



ESSEX COUNTY COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Mission

On August 3, 2010, former Governor Deval Patrick signed legislation establishing the Essex County Commission on the Status of Women (ECCSW) to advance the women of Essex County to full equality in all areas of life and to promote women's rights and responsibilities.

Commissioners

Sandy Almonte, *Methuen*

Paula Gomez Stordy, *Middleton*

(Resigned in 04/18) Rebecca Hallowell, Vice Chair, *Hamilton*

(Appointed 03/18) Julie DeSilva, *Beverly*

Vilma Martinez-Dominguez, *Lawrence*

(Resigned in 02/18) Heather McMann, *Haverhill*

(Appointed 03/18) Estelle Rand, *Beverly*

(Resigned in 01/18) Elsabel Rincon, *Peabody*

Sefatia Theken, *Gloucester*

Polly Titcomb, Chair & Secretary, *Swampscott*

Emeritus/Advisory Commissioners

Anne Ferguson (Co-Chair), *Amesbury*

Goals

This year, the ECCSW's goals included appointing new members to the Commission, holding a regional hearing or legislative breakfast, increasing legislative advocacy, and conducting informational interviews, all with the goal of serving the Commission's most fundamental missions.

Accomplishments

Membership

This year, three commissioners, Rebecca Hallowell, Heather McMann, resigned from their appointed positions due to personal and professional circumstances. Each of these women was enormous assets to the Commission and their absence leading and subsequent to their formal resignations hugely impacted the achievements the Commission was able to accomplish this year.

Fortunately, the Commission also appointed two new fabulous commissioners, Estelle Rand and Julie DeSilva. Their expertise, dedication, fresh perspective, and cooperative spirits have already proven to be huge assets for the Commission. We are thrilled to welcome these impressive women and look forward to seeing all the ways in which they will undoubtedly continue to contribute to and fulfill our mission.

We are extremely grateful for the ongoing presence and commitment of the one-and-only Anne Ferguson, who reached her maximum years of service under the MCSW's bylaws in early 2017 and therefore has been serving in an emeritus/advisory capacity. The commission simply would not be the same without Anne, who helped to found this Commission years ago, and we are thankful for her continued service.

Thanks to the efforts of the new MCSW Regional Outreach Coordinator, Isabelle Greene, the ECCSW had several applicants to choose from to fill our vacant seats this past year. The ECCSW will collaborate with Isabelle again in the coming months to fill our final open seat over the summer.

Legislative Outreach

This year, the ECCSW adopted two legislative priorities: An Act Establishing A Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program (H. 2172/S. 1048) and An Act Providing Equitable Coverage in Disability Insurance (H. 482/S. 545).

In March, 2018, the Commission was trained in the Act Establishing A Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program by MCSW Commissioner, Becca Glen, who has proven to be an increase resource and great support for our Commission.

A few weeks after being trained, the Commission had intended to participate in its own Phone Banking effort, but a lack of quorum at the meeting and other related issues precluded this possibility as the meeting was effectively cancelled.

On April 30, 2018, the Commission held a Legislative Breakfast hosted by our very own Mayor Sefatia Theken at City Hall in Gloucester. The event was a great success. There were over 50 attendees; four legislators, including Reps Paul Tucker, Jerald Parisella, Ann-Margaret Ferrante, and Senator Bruce Tarr; and a majority of our Commissioners. Each legislator presided, giving detailed accounts of and showing support for the two bills. In addition Mayor Theken, Commissioner Paula Gomez Stordy, and Chairperson

Polly Titcomb spoke about the Commission, the need to be engaged in women's issues, and expressing their gratitude to the legislators for their continued support and for all of those who freely attended the Breakfast.

Finally, several Commissions plan to be in attendance at this year's Advocacy Day to support the MCSW's effort to get their critical priority legislation passed.

Training to Become Salary Negotiation Workshop Facilitators

Earlier in 2018, several members of the Commission also participated in the Salary Negotiations Workshop offered by ACLU. The training was a great start, but the Commission did not feel prepared after just that initial training to facilitate its own workshops without further education and guidance. Therefore, the Commission is working with our MCSW liaison, Penny Blaisdell, to determine what steps are needed in order to better prepare our Commission, and others in a similar position, to be more fully trained in facilitating a workshop. The Commission is looking forward to fulfilling its goal of holding the two required salary negotiation trainings in the coming year.

MCSW Collaboration

The ECCSW is extremely grateful for the increased and ongoing collaboration with the MCSW. The MCSW Commissioner liaison to the ECCSW, Penny Blaisdell, continues to be an *extraordinary* asset to our Commission, and we are grateful for the productive efforts of the new Regional Outreach Coordinator, Kelly Lynch, as well.

Statistical Data

The following statistics have been generously provided by newly resigned commissioner, Rebecca Hallowell, through her active role in The Women's Fund of Essex County:

Demographics:

- Females are 52% of total population
- 57% of the 65+ population is female
- Age Distribution of Females:
 - < 18: 21%
 - 18-34: 20%
 - 35-64: 41%
 - 65+: 18%
- Median female age is 42.5 years

Marital Status of Females (Ages 15+)

- 31% Never married
- 46% Now married (except separated)
- 2% Separated
- 12% Divorced
- 9% Widowed

Childbirth & Marriage

- 27% of women who gave birth in past 12 months were unmarried (compare to 31% in 2016 and 38% in 2013)

Place of Birth

- 84% Native born
- 16% Foreign born (of foreign born, 55% are naturalized citizens)

Households:

- Overall Female Householders¹
 - 13% of all households
 - 19% of all families
- Latina or Hispanic Female Householder Families
 - 39% of all female householder families
 - 44% of all Latino families
- Black or African American Female Householder Families
 - 6% of all female householder families
 - 35% of all Black or African American (alone) Families: 35%
- Asian Female Householder Families:
 - 3% of all female householder families
 - 15% of all Asian families

Total Families with Own Children²

- Overall Female householder with their own children:
 - 58% of female householder families
 - 26% of all families with children
- Latina or Hispanic Female Householder Families
 - 53% of all female householder families
 - 35% of Latino families
- Black or African American (alone) Female Householder Families
 - 7% of all female householder families
 - 23% of all Black or African American Families

Average Family Size

- Married Couple: 3.3 people
- Male Householder: 2.9 people
- Female Householder: 3.2 people

Households Which Own Their Own Home vs. Rent

- 64% of all families own; 36% rent
- 39% of all female householders; 61% rent
 - Females Ages 35-64: 56% rent
 - Females Ages 65+: 27% rent

¹ Householder = Head of Household

² Children include those who are related and who are under 18 years of age.

Median Family Income

- \$35,183 Female Householder families (compare with \$53,250 for Male Householder families)
- \$25,530 Female Householder families with children (compare with \$43,258 for Male Householder families)

Women & Poverty: Generally

- 59% of the population living below the poverty level (100% of Poverty Level) are women and girls
 - 26% are Female Householder families
 - 67% of Female Householder families are single mothers with children; on average they are 36% below the poverty line
 - 33% are Female Householder families without children; on average they are 6% below the poverty line
- 60% of the “poorest poor” (50% of poverty level) are women and girls
- 59% of the population living below 125% of the poverty level are women and girls

Women, Poverty & Race/Ethnicity (single race/ethnicity)

- Highest total number of women in poverty are white women
- Highest rates of poverty are: Latina women (28.5%), Black Women (27.7%)

Children in Families Living Below the Poverty Level

- 17% of all children in families
- Of all children who live in poverty, 69% live in Female Householder families
- 43% of children living in Female Householder families are living below the poverty level
- 60% of children in Female Householder families receive public assistance

Public Assistance in Last 12 Months (SSI, cash, &/ or Food Stamps/SNAP benefits)

- 60% of children in Female Householder families (compare with 37% of those in Male Householder families)

Percentage of Female Householder Families (With Children <18) Living below Poverty Level by Nativity

- Total: 36.6%
- Native: 34.3%
- Foreign Born: 41.6%
- Naturalized: 26.4%
- Non-Citizen: 61.2%

Families by Race & Ethnic Origin by Poverty

- White:
 - 52% of Female Householder Families
 - 17% live below poverty line
- Black:

- 6% of Female Householder Families
- 34% live below poverty line
- Asian:
 - 3% of Female Householder Families
 - 11% live below poverty line
- Hispanic/Latino/a
 - 39% of Female Householder Families
 - 39% live below poverty line

Median Earnings for Full-Time, Year-Round Workers

- On average, Females earn 79% of what Males do
- Native born Females earn 83% compared to their Male counterparts
- Foreign Born/Naturalized Female citizens make 65% compared to their Males counterparts
- Foreign Born/Non-Citizen Females make 40% compared to Men's average median earnings

Work Hours Per Week (Ages 16-64)

- 35+ Hours/Week: 49% females (68% males)
- 15-24 Hours/Week: 22% females (13% males)
- 1-4 Hours/Week: 6% females (3% males)
- Did Not Work: 23% females (16% males)

Mean Hours Worked Per Week

- Females: 34
- Males: 40

Summary of Educational Attainment and Poverty Rate by Head of Household

	Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Some College	High School Degree	< High School Degree	HS Degree or Less	Overall Poverty Rate
Female Householders	20%	32%	29%	19%	48%	26%

Female Households & Single Mothers in Poverty in Essex County

City	Female Householders		Single Mothers with Related Children < 18		Single Mothers in Poverty	
	Total	% of Families	Total	% of Female Householders	Total	% in Poverty
Essex County	36,666	19%	21,424	58%	8,927	37%
Lynn	5,952	29%	3,811	64%	1,863	49%
Lawrence	7,717	46%	5,900	76%	2,880	49%
Haverhill	3,743	25%	2,579	69%	980	38%
Peabody	2,373	18%	1,318	56%	369	28%

Methuen	2,514	20%	1,674	67%	496	30%
Salem	2,769	28%	1,843	67%	637	35%
Gloucester	1,255	16%	786	63%	175	22%
Beverly	1,690	18%	1,008	60%	233	23%
Amesbury	750	17%	475	63%	94	20%
NBPT	664	15%	356	54%	70	20%

Poverty Rate for Population Ages 25+ by Educational Attainment

City	< HS Degree	HS Degree or Equal	Some College or Associates	Bachelor's or Higher
Lawrence	36.0%	29.9%	17.7%	26.1%
Lynn	36.6%	11.0%	20.9%	6.8%
Salem	41.2%	18.3%	14.5%	6.3%
Haverhill	29.7%	12.7%	8.8%	4.3%
Methuen	28.5%	11.8%	7.9%	3.6%
Peabody	23.9%	13.0%	8.1%	4.6%

Female Householder Housing Tenure

City	Female Householder Housing Tenure	
	% Owner Occupied	% Renter Occupied
Lawrence	17%	83%
Lynn	27%	73%
Salem	32%	68%
Haverhill	37%	63%
Methuen	48%	52%
Peabody	54%	46%

Findings

Aside from the eye-opening data provided above, the Commission unfortunately did not have substantial opportunity to make significant findings this past year. We intend to resolve this issue in the coming year.

Conclusions

It has become clearer than ever just how critical it is for the Commission to have consistent attendance at meetings and enduring membership in order to accomplish any of our goals. Despite holding an “Annual Retreat” last summer to outline the goals we wanted to accomplish this year and very specific strategies and timelines to attain these goals, the lack of consistent attendance at meetings entirely undermined these noble efforts. The Commission picked up momentum toward the end of this year, which resulted in being able to host a Legislative Breakfast. The Commission’s hope is that new membership will increase our productivity in the coming year.

Goals for 2018

- Recruit one or more new members who will be active and consistent participants on the Commission
- Continue to become a more fully operational Commission, which will create the stability needed to accomplish our mission and goals.
- Choose and advocate for our legislative priorities to elected officials and other lobbying groups, including hosting a legislative breakfast, meeting individually or in pairs with our local legislators, phone banking, and attending Advocacy Day
- Interview local non-profits to become better informed about the most pressing issues facing women in Essex County; get testimony through these organizations
- Become a better and more effective bridge for local organizations studying women's issues/advocating for positive change in their Essex County communities. Ways to accomplish this goal include:
 - informing them about our legislative priorities;
 - linking them to other local organizations;
 - assisting with and attending their hearings/educational forums; and
 - distributing their information to local legislators/other activist groups to help spread the data on the status of women in Essex County
- Become fully trained in and facilitate at least two Salary Negotiation Workshops
- Inform leaders of business, education, healthcare, municipalities and communications media on issues pertaining to women in Essex County, including writing timely Op-Eds in various local papers
- Facilitate ongoing collaboration with the MCSW and increased collaboration with other regional Commissions
- Continue to study and report on the status of women in Essex County

Submitted by Polly Titcomb on May 6, 2018