



**MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

***FY 2005 Annual Report***



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*From Commission Leadership...*

Fiscal year 2005 was a phenomenal one for the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women! We achieved all the goals we set for ourselves and did much to contribute to improving the status of women in the Commonwealth.

The Commission, with the assistance of many of you - our valued supporters - has come a long way since it was first created in 1998. We are proud of the strides we've made, what we've helped accomplish, and how we are fulfilling our role as the voice for the women of Massachusetts. We are excited and enthusiastic about the future, and the challenges and opportunities it presents, and promise you our full engagement in our mission.

This year also marks the 10-year anniversary of the United Nations Fourth World Conference for Women, held in Beijing, China, which ultimately led to the creation of our Commission. While we are proud of the progress we and others have made, much work remains to be done. The tenets of that conference's Platform for Action still provide a framework for change, while reminding us that far too little advancement has been made. We remain committed to:

- Helping women rise out of poverty and achieve economic self sufficiency
- Have access to education, which is the key to the above
- Live healthy, violence free lives
- Ensuring that women's voices are present in key decision making environments, particularly government

We offer our sincere thanks and gratitude to ALL who have made Fiscal 2005 such a great year – our Commissioners, staff, interns, appointing authorities, the other Women's Commissions of Massachusetts, our collaborative partners and so many groups and individuals across the state. We are extremely excited about the coming year. The Commission has a vision for the future and what we hope to achieve for the women of Massachusetts. We urge you to join with us in ensuring its success.

*Together, we can, and will, achieve great things for the women of Massachusetts.*



Linda Brantley  
Executive Director



Kathleen Casavant  
Chair

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Commission Overview	1
Our Mission & Our Vision	2
MCSW's Commissioners	3
MCSW's Staff	5
Executive Summary	6
Commission Budget	10
How the Commission Fulfills its Mission	11
Opportunities for Involvement	16

### Front Cover Photo:

MCSW Commissioners, front row, left to right are Catherine Pakaluk, Nilka Alvarez-Rodriguez, Lianne Cook, Roseanna Means, MD, Angela Menino, Kathleen Casavant and Elizabeth Houlihan.

Back row, left to right are Marianne Fleckner, Frances Hogan, Gloria Coney, Susana Segat (top row), Carol Pimentel, Kateri Walsh (top row), Helen Jackson, MD, Martha Chadwick and Donna Finneran.

## COMMISSION OVERVIEW

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women (MCSW) is an independent state agency that is comprised of nineteen appointed Commissioners. The Governor appoints five Commissioners; the Senate President appoints four Commissioners; the Speaker of the House of Representatives appoints four Commissioners; and the Caucus of Women Legislators appoints six Commissioners.

Commissioners are selected from throughout the Commonwealth and are a diverse group of committed women. Commissioners volunteer their time to work with the Commission's staff on programs, legislation, and constituent services. This year, as always, the Commission's work was guided by the Commission's mandate "to provide an effective voice for women in the Commonwealth."

The 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.

## OUR MISSION

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women exists to advance women toward full equality in all areas of life and to promote rights and opportunities for all women. The Commission provides a permanent, effective voice for women across Massachusetts.

### 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.

## OUR VISION

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women (MCSW) envisions a future where Massachusetts' women will have the benefit of full equality in all areas of their lives. A state where the rights and opportunities for all women are equivalent to those of their peers. Most importantly, a state where ALL women's voices are heard and acknowledged.



## MCSW's COMMISSIONERS

(As of June 30, 2005)

**Appointing authorities are designated as follows:** (G)–Governor, (S)–Senate President, (H)–Speaker of the House of Representatives and (C)–Caucus of Women Legislators.

**Kathleen Casavant, Chelsea, Chair (S)**

Treasurer of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO.

**Kateri Walsh, Springfield, Vice-Chair (S)**

Springfield City Councilor & Insurance Agent.

**Catherine Greene, Esq., Brighton, Secretary (G)**

Executive Director of the Suffolk County Family Justice Center.

**Mary Reardon Johnson, East Longmeadow, Treasurer (G)**

Executive Director of the YWCA of Western MA.

**Martha (Martie) Chadwick, Boston (G)**

Recently retired from a career in public service.

**Gloria Coney, Roxbury (C)**

Gloria advocates for the safety and prosperity of all women.

**Lianne Cook, Salem (C)**

Executive director of Health Quarters.

**Helen Corbett, Danvers (H)**

Communications Director of Corbett & Lalli

**Donna Finneran, Mattapan (H)**

Co-owner of "Just Perfect!" a small gift basket business.

**Marianne Fleckner, Westford (G)**

Deputy Commissioner of Administration and Finance at the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

**Mary K. Grant, PhD, North Adams (S)**

President of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts.

## MCSW's COMMISSIONERS Continued

**Elizabeth Houlihan, Falmouth (C)**

President and Owner of E.H. Houlihan & Associates.

**Helen Jackson, MD, W. Roxbury (H)**

Obstetrician and gynecologist in private practice.

**Judith Kurland, Brookline (H)**

President-elect of the Massachusetts Public Health Association, visiting fellow at the McCormack Graduate School for Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts and a consultant at DCA Boston.

**Roseanna Means, MD, Wellesley (C)**

Private Physician and Founder, President and Executive Medical Director of Women of Means, Inc.

**Angela Menino, Hyde Park (C)**

John Hancock Financial Services.

**Carol Pimentel, New Bedford (C)**

Director of Internal Audit and Administrative Services at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth (UMD).

**Susana Segat, Cambridge (S)**

Founding President of SEIU Local 888.

**Greer Tan Swiston, Newton (G)**

Software Engineer.

## MCSW's STAFF

**Linda Brantley**, Executive Director  
**Paula Daddona**, Program Manager / Webmaster  
**Darlene Kelter**, Administrative Assistant

### INTERNS

The Commission would like to thank the following interns for their valuable contributions this fiscal year:

#### Summer 2004

**Courtney Gross**, Emerson College, Print Journalism & Political Communications Major  
**Amanda Harrow**, Bates College, Psychology Major  
**Katie Kern**, Middlebury College, Classics Major  
**Kristen Rogers**, United Leaders Fellow

#### Fall 2004 / Winter 2005

**Jill Ashton**, UMASS Boston, Women in Politics and Public Policy  
**Dionne Dupuis**, Suffolk University, Political Science Masters Candidate  
**Cara Mottola**, UMASS Boston, Economics Bachelors Candidate

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fiscal Year 2005 was one of great expansion and accomplishment for the MCSW. Key achievements include:

◆ *Real Cuts – Real People – Real Pain: The Effects of the Fiscal Crisis on Women and Girls in Massachusetts*

Part of the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women's (MCSW) mission is to study and report on the Status of Women in Massachusetts. This year the MCSW, for the first time, commissioned an analysis of how state budget cuts enacted during the fiscal crisis impacted the lives of women and families in the Commonwealth. The Commission contracted with the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center (MBPC) to provide the study and analysis.

The MBPC analyzed budget data and other evidence to examine the effects of changes in access to services such as education and higher education, job training, child-care, and healthcare on the economic security and life opportunities of Massachusetts' women and families. It also examined the policy choices that led to service cuts.

Results of the study were released during a press conference at the State House in December 2004. The Commission then held a series of statewide regional briefings to further share the information and engage others in crafting positive change for women and families of the Commonwealth.

This comprehensive report contains data of use to nearly every segment of society and the MCSW believes the results will contribute significantly to the public debate about future options.

◆ *The Eleanor Roosevelt Unsung Heroine Award Luncheon*

The Commission held its second annual signature event, the Eleanor Roosevelt Unsung Heroine Award Luncheon. Held on April 1st, the event honored four women who had, as Mrs. Roosevelt (the chairperson of the first President's Commission on the Status of Women) urged, "Done the thing that they (or others) thought couldn't be done" for the women of Massachusetts.

The Unsung Heroine Awards were presented at a luncheon held at the Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel attended by 300 people. The keynote speaker was David D'Alessandro, former Chairman and CEO of John Hancock Financial Services.

Honorees included: Marie Celestin of Boston, Linda Herman of Hull, Deborah Netto of Falmouth, and Lee Nugent of Revere. Each of these honorees represents the spirit of the Eleanor Roosevelt Unsung Heroine Award.

Part of the Commission's mission is to provide referrals and serve as a resource of information on issues pertaining to women. Proceeds from this event will be utilized to create a comprehensive online and in-house resource and referral center, which will connect women from throughout Massachusetts to the information, services, agencies, and organizations that can assist them and their families. This network will place information at their fingertips, accessible from their home or any public computer.

#### ◆ **Creation of the Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women (BCCSW)**

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women worked diligently along with Senator Andrea F. Nuciforo, Jr. to bring the new Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women (BCCSW) into existence. *An Act Establishing the Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women* was passed on September 30, 2004. The legislation, S.142, dictates that nine appointments be made by the MCSW, to which the BCCSW will report annually.

On Tuesday, November 30, 2004, the MCSW held a public forum to meet with women of the Berkshires to listen to their ideas and hopes for the creation of the new County Women's Commission. Over 50 women from throughout Berkshire County attended. At that time, applications were distributed and a deadline for submission, Friday, January 7, 2005, was announced. Additionally, this information was publicized and distributed throughout Berkshire County and posted to the MCSW Web site.

The MCSW made every effort to recruit the most qualified and interested women of Berkshire County to serve as Commissioners. Appointees on the Charter Commission include: Martha Almgrem from West Stockbridge; Sue Birns, Pam Malumphy, Mary O'Brien, and Erin Sullivan from Pittsfield; Carol Harty and Eleanore Velez from Lee; Eve Schatz from Great Barrington; and Carole Delgreco Hilderbrand from Cheshire.

The MCSW looks forward to working closely with this new Commission to get it operating smoothly and addressing the issues of the women of Berkshire County.

◆ **Legislative advocacy to shape the state’s public policy agenda for women**

The Commission expanded its activity in the legislative arena, actively participating in the legislative process by testifying on behalf of legislation it had endorsed as well as other key pieces of legislation that would impact the women of the Commonwealth. It participated in several groups that met regularly to discuss and craft legislative agendas and strategies in specific areas. The Commission laid the groundwork to have even more of a voice in this area by commissioning a budget analysis to determine how state budget cuts enacted during the fiscal crisis have impacted the lives of women and families in the Commonwealth. The results of this analysis enabled the Commission to give lawmakers and public policymakers critical information they need to build positive changes in the future.

◆ **Collaborations and partnerships that addressed key women’s issues and lay the groundwork for meaningful change**

The Commission was guided by the adage, “Alone we do good things, together we achieve great things,” and sought out partnerships that built on collective expertise and energy to effectively address key issues. A prime example was the conception and implementation of *Bringing Women to the Table*, which the Commission created with the Caucus of Women Legislators, a bi-annual event that draws together industrious women leaders across professions to share their knowledge, make connections and ultimately build a more integrated, focused approach to positive change for women.

Collaborative Partners included MCSW’s appointing authorities, particularly the Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators, statewide organizations devoted to women and their issues, colleges and universities with women’s programs and many others. Further examples of these partnerships are outlined later in this report.

◆ **Developing alternative sources of funding to augment the Commission’s inadequate operational budget**

The Commission built on language in its enabling legislation that allows it to accept donations and funding from outside sources to offset operating expenses and fund special projects. The Commission is extremely grateful to the following donors who contributed this year:

- BlueCross BlueShield of Massachusetts
- Verizon
- Boston Capital

- Citizens Bank
- Corbett & Lalli
- Steve Grossman, President, Mass Envelope Plus
- E.H. Houlihan & Associates
- Sandi Kirshner, Addison Wesley Higher Education Group
- Massachusetts AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations)
- MNA (Massachusetts Nurses Association)
- Menino Committee
- O'Neill and Associates, LLC
- Pricewaterhouse Coopers LLP
- The Studley Group
- Suffolk County District Attorney's Office
- Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale & Dorr

In addition, the Commission was fully appointed and staffed to the level allowed by its budget. The MCSW welcomed new faces and bid adieu to others, grateful to each for their involvement and support of the Commission.

Retiring from the Commission were Commissioners:

- *Nilka Alvarez-Rodriguez, Lawrence*
- *Frances X. Hogan, Everett*
- *M. Clare Higgins, Northampton*
- *Dianne Luby, Boston*
- *Catherine Ruth Pakaluk, Worcester*

The Commission welcomed:

- *Gloria Coney, Roxbury*
- *Helen Corbett, Danvers*
- *Elizabeth Houlihan, Falmouth*
- *Judith Kurland, Brookline*
- *Greer Tan Swiston, Newton*

## COMMISSION BUDGET

### Budget History and FY 2005 Expenditures

Commission on the Status of Women	BUDGET FY'2001 Actuals	BUDGET FY'2002 Actuals	BUDGET FY'2003 Actuals	BUDGET FY'2004 Actuals	BUDGET FY'2005 Actuals
Total Income from State Appropriation	\$195,000  (Reduced to \$165,000)	\$165,000  (Reduced to \$145,000)	\$145,000	\$145,000	\$145,000
Salaries	\$131,000	\$131,000	\$98,046	*\$126,353	\$132,000
Operating Expenses	\$ 64,000	\$ 15,000	\$46,954	\$18,347	\$ 13,000

The Commission is funded through a line item in the state budget. It complies with state-mandated policies and maintains a balanced budget. Commission staff is responsible for all personnel and fiscal administration but is grateful for the ongoing assistance it receives from the Office of the State Comptroller, the Department of Employment and Training and many other state departments and agencies.

## HOW THE COMMISSION FULFILLS ITS MISSION

### 1. *Study, review and report on the status of women in the Commonwealth*

In FY 2004 the MCSW commissioned the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center (MBPC) to produce a budget study titled *Real Cuts – Real People – Real Pain; The Effects of the Fiscal Crisis on Women and Girls in Massachusetts*. This report will provide an analysis of how state budget cuts enacted during the fiscal crisis have impacted the lives of women and families in the Commonwealth.

### 2. *Assess the status of Massachusetts' women through meeting directly with women around the Commonwealth to hear their concerns, identify gaps in services and potential solutions*

The Commission typically holds public hearings across the state to hear the concerns of women in Massachusetts. It then channels this input to legislators, public policy groups and advocates who are in a position to act on the information to effect positive change. This year the Commission held a series of regional briefings surrounding the above mentioned report. The briefings allowed the MCSW to more broadly distribute the report results and engage elected officials and key constituencies in working to improve things for women and families.

### 3. *Advocate for legislation and public policy changes that will positively impact the status of women*

◆ *The Commission has endorsed and/or worked to pass ELEVEN pieces of legislation:*

- ◆ An Act to Provide Timely Access to Emergency Contraception
- ◆ An Act Indexing the Minimum Wage
- ◆ An Act Establishing Paid Sick Days
- ◆ An Act to Establish a Special Commission to Investigate the Integration of International Human Rights Standards Into MA State Law and Policies
- ◆ An Act to Establish a Self-Sufficiency Standard in Massachusetts
- ◆ An Act Creating Early Education for All
- ◆ An Act Creating a Commission on the Status of Women in the Berkshires

- ◆ An Act Establishing a Bill of Rights for Victims of Sexual Assault
- ◆ An Act Providing Equitable Coverage of Services Under Health Plans
- ◆ An Act to Ensure Eligibility for Unemployment Insurance for Victims of Domestic Violence
- ◆ An Act to Prohibit Discrimination in Insurance Policies

The Commission actively participated in this year's legislative session by offering testimony in support of its priorities and other legislation impacting women.

- ◆ *MA & New England Regional Paid Family Leave Coalitions*  
The Commission is active with both the Massachusetts and New England Coalitions working to create and enact Paid Family Leave legislation.
- ◆ *Caucus of Women Legislators Task Force on Women in Poverty*  
The Commission is part of this committee, chaired by State Representative Anne Paulsen, which strives to lessen the burden on this group.
- ◆ *Caucus of Women Legislators Task Force on Women in the Criminal Justice System*  
The Commission works with this committee, chaired by State Representative Kay Khan, which examines the circumstances of these women.

#### 4. *Serve as a resource and referral network for women of the Commonwealth*

To ensure that women in the state have the tools and data they need when they need it, the Commission maintains an extensive collection of information and services pertaining to women and families. This includes data on all agencies and organizations statewide that serve women. Although the Commission does not provide direct services, constituents regularly contact the office and the staff is able to utilize the clearinghouse to offer resources and referrals to assist that person's particular need. The organizations to which constituents are frequently referred include: various government agencies, advocacy groups, and legal services groups. Information sought this fiscal year included: legal assistance, financial assistance, domestic violence, sexual harassment in the workplace, health insurance, child-care & support, employment rights, unemployment, child custody and divorce, equal pay, and research questions.

5. *Promote and facilitate collaboration among women's organizations in the state, including local Women's Commissions*

- ◆ The Commission organized a celebration of *Women's Equality Day*, the anniversary of the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment that gave American women the right to vote. This day is celebrated annually on August 26. It welcomed participation from other women's organizations that work to ensure women's participation in the political process.
- ◆ In advance of the 2004 Presidential Election, the MCSW, in conjunction with Women of Means and the MA Caucus of Women Legislators, developed a program where interns from each organization conceptualized and implemented a program that registered women from various women's homeless shelters in Boston to vote. The women were then assisted in getting to the polls to cast their vote on Election Day.
- ◆ The Commission has collaborated and formed alliances with a wide variety of organizations on projects of mutual interest that impact the status of women. Collaborators include Early Education for All (EEA), Jane Doe, Inc., Massachusetts Family Economic Self-Sufficiency (MassFESS), the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy (CWPPP), Amnesty International and the League of Women Voters.
- ◆ For National Women's History Month in March, the Commission joined forces with many groups, including 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, Irish Immigration Center, Somali Women and Children's Association, to host the annual International Women's Day celebration on March 8 at Simmons College.
- ◆ Commission staff and Commissioners regularly attended meetings and events of other women's groups throughout the year.
- ◆ The MCSW is a resource for both established and emerging local women's commissions and continues to promote the growth of local Women's Commissions throughout the Commonwealth. This year the Commission worked to create a permanent Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women.
- ◆ The Commission is a member of the New England Women's Commissions.

6. *Inform leaders of business, education, health care, state and local governments and the communications media of issues pertaining to women*

- ◆ The Commission created its own **Speaker's Bureau**. This service makes our Commissioners and staff available to speak about the many issues of interest to women throughout Massachusetts. Through this service, the Commission hopes to support the women of Massachusetts, raise awareness of women's issues, educate women about the resources of the Commission and strive for positive change for women within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. As a result, Commissioners and staff were sought after speakers at various events and activities statewide.
- ◆ Executive Director Linda Brantley was named the *Honorary Massachusetts United Nations Day Chair* by Governor Mitt Romney and addressed an audience of approximately 125 people at a ceremony at the State House on National United Nations Day.
- ◆ The MCSW works diligently to educate the public about the Commission and raise awareness about the status of Massachusetts's women and the issues that matter most to them. Success was achieved through:
  - Regular correspondence and outreach to constituents and legislators
  - Publication of a Commission brochure
  - Maintenance of the Commission Web site
- ◆ The Commission serves as a spokesperson on the status of women in Massachusetts and women's issues with the media and manages a comprehensive media and public relations outreach plan.
- ◆ The Commission's Web site ([www.mass.gov/women](http://www.mass.gov/women)) is a user-friendly tool that constituents can use to learn about the Commission and access online resource referrals. Such features of the Web site include: a list of domestic violence and sexual assault hotline numbers on the local, state, and national level; a list of various Massachusetts' hotline numbers; information on topics such as child-care, economic issues, education, elder advocacy, health and insurance advocacy, housing advocacy, and legal assistance. The Commission's Web site also contains information about the Commission, such as the Commission's mission statement and goals, list of current commissioners, calendar of upcoming Commission meetings and events. Public hearing reports, hearing survey results and photos from each hearing

are also posted. Other Commission publications are also available for PDF download on the Web site, such as the Commission's brochure and newsletter.

7. *Identify and recommend qualified women for positions at all levels of government, including boards and commissions*

- ◆ The MCSW publishes a "How to Get Appointed to State Boards and Commissions" handbook to encourage women of the Commonwealth to become involved in the political process. This guide has proved to be immensely popular.
- ◆ In partnership with the Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators, the Commission began a series of informal dinner meetings for key women leaders named "Bringing Women to the Table." These sessions have the goal of bringing women together from diverse professions and organizations to define common issues and explore expanded and improved ways of collaboration to effect true change. Getting more women involved in the political process – running and being elected to office, working on campaigns, supporting candidates and more – has emerged as an area of general consensus for all to promote.
- ◆ CREW (Coalition to Recruit and Elect Women) – The Commission joined with other women's organizations statewide in the creation of the coalition to recruit and elect women. The goal of the initiative is to educate women about the importance of political participation, identify future leaders, try to connect them with the resources they need and ultimately add more women's voices to the political process. One of the group's first efforts was to conduct an audit of what organizations work on these issues, identify the role of each and publish a directory of resources and services for all. The Commission looks forward to an active year on this front going forward.

8. *Work with other local, state and federal government agencies on issues and/or projects that affect women*

- ◆ MCSW Executive Director, Linda Brantley was appointed to the Special Commission Relative to Eliminating Cervical Cancer in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This special Commission consists of 17 members.
- ◆ Due to its commitment to, and work on, domestic violence prevention, the Commission is fortunate to have two appointments to the Governor's Commission on Sexual and Domestic Violence.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT

### *Internship / Volunteer Program*

The MCSW is a small organization with an enormous charge! Therefore we are always seeking interns and volunteers to assist us in achieving our goals and meeting the needs of Massachusetts' women. Unfortunately, due to budget constraints, all intern positions are unpaid.

Opportunities in the following areas are available for either interns or volunteers: Legislative/Research; Advocacy; Fundraising; Communications; Database Development and Management; Resource and Referral Clearinghouse; or General duties. For consideration, please indicate which intern/volunteer positions of interest and forward a cover letter and resume to the Commission office.

### *Serve as a Commissioner*

To be considered for appointment by any of the Commission's appointing authorities, please submit a completed application form annually between August 1 and September 16. Mail the form to the Commission, which will then forward it to the appropriate appointing authority. Please remember that information that you provide is public and cannot be kept private or confidential. If you are appointed, your term of office will be determined based on the vacant position you are filling. The maximum term is three years.

### *Become a Donor*

Contributions to support MCSW's special projects and operations are always welcome. Checks should be made payable to the "MCSW" and sent to the Commission office. **MCSW is a 509 (a) (1), not-for-profit organization and contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.** For more information, please contact the Commission office at (617) 626-6520.