



## **PLYMOUTH COUNTY COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS: ANNUAL REPORT**

**June 2020**

### **Commissioners of the Plymouth County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls**

Elisabeth Arruda  
Laura Buckley  
Leona Martin  
Karis L. North  
Jordan Pouliot Latham  
Janice Johnson Plumer  
Carolyn M. Riley  
Dawn Sibor  
Kristina Whiton-O'Brien

### **Elected Officers**

Karis L. North: Chair  
Carolyn M. Riley: Co-Vice-Chair  
Kristina Whiton-O'Brien: Co-Vice-Chair  
Jordan Pouliot Latham: Secretary  
Laura Buckley: Treasurer

### **Interns**

Lily Cook  
Rachel Bourk

**Purpose:** The Plymouth County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls (“PCCSW”) was established by House Bill 1110, signed into law on March 15, 2018 as Chapter 45 of the Acts of 2018. The PCCSW’s mission is to provide a permanent, effective voice for the advancement of women and girls in Plymouth County.

The PCCSW is a nine-member body which represents all the towns and cities in Plymouth County including: Abington, Bridgewater, Brockton, Carver, Duxbury, East Bridgewater, Halifax, Hanover, Hanson, Hingham, Hull, Kingston, Lakeville, Marion, Marshfield, Mattapoisett, Middleborough, Norwell, Pembroke, Plymouth, Plympton, Rochester, Rockland, Scituate, Wareham, West Bridgewater, and Whitman.

The PCCSW is responsible for studying, reviewing and reporting on the status of women and girls in Plymouth County, and are charged with offering recommendations regarding policy that would improve access to opportunities and equality for women and girls in the region.

Through public hearings, public meetings, and coordination with resources within and residents of Plymouth County, the PCCSW will assess, take actions, and make recommendations to advance the women and girls of Plymouth County toward full equity in all areas of life and to promote rights and opportunities for all women and girls.

**Membership:** After approval by the legislature, the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women sought applicants for the PCCSW. Eight members were appointed to the inaugural PCCSW, and sworn in by Lieutenant Governor Karen Polito on July 11, 2018. Those original eight members are: Elisabeth Arruda, of Marion; Laura Buckley of Plymouth; Karis North of Hull; Kathryn Pevzner of Duxbury; Jordan Pouliot Latham of Rochester; Janice Johnson Plumer of Brockton; Carolyn M. Riley of Plymouth; and Kristina Whiton-O’Brien of Kingston.

The current Commissioners are: Elisabeth Arruda, Laura Buckley, Jordan Pouliot Latham, Leona Martin, Karis North, Janice Johnson Plumer, Carolyn Riley, Dawn Sibor, and Kristin Whiton-O’Brien.

Secretary Jordan Pouliot Latham resigned from the PCCSW on February 10, 2019. Her seat remains open and a new commissioner will be appointed in the summer or fall. Elisabeth Arruda has been acting as Secretary in Jordan’s absence and has our thanks for her willingness to take on that role!

**Activities and Accomplishments:** In its second year, the PCCSW focused on setting new priorities based on lessons learned from year one, restructured by adding two ad-hoc committees – legislative and events, elected officers, established the goal of two events this year -- a legislative tea and a public hearing, adding interns to assist the PCCSW, applied for grants to support its events, and prepared a resource guide to be shared with our constituents and supporters in Plymouth County. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted our events scheduled for this year, which will be rescheduled for the fall.

The PCCSW held its first meeting of the FY2020 year on September 14, 2019, where it re-elected officers and continued a discussion about priorities for the year. It subsequently held meetings on the following dates, where it accomplished the following items (among others):

October 19, 2019 (establishing legislative and events committee, priority setting)  
November 16, 2019 (priority setting, discussion of interns)  
December 14, 2019 (priority setting, event schedule, grants, introduction of interns)  
January 11, 2020 (event planning)  
February 8, 2020 (event planning)

All of the above meetings were held at the Plymouth Public Library. The PCCSW's March meeting was cancelled the day before the meeting because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of the Plymouth Public Library to the public. Thereafter, we held our meetings on Zoom on the following dates:

April 11, 2020 (regroup and discussion of MCSW survey)  
May 9, 2020 (a conversation with State Representative Joan Meschino, discussion about participating in virtual Advocacy day, discussion of resource guide)  
May 16, 2020 (discussion of legislative day and potential Girl's Initiative virtual event)  
June 13, 2020 (report approval, resource guide approval, initial planning for FY2021)

**Resource Guide:** With the assistance of two interns, Lily Cook and Rachel Bourk, the PCCSW has prepared and will shortly release (in June of 2020) its first resource guide for its constituents and supporters. Both a PDF version and an on-line link will be made available.

**Pilot Project – Follow-up for Domestic Violence Victims:** Commissioner Riley is working with the Hull Police Department and State Rep. Joan Meschino to develop a pilot project for victims of domestic violence in Hull, which provides additional counseling and resources to those women.

**Hearings/Public Forums:** The PCCSW's scheduled Girls Initiative hearing at South Shore Vo-Tech was cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. We hope to bring this back in the fall of 2020.

The PCCSW's scheduled Legislative Tea at the Statehouse was cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. We hope to reschedule this event once the Statehouse is re-opened to the public, or hold a virtual legislative tea.

### **Legislative Agenda**

The newly established Legislative Committee drafted a Legislative Agenda of bills before the MA Legislature. The list is composed of three priority bills and nine endorsed bills. See attached addendum. Over the summer, Commissioners Johnson, Martin, and Whiton-O'Brien joined MCSW members in a meeting with Representative Cronin to discuss the Act to End Child Marriage in MA bill.

Commissioners Carolyn Riley and Laura Buckley joined MCSW Chair Nina Kimball in a summer meeting with Senator DeMacedo. Chair Kimball presented the legislative priorities of the statewide commission. Commissioners Rile and Buckley shared the PCCSWMA accomplishments.

**Additional activities:**

On November 21, 2019, several PCCSW Commissioners (Karis North, Carolyn Riley) joined the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women and the Eastern Regional Commission in co-sponsoring a MCSW public hearing in Weymouth, MA. The PCCSW also helped publicize and advertise the public hearing.

On March 2, 2020, Commissioners Arruda, Riley, and Whiton-O'Brien participated in the MCSW statewide hearing on COVID-19 and its impacts on women and girls. The PCCSW also helped to advertise this event.

On April 29, 2020, Commissioner North participated in a virtual meeting with other regional commissioners and MCSW staff to discuss virtual Advocacy Day, and also a virtual Girl's Initiative Event.

On May 12, 2020, several PCCSW Commissioners (Elisabeth Arruda, Carolyn Riley, Kristina Whiton-O'Brien, and Karis North) participated in virtual Advocacy Day 2020.

On May 13, 2020, Commissioners Arruda, Riley, North, and Whiton-O'Brien participated in the MCSW's South Shore, Cape, and Islands local virtual advocacy and issues meeting. The PCCSW also helped advertise the meeting.

**Social Media:** The PCCSW has established a Gmail account: [PCCSWMA@gmail.com](mailto:PCCSWMA@gmail.com) and Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/Plymouth-County-Commission-on-the-Status-of-Women-2183371068549059/> in order to facilitate communication with interested community members and also to post information about meetings and hearings. An Instagram page was also established @plymouthcountymacsw. Meeting agendas and notices of hearings and other events are posted to the Facebook page and the Instagram page.

**Preliminary Goals for 2020/2021:**

1. Re-schedule and hold a Girl's Initiative Hearing and a Legislative Tea
2. Continue to refine and establish resources and contacts for the women and girls of Plymouth County. Consider holding a resource fair open to all.
3. Reach out to law enforcement and explore whether there is further opportunity for collaboration.
4. Consider whether the PCCSW wants to establish a permanent legislative committee and get more involved in advocating for specific matters.
5. Continue to explore grant opportunities and work to help break down barriers for women and girls who want to attend PCCSW events.

6. Utilize interns again, from a local college or university. Update position description based on this year's experience.
7. Improve marketing, outreach, and social media presence.
8. Build on everything we have learned so far!

Respectfully submitted,

Commissioners of the Plymouth County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls  
By unanimous vote of the PCCSW  
June 13, 2020

## APPENDIX A

# PLYMOUTH COUNTY COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

## Priority Legislation for 2019-2020 Legislative Session

### Priority Legislation

#### **An Act Supporting Working Parents Who Choose to Run for Public Office (S.408/H.639)**

**Lead Sponsors:** Sen. Patricia Jehlen and Reps. Mike Connolly and Joan Meschino

(Status: Referred to Joint Committee on Election Laws on 1/22/2019)

Many working parents are discouraged from running for public office because of financial reasons.

This bill would clarify that child care expenses for times while campaigning are not considered personal expenses.

#### **An Act Relative to Wage Transparency (H.3963)**

**Lead Sponsors:** Rep. Josh Cutler

(Status: Referred to Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development)

The proposed bill would require employers to provide the pay scale for a particular employment position.

#### **An Act to Increase Access to Disposable Menstrual Products in Prisons, Homeless Shelters, and Public Schools (S.1274/H.1959)**

**Lead Sponsors:** Sen. Patricia Jehlen and Reps. Jay Livingstone and Christine Barber

(Status: Referred to Joint Committee on  
Public Health 1/22/2019)

### Other Endorsed Legislation

#### **An Act to End Child Marriage in Massachusetts (S.24/H.1478)**

**Lead Sponsors:** Sen. Harriette Chandler and Rep. Kay Khan

(Status: S.24 - Hearing scheduled for 4/09/2019; H.1478 Referred to Joint Committee on the Judiciary on 1/22/2019)