

## **MCSW VIRTUAL HEARING- WORDS FROM REGISTRANTS**

**Amanda Shepard-** Addressing education about Social Reproduction and the Labour of Women during COVID-19 crisis.

**Amy Clarke-** What accommodations, changes are being looked at for high school seniors (class of 2020) to complete their school year, transcripts, etc.

**Alexandra Kennedy-** Please discuss homeschooling support and the mental health impact of self-isolation.

**Kim Comatas-** People with uteruses are unable to continue their birth control if it requires an office visit like Depo shot does. People with uteruses are unable to get hormonal birth control for the first time without a visit to a doctor. Allowing for pleasurable experiences and being bored can come w a consequence of pregnant. They could also be at home for a very long time with someone who is possibly an abuser or someone who does not respect their boundaries. This can be very traumatic without access to birth control during the shut in.

**Deb Cleveland-** Anything being done to help prostitutes?

**Nicole Albert-** The crisis amplified women issues. Those that are suffering domestic violence, that are old, those that lost their kids financial support. It is become harder for women to survive pay bills have to go to different pantries do join both ends.

**Phyllis Morrison-** PPE

**Margot Parrot-** As a Law Professor teaching Elder Law, I have focused on the effects of COVID-19 on seniors. Isolation has become a major issue for seniors, leading to poor physical and mental health outcomes.

**Natalia Frois-** There are limited resources available for US citizens at this time to survive and be up to date with bills, my family income has dropped to 1/2. Most of my clients are undocumented immigrants and they practically has no resource to access to keep their family needs in the daily bases. I feel we don't have much to support our community specially the ones in the margin of poverty and minorities; they are falling through the cracks and not being supported as much. About under privileged women difficulties through Coronavirus pandemic.

**Aubrey Hartnett-** This is so challenging! I was laid off, am trying to look for work, and grateful I have family in the area to help with childcare as I do so. I know I am lucky.

**Lynn Masterman-** Girls and young women are feeling isolated and overwhelmed. We are trying to connect to our groups whose programming has been disrupted by COVID-19. We are concerned that so much funding for nonprofits is being directed to food and shelter (which is of

course critical) but resources for other types of services is drying up. Now is not the time to abandon girls who need this support more than ever. Thank you.

**Sue Mynttinen-** I am worried about the amount of posts I see about women and wine, joking or otherwise, while they are homeschooling children.

**Gail Lyonais-** Working at home requires discipline and is challenging but once the discipline is acquired and as the challenges slowly decrease, it is manageable. We should always be ready for change as Change is Inevitable.

**Elizabeth Lehr-** Unseen personnel in hospitals, medical laboratory technicians, PT, OT, cleaners, etc. are predominantly women working under high risk conditions and going home to families. The lack of protective gear for them puts them in an untenable position - act for the public good or act for their family and themselves. Can we please at least hear some recognition for all of them, men included?

**Janice Mirabassi-** How are domestic violence programs helping people in quarantine - especially if they are secluded with their abuser.

**Susan Lee-** I am concerned about female low-wage workers - I know several people who are teacher's aides who have been laid off. The uncertainty is very hard for them. Very few savings because they are paid so minimally, hard to maintain health insurance. I am also concerned about victims of domestic violence, very hard to be confined at home in an abusive situation, out of touch with coworkers, etc.

**Amy Blanchette-** Mental health and Domestic Violence are two of my biggest concerns in addition to the many women who have lost their jobs during this crisis and are struggling to pay their rent and student loans. There is little to no relief for college students especially in this stimulus package.

**Robin Robinson-** 1) Address how Massachusetts state government can support women-owned small businesses in rural areas in terms of their economic viability, beyond unemployment payouts.

2) Address coordination of efforts to support women and girls who experience gender-based violence, especially in their homes where many are now confined.

**Michelle Long-** Our community at the Cambridge Women's Center is definitely affected by COVID-19. Our Director Jessye Kass has been taking calls from women and providing emotional support and resource referrals since our Center closed on March 17th. Though our Center is closed, our Helpline and Business line remain open and will officially launch on Monday, April 6th, staffed by remote volunteers. Additionally, our April calendar of remote support groups, workshops, yoga, meditation, and reiki courses are now posted on our website: [www.cambridgewomenscenter.org](http://www.cambridgewomenscenter.org).

**Sunny Daily-** Home birth midwife, doula, and director of nonprofit offering family planning, WIC, and young parents support programs.

**Jaspreet Mahal-** Juggling between shared households and child custody with divorced spouse.

**Sharon V Jones-** Interested in knowing how women and girls are being treated during this time.

**Marianela Rivera-** Domestic Violence is on the rise. Children without access to tech and special needs are being left behind from DESE's push for online remote instruction.

**Sharon Schiffer-** COVID-19 is disproportionately affecting mothers because they are forced to caretake and work at the same time.

**Kelli-beth Vecchione-** The social isolation that our Little Sisters are facing during this time is extreme. There is a critical need for them to be able to connect emotionally while they are unable to connect socially.

**Kristen Wessels-** The stay at home advisory often forces some women and girls to be trapped with their perpetrators and makes safety planning more difficult as well as options are now more limited. Also, services become much harder to access as well as it can be hard to find a private place for survivors to do remote counseling.

**Rachel Roth-** I would like the Commission to look into the following areas and raise them with the Legislature: 1) How are families involved with the child welfare system being treated during the pandemic? Is the timeline for termination of parental rights under ASFA being extended, given that people are not able to have visits or receive supportive services because we are required to stay home? 2) What steps are being taken to release women and girls from prison, jail, youth detention, or group foster homes? Public health experts recommend releasing people. Are any special provisions being implemented for parents who are incarcerated? For example, is the Primary Caretakers Act being extended retroactively or to people who are being arrested now as part of pretrial decision making?

**Felicia Harvey-** I would like to ask where small businesses can get loans at this time?

**Marianne Winters-** I will provide written testimony on needs of survivors of DV living in close quarters with abusers and the needs of emergency shelter guests in congregate facilities.

**Virginia Meany-** Support the policies that support women and families like Equal Pay, Paid Sick Leave, health care for all, end to homelessness.

**Stephanie Deeley-** I hope that we can cover the issues victims of domestic violence are experiencing being tied down in their homes with their abuser.

**P. Sampson-** Concerned about adult children during 26 this year. Will now be off parents' insurance with limited job prospects.

**Leslie Credle-** No new prisons to be built in MA. Free women held pre-trial, sick and with health problems who are incarcerated during the pandemic. De-fund a percentage of the DOC budget and re- invest the money into the community for alternatives to incarceration.

**Dawne Young-** Incarcerated loved ones.

**Nancy Rosenblum-** How are incarcerated women faring? Many are dependent on "jaicare" for their healthcare and I worry what will happen to them. Also, concerned re: increase in intimate partner violence with all of us sheltering in place.

**Maglais Troncoso-** The condition of domestic workers those who care about our family are confronting real challenges, lack of job, foods, money, behind rent, we desperately need support for home care workers. The most vulnerable and impacting by this crisis.

**Austin Frizzell-** As an MPH and concerned community member I believe we have an imperative to include the release of incarcerated women in prisons and jails as an an essential part of the public health response to COVID-19. This especially includes elderly women serving life sentences and others with health concerns.

**Carol Prone-** I think they are doing well now. Just like to hear future plans. Daughter-in-law pregnant with first child so concerned.

**Kelly Love-** I'm most worried about women and girls who are in homes with abusers, who may not know that they have resources available to stay safe.

**Chloe Rothman-** keeping girls/women safe during this time. keeping girls/women connected and with access to resources during this time.

**Charmaine Arthur-** Women and girls are dealing with increased violence during this time. We need support. They need mental health support.

**Sharon Scott-** Additional stressors on Black women's health & crippling effects on the household...

**Therese Fitzgerald-** We need gender-specific programming for the economic empowerment of low-income girls and young women in Massachusetts.

**Lyndon Vincent-** The effect of the COVID 19 has serious traumatic effects on the entire community.

**Chien-Chi Huang-** Asian Americans are encountering racism due to Covid-19 and it is impacting our mental health - people are afraid, anxious and in distress!

**Brittany Gaetano-** I am interested in learning more about the needs of women and girls during this time so that we can better serve our Boston girls.

**Calvena DeVoe-** That our woman and incarcerated loved one's deserve to live they are suffering behind the walls that they need to be released immediately that we are concerned for our loved one's wellbeing that we support them that we care about them that they have love on the outside they're not safe inside the cages. They are lacking supplies living in horrid situations being abused...#FREEHER #FREETHEMALL #RELEASEOURPEOPLE #FREEOURFAMILIES

**Ivanna Solano-** I am interested in also discussing ways in which we can support women and girls during this pandemic.

**Stephanie Gonzalez-** We need extra attention to domestic violence resources for women and the ability to have women's health clinics open during this time.

**Christina Gordon-** Only .3% of philanthropic giving in Boston is directed towards women and girl serving organizations. The Women's Foundation of Boston created the WFBoston Response Fund for emergency funding for women and girl serving nonprofits during this crisis because on all the community websites there was not one relief fund set up for women and girls or one that even mentioned women.

**Danubia Camargos Silva-** This pandemic truly is impacting the lives of the women we serve. generationally we have expected that they must figure it out and keep going despite any adversities they endured. This survival mode is at all times very much alive to women who are already functioning on override. How can this pandemic reset the expectations over women in our society? What are the new set of values, beliefs, and expectations that we can instill in society to move our women from survival mode to thriving mode?

**Helen McCreedy-** I want to attend as a PD of an IHT and TM program to hear testimony from others of what they're experiencing, or hearing being experienced. Definitely concerned about the possibility of increased domestic violence towards women/caregivers at this time.

**Ceylan Rowe-** I'm concerned about women who are at home with their abusers, women not having access to free menstrual products, food insecurities and female founders no longer in business particularly single mothers who do not have another source of income. Thank you.

**Em V-** We need to do what is possible to protect the most vulnerable in our region.

**Elaine Donnelly-** Concerns about displacement/discontinuance of non-Covid preventions/treatments. For example, breast cancer screenings stopped at Tufts Medical on Mar 12. The fallout from this pandemic will be far-reaching across broad range of physical and mental health areas.

**Jarrold Chin-** What are the challenges and barriers people and their families are facing in access healthcare and what additional supports do could hospitals provide to people in their communities that they serve?

**Julie Kabukanyi-** LEP women immigrants from Africa are especially vulnerable to contracting COVID 19 or death from complications due to misinformation from social media.

**Kevonna Jones Tandon-** Financial Abuse is real. Financial Abuse often accompanies other forms of abuse and continues after a woman leaves a volatile living situation. Financial Abuse during a Pandemic could mean life or death. What is being done to protect and include mothers who may not be able to [qualify to] collect unemployment or stimulus funds? Furthermore, child support that is often the lifeline of stability, may not be received or drastically cut due to various circumstances of the times. Additionally, Enforcement/Courts are closed.

**Carmelle Bonhometre-** How to find resources for domestic violence survivors?

**Irvienne Goldson-** Reproductive and sexual health is essential service.

**Shanita Jefferson-** As a daughter of a currently incarcerated woman serving a life without the possibility of parole hope is hard to hold onto. My mother has done everything in her power to rehabilitate herself over the last 28 years, she is now a grandmother on her golden years and deserves a second chance to be a great role model in this community. We've suffered generational trauma with my now 5-year-old experiencing the same shame that I've felt for years. The future could be so bright if you'd free our mommas and I beg you to start with mine, Ms Angelia Jefferson F34801.

**Olivia Massie-** Right now, more than ever you need to release women who are incarcerated. Incarceration is not safer and never has been. No women (or person) belongs in prison! Now is the time to divest from prisons and instead invest in our communities. Release people now!! #FreeHer

**Mia Roberts-** Girls are even more at risk of the negative impacts of the stress and trauma brought about by the COVID-19 environment and are more likely to be overlooked as their caregivers grapple with concerns about unemployment, health, and the health of their elder members in their family. Our girls and their families need us more than ever before to help ensure that girls are resilient, now and in the future. It's important that the state continue to fund the vital programs that support the girls of the Commonwealth.

**Deborah Re-** It is critical that the state ensure continued funding to put a caring adult in the lives of girls. Research shows that girls are more vulnerable to adverse childhood experiences that undermine their self-confidence and self-worth. This translates into higher rates of anxiety, depression, and opting out of the opportunities for education, career advancement, and financial stability. The stress related to the COVID 19 environment will exaggerate these negative effects. The Commonwealth has been and must continue to be at the forefront of promoting girl's development, who in turn, will advance the quality of life for all of us.

**Ayanna Aubourg-** How they are including incarcerated women and girls in the pandemic response to COVID?

**Barbara Jarosz-** Any separation of a mother with a child goes against every law of nature and the consequences from such a separation from incarceration is irreversible on both mother and child.

**Vanessa P-** I do agree that women should be paid the same as men. Since many women often/usually do most of the housework and childcare, as well as work, they need a higher salary. Today, there are more examples of women being the main or higher wage earner.

**Lauren McCann-** WE have JOBS!!

**Fabian Pierre-** Mental illness has been prominent in our communities for a very long time. We have experienced many traumas and generational struggles that lead some of us to not function as your average individual would and many of us tend to make mistakes. Mistakes that we should not be punished for because of behavior resulting from trauma.

For years I have watched my sister fight demons and when she gets to the end of her rope rather than being offered help or being asked why? What is going on with you? She is instead punished with court ordered probations, fines, verbal abuse from our police officers, evictions and many times have even faced homelessness with her daughter. This is not just the story of my sister this is the story of many women in my community and in my family.

In our many conversations she has expressed her hopes and wishes to just be able to have a chance to go to school, work, be able to consistently provide for her daughter while having a stable roof over their heads. Which, ideally everyone wants. It's known that the DOC is planning on opening a new 50 Million dollars woman's prison at Bay state with capitol bond money. This is unethical and immoral. Rather than build an additional cage to put our people in we should redirect those resources and put programs, developmental centers, Therapist into our community's resources we truly need to be able to thrive as a whole.

In addition to all this, Covid-19 has become a threat to our loved ones on the inside. It would be truly impossible to follow the recommended health guidelines to prevent getting Covid-19 as an incarcerated woman, let alone being an incarcerated woman with underlying health conditions.

During this time, we need our grandmothers, mothers and sisters back home. and we need to invest in re-imagining our communities. #FreeHer Thank you, Fay Gelin

**Rebecca Donham-** How funders can help.

**Hema Sarand-Sieminski-** Janedoe.org is a resource to the Commission and Commonwealth.