

THE MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

# ANNUAL REPORT FY '07

July 1, 2006 ~ June 30, 2007



Charles F. Hurley Building | 19 Staniford Street, 6th Floor | Boston, MA 02114  
Phone: 617-626-6520 | E-Mail: [mcsw@state.ma.us](mailto:mcsw@state.ma.us)

## *Massachusetts Community Unsung Heroines of 2007*



Massachusetts State House Grand Staircase

Boston, Massachusetts May 16, 2007

*Unsung Heroines use their time, talent, spirit, and enthusiasm to enrich the lives of others. They are the mentors, volunteers, innovators and the glue that keeps a community together. They are the spark that gets things started and the determination that gets things done.*

*They don't make the news, but they make a difference.*

# MCSW FY 2007 Annual Report

## Mission & Purpose

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women (MCSW) is an independent state agency, enacted by Massachusetts law in 1998. The mission of the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women 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 the life cycle.

### THE COMMISSION IS EMPOWERED TO:

- Study, review and report on the status of women in the Commonwealth
- Advise executive and legislative bodies on the effect of proposed legislation on women

- Inform leaders of business, education, health care, state and local governments, and the communications media of issues pertaining to women
- Provide referrals and serve as a resource of information on issues pertaining to women
- Identify and recommend qualified women for positions at all levels of government
- Promote and facilitate collaboration among local Women's Commissions and among women's organizations in the state
- Serve as a liaison between government and private interest groups concerned with issues affecting women.

Table of Contents:	
Message from the Chair	2
Legislation	3
MCSW Resources	4
MCSW Reports	5
Initiatives	6-7
Finances	8
Commissioners, Staff & Interns	9
Appendix	10

## Composition

The MCSW is comprised of nineteen appointed Commissioners, four state employees, and is supplemented by interns. Commissioners are selected from throughout the Commonwealth and are a diverse group of committed women. They work on programs, legislation, and advocacy.

The Commissioners are appointed

by a variety of state officials. Five are chosen by the governor, four by the Senate President, four by the Speaker of the House, and six by the Caucus of Women Legislators.

Our current Commissioners hail from around the Commonwealth, and bring a wide variety of expertise to the MCSW. With profes-

sional backgrounds in business, healthcare, education, unions, non-profit management, and analytic biochemistry, Commissioners have much to contribute to the varied, interdisciplinary work of the Commission.

The Commission meets monthly, throughout the fiscal year.

## Message from the Chair—Elizabeth H. Houlihan

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women (MCSW) was successful in many endeavors in FY07. The work of 19 Commissioners, four Staff and a rotation of strong interns, brought forth a year of accomplishments, several celebrations and a keener knowledge about the level of women's status in the Commonwealth. In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 3, Section 66, the MCSW wishes to submit its Annual Report for FY 2007 to our appointing authorities. It will also be filed with the Clerks of the House of Representatives and Senate.

In October of 2006 we launched an interactive, online database, titled, The Massachusetts Women's Resource and Referral Network (MWRRN). Made possible entirely by donations to the Commission, it made information and resources that the women of Massachusetts and their families need available by computer, at home or at the local public library. The MWRRN and the MCSW have been recognized by the National Association of Commissions on Women (NACW), for this important resource.

The MCSW prepared and issued "State of Women: A County by County Report on Women and Girls in Massachusetts", a report primarily based on the Census of 2000. While it would have been preferable to have more current statistical data, our interns worked with what was available.

The MCSW conducted 9 Regional Council meetings across the state. Female leaders from various backgrounds and professions were invited to attend these meetings to hear and discuss the material contained in the "State of Women" report. Distribution of the regionally defined information provoked discussion and proved to be of interest to regional groups as well as local media.

In addition to the Commissioner's monthly meetings, the MCSW held 6 public hearings across the state as part of our mandated responsibilities. These public hearings gave women across the Commonwealth the opportunity to speak to Commissioners about their own issues, opinions and concerns. An overview of the results of those hearings are contained within this report.

In FY2007, the Commission committed to advancing Massachusetts women to wage equality. To this end, we created and led a multi-pronged strategy to inform, educate, and engage people statewide. For the first time in its history, the Commission, working in close contact with Senator Harriette Chandler and Representative Alice Wolf, researched, drafted, filed and advocated for legislation. The bill will impact public sector employees to ensure that women and minorities are paid equitably. In addition, the Commission convened organizations from across the state that are working on pay equity to integrate efforts and bring power to our collective voices by creating the MA Coalition for Women's Wage Equality. The Coalition's first major joint project was a recognition of Equal Pay Day which was held at the State House on April 23.

The Commission also researched and evaluated legislation relative to issues of particular concern to women. Although our major focus in 2007 was pay equity, the full Commission gave its endorsement to five other important bills being considered by the General Court which are delineated in this report. Throughout the year, Commissioners were present to testify at specific legislative hearings in support of our endorsed legislation.

In May, the MCSW planned and implemented the Fourth Annual Unsung Heroines Initiative which honored 268 women from across the Commonwealth. The Governor, State Senate President Therese Murray and numerous Senators and Representatives took part in this State House celebration to honor women who every day, in some way, help others. They serve their communities without fanfare and make our Commonwealth a better place to live. It is our honor to honor them.

As this year's Chair, I am proud of all that the Commission and its staff have accomplished. On behalf of all MCSW Commissioners, and our staff, I want to thank you for your interest in and support of the Commission's work. It is sincerely appreciated. If you have any questions regarding the MCSW or the contents of our Annual Report for FY 2007, please do not hesitate to contact me.

  
Elizabeth H. Houlihan

# Legislation

## The MCSW’s Platform for Action

This year the MCSW officially adopted a Platform for Action to drive its legislative activity. This Platform demonstrates the scope of issues currently affecting the lives of the women in the Commonwealth. The Platform is the framework from which the MCSW’s legislative committee’s agenda is identified, organized, and put into action.



## **MCSW-Endorsed Legislation:** *A list of the bills the MCSW voted to endorse in FY 2007*

### ECONOMIC SECURITY/PAY EQUITY

**An Act to Authorize the Human Resources Division to Undertake a Study of the State’s Job Classification System**

**Senate Bill 1858/House Bill 2826**

**Sponsors:** Senator Harriette Chandler & Representative Alice Wolf

**Date Endorsed by MCSW:** February 28, 2007

**An Act Further Defining Comparable Work**

**Senate Bill 1070/House Bill 1869**

**Sponsors:** Senator Patricia Jehlen & Representative Alice Wolf

**Date Endorsed by MCSW:** February 28, 2007

### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**An Act Relative to Bullying in the Workplace**

**House Bill 1850**

**Sponsor:** Representative Ellen Story

**Date Endorsed by MCSW:** June 27, 2007

### CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

**An Act Establishing the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Commission**

**Senate Bill 86/House Bill 617**

**Sponsors:** Senator Michael Knapik & Representative John Lepper

**Date Endorsed by MCSW:** February 28, 2007

**An Act Relative to Caregiver Medical and Educational Consent**

**Senate Bill 69/House Bill 1151**

**Sponsors:** Senator Robert Creedon & Representative John Lepper

**Date Endorsed by MCSW:** June 27, 2007

### CIVIL RIGHTS

**An Act Establishing the Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women**

**Senate Bill 1172**

**Sponsor:** Senator Joan Menard

**Date Endorsed by MCSW:** April 10, 2007

# MCSW Resources

In its founding legislation, the MCSW is mandated to “provide referrals and serve as a resource of information on issues pertaining to women.” Over nearly ten years of serving the women of the Commonwealth, the MCSW has developed a wealth of resources.

The following are some of the resources the Commission offers:

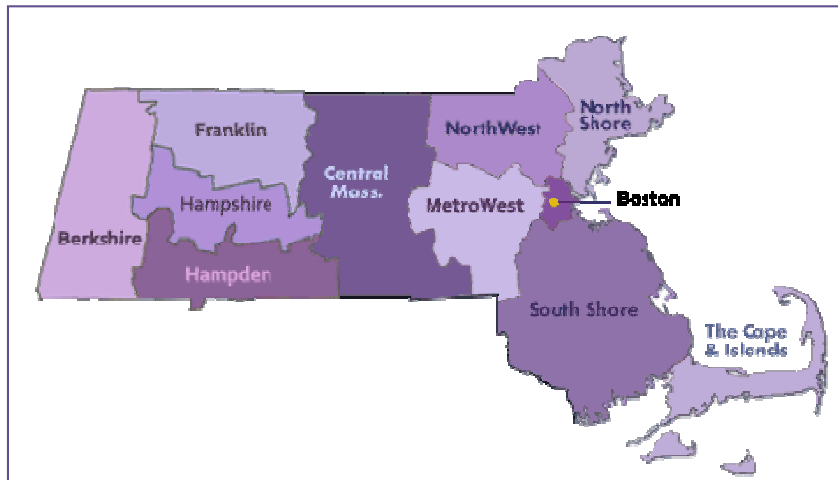
- Massachusetts Women’s Resource and Referral Network (MWRRN)
- Free Speaker’s Bureau, a resource that makes the expertise and speaking talents of MCSW Commissioners and staff available to all interested groups.
- Up-to-date, informative, comprehensive Web site
- Free monthly e-newsletter, “The Status Report” offering a concise look at the Commission’s latest work and sharing opportunities for involvement
- Pamphlets and brochures on a variety of topics, ranging from employment practices to child care resources
- “How To” guides on getting appointed to Boards and Commissions and beginning a Women’s Commission

## The Massachusetts Resource and Referral Network

The Massachusetts Women’s Resource and Referral Network (MWRRN) was created to provide a free, accessible tool for Massachusetts women seeking information about local, regional, and state resources. The network’s home page, [www.mcswnetwork.com](http://www.mcswnetwork.com), displays a map of Massachusetts (see below) 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.

The MWRRN was launched on October 12, 2006 with a ceremony featuring business leaders who helped finance the project, including Verizon, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, and Tufts Health Plan, and state legislators. Attendees included keynote speaker Donna Cupelo, Regional President, Massachusetts & Rhode Island Verizon Communications, Senator Harriette Chandler and Representative Kathleen Teahan of the Massachusetts Caucus of Women. In total, more than 55 people attended the event.

The MWRRN’s successful early months indicate its potential to grow into a significant and widely used resource for the women of Massachusetts.. Web statistics and other feedback to the Commission suggest that the Commonwealth’s women are using the database, while the number of organizations associated with the network continues to grow.



Map of regions found on [www.mcswnetwork.com](http://www.mcswnetwork.com)

## *MCSW Reports*

### **State of Women: A County by County Report on Women and Girls in MA**

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women undertook an analysis of the most recent available census and other data related to the status of women in the Commonwealth, determined to gain a better grasp on the true status of Massachusetts women. On November 29 the MCSW issued a report, "State of Women: A County by County Report on Women and Girls in Massachusetts." The 66-page report offers detailed county-level information.

Compiled by MCSW staff and interns, with help from Tufts Professor Molly Meade and her graduate students, Audra Ladd and Bobbie Peyton, the report is based on "The Status of Women by County" research guide created by the National Institute for Women's Policy Research. The format allows readers to compare the status of women within one county with that of women in nearby districts and the state as a whole, making it a useful tool for both state and local policymakers.

The report contains information regarding basic demographics, family composition, economic and fiscal status, and health issues. The data provides sobering numbers that illustrate persistent troubles within many of these arenas. For instance, numbers reveal that women earn less than men in every county in the Commonwealth, that poverty disproportionately affects girls in all but one county, and that 4,495 women in the state are currently living with HIV/AIDS. Taken as a whole, the information presented in the report presents a number of important areas on which the Commission and other women's groups should focus.

The report is available for download under the Publications link at [www.mass.gov/women](http://www.mass.gov/women).

### **Handbook for Developing Women's Commissions**

In fall 2006 the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women released the Handbook for Developing Women's Commissions. Publicly available at [www.mass.gov/women](http://www.mass.gov/women) under the Publications link, this handbook offers useful guidance for women interested in creating women's commissions at the

After reading and analyzing older handbooks of its type, the Commission decided to work towards compiling an updated model to the local, regional, and state levels.

Much of the Handbook's content was adapted from the National Association for Commissions for Women Organizational Handbook, created by the Nebraska Commission on the Status of women and the Lincoln/Lancaster Commission on the Status of Women in 1993. Using that work as a rough model, MCSW interns and staff compiled this detailed new handbook. Though still relatively new, the handbook is proving to be a valuable resource to many.

## Initiatives

### MCSW Promotes & Facilitates Collaboration Among Women

The MCSW promotes and facilitates collaboration among local women's commissions and among women's organizations in the state. The Commission works to serve as a resource to local women's commissions, collaborate on appropriate projects, and connect statewide resources and initiatives.

Some of the partnerships include:

- Massachusetts Conference for Women
- International Women's Day
- MassGAP
- Regional Council Meetings
- Massachusetts Coalition for Women's Wage Equality
- Guiding and assisting in the creation of new women's commissions

### The Massachusetts Coalition for Women's Wage Equality

The MCSW convenes and leads the Coalition. Coalition activity includes monthly meetings, spearheading research, outreach efforts, endorsing relevant legislation, and helping raise awareness of the issue.

The MCSW and other Coalition members have presented compelling testimony at hearings for the House and Senate versions of a bill titled "An Act to Authorize the HRD to undertake a Study of the State's Job Classification System." The bill is modeled after a set of reforms

enacted by the Minnesota legislature that led to the near-elimination of the pay gap for state employees within five years. Legislators have stated that they see great potential in the bill, a positive sign for all those concerned with wage equity.

An April 23 Equal Pay Day celebration was the year's most visible effort to increase public awareness of the problem.

Evelyn Murphy, former Lieutenant Governor and author of *Getting Even: Why Women Don't Get Paid*

*Like Men and What to Do About It*, delivered the day's keynote address and offered striking statistics regarding the issue.

In addition to Murphy's speech, the day featured advocacy training and a panel discussion featuring experts on the issue, who addressed different perspectives on it. Participants then met with their Representatives to advocate for the issue.

*(See Appendix A for a list of members.)*

### 2007 Unsung Heroine Celebration Honors 268 Women

The Commonwealth is full of caring and accomplished women who continually give of themselves without the acknowledgement or recognition that they deserve. With this reality in mind, the Commission strives to recognize Massachusetts' extraordinary women.

The MCSW recognizes women from all walks of life at its signature event, the Unsung Heroine celebration. Held annually since 2004, the

event highlights women that *don't make the news, but surely make a difference.*

The 4th Annual Unsung Heroines celebration honored 268 Unsung Heroines of 2007 at the Massachusetts State House on May 16.

There were 3 concurrent regional ceremonies to honor them. Immediately following the regional ceremonies, honorees went to the

Grand Staircase where a group photo was taken.

From there, honorees and guests convened in the Gardner Auditorium where they heard from guest speakers Governor Deval Patrick, Senate President Therese Murray and the former Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts Evelyn Murphy. Honorees and guests then attended a "Just Desserts" reception in their honor in the Great Hall.

## *Initiatives (cont'd)*

### **Six Public Hearings Held**

The MCSW regularly holds statewide public hearings giving Commissioners and staff the opportunity to hear women of the Commonwealth speak about the challenges they face.

FY07 Hearings were held in Amherst, Boston, Bridgewater, Dartmouth, Lowell, and Springfield.

#### Issues raised were:

- transportation
- family planning
- child care
- housing/homelessness
- domestic violence
- healthcare
- education
- employment opportunity
- equal representation

#### **Transportation**

These were issues women found particularly trying when they wanted to access state services such as job training and child care. Public transportation that stops running in the early evening also makes it impossible for many low-income women to attend night classes and obtain college degrees.

#### **Family Planning**

There is a disturbing trend of women using pregnancy to obtain healthcare, housing, education, and food. Speakers contended that some young women have been turning to motherhood as a means of raising themselves out of poverty, a course of action that creates a burden for the social welfare system and for the young mother.

#### **Childcare**

Women proposed a number of models for solutions for the lack of quality child care, including modified vouchers and drop-in respite systems.

#### **Housing/Homelessness & DV**

The need for improved transitional housing services for female victims of domestic violence, along with the need for women to become financially independent in ways that will discourage them from staying with their abuser for the sake of economic security were brought to the Commission's attention. Representatives from housing organizations noted another troublesome reality: elderly homelessness has reached an all-time high. Without timely and effective action, and considering the increasing burden of the baby boomer generation on social security, this issue is certain to worsen before it gets better.

#### **Healthcare**

A variety of health issues were mentioned including the struggle to attain adequate healthcare and health insurance, the rise in the incidence of HIV infections among middle-class women of color, and the increasing incidence of post-partum depression.

#### **Education**

Speakers commented on the need for improved health education in primary and secondary schools and the need for increased access to GED services, specifically for single mothers and victims of domestic violence.

#### **Employment Opportunity**

While wage equity may not have been a focus, many women commented on the need to raise the minimum wage, an initiative the Commission supported in the past. Women also discussed job discrimination, noting that they typically relied on union resources after approaching their managers.

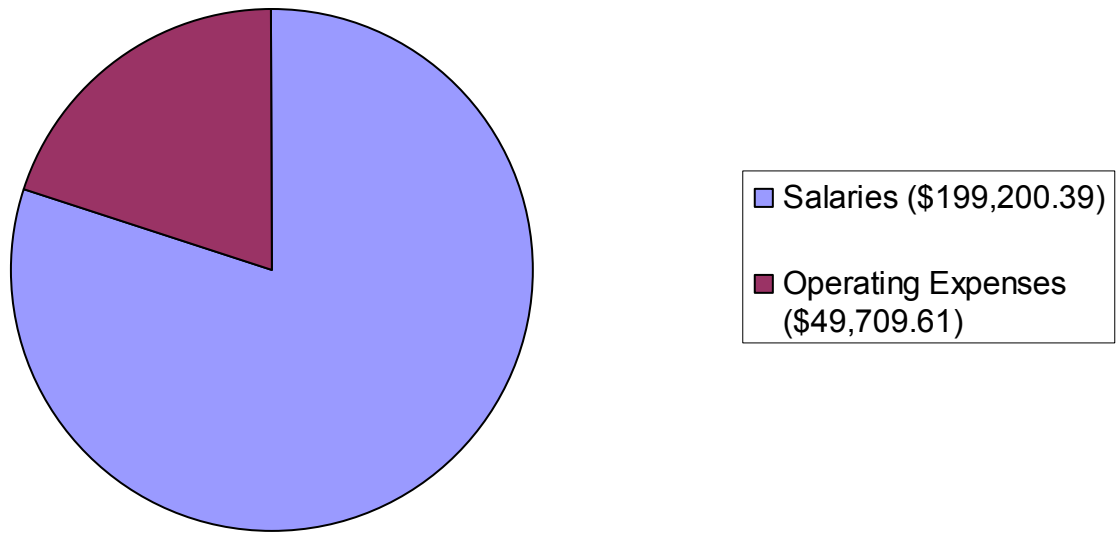
#### **Equal Representation**

Attendees often attributed the lack of female legislators to the fact that women dedicate the earlier part of their lives to raising their children and aren't free to pursue other interests such as their education or a political career.

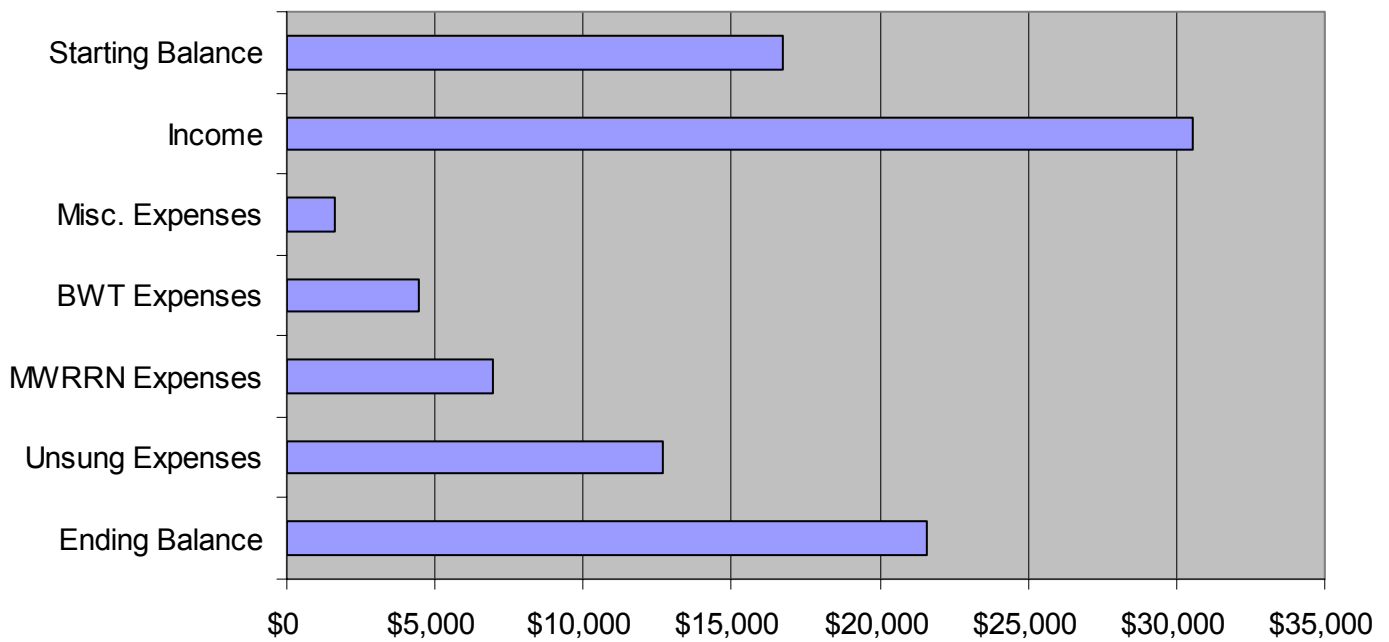


# Finances

**MCSW FY 2007 Budget  
Total: \$248,900**



**MCSW FY 2007 Trust Fund Income and Expenditures**



# *Commissioners, Staff & Interns*

## Commissioners

### OFFICERS

Elizabeth Houlihan, Chair, Falmouth

Marianne Fleckner, Vice-Chair, Westford

Greer Tan Swiston, Treasurer, Newton

Susana Segat, Secretary, Cambridge

### COMMISSIONERS

Ruth N. Bramson, Dover

Linda Cavaoli, Worcester

Gloria Coney, Roxbury

Lianne Cook, Salem

Helen Corbett, Danvers

Erika Ebbel, Cambridge

Donna Finneran, Mattapan

Catherine Greene, Esq., Brighton

Helen Jackson, MD, W. Roxbury

Judith Kurland, Brookline

Jacqueline Lane, Sagamore

Roseanna Means, MD, Wellesley

Angela Menino, Hyde Park

Carol Pimentel, New Bedford

Madhu Sridhar, Andover

### RETIRED COMMISSIONERS

Ellen Calmas, Chestnut Hill

Kathleen Casavant, Chelsea

Dr. Mary Grant, North Adams

## Staff and Interns

In addition to the Commissioners, four state employees and a rotating group of interns work to carry out the MCSW's vision. The FY2007 staff and intern roster was comprised of:

### STAFF

Linda Brantley, Executive Director

Paula Daddona, Program Manager

Jill Ashton, Outreach Coordinator

Darlene Kelter, Administrative Assistant

### INTERNS

#### Fall 2006

Maggie Brunner (Tufts University)

Lucinda Kallis-Hilbert (UMASS-Boston)

Aliza Krevolin (Brandeis University)

Elise Wang (Harvard University)

#### Spring 2007

Kate Loughney (Stonehill College)

Michelle Saltzman (Boston University)

Rebecca Stein (Colby College)

Alex Cole (Harvard University)

#### Summer 2007

Liz Brennan (Mount Holyoke College)

Kat Dunn (Simmons University)

Eliza Buddenhagen (Georgetown University)

Rachel Caris (Brown University)

Michele DesAutels (UMASS-Amherst)

Victoria Horan (Siena College)

Claire Hsu (Williams College)

Sarah Randle (Williams College)

Adrienne Shea (Wesleyan University)

## *Appendix*

### **Appendix A: Massachusetts Coalition for Women's Wage Equality Members**

American Association of University Women of Massachusetts

City of Boston Women's Commission

Boston Women's Fund

Cambridge Commission on the Status of Women

Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy

Crittenton Women's Union

Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women

Massachusetts Federation of Business and Professional Women

Massachusetts NOW

Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus

SEIU 888

Simmons Institute for Leadership and Change

Somerville Women's Commission

Women's Bar Association

Women's Fund of Southeastern Massachusetts

Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts

YWCA's of New England and the YWCA of Southeastern Massachusetts