

Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women



Fiscal Year 2011 Annual Report

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Commissioners

Linda Cavaoli, Chair, Worcester
Ruth Nemzoff, Vice-Chair Brookline
Lucy Hartry, Secretary and Chair of Program and Planning Committee, Florence
Marianne Fleckner, Treasurer, Westford

Hanishi Thanawalla Ali, Co-Chair Unsung Heroine, Westborough
Carmen Arce Bowen, Co-Chair Unsung Heroine, East Boston
Victoria Budson, Wellesley
Chris Chanyasulkit, Co-Chair Budget and Personnel Committee, Brookline
Helen Corbett, Previous Past Chair, Middleton
Marisa DeFranco, Middleton
Stephanie Everett, Mattapan
Donna Finneran, Mattapan
Elizabeth Hart, Chair Legislative and Public Policy Committee, Malden
Pamela Malumphy, Pittsfield
Joanne Fitzgerald McCrea, Salem
Angela Menino, Hyde Park

Staff

Jill Ashton, Director
Jeni Wheeler, Special Project Consultant

Interns

Summer 2010:

Amy Edison, Northeastern University
Kristen Ellis, Colgate University
Abigail Hanson, Bates College
Corina Maturo, Northeastern University
Lennie Specht, Hamilton College

Fall 2010:

Kelsey Hersh, Tufts University
Juliana Jackson, Suffolk University
Laura Powell, Wellesley College

Spring 2010:

Noelani Alexis, Newbury College
Elizabeth Fegreus, Northeastern University
Michael Kerrigan, Newbury College
Alison Medlar, Emmanuel College
Laura Powell, Wellesley College

INTRODUCTION

Mission

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 their lives.

Charges

Under MA Chapter 3, Section 66 of the Massachusetts General Laws the MCSW 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.

Organization

The MCSW is an independent state agency legislatively created in 1998 to provide a permanent, effective voice for women across Massachusetts. The Commission strives to advance women of the Commonwealth to full equality in all areas of life and to promote their rights and opportunities.

The Commission is comprised of 19 members who are appointed by the Governor, Senate President, Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Caucus of Women Legislators. Commissioners serve in a voluntary capacity and the work of the Commission is facilitated by a Director, assisted by year-round interns.

The full Commission meets monthly, except in July and August, as does the MCSW Executive Committee. In addition, each commissioner is a member of at least one Standing Committee which also meets monthly.

This 2010-2011 Annual Report includes the Commission's activities and findings for the period of July 2010 to June 2011.

2011 RECOMMENDATIONS TO APPOINTING AUTHORITIES

In accordance with the responsibilities of the MCSW under MA Chapter 3, Section 66 of the Massachusetts General Laws, the MCSW submits the following recommendations for action to our appointing authorities:

- **Support legislation and budget items that address issues of domestic violence and violence against women and increase the integration of services to best meet the needs of the members of this population.**

Based on information collected by the MCSW through constituent contact and public hearings, sexual assault and domestic violence remain some of the most pervasive concerns facing women in the Commonwealth. The Commission has recommitted itself to advancing efforts in this area and commends the work of policy makers dedicated to achieving progress on behalf of survivors. While the Commission recognizes the challenges of the state budget, it advises against the reduction of resources directed to survivors of violence against women

- **Pass An Act Relative to the Commercial Exploitation of People, (S0087)**

The bill gives law enforcement the necessary tools to investigate and prosecute the crimes surrounding prostitution and attempts to address all three aspects of human trafficking – supply, demand, and victim services. Frequently women who entered the system either as defendants or victims, arrested for drug use or prostitution, are the victims of violence, sexual abuse, or exploitation; or a combination of the three. The legislation will serve to shift responsibility to those who are the true perpetrators of the crimes and provide services for the victims.

- **The Commission recommends that one seat on the Governor's Council to Address Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence be reserved for a MCSW Commissioner.**

The Governor's Council to Address Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence, chaired by the Lieutenant Governor, provides an appropriate venue for the Commission to share information relating to sexual assault and domestic violence gathered from constituent contact and public hearings.

- **Pass An Act Further Defining Comparable Work (S931/H1415).**

Passage of this bill would help to eliminate the wage gap by ensuring that work requiring similar skill, effort, responsibility and performed under similar working conditions be compensated equally. In 2010, women made on average \$0.77 for every \$1 earned by men, when controlling for factors such as education level and work experience. This figure has remained basically stagnant since 1993, indicating that the wage gap is not closing itself.

This bill is also a critical component of economic recovery. The majority of jobs lost during the recession were lost by men, leaving more households dependent upon

women's income. Massachusetts families cannot afford to wait any longer for steps to be taken toward closing the wage gap once and for all.

- **Establish the Worcester County Commission on the Status of Women.**

This legislation would create the Worcester County Commission on the Status of Women on the same model as the MCSW and the four existing County and Regional Commissions. The creation of the Worcester County Commission is consistent with the Commission's goal of increasing women's political participation in the Commonwealth. It is also important to note that there is no funding attached to this bill.

- **Complete the Essential Functions Study undertaken by the Human Resources Division and implement the resulting recommendations.**

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women has endorsed An Act providing for a study of the Commonwealth's job classification system by the Human Resources Division (S1408/H2665). We commend the administration for undertaking the study. It enables the Commonwealth to serve as a model for private business in achieving equitable pay in the workplace.

MCSW COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The Commission operates through working committees that address various areas and report back to the full Commission for consideration and action. Each commissioner is required to participate in at least one committee and attend monthly full commission meetings. Each committee meets once a month.

There are four working committees and one subcommittee within the Commission:

1. Executive Committee – comprised of all officers and committee chairs and chaired by the chair of the Commission.
2. Legislative and Public Policy Committee
3. Program and Planning Committee (including Unsung Heroine Event Subcommittee)
4. Personnel and Budget Committee

MCSW Standing Committees FY 2011

The work and structure of each Committee and Subcommittee of the Commission is detailed below.

Executive Committee

Consists of: Chair; Vice Chair; Treasurer; Secretary; Co-Chairs, Legislative and Public Policy; Chair, Program and Planning; Co-Chairs, Personnel and Budget; Immediate Past Chair

Work and Responsibilities:

- Address operational/organizational issues
- Ensure Commission adheres to bylaws and open meeting laws
- Communicate with Appointing Authorities
- Maintain fiscal oversight of Commission's operating and trust fund budgets
- Ensure and advocate for the agency having adequate resources
- Evaluate director job performance, staff hiring approvals
- Initiate officer nomination process
- Monitor committee functioning

Legislative and Public Policy Committee

Work and Responsibilities:

- Recommend legislation to the full Commission for endorsement
- Help the full Commission to advise executive, legislative, and other bodies of the effect on women of proposed legislation
- Help the full Commission impact public policy through advocacy, including verbal and written testimony, and other means of support for bills the Commission has endorsed
- Help the full Commission to advise appointing authorities on legislative issues through verbal and written testimony and other means of support for bills the Commission has endorsed

- Help the full Commission advocate for research regarding the status of women in the Commonwealth and for utilizing research to achieve positive outcomes for women

Program and Planning Committee

Work and Responsibilities:

- Plan public hearings
- Maintain contact with county and regional women's commissions
- Evaluate requests for partnering with other groups and organizations to advance women's issues
- Oversee Speakers Bureau and media outreach
 - *Unsung Heroine Event Subcommittee*

Work & Responsibilities:

Plan the Commission's annual signature event and program

Oversee the nomination process and Honoree selections

Solicit event sponsors and in-kind contributions

Work with assigned staff and interns to implement logistics

Personnel and Budget Committee

Work and Responsibilities:

- Hiring:
 - Write and update job description of the director
 - Recruit, interview, recommend hire for director position
 - Approve job descriptions of all support staff
 - Review finalists for staff positions and make final hiring recommendations to full commission
- Evaluation:
 - MCSW chair is the supervisor of the director
 - MCSW chair evaluates the director year round utilizing ACES
 - All commissioners receive a copy of both the director's agreed upon goals for the year and the director's full annual evaluation at the end of the year
- Personnel/Office Policy
- Oversee use of budget and make recommendations for approval of Executive Committee and full Commission

MCSW BUDGET

Commission on the Status of Women BUDGET FY 10	
	FY10 GAA
Total Income from State Appropriation	\$70,000
Expenses	
Salaries	\$56,349
Operating Expenses	\$13,651
Total Expenses	\$70,000

In FY10 the Commission's budget was reduced by 73% (from 250,000 in FY2009). This required the Commission to reduce staff from 3.5 FTEs to 0.6 FTE. With increased involvement of unpaid commissioners, unpaid interns, and unpaid volunteers, and by reducing office operations from 5 to 3 days per week, the Commission has been able to operate with this budget cut. However, it has severely affected the ability of the Commission to do its work. The MCSW commissioners also solicited private and corporate funds for the MCSW Trust Fund which helps fund research projects and commission activities. In addition, the Commission has begun to explore grant funding to support its activities.

PROGRAM AND PLANNING

Public Hearings

In keeping with its mandate to study and report on the status of women and girls living in the Commonwealth, the Commission holds regional public hearings to hear the concerns of women and community members. Area legislators and public officials are invited to attend. The Commission uses hearing testimony to shape and influence its legislative advocacy work and its annual recommendations to the appointing authorities.

The Commission held three public hearings during FY11:

Fall River, Family Service Association, November 17, 2010

- The hearing included a presentation on the topic of negotiating salaries- the goal of which is to inform women of the wage gap and to empower them to advocate for themselves in order to achieve compensation equitable to their male counterparts. Much of the testimony focused on the gender wage gap and economic self sufficiency.

Other issues raised at this hearing included:

- The need to provide more opportunities for women to access education and the importance of ensuring young women receive the education to provide for themselves and their families.
- The importance of ensuring adequate and integrated community services for women and girls.

Fitchburg, Fitchburg City Hall, February 9, 2011

Issues raised at this hearing included:

- The increased incidence of sexual assault, domestic violence and homicide relating to this, and the shortage of safe shelter space and transitional housing within the Commonwealth for victims of domestic violence.
- The need for cultural sensitivity training for service providers of domestic violence victims in immigrant communities;
- The unmet need for adequate and integrated services for survivors of violence against women.

Boston, Boston City Hall, March 23, 2011

Issues raised at this hearing included:

- The need for an appropriate response to the issue of human trafficking and prostitution, one that is integrated and does not re-victimize victims of violence against women.
- The fact that real disparities still exist in the race and gender wage gaps and the need to ensure economic justice and self sufficiency for women.
- The need for increase in attention and resources to be directed to women's health and reproductive health.

County and Regional Women's Commissions

- Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women, 9 members from Berkshire County, established in 2005
- Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women, 9 members from Bristol County, established in 2008
- Cape Cod and Islands Commission on the Status of Women, 13 total members from Barnstable, Dukes, and Nantucket Counties, established in 2009
- Essex County Commission on the Status of Women, 9 members from Essex County, established in 2010

Modeled after the MCSW, the four county and regional women's commissions have been legislatively created to study and report on the status of women and girls in their respective areas, and to provide permanent and effective voices for them. Each county or regional commission reports their findings annually to MCSW.

Once the legislation has passed to establish a county or regional commission, MCSW solicits and reviews commissioner applications, makes appointments, and hosts a formal inaugural event to have the new commissioners sworn in, and conducts an opening session.

After the initial appointments have been made and opening session conducted, MCSW continues to serve as a resource for the commissions, and continues to oversee the appointments and reappointments of commissioners.

The commission has endorsed proposed legislation to establish a Worcester County Commission on the Status of Women (see Legislation and Public Policy section), which would function in the same way as the four existing county and regional women's commissions. This legislation is currently pending.

Local Women's Commissions

There are currently ten local Women's Commissions which represent various cities and towns in the Commonwealth. While these Commissions are independent of MCSW, the Commission serves as a resource for local commissions and maintains contact with them.

Local commissions include: Boston Women's Commission; Brockton Mayor's Commission on Women's Issues; Brookline Commission on Women; Cambridge Commission on the Status of Women; Newton Commission on the Status of Women; Quincy Mayor's Commission on Women; Somerville Commission for Women; Springfield Commission for Women; and Worcester City Manager's Advisory Committee on the Status of Women.

RESOURCES & REFERRALS

MCSW Website

The Commission's Web site (www.mass.gov/women) is a user-friendly tool for learning about the Commission and its work. Users can also download MCSW publications and access MassWIN to find other important resources.

MassWIN (Women's Information Network)

The MCSW hosts MassWIN (www.mcswnetwork.com), a comprehensive online searchable database featuring profiles of over 2,000 service providers throughout the Commonwealth. MassWIN allows users to search for what they need by geographic region and/or service area, or type of service.

One of the charges of the MCSW is to serve as a clearinghouse for information on issues pertaining to women, and MassWIN is one way of providing this service. MassWIN is continuously augmented and improved. MCSW is always seeking new local, community, regional, statewide and in some cases national resources and providers to add to the database. This includes, but is not limited to, direct service providers addressing such issues as domestic violence, cancer prevention, business networking, GLBT concerns, and healthcare.

Constituent Contact

The Commission office is open three days a week to assist constituents with questions or concerns. The Commission staff provides either information and/or referrals. Needs and issues frequently raised include: domestic violence, legal assistance, health insurance, child care and support, employment rights, maternity leave policies, unemployment, financial assistance, child custody and divorce, equal pay, and research questions.

LEGISLATION AND PUBLIC POLICY

The Commission provides information, impact statements, and assistance to elected officials and the public regarding legislation affecting women and families in Massachusetts. The Legislative and Public Policy Committee evaluates proposed legislation and recommends endorsement to the full Commission. Once endorsed, the Commission provides written or spoken testimony, identifies and gathers community support and is available to support legislation in response to legislators' requests.

During FY11, the Commission's efforts surrounding Legislation and Public Policy were focused on the economic security of women in the Commonwealth, specifically Comparable Work, Human Trafficking, and Pay Equity legislation, as well as issues of violence against women.

INITIATIVES

MCSW Annual Community Outreach Program

Eighth Annual “Unsung Heroines of Massachusetts” Program

On May 18, 2011 the MCSW hosted its 8th Annual Unsung Heroine Celebration at the State House. This event honored 100 Unsung Heroines from cities and towns across the Commonwealth. The Unsung Heroines are women who without fanfare or recognition make the Commonwealth a better place to work and live. The Unsung Heroines “don’t make the news, but make a difference”.

Each year, the Commission seeks nominations from the public to identify women who perform unheralded acts of service on behalf of their communities. The nomination process identifies women of all ages, all economic, political, geographic and ethnic backgrounds. After reviewing all of the nominations, a selection committee designates the 100 outstanding citizens to be honored. All 100 Unsung Heroine honorees are honored at a State House ceremony where they receive appreciation from a grateful Commonwealth.

This event is funded through generous corporate sponsorship, with individual donations and the MCSW Trust Fund.

MCSW Internship Program

Preparing the next generation of leaders remains a key priority for the Commission and as an extension of this commitment, extends for credit internship opportunities to students from universities and colleges across the Commonwealth. Internships, both for credit and non-credit, are extended during fall semester, spring semester and again through the summer. During the 2010 – 2011 academic year, the Commission hosted 12 interns.

MCSW interns assist the director in executing a variety of projects which help to carry out MCSW’s mission, such as:

- Communication production – website, newsletter, MCSW resource brochures, handbooks, and other literature
- Event management - public hearings, regional council meetings, Unsung Heroines of Massachusetts event
- Research and prepare legislation summaries
- Contribute to research projects

Commissioner Emerita Program

To strengthen the bond and connections between the MCSW and former Commissioners, the MCSW maintains a Commissioner Emerita program.

The Commissioner Emerita program strives to better inform and engage former Commissioners and encourage them to remain involved when able in the ongoing work of the Commission.

Collaborations and Coalition Membership

In line with the Commission’s mission to promote and facilitate collaboration among local women’s commissions and women’s organizations, the Commission frequently partners with other organizations to support efforts of joint concern.

The MCSW maintains active membership in the following coalitions:

- **Disparities Action Network:** works to reduce health disparities in the Commonwealth through legislative advocacy and education – Commissioner Liaison: Chris Chanyasulkit
- **Massachusetts Paid Sick Leave Coalition:** advocates for passage of this legislation. MCSW participation has included legislative testimony, advocacy campaigns, information sharing through newsletter and web site
- **New England Women's Commissions:** bi-annual meetings to share strategies for success, convened by the US Dept of Labor Women's Bureau, Region 1.
- **Boston Area International Women's Day Breakfast Co-Host:** MCSW co-sponsors this annual informational gathering, which was held this year at Simmons College on March 5th. This year's event featured speakers on Women's Role in the Green Economy.

APPENDIX

MCSW PUBLIC HEARING NOTES
FALL RIVER PUBLIC HEARING, 11/17/11

1. Linda Cavaioli, Chair of the MCSW, introduced herself and 5 colleagues.
 - a. She thanked the BCCSW for the joint event and looked forward to hearing about issues of particular interest to Bristol County Women. She cited examples of how the Commission can inform Boston decision makers and improve outcomes and circumstances for women.
2. Gail Fortes: Introduction to BCCSW
 - a. Gail provided a quick Power Point presentation of the local Commission. As the Commissioners' pictures were displayed, they quickly introduced themselves.
3. Negotiating Your Salary
 - a. Juli's rapid-fire presentation was very well received.
 - b. A handout of the power point was circulated.
4. Wage Study
 - a. Several individuals interested in a current analysis of wage rates by job category and gender.
 - i. The MCSW is currently working on a statewide analysis. New Census data will inform the analysis. It was noted that the Paycheck Fairness Act failed in Congress today, Nov. 17.
5. Poverty
 - a. Single mothers are more likely to be poor.
 - i. Educational attainment levels of their children are directly related to the mother's educational level.
 - b. Almost 90% of the children of single mothers are poor.
 - i. The "toxic stressors" on these children -- from the mother's substance abuse, neglect, poverty, or other environmental factors -- lead to poor brain development and significant behavioral problems.
6. Bullying and Internet Safety
 - a. This topic has not been raised at previous meetings, but with the rash of suicides and violence arising from the use of electronic media; it is a topic that deserves additional attention.

- i. Lara Stone of Dartmouth noted that the town received some grant funds for a "Healthy Dartmouth" program, which includes a focus on social media targeted to young women.
- ii. Juli Parker added that tolerance of gays and lesbians should be part of the conversation around bullying and suicide.

7. Domestic Violence

- a. Women who are victims of domestic violence typically suffer from parenting and substance abuse problems as well.
 - i. These problems pose growth and development issues for their children.

8. Education of Women

- a. The Women's Fund and UMass are engaged in a dialogue around elevating educational attainment levels of women.
 - i. Particular emphasis on college credentialing.
- b. Juli added that women with a Bachelor's are likely to make about the same salary as a man with a high school diploma, on average.
- c. Jean noted that while Massachusetts boasts a respectable educational attainment rate, those areas that lag are among the lowest in the nation.
 - i. New Bedford and Fall River fall into this latter category.
- d. Furthermore, the educational system is "broken."
 - i. For example, if a school dropout wished to return to public high school after the enrollment cutoff date of October 2, it would be problematic since the school system receives its state funding allocation based on the Oct. 2 enrollment number.
- e. Linda Cavaioli of MCSW mentioned that the Commission may well achieve some level of progress in this area, as it is often easier to change rules than it is to change laws.

9. Education/Support of Parents

- a. It was almost universally agreed that parent engagement is essential for positive growth and development of children. Home visits have been useful in certain situations.
 - i. eligibility criteria pertain
- b. Many mothers are undereducated and are reluctant to disclose their shortcomings.

- i. This translates to poor support of educational endeavors at home as well as poor interactions with schools.
 - 1. A hearing attendee who works in a mental health office observed that parents are often adrift in a world of poor connections to resources and supports.
 - 2. Denise suggested CSA, a family wrap-around initiative, was a good way to connect these parents and provided her information.
 - a. Jean noted that while the Commission is an excellent vehicle to glean information from nearby women that will be used to catalyze change, it also provides an opportunity for information sharing and networking.

10. Mass. WIN

- a. Massachusetts Women's Information Network currently consists of 2,600 resources for women
 - i. We were all provided with magnets containing the contact information.

MCSW PUBLIC HEARING NOTES
FITCHBURG PUBLIC HEARING 2/9/11

4:14 Mayor Lisa Wong

-In 2008 Fitchburg had no power for three weeks, no cell phones etc. – group of women who were bilingual and knew where people lived who didn't have any form of communication during the storm. They went door to door to help these people in need to find out and make sure that they were okay. These people of the community and city knew how important this was and acted.

-Mayor Wong invites women to be a part of the solution, many say yes. A year ago she started "Mayor of Your Street," which is individuals/volunteers of the community who gain information through the program and chose to be leaders of their neighborhood and street. Most of them are women, ranging in age from high school students to eighty year old women.

9:23 Tricia Gilley

Spoke about her work with youth regarding dating and relationship violence.

13:31 Jillian

Most issues she sees are about counseling or safe plan. Many women are unaware of the resources that are available to them. Many women feel guilty seeking help because they are not physically abused but people must recognize that there are many different forms of abuse. Custody is a big issue.

14:50 Katherine

She is new to the system and had a restraining order filed against her husband in December. Her issues have been her ability to access about the status of her husband's location. When he got out of jail he was suppose to go to his mother's house in New Hampshire but didn't and found out through friends that he was still in Fitchburg. She has found it very hard to find information; she doesn't know who to call and as a victim receives no help. He has violated the restraining order a couple of times and as a full time nursing student, and a single mom she has had to take off time from work and school to go to court. As a victim she has to take more time away from her life for these issues, while he is unemployed and has all of the time in the world to go to court.

16:09 Melissa Hernandez

She is currently working on getting out of an abusive relationship. She thinks that it is important to identify that physical abuse isn't the only kind of abuse. She goes on to talk about once when she was reflecting on the thirteen stitches she had just received and that she had all of these wounds she could physically look at, but she realized that as time moved on she could put on an act of being a strong willed woman, but the other day when she looked in the mirror she realized that all of the physical pain she carried with her was also in her emotions and it's paralyzing. Resources may be available but we carry a fear that if they share their experiences that their children will be at risk and that they will all be judged because of it. She now has a job and is finally finding her self again but she couldn't do that without the people she has in her life. Isolation is the worst place to be, so today she is looking for recovery.

29:08 Karen Riley McNary

Spoke about the need for adequate shelter services. She noted the specific needs of the immigrant and undocumented population.

35:38 Joan David

She was a single mother herself, a divorce left her penniless and she had to slowly pick herself up to be able to stand on solid ground. She was finally able to put a deposit down on a house after years of saving. She offers cards that women can use to contact her if they are having problems and have no one else to turn to.

44:30 Question asked

-A woman asks a question if there are volunteer advocates to help women in need through the system.

46:26 Question asked

-A woman asks a question regarding an out of state situation with her children and their therapist trying to keep them from going to Pennsylvania. She wants to know if the states share information between one another.

47:49 Kim Dawkins

Spoke about the work of her organization, the Rape Crisis Center of Central Massachusetts

54:24 Arthur Heusser

Reported on the need for post emergency shelter housing and services

60:06

-Woman works with an organization that works with immigration. Also deals with women in domestic violence situations. She herself was a victim of domestic violence at the age of 14. Has been working with issues such as this for 35 years, but stopped because of her son being killed by a drunk driver. Tells a story of a family where the father's identity was stolen and he plans to leave the country in fear of being deported because authorities are looking for him. The mother can't receive any help and as of tonight will be on the street. She's in fear for her husband, and her husband fears for his family. Spoke with the chief of police and is trying to get the Spanish center back in Fitchburg. They need a lot of help, especially funds. Also mentions a man who was being paid less than minimum wage doing construction work and he had to support a family.

71:11 A victim of domestic violence

She was abused by a repeat offender; she is the second woman that she knows of that he has abused. He also just recently abused his mother who refused a restraining order against him. He was mentally hospitalized for thirty days and just got out. He just received custody back of his two children and she is unsure how DCF let this happen. She has been able to obtain legal

aid, is permanently disabled, and can not work. She tried to keep the case open but they wouldn't do that because she had done everything she was supposed to do. She is one the high risk response list and has cameras installed on the outside of her house because of this. He has violated restraining orders-both herself and the first wife. She is in the process of being evicted and has to be out by the 15th of this month, and as of the 13th will be staying in a hotel with her five children, one of which is her offender's child and her mother in law is still throwing her out. His mother has dropped charges against her son. She is looking for funding assistance; she has no shelter and can't afford it. He was everything she has been looking for in the beginning until she became pregnant. May 1st they got married, and on May 24th and May 25th bruised her entire body. She waited to get the restraining order in fear that he would do it again, and when he grabbed one of her children she got the restraining order. She knew that she would have to give up his children and it became very hard because she had been raising them for the past two years-this also delayed her from getting the restraining order. She is going to have to face him in court and will be "verbally mutilated" because of what he has accused her of. He has been able to walk away from criminal court while he continually violates restraining orders and doesn't show up for court-they do nothing about it (Fitchburg Court). He drives up and down her road. He gets out of it because of being "bi-polar." When he was confronted by a police officer he repeatedly stated that his son was in a river, he kicked the inside of the police car continuously, and the police had trouble detaining him. When he got to the hospital he was administered a shot to try and calm him down but it did nothing-he had to be held down by several people to get him into restraints and was then hospitalized, yet he was still able to receive custody through DCF.

MCSW PUBLIC HEARING NOTES
BOSTON PUBLIC HEARING 3/23/11

Martha Coakley 1:27 – Wants to highlight the issue of human trafficking and proposed legislation surrounding it. Through her career she continuously came across women who entered the system as defendants, victims, and sometimes both who were arrested for drugs or for prostitution, yet seemed the least guilty in the chain. Many district attorneys are recognizing these women as women who have been victimized. She wants to focus her attention on the bill in MA that prosecutes the ones trafficking people, shifting the blame from the victims and to provide resources for them. There are 27 million people trafficked internationally and domestically-it is a 32 billion dollar annual business. The trafficking of individuals should not be acceptable by any means, especially in the state of MA. It is the second largest growing black market in the country.

Ayanna Pressley 17:28 – Women and healthy communities-strengthen support and stabilize our families. Believes personally that young girls get left behind when it comes to funding for youth programs. The council she is on is working on issues such as teen pregnancy, domestic violence, sexual assault, challenging gender role stereotypes, advocating for women in the building trades, and the upper ranks of police and fire roles. She believes that we need to have a strong sexual health education system within the Boston public school system-primarily to educate youth on healthy choices and behaviors. Massachusetts does not have any laws against human trafficking and this is “simply shameful.”

Phyllis (Cambridge) 2:56

Grace Ross 10:17 - Talks about economic issues. Brought a woman out for dinner and learned of her inability to find a new job and was receiving unemployment was soon to run out and she was trying to acquire food stamps. Some days she would eat others she couldn't. The foreclosure crisis has caused a rise in domestic violence. There is a lot of silence surrounding the problems we face in the media, but the people she sees everyday aren't quiet-they are angry. How do we create opportunities and a new image of women not allowing these issues to happen (such as domestic violence, hunger, homelessness) and lead with less visible positions in power but in a collective way of coming together as women again?

Sarin 19:18 – 1 in 4 women of childbearing age in the world are living with HIV. Here in MA, 29% of the people living with HIV are women, 70% being women of color (Black & Latina women). She hopes for the concentration to be surrounding on efforts of keeping the spread of HIV down. We should encourage conversations in schools and with primary care providers and their patients to talk about these issues, from how to put on a condom to injection drug use.

Elizabeth 20:56 – Has been doing research on sex trafficking of women and girls from a public health perspective at MGH. Women and girls are disproportionately affected. Has done research in NY and Los Angeles. Better systems have to be put in place in regards to research numbers. People need to be educated/raise awareness on what human trafficking is. She and her colleagues have been trying to raise awareness with school nurses and the department of public health has started to take a real lead on this. The highest risk groups are girls who have experienced sexual and physical abuse growing up and girls who come from unstable family backgrounds. The impact this has on young girls is damaging to their psychological health. We need to address the demand, and engage men.

Karen 36:34 – We've come a long way but we have a long way to go. She has many concerns regarding health care and education. She came across a law that disempowers people who are considered disabled by withholding their medical records. All people should have full access to their medical records.

Mary 32:38 – Talks about the women she has heard speak of their struggle with HIV/AIDS and the differences they face and how they are treated just because they are women. We are all sisters and we have to work together. We have to continue to empower each other and work united and collaboratively.

Patricia Quin (MA Alliance on Teen Pregnancy) 39:01 – New young people become teens everyday and this issue will never drop off the radar entirely. Teen parenting is the reasons that young women leave school. 26% of the kids who leave school each year give teen parenting as the reason (over 2000 young people each year). We can change the outcome by helping to prevent teen pregnancy and by providing support for parenting teens to finish school. We have to make sure that all teens have access to comprehensive sex education and the help they need to finish school. A child has a 27% chance of growing up in poverty if born to a teen mother. If that mother doesn't receive an education her chance of poverty rises to 42%. Poverty is a cause and an effect of teen pregnancy and education is the way out. The education attainment of the mother is a good indicator of what happens to her children. When teens become pregnant they are driven to finish their education but the numbers show that they don't follow through which is an indication that we are not assisting them in getting the education that they need to thrive.

Freddie K (Women's Suffrage Celebration Committee) 1:45 – The committee is concerned about women and men, young and old alike, have no idea what it took for women to get the vote and of all of the issues that caused women and men to work for 72 years for women to get the vote. Women's Suffrage Celebration Committee just celebrated the 90 year mark of women being allowed to vote.

Sylvia Farrel Jones (YWCA Boston) 8:15 –She believes that healthy communities require equity of gender and racial issues-goal is to eliminate racism and empower women. Due to the work of organizations like the YWCA, breast cancer screenings of black women are higher than any other race in MA. Despite this great fact, the mortality rate of black women is the highest rate among women. There is a 24% population of Black people in Boston, but are only 3-5% of the cancer patients in the hospitals. More than 100 scientific studies show that connects racism with chronic health issues that effect women of color (featured in the Boston Globe).

Sonya Darai 14:36 – She works in the health department for the city of Somerville and is also the director for the office of Somerville commissions. She wanted to bring up the many phone calls from concerned citizens, who do not know their rights, where to go, Etc. She is also concerned with how the media portrays domestic violence and abuse. Just the other day she was reading in the paper of a man who murdered his wife and didn't connect resources, data surrounding domestic violence, and failed to tie the real reporting to the larger story and issue-domestic violence.

Reesa Mednick (Transition House) 21:10 – They have seen a 60% increase for service since 2008 and for an organization that only has so many beds, they are turning away an immense number of people in need everyday. While seeing a rise in need in the population they help, they are also seeing an erosion of mental health services and clinical services in our

communities. These difficult circumstances become extremely hard for people trying to extract themselves from difficult situations.

Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women

Annual Report – May, 2011

The Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women was created through legislation supported by the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts and former State Senator Andrea Nuciforo. Once the legislation came into effect in September of 2004, the inaugural slate of nine commissioners were appointed to the Commission in February of 2005. Now, six years later, we are pleased to provide an update of our annual activity.

Current Commissioners include:

Tara Jacobs
Jennifer Breen Kirsch
Pam Malumphy - CoChair
Katrina Mattson
Susan Mongue – Co-Chair
Amy Binette Wolfe
Eleanore Velez
Abbie Von Schlagell

Currently, Pam Malumphy, who is also an appointee to the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women, and Susan Mongue, co-chair the Berkshire County Commission.

Over the past year, the Berkshire Commission continued its focus on teen pregnancy prevention, pay equity, and domestic violence. To that end, the Commission hosted Public Hearings in Pittsfield, North Adams, and Stockbridge. At each Hearing, members of the Berkshire community spoke about issues impacting their life or issues impacting the life of a woman or girl. It was clear through these hearings that issues of domestic violence and teen pregnancy rose to the top of those issues most impacting the lives of girls and women in the County. Guests at these Hearings included leaders of community organizations such as the Elizabeth Freeman Center, the Berkshire County District Attorney's Office, Girls Inc. of the Berkshires, WHEN! (Women Helping Empower Neighborhoods), Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, The Berkshire Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative, as well as private citizens.

Each public hearing had a co-host. The first, in Pittsfield, was co-hosted and held at Girls Inc of the Berkshires. The second took place at North Adams City Hall and was co-hosted by Mayor Richard Alcombright and State Representative Gailanne Cariddi. The third will be held on June 2nd at Stockbridge Town Hall and will be co-hosted by Multicultural BRIDGE. The co-hosts have been extremely helpful in getting members of the community and agency leaders to attend the Public Hearings.

With regard to teen pregnancy prevention: the BC Commission has worked over the past three years to create a collaborative of community and regional entities willing to partner over this epidemic shattering Berkshire County. During this past year, the Berkshire United Way and at least 20 other organizations applied for newly allocated federal monies under the Office of Adolescent Health for teen pregnancy prevention. Although we were notified in September, 2010 that we did not receive funding, the collaborative has continued under the umbrella of the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative. The United Way has provided funding to team with the Massachusetts Alliance for Teen Pregnancy Prevention and we have successfully surveyed nearly 1,000 Berkshire residents, held focus groups to better understand gaps we saw in the survey results, and then held a public conversation only a month ago with 100 residents attending. Exciting stuff. And more is planned during the summer and fall of 2011.

Broadly Speaking – What Do We Want to Accomplish?

- Improved economic opportunity and income
- Change consciousness and raise awareness about issues effecting women
- Broaden cultural/gender perspectives

- Participation in the community (including the political community)
- Breakdown isolation for women

How Does the Commission Wish to be Seen in the Community?

As an organization, we want to be recognized in the community as a group that influences and has our finger on the pulse of issues effecting women. Commissioners shared the following as issues that are impacting the lives of women:

- Pay Equity
- Teen Pregnancy
- Domestic Violence

Who Are the Stakeholders?

Berkshire United Way is our key partner for teen pregnancy prevention and the State Commission has been a key partner with pay equity issues. Our Public Hearings have allowed the Commission to reach numerous agencies and individuals within the County and helped give voice to those issues most affecting girls and women in our community.

How Do We Effectively Address Issues Cited Above?

Along with the three Public Hearings cited above, we were able to televise two of the hearings to reach a broader Berkshire audience. Members of the Commission also appeared on local television and radio programs to advocate for our continued work with teen pregnancy prevention. Recently, co-chair Pam Malumphy was part of the three-person panel discussing issues impacting immigrant women in the Berkshire Community given that the Berkshires has at least 10% of its population as immigrants.

Are We Working Efficiently?

We have been extremely pleased to welcome three new Commissioners this year. We also agreed that we needed to have a clear focus of activities for the 2010/2011 year. Public Hearings became that focus and, to date, they have been highly successful. Our continued work as part of the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative has also brought great effectiveness and efficiencies as we've continued to partner with so many agencies throughout the Berkshires and the tremendous leadership provided by the United Way.



Annual Report
May 24, 2011

CCICSW Commissioners

Pamela Pollock, Chair
Cataumet

Evelyn Young, Vice Chair
Cotuit

Janice Barton, Secretary
Marston Mills

Janet Joakim, Treasurer
Centerville

Theresa Mitchell Barbo
Yarmouth Port

Helen Bresnahan
Centerville

Barbara Dixon
East Falmouth

Catherine King
South Dennis

Cheryl Osimo
Barnstable

Deborah Thompson
South Dennis

Elaine Cawley Weintraub
West Tisbury

The Cape Cod and Islands Commission on the Status of Women continued into their second year hosting their second discussion on “Looking Forward: The Status of Cape Cod and Islands Women in the 21st Century” on Wednesday, June 9th, 2010 at the Eastham Council on Aging on 1405 Nauset Road in Eastham. The working event featured networking, a resource information exchange, and a presentation by a panel of community leaders that included: focusing on child care, health and housing issues. There was also opportunity for those in attendance to offer comments and testimony on the issues of concern. The commission continues to compile information from the discussions to identify legislative priorities.

In October the Commission hosted a candidate’s forum at the Barnstable Town Hall on women’s issues cosponsored by The Community Action Committee of the Cape and Islands. The forum was moderated by Judith Goetz of Quantum Communication (WXTK) and recorded for C3TV. 9 candidates for statewide office participated.

New officers were elected in December 2010:

Chair- Pamela Pollock, Cataumet
Vice Chair – Evelyn Young, Cotuit
Secretary – Janice Barton, Marston Mills
Treasurer – Janice Joakim, Centerville

A planning retreat was held in February 2011 to build community, strengthen governance and set annual goals. Goals included strengthening committee structure, raising awareness of CCICSW, strengthening relationships with legislators and identifying legislative priorities.

The commission held a joint meeting with the Bristol County Commission at Massachusetts Maritime Academy on March 16th. The commissioners shared ideas and provided updates on the work of each commission, worked on legislative priorities and identifying opportunities to work with each other. The commissions will meet again jointly in the fall.

The CCICSW has instituted an opportunity for public comment at their regularly scheduled bimonthly meetings that are held in different communities throughout the cape. Meetings have been held in Bourne and Dennis and are scheduled for Barnstable, Cummaquid and Falmouth.

At present there are 2 vacancies that are in the process of being filled.



Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women

Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women
Annual Report
June 1, 2011

Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women - Members 2010-2011:

Jean Cotter –Fox, Freetown
Melissa Costa-Doyle, Fall River
Gail Fortes, New Bedford
Ellen Heffernan-Dugan, Norton
Denise Hoyt, Fall River
Carolann McCarron, Raynham
Dr. Juli Parker, Swansea
Gale Schultz, Dartmouth
Ginny Starvish, Berkley

BCCSW Commissioners

Gail Fortes, Co-Chair
New Bedford, MA

Juli Parker, PhD., Co-Chair
Swansea, MA

Denise Hoyt, Secretary
Swansea, MA

Jean Cotter-Fox, Treasurer
Freetown, MA

Ellen Heffernan - Dugan
Norton, MA

Carolann McCarron
Raynham, MA

Gale Schultz *South*
Dartmouth, MA

Ginny Starvish, RN
Berkley, MA

The following were nominated and elected as officers:

Gail Fortes, Co-Chair
Juli Parker, Co-Chair
Denise Hoyt, Secretary
Jean Cotter –Fox, Treasurer

In October 2010, Ginny Starvish resigned and Denise Hoyt resigned in May 2011.

Accomplishments 2010- 2011

Hearings:

A Joint Hearing with the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women was held in Fall River on November 17, 2010. Dr. Juli Parker presented “Tips on Negotiating Your Salary”. Following the presentation the attendees discussed pay equity and other areas of concern for women in Bristol County. The hearing was attended by 21 individuals.

On March 16, 2011 BCCSW held a joint meeting with the Cape Cod and the Islands Commission on the Status of Women. Pam Pollock, Chair, conducted an exercise to identify the issues of concern and important to area women. The list was narrowed down so that the commissions could focus on 3 or 4. Priority issues: education/literacy, pay equity, senior services and child hunger/care. It was felt that two other topics, commission visibility and women in politics, would be covered through our regular work. The BCCSW and CCCSW are planning a second meeting in the fall of 2011 to discuss further ways in which the Commissions can collaborate and better serve the needs of women from both counties.

The mission of the Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women is to provide a permanent, effective voice for women across Bristol County that facilitates and fosters community and inclusiveness among women. The Commission stands for fundamental freedoms, basic human rights and the full enjoyment of life for all women throughout their lives.

Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women

On May 14, 2011 BCCSW conducted a presentation for Annual Meeting Church Women United. Gail Fortes presented on the mission, history and activities of BCCSW. Following the presentation attendees discussed a variety of topics of concern to area women. Prison reform and substance abuse were identified as significant issues.

BCCSW Commissioners

*Gail Fortes, Co-Chair
New Bedford, MA*

*Juli Parker, PhD., Co-Chair
Swansea, MA*

*Denise Hoyt, Secretary
Swansea, MA*

*Jean Cotter-Fox,
Treasurer Freetown, MA*

*Ellen Heffernan - Dugan
Norton, MA*

*Carolann McCarron
Raynham, MA*

*Gale Schultz
South Dartmouth, MA*

*Ginny Starvish, RN
Berkley, MA*

Additional Activities:

- Sent introductory letters to area organizations and legislators.
- Hired a Summer Intern in 2010
- Set-up Social Networking Pages.
- Established agreement with the YWCA Southeastern MA to act as a fiscal agent for the BCCSW.
- Began database of contacts.
- Held monthly meetings of the Commission
- Submitted annual report to MSCW

Issues identified to date include:

Homelessness for women /families	Domestic Violence
Education	Sexual Abuse/Assault
Women Veterans	Mental Illness
Disabilities and women	Language Barriers
Healthcare	Pay equity
Transportation	Prison Reform/Re-entry
Legislative Support of Women's Issues (e.g., DTA policies)	
Single women's eligibility for services	
Substance Abuse	Bullying
Internet Safety	Wage Study

Goals for 2011-2012:

Develop additional marketing materials.
Increase utilization of the media to raise awareness of the Commission.
Develop BCCSW budget.
Convene members of the local delegation to alert them to the Commission's activities and begin a dialog on the salient issues pertaining to women in this area.
Continue joint meetings/events with the Cape and Islands Commission
Submitted by:

Commissioner Ellen Heffernan-Dugan, Norton

The mission of the Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women is to provide a permanent, effective voice for women across Bristol County that facilitates and fosters community and inclusiveness among women. The Commission stands for fundamental freedoms, basic human rights and the full enjoyment of life for all women throughout their lives.

ESSEX COUNTY COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

ANNUAL REPORT JUNE 2011

The newly appointed Essex County Commission on the Status of Women has met four times since January 2011, to accomplish the following:

- Elected officers:

Chair	Patricia Fae Ho
Vice-chair	Joni Stone
Secretary	Anne Ferguson
Treasurer	Mary Anne Clancy

- Proposed an action plan toward addressing ECCSW mission and duties outlined by the MA Commission on the Status of Women.
 1. Plan a public hearing for October 18, 2011, location TBD, to receive testimony on issues regarding women in Essex County.
 2. Establish avenues for outreach with individuals and agencies advocating for and providing services to women in Essex County. By September, each commissioner will have interviewed staff at 4 – 5 area agencies to ascertain the needs of women served by those agencies, the resources needed by the agencies to accomplish their work, and the advocacy efforts that ECCSW can initiate to achieve shared goals at the municipal and county levels. Commissioners will also meet with town and county officials to discuss services available to women and the economic impact of decreased municipal funds.
 3. Assess feasible ways of bringing about positive change and improvements in the lives of women in Essex County. Following the public hearing and the community needs survey of agencies and government officials, ECCSW will be better able to focus on specific needs of women, facilitate collaboration among different stakeholders, and recommend policies that benefit women.
 4. Establish a presence in the county and connect with media avenues by appointing a commissioner chair for public relations/communications, opening an e-mail account and a bank account, designing a letterhead and business cards.
Congratulatory letters were sent to eleven Unsung Heroines in Essex County.

Submitted by Chair Patricia Fae Ho

June 4, 2011

