommittee carefully examines both sides of a bill and also looks to the testimonies presented at public hearings. It is the Commission's goal to eventually write and/or sponsor its own legislation.

Legislation

Based on the recommendations of the Legislative Subcommittee, the full Commission endorsed the following legislation during FY2001-2002:

S. 2179, An Act Establishing a Bill of Rights for Victims of Sexual Assault

This bill seeks to protect the rights of victims of sexual assault as they work through the judicial system. The protections afforded by this legislation provide confidentiality, privacy and an extended statute of limitations that will benefit victims of sexual assault. This bill is currently before the Committee on House Rules.

S. 804, An Act to Prohibit Discrimination in Insurance Policies

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. This bill is currently before the Insurance Committee.

S. 141/H. 2836, An Act to Establish a Self Sufficiency Standard in Massachusetts

This bill will establish a realistic, independent benchmark of economic status by region throughout Massachusetts. The Self-Sufficiency Standard that will calculate the realistic costs of housing, food, child care, transportation, medical care, taxes and miscellaneous costs by region within the state. The standard will be used as an official and accurate reference point for policymakers. This bill is currently before the Commerce and Labor Committee.

S. Docket No. 2111, An Act Creating a Commission on the Status of Women in the Berkshires

This bill will establish a Women's Commission in Berkshire County. Because county government no longer officially exists in Massachusetts, the Berkshire Women's Commission must be established through state law rather than municipal or county ordinance, like other Commissions. The state Senate has referred this bill to the Committee on State Administration, but the House has not yet concurred.

S. 1984, An Act to Ensure Eligibility for Unemployment Insurance for Victims of Domestic Violence

This legislation 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. This bill was signed into law in August 2001.

S. 2139, An Act Providing Equitable Coverage of Services Under Health Plans

This bill requires insurance companies to cover contraceptives and hormone replacement therapy for women to the same degree they cover comparable services for men. This bill was signed into law in March 2002.

Personnel Subcommittee

The Personnel Subcommittee oversees the hiring of staff, the performance review of the Executive Director and other staff related issues.

Planning & Task Force Subcommittee

The Planning Subcommittee reviewed constituent feedback and determined that violence against women and child care would be the two primary issues to focus on this year. A merger of the Planning Subcommittee and the two task forces has facilitated more efficient project planning, development and delivery. The Commission works on both violence prevention and child care issues and is in collaboration with government and nonprofit agencies. See below for additional information.

Task Forces on Violence Against Women and Child Care

In order to better understand the range of activities in the Commission's two priority areas, a grid of organizations working on Violence Against Women and Child Care was developed. The grid details the priorities and mission of each organization and provides contact information. The Commission staff is in regular contact with these organizations and attends various meetings to work on issues together. See Coalition Building for further details.

Public Hearings

Public hearings are an ongoing long-term goal set by the Commission. The purpose of the public hearings is to listen to the concerns of women, girls, and organizations advocating for women and girls in Massachusetts. The Commission used the public hearing testimony and pre-hearing survey results to shape its work for this year.

Last year, fiscal 2001, four public hearings were held—the first in Lawrence, the second in New Bedford, the third was a special Girls' Hearing in Boston, and the fourth in Cape Cod.

The Commission continued with its series of public hearings in fiscal year 2002 by holding four hearings in various regions of the state. Locations included: Worcester, Brockton, Fitchburg, and Lynn. Many individuals and organizations were invited to attend each public hearing. The Commission staff sent invitations to legislators, local government officials, and local organizations serving women and girls, and individuals/community leaders from communities relevant to each hearing.

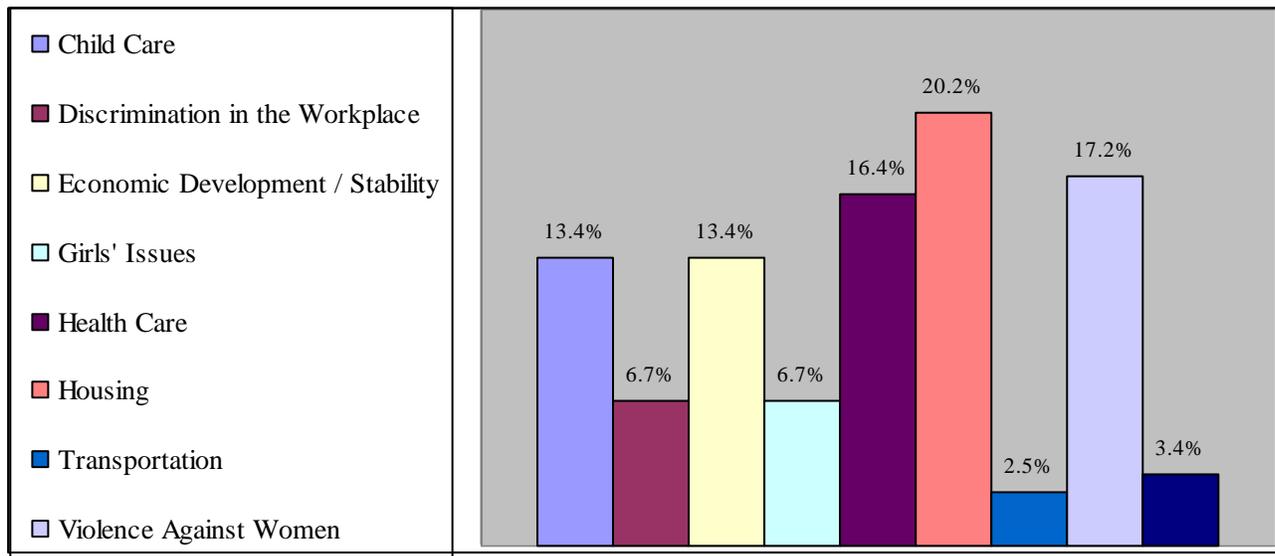
A pre-hearing survey regarding issues related to women and girls in Massachusetts was included in the outreach. The survey results for each public hearing are included in the sections that follow. The survey results and a report summarizing the testimony from each hearing were widely distributed. Recipients included the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate, the Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators, regional and local officials and organizations, and all hearing participants. These reports are also posted on the Commissions Web site and are easily downloadable.

All hearings are planned in attempts to remove obstacles to attending. Child care and translators are available upon request. Times and locations are planned with special care to give easy access to constituents. Brief summaries of each public hearing follow:

Worcester, MA

On October 3, 2001, the Commission held its 7th public hearing in Worcester at the YWCA of Central Massachusetts. The local Worcester City Manager's Commission on the Status of Women supported this hearing. Topics of concern discussed at this hearing included the need for affordable housing and child care, violence against women, gender neutral health insurance, and economic concerns pertaining to women's retirement and social security benefits.

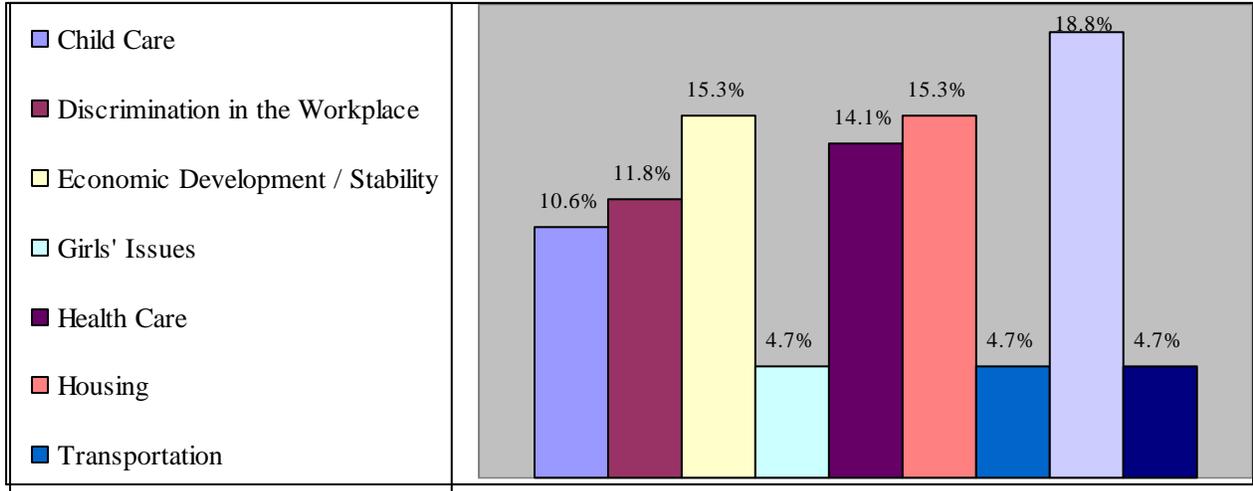
The following chart depicts the top concerns of constituents in response to a pre-hearing survey.



Brockton, MA

The 8th public hearing was held on November 14, 2001 at the Brockton Visiting Nurse Association. The Brockton Mayor’s Commission on Women’s Issues supported this hearing. Topics of concern discussed at this hearing included domestic violence, violence prevention education targeted towards young boys and girls, child care, and the lack of affordable housing, money, and resources. A newspaper article about this hearing is included in the appendix of this report.

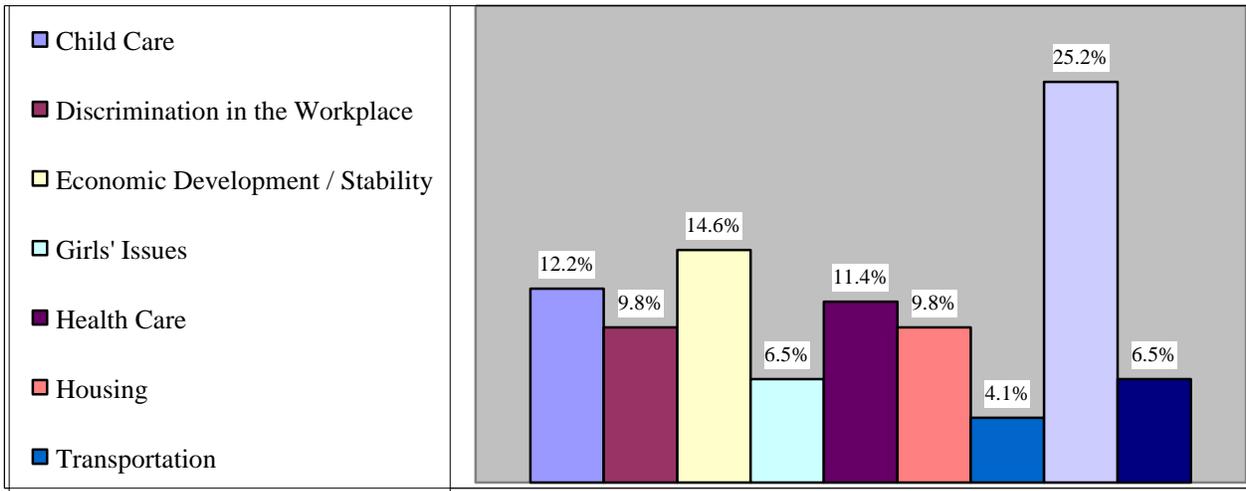
The following chart depicts the top concerns of constituents in response to a pre-hearing survey.



Fitchburg, MA

The 9th public hearing was held at Fitchburg State College on April 17, 2002. The Executive Director was a guest on Inside Fitchburg, a weekly Fitchburg Cable program, on April 10, 2002 to discuss the hearing. Topics of concern discussed at this hearing included the welfare system, the lack of affordable housing, the lack of sexual education for women and girls, the impact of state budget cuts, and the shortage of nurses. A newspaper article about this hearing can be found in the appendix of this report.

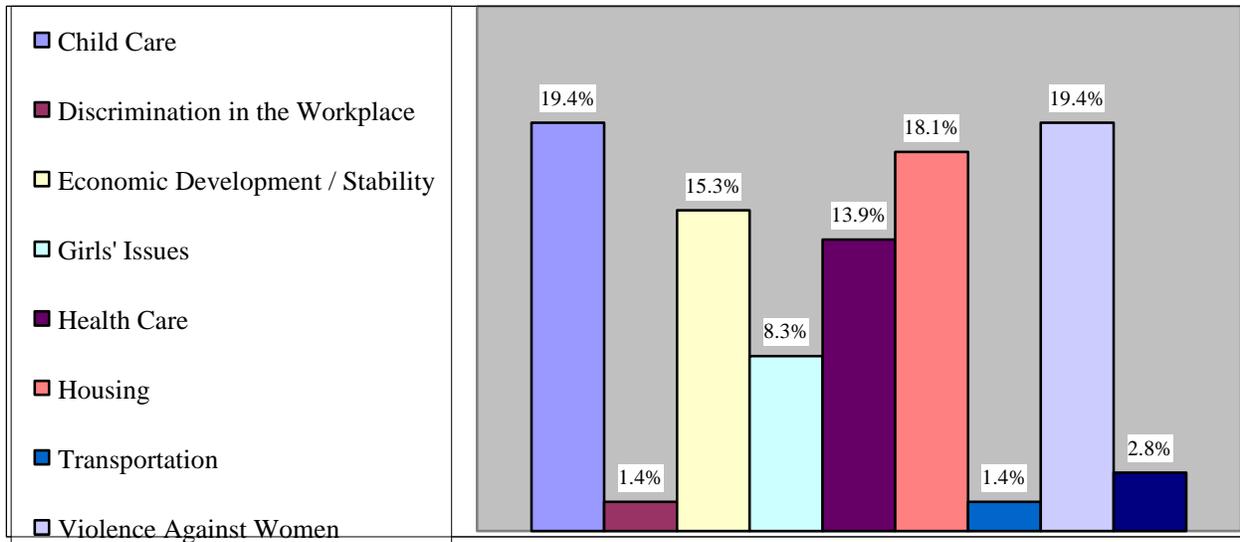
The following chart depicts the top concerns of constituents in response to a pre-hearing survey.



Lynn, MA

The Commission's 10th and final public hearing for fiscal year 2002 was held at Girls Incorporated of Lynn on May 8, 2002. Topics of concern discussed at this hearing included the impact of state budget cuts on various human services and prevention programs, domestic violence, and environmental issues. An article about the Lynn hearing is located in the appendix of this report.

The following chart depicts the top concerns of constituents in response to a pre-hearing survey.



Direct Constituent Information and Referral

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. The Commission staff provides either information or referrals. Issues frequently raised this fiscal year included: 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. Additionally, constituents had questions about the Commission itself and its events.

As mentioned previously, the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women has a clearinghouse of files containing information about organizations and agencies that focus on issues relevant to women and girls. This clearinghouse is a tool to serve the women and girls in the Commonwealth. Because the Commission does not provide direct services, when constituents contact the office with a question or inquiry, the staff accesses the clearinghouse files and database to make referrals to an organization serving that person's particular need. The organizations to which constituents were frequently referred include: various government agencies, advocacy groups, and legal services groups. The Commission's hotline lists are reviewed regularly, and are available in print and on the Web site

Coalition Building

In line with the Commission's charter to promote and facilitate collaboration among local women's commissions and among women's organizations, the Commission cooperated and collaborated with

multiple agencies during the past year. Commissioners and staff met with leaders of state agencies such as the Department of Public Health and the Governor's office to discuss issues and exchange ideas.

The Commission became a member of the Girls' Coalition in both eastern and western Massachusetts. These coalitions consist of various organizations concerned with girls' issues.

Commission staff and Commissioners regularly attended meetings of other groups throughout the year, such as the MassFESS Project. The Commission also cooperated with other organizations and commissions to sponsor such annual events as International Women's Day and the American Association of University Women (AAUW) meeting with Women Legislators.

The Commission works regularly with the Caucus of Women Legislators on both issues and legislation of concern to women in the state.

During fiscal year 2002, the Commission formally joined the following coalitions:

Jane Doe Inc.

Jane Doe Inc. brings together organizations and people committed to ending domestic violence and sexual assault. The Commission is a member of Jane Doe Inc. and worked with them on several pieces of legislation, including most recently, the Sexual Assault Victim Bill of Rights.

Working Families Massachusetts (WFM)

The WFM group is new and is in the process of developing its policies and procedures. The Commission is working with the Executive Director and other member representatives on compensation for child care workers, including a survey of local and national activities. A committee will be working with us to develop suggestions or recommendations for methods to increase the compensation of child care workers. All activities utilize the current research and evaluation available from numerous academic and advocacy institutions. Executive Director Golding and Commissioner Casavant are on the Steering Committee of WFM.

Investing in Children (IIC)

IIC is a statewide organization dedicated to improving child care by establishing new funding streams that will be used to increase the wages, benefits and professional development of early care providers. The Commission is a member.

Strategies for Children, the Early Education for All Campaign (EEA)

Strategies for Children is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the well being of children and families. EEA is a project of Strategies for Children with the goal of making high quality early childhood education available to all Massachusetts children ages three through five. EEA intends to file legislation in December 2002. The Commission has joined EEA as an endorser and will review their legislation when it is filed.

Government Agencies

The Commission has worked on at least one project with the following state agencies:

Governor's Commission on Domestic Violence

The staff assisted the Commission in their public hearings on the economic consequences of domestic violence. The Commission utilized our outreach lists and Executive Director Golding served as a "listener" at hearings in Lawrence and Boston.

Governor's Task Force on Hate Crimes

The Task Force will be featured on our Web site as an innovative program. The staff is in discussion with the Task Force to cosponsor events in the future.

Mass Department of Public Health (MDPH) Office of Women's Health Policy

Executive Director Golding attended the two-day planning session for the new office. The office will oversee the violence prevention activities of the MDPH as well as other women's health projects. She will sit on the agency advisory committee. The office will be utilizing the outreach materials of the Commission in their activities.

Governor's Task Force on Sexual Assault

Governor Swift appointed Executive Director Golding to the newly established Task Force on Sexual Assault.

Projects

Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS)

The Commission will be distributing MMS pamphlets on violence prevention to community agencies. Staff are working with the Public Health and Education Coordinator at MMS. The Society has accepted our proposal to distribute their violence prevention brochures. They will be adding our name and logo to packages of brochures that will be distributed by the Commission to grassroots agencies such as the YWCAs and Girls Inc chapters around the state.

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's Executive Director is working with organizing committees in the cities of Taunton, Leominster and Revere, and in the Berkshires to develop women's commissions that will work on local and regional issues. One of the Commission's legislative priorities is a bill filed by all the state representatives to establish a women's commission in Berkshire County.

The organizing committees include community women, elected officials and staff from the Commission. Utilizing the models of other local women's commissions in Massachusetts and the resources of the National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW), the Commission provides technical assistance to the organizing committees. MCSW is a resource for both the established and emerging local commissions.

Events

In an effort to better serve constituents and to reach a wider audience, the Commission co-sponsored several events this year. As a co-sponsor, the Commission actively participated in the planning, outreach and coordination of the events.

On October 1, 2001 the Commission co-sponsored a Child Care Conference and the founding of Working Families Massachusetts. On November 2, 2001 the Commission co-sponsored the public announcement of the Mass Action Audit report, a three-year participatory research project.

For National Women's History Month (March 2002) the Commission joined forces with many groups such as, the Simmons Institute for Leadership and Change, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Association of Haitian Women in Boston, Boston Women's Commission, Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy, Irish Immigration Center, Mass Action for Women, Somali Women and

Children's Association, to host the annual International Women's Day celebration on March 8, 2002 at Simmons College. The theme of this year's event was "Raising Awareness and Empowering Women through the Visual Arts."

The Commission also co-sponsored "Lunchtime with Massachusetts' Women Legislators" on March 14, 2002. Other co-sponsors of the event included the American Association of University Women, Caucus of Women Legislators, Girls' Coalition of Greater Boston, and the Massachusetts Association of Older Americans. This event was held at the State House.

The Commission served on the advisory committee for the Money Conference for Women, which was held on March 23, 2002. On May 9, 2002 the Commission co-sponsored the Gubernatorial Debate on Women's Issues at the University of Massachusetts, Boston.

The Commission is also an active member of the New England Women's Commissions and the National Association of Commissions for Women. It is our goal to participate at each NACW annual convention.

Attended Conferences, Events, and Meetings

The Commissioners and staff attending the following conferences or events this year:

- ◆ June 13, 2001 - Conference on Immigrants and Domestic Violence sponsored by Jane Doe.
- ◆ July 18-21, 2001 - National Association of Commissions for Women.
- ◆ January 18, 2002 - Reality Check: Attaining Economic Security for Massachusetts Family conference sponsored by the Center for Social Policy at the McCormack Institute.
- ◆ January 31, 2002 - MassFESS report release.
- ◆ March 1, 2002 - Train the Trainers led by Massachusetts Commission on Discrimination.
- ◆ March 6, 2002 - Massasoit Community College International Woman's Month kick-off breakfast.
- ◆ May 9, 2002 - Battered Women's Testimony at State House.
- ◆ Various Girls' Coalition of Greater Boston meetings and events.

Additional Commission Activities

The Executive Director serves on the steering committee of the Massachusetts Family Self Sufficiency Project at the Women's Educational and Industrial Union and Working Families Massachusetts. She is also a member of the Women in Construction Advisory Board of the State Office of Administration and Finance and the Governor's Advisory Committee on Women's Issues.

At the March 26, 2002 planning meeting of the new Office of Women's Health Policy of the Department of Public Health, the Executive Director was appointed to the agency advisory board. She also served as a "listener" at the public hearings held in June 2001 by the Governor's Commission on Domestic Violence. She was guest lecturer at the Harvard University Model UN on December 8, 2001 and at Holy Cross College on February 25, 2002.

During the fall of 2001, the Commission staff assisted an effort to induct Lydia Maria Child into the National Women's Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls. The event was cancelled after the September 11th tragedy. The Commission also assisted the Institute for Women's Policy Research on their Status of Women in Massachusetts report. The report is scheduled to be released in the fall of 2002.

Summary

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women is at an exciting juncture of development and activities. The Commissioners and staff bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the crucial task of improving the status of women in Massachusetts.