

# Maryland Legislative Agenda for W♀men 2020



*Celebrating MLAW's 25 years as a non-partisan,  
independent voice for Maryland Women & Families*

---

For more information on the  
2020 Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women  
Contact:

305 W. Chesapeake Avenue, Suite 201  
Towson, MD 21204  
443-519-1005 phone/fax  
[mdlegagenda4women@yahoo.com](mailto:mdlegagenda4women@yahoo.com)





# Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women

---

**1994 - 2019**

## **25 Years of Advocacy for Women's and Family Issues**

**MLAW is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2019.** It was established to **harness the collective power of women** and to **create a statewide, non-partisan, independent coalition of groups and individuals to advocate for progressive legislative initiatives that promote and protect the well-being of women and their families in Maryland.**

This call to action for legislative change has resulted in a coalition almost unique in the United States. The annual legislative conference and other activities have energized thousands of women - and male allies - to become engaged in advocacy for important issues affecting Maryland women and families.

The annual Legislative Agenda has included a broad diversity of issues and the organization's advocacy and collaborative efforts have resulted in the **passage of 90 pieces of legislation enacted by the Maryland General Assembly in the last 25 years.**

This extraordinary success has made **a significant difference for women and families.** It has established MLAW as a **powerful voice for women and their priorities in Maryland.**

**MLAW provides visibility for legislation affecting women and families.** The fall conference develops our MLAW Legislative Agenda and a legislative reception in Annapolis during the legislative session introduces the Agenda to advocates and legislators. These events focus legislators' attention on our issues and raise their visibility throughout the state. We distribute the annual Legislative Agenda to every Maryland legislator. In collaboration with our advocacy partners, we submit testimony, advocate for bills, and promote our Agenda through our large e-mail list, website, and Facebook page.

The Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women is proud of its achievements during the last 25 years, but there is more to be done. **Join us and help us continue to make a difference for Maryland women and families.**



# Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women

1994 - 2019

25 Years of Advocacy for Women's and Family Issues

## \$25 for 25

### Organizations:

Maryland State Conference of the NAACP  
University of Maryland Women's Forum  
American Association of University Women MD  
Zonta Club of Annapolis

### Individuals:

Tazeen Ahmad  
Wandra Ashley-Williams  
Sen. Pamela Beidle  
Sharon Blugis  
Tracy Brown *in honor of Jessica Morgan*  
Valencia Campbell  
Judith Carbone  
Darlene Carter *in honor of Kahlia A. Boyd*  
Alice Chambers  
Michael Cohen  
Diana Conway  
Janet Wert Crampton  
Melissa Curtin  
Joanna Diamond  
Holly Fechner *in honor of Mary Fechner*  
Linda D. Fihelly  
Diana Fink  
Lynn Fitrell  
Linda V. Forsyth  
Gloria A. Fuller  
Senator Sharon Grosfeld  
Donna R. Herring  
Stacia Hilder  
Susan Horst  
Sharon R. Jacob  
Elizabeth F. Johnson

Holly Joseph  
Elizabeth Joyce *in honor of Anne P. LaFleur & Sarah LeFleur Friedman*  
Senator Delores G. Kelley  
Roxann King *in honor of Mary Ellen Gick*  
Mary Klausner *in honor of Theresa Kelly Klausner*  
Michelle Koul  
Linda Mahoney  
Ruth Martin  
Angela McDaniel  
Giulia McPherson  
Niamh McQuillan  
Jessica Morgan *in honor of Linda Morgan*  
Reggie Oldak *in honor of Michael Cohen*  
Jo-Ann Orlinsky  
Erin Prangle  
Heather Reichardt  
Ameila Riley *in honor of Nate & Ben Riley-Strouse*  
Anita Riley  
Diane Roca  
Anita Rosen  
Judith Sholes  
Michelle Siri  
Kate Campbell Stevenson  
Joan Stine  
Susan W. Talbott  
Phyllis Taylor White  
Judith Vaughn-Prather  
Diane Williams *in honor of Juanita Cabbage*  
Caren Williams  
Sabrina Winters



# Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women

---

## Overview

The Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) is a statewide coalition of women's groups and individuals formed to provide a non-partisan, independent voice for Maryland women and families. The coalition advocates for progressive legislation and policies that promote and protect the well-being of Maryland women and their families and provide them opportunities to develop their full potential.

### Our Vision

Maryland women and their families have a right, by law, to an adequate and sustainable quality of life and an opportunity to develop their full potential.

### Guiding Principles

- An adequate standard of living regardless of ability to work or achieve financial independence
- Personal safety at home, school and the workplace
- Freedom from discrimination in Maryland's economic, educational, judicial, political, and social system
- Equal access to quality health care and reproductive services
- Safe and affordable child and dependent care
- A quality, public education
- Equitable and responsible implementation and enforcement of rights and protections provided by existing law
- Elimination of discriminatory policies and practices based on age, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities and attributes, race, and sexual orientation
- Family-friendly employment practices

### Board of Directors

Wandra Ashley-Williams	Elizabeth Joyce, <i>Vice President</i>	Erin Prangley
Lee Bachu	Linda Mahoney	Anita Riley, <i>Secretary</i>
Shruti Bhatnagar	Ruth Martin	Shuchi Sharma
Michael Cohen, <i>President</i>	Angela McDaniel	Michelle Siri, <i>Treasurer</i>
Melissa Curtin	Giulia McPherson	Joan Stine
Joanna Diamond	Sabrina Nelson-Winters	Caren Williams
Tahira Mussarat Hussain	Diana Philip	

### MLAW Staff

Jessica Morgan

# 2020 MLAW SUPPORTERS

## *Organizations*

AAUW Maryland  
Anne Arundel County Commission for Women  
Anne Arundel County Democratic Women  
Anne Arundel County NOW  
Baltimore County Women's Commission  
Business and Professional Women of Maryland (BPW/MD)  
Calvert County Commission for Women  
Charles County Commission of Veterans Affairs  
DC Coalition for Safe and Just Communities  
Federation of Jewish Women's Organization of Maryland  
Greater Washington Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse (JCADA)  
HopeWorks of Howard County  
Laurel RESIST  
Law Office of Carole D. Brown, LLC  
Lincoln Park Historical Foundation  
Maryland Business and Professional Women  
Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence  
Maryland NOW  
Maryland Women's Heritage Center  
MoCoWoMen  
Montgomery County BPW  
Montgomery County Commission for Women  
Montgomery County NOW  
Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club  
Montgomery County Young Democrats  
NARAL ProChoice Maryland  
National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc., Anne Arundel Chapter  
National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Prince George's County, MD  
North Arundel Alumnae Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.  
On Our Own of Montgomery County Inc.  
Planned Parenthood of Maryland  
Prince George's County Drug Policy Coalition, Inc.  
The Human Trafficking Prevention Project  
The Law Office of Jessica O'Kane  
The QED Foundation  
White Lion Social  
Women's Equality Day 2020 Celebration Coalition  
Women's Law Center of Maryland

*\*The names of individuals and organizational supporters may only support some components of the agenda that pertain to their mission and work.*

## *Individuals*

Annie Ahmed	Jennierose D'Elia-Dufour	Linna Liberchuk	Ginger Robinson
Lin Amendt	Joanna Diamond	Patricia Maclay	Diane B. Roca
Kanya Anyiam	Sylvia Diss	Ginger Macomber	Fran Rothstein
Jan Arado	Valerie Dougherty	Linda Mahoney	Amelia Rubenstein
Isabel Argoti	Linda Eggbeer	Ruth Manchester	Diana Rubin
Ruby Aridi	Jessica Emerson	Marsha Manekin	Laure Ruth
Betty Arnall	Karan Engerman	Alicia Lynn Martin	Dr Brenda Savoy
Wandra Ashley-Williams	Patricia Farmer	Hyun Martin	Sara Schomig
Shawn Ashworth	Jeannette Feldner	Ruth Martin	Bobbi Seabolt
Valerie Astin	Linda Fihelly	Lynn Mason	Kimberly Scott
Lee Bachu	Linda Forsyth	Bridget McCullough	Shuchi Sharma
Diana M. Bailey	Sue Franckel	Angela McDaniel	Kim Shelton
Daphne Ballantine	Cassandra Freeman	Doreen McGurl	Linda Shevitz
Tanya Barnett	Gloria Fuller	Melissa McKenna	Cindy Shubin
Keirsten Beckelhimer	Lisa Fuller	Lee McNair	Mary Silva
Vanessa Bedford	Therese Fuller	Giulia McPherson	Michelle Siri
Dian Belanger	Paul Geller	Niamh McQuillan	Linda Slack
Sandy Bell	Trisha Gentle	Ishrat Memon	Mary Sobray
Shruti Bhatnagar	Lynda Gomesz de la Vega	Jennifer Mercer	Toni St. John
Erica Boyd	Kimba Green	Kathy Milani	Tiffany Stephney
Melissa Boykin	Merchelle Halsey	Leslie Milano	Joan Stine
Mara Braverman	Patricia Harrison	Margaret Miller	Dawn Stoltzfus
Caroline Broder	Beth Hayden	Valerie Miller	Naomi Taffet
Carole Brown	Sylvie Henry	Juanita Miller	Susan W. Talbott
Shelly Brown	Elaine Hertzberg	Kacie Mills	Barbara Taylor
Sandra Bryant	Stacia Hilder	Stephanie Mobley	Phyllis Taylor-White
Shelia Bryant	Michele Holzman	Connie Moore	Sharyn Terrasa
Rhonda Caldwell-Dove	Betsey Hurwitz-Schwab	Jessica Morgan	Pamela Trickett
Dr. Valencia Campbell	Tahira Mussarat Hussain	Kayla Morgan	Phyllis Trickett
Hannah Cann	Jay Hutchins	Susan Nugent	Charlotte Twombly
Spencer Cantrell	Sharon Jacob	Annie O'Connell De Meo	Geraldine Valentino-Smith
Jon Cardin	Ashley Jarvis	Jessica O'Kane	C.R. Valeriann
Andrea Carroll	Carla Johnson	Reggie Oldak	Toean Vaughn
Darlene Carter	Elizabeth Johnson	Jo-Ann Mayer Orlinsky	Latasha Ward
Sharron Cassavant	Ricarra Jones	Sonja Osborne	Patricia Webb
Alice Chambers	Sabrina Jones	Anna Palmisano, Ph.D.	Millie West-Wiggins
Barbara Christensen	Lisae C Jordan	Roland N. Patterson, Jr.	Caren Williams
Inez Claggett	Elizabeth Joyce	Diana Philip	Cynthia Williams
Betty Clark	Lois Kelberman	Jennifer Pollitt Hill	Mike Wilson
Michaele Cohen	Renee Key	Jill Polm	Joan D. Winship
Weldina Conde	Savanna Khoury	Kathryn Pontzer	Keith Winters
Diana Conway	Roxann King	Sara Powel	Sabrina Winters
Beth Corbin	Mary Klausner	Anita Powell	Rebecca Wise
Annie Craig	Amy Knox	Erin Prangle	Teresa Woorman
Janet Wert Crampton	Margie Kotzalas	Adrienne Prentice	
Melissa Curtin	Joy Kroeger-Mappes	Le Shaun Quander-Mosley	
Sharon Daul	Claire Landers	Carol Ann Rahbar	
Melanie Davis	Jaime Lee	Heather Reichardt	
Kathy Deerkoski	Sarah Libby	Anita Riley	

*\*The names of individuals and organizational supporters may only support some components of the agenda that pertain to their mission and work.*





# Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women

---

## 2020 Agenda Process and Selection

In November, MLAW hosted its Fall Agenda Conference. Advocacy and women's groups were invited to present legislative initiatives for consideration. The criteria for initiatives to be presented at the conference were:

- Addresses an issue related to women's health, women's personal safety at home, in public, in school, and in the workplace; the ability to achieve and maintain economic independence; or freedom from discrimination in Maryland's economic, educational, judicial, political, and social system;
- Can be addressed through the legislation in the Maryland General Assembly;
- Has a reasonable chance to move successfully through the legislative process;
- Has an identifiable, sustainable lead group that can shepherd the bill.
- The lead group must:
  - Be a Maryland-based group or a national group with a strong on-the-ground presence in Maryland;
  - Have issue-area expertise and/or a track record of supporting legislation/advocacy in areas related to this proposal;
  - Have an identified representative who will be in regular contact with the MLAW Board of Directors about the progress of the legislation; and
  - Regularly provide legislative updates and supportive materials for MLAW to share with our members so that they can take action.

Following a successful conference, the Board of Directors met to review the legislation and ensure that it met the criteria. Bills that met the criteria were placed on a ballot, which was distributed to the MLAW membership. Members were asked to vote for the initiatives that would comprise the **2020 Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women**.





# Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women

---

## 2020 Legislative Initiatives

Criminal Law - Sexual Crimes - Repeal of Spousal Defense	5
Sexual Solicitation of a Minor – Solicitation Through Parent, Guardian, or Custodian – Prohibition and Penalties	6
Criminal Law - Assault in the First Degree - Suffocation or Strangulation	7
Protective Orders—Relief Eligibility—Rape and Sexual Offenses	8
Criminal Procedure - Motion to Vacate Judgment - Human Trafficking (True Freedom Act of 2020)	9
Public Safety - Rifles Shotguns - Secondary Transactions	10
Labor and Employment - Wage History and Wage Range	11
Labor and Employment—Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program—Establishment	12
Correctional Facilities—Prerelease Unit for Women – Requirement to Operate	13

# Criminal Law - Sexual Crimes - Repeal of Spousal Defense

**Bill Number:** SB230/HB590

**Synopsis:** This bill would repeal the law allowing marriage as a defense to sex crimes.

**Committee(s):** Senate Judicial Proceedings  
House Judiciary

**Bill Sponsor(s):** Senator Susan Lee, 301-858-3124  
Delegate Charlotte Crutchfield, 410-848-3485

**Lead Group(s):** Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
Lisae C. Jordan, Executive Director & Counsel  
443-995-5544

## **Background:**

This is a bill to repeal the current statute that makes marriage a defense to some sex crimes. Sexual assault disproportionately affects women.

Like many states, Maryland's laws were based on the premise that marriage was consent to sex and that, therefore, a man could not rape his wife. Unlike many states, Maryland has not yet firmly rejected that antiquated and fundamentally disrespectful concept.

Criminal Law §3-318 provides that marriage is a defense to certain sex crimes. We have made some progress: Spouses can be prosecuted for any sex crime if they have a limited divorce. Additionally, if the parties have been separate and apart and "without cohabitation" (meaning without having sexual relations) and they have been separated for three months or have a written separation agreement, then they can be prosecuted for sex crimes that are not based on age or capacity. Finally, if the rape involved actual force or threat of force, marriage is not a defense. For other sex crimes, marriage is a complete defense.

Marriage should never be a defense to a sex crime.

# Sexual Solicitation of a Minor – Solicitation Through Parent, Guardian, or Custodian – Prohibition and Penalties

**Bill Number:** SB231/HB246

**Synopsis:** This bill expands the definition of sexual solicitation of a minor to include the solicitation of the parent, legal guardian, or custodian of a minor, or a hypothetical minor, to consent to the participation of such a minor in sexual acts.

**Committee(s):** Senate Judicial Proceedings  
House Judiciary

**Bill Sponsor(s):** Senator Susan Lee, 301-858-3124  
Delegate Jesse Pippy, 410-841-3118

**Lead Group(s):** Maryland State Attorney's Association (MSAA)  
Joyce King, Chief Counsel, Frederick County State's Attorney's Office  
JKing1@statesattorney.us

## **Background:**

Sexual solicitation of a minor often occurs via that minor's parent or guardian. Currently, such solicitation is not prohibited by Maryland Code. Further, the current Maryland Code includes no provision prohibiting the solicitation of a minor when such a minor is hypothetical (*Criminal Law, § 3-324. Sexual solicitation of minors*). For example, under current law, a person may sexually solicit a hypothetical minor via what the solicitor believes to be the parent of a minor but if no such minor exists, the act is not prohibited. This hole in Code was highlighted by a decision handed down by the Maryland Court of Special Appeals in *Vaqaar Choudry v. State of Maryland*. Choudry arranged via a third party to go to a motel room to engage in sexual relations with a prepubescent girl. However, because the prepubescent girl did not actually exist (the third party had instead notified the police), Choudry was found not guilty. While the sexual solicitation of a hypothetical minor has no immediate victim, such solicitation increases the likelihood of actual child rape and should be treated as seriously as sexual solicitation of an actual minor.

The legislation would close the loopholes mentioned in the section above in order to deter and more easily prosecute the actual and the attempted sexual solicitation of a minor in Maryland. The victims of sexual solicitation and child rape include many young women, and this legislation seeks to close loopholes that allow sexual predators to escape prostitution.

The proposed legislation expands the existing Code (*Criminal Law, § 3-324. Sexual solicitation of minors*) to affirmatively prohibit the sexual solicitation of a minor, or hypothetical minor, via a parent, guardian, or custodian. The proposed bill also doubles the maximum penalties for the second offense of sexual solicitation of a minor from not to exceed 10 years in prison to not to exceed 20 years in prison and from a fine not to exceed \$25,000 to a fine not to exceed \$50,000.

# Criminal Law - Assault in the First Degree - Suffocation or Strangulation

**Bill Number:** SB212/HB233

**Synopsis:** This bill would decrease the risk of femicide by designating intentional suffocation and strangulation as Assault in the First Degree.

**Committee(s):** Senate Judicial Proceedings  
House Judiciary

**Bill Sponsor(s):** Senator Susan Lee, 301-858-3124  
Delegate Jesse Pippy, 410-841-3118  
Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, 410-841-3471

**Lead Group(s):** Frederick County State's Attorney's Office  
Joyce King, Chief Counsel  
JKing1@statesattorney.us

## **Background:**

Non-fatal strangulation is one of the most significant risk factors for femicide. Studies have shown that prior non-fatal strangulation is associated with a six-fold increase in the chances of attempted homicide and a seven-fold increase in the chances of completed homicide.

Under current law, suffocation and strangulation is classified as Assault in the Second Degree (*Criminal Law §3-203*), which puts such offenses in the same legal category as a slap. This bill would reclassify suffocation and strangulation as Assault in the First Degree (*Criminal Law §3-202*.) The measure creates nuance in the Code and recognizes that suffocation and strangulation, which are heinous in their own right and a red-flag of future and more extreme violence against women, are to be treated as a serious form of assault.

The bill redesignates intentional suffocation and strangulation from Assault in the Second Degree (*Criminal Law §3-203*) to Assault in the First Degree (*Criminal Law §3-202*).

# Protective Orders—Relief Eligibility—Rape and Sexual Offenses

**Bill Number:** SB210/HB248

**Synopsis:** This bill alters the definition of “person eligible for relief” in a domestic violence protective order to include any individual who alleges s/he is a victim of a rape or sexual offense within one year of filing the petition and by removing them from the peace order to clarify that these victims are eligible to receive all of the protections of a protective order rather than a peace order.

**Committee(s):** Senate Judicial Proceedings  
House Judiciary

**Bill Sponsor(s):** Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, 301-858-3137  
Senator Chris West, 410-841-3648  
Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, 410-841-3471

**Lead Group(s):** House of Ruth Maryland  
Dorothy Lennig  
dlennig@hruthmd.org, 410-274-7773

## **Background:**

For many years, domestic violence and sexual assault advocates have worked to have the protective order (PO) cover victims who were in dating relationships and victims of sexual assault. One of our first attempts to add this resulted in the creation of the peace order. While the PO covered these acts, many victims were not eligible for a PO because of their relationship to the abuser. In 2015, the law changed to include victims on sexual relationships. Since then there have been a number of judges who believe date rape victims do not qualify for a PO because the parties were not in a “relationship.” By clarifying that this group of victims is eligible for a PO, it provides them with the special protections of a protective order that are not included in peace orders, e.g. longer order, removal of firearms, more robust response by law enforcement.

# Criminal Procedure - Motion to Vacate Judgment - Human Trafficking (True Freedom Act of 2020)

**Bill Number:** SB206/HB242

**Synopsis:** This bill expands Maryland's current "vacating convictions" law to allow criminalized survivors of human trafficking to remove crimes *other than* prostitution from their criminal records would significantly increase the ability of these survivors to access to employment and stable housing, as well as heal from the trauma of their trafficking experience.

**Committee(s):** Senate Judicial Proceedings  
House Judiciary

**Bill Sponsor(s):** Senator Susan Lee, 410-841-3124  
Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, 410-841-3471

**Lead Group(s):** Human Trafficking Prevention Project  
Jessica Emerson  
jemerson@ubalt.edu, 410-837-4566

## **Background:**

Victims of human trafficking, a significant portion of whom are female-identified, are commonly forced to engage in various criminal acts by their traffickers. Survivors who are arrested and convicted for crimes they were forced to commit often experience difficulties obtaining safe housing and gainful employment, which in turn keeps them trapped in poverty and vulnerable to continued exploitation.

Although Maryland law already allows survivors of sex trafficking to vacate, or, set aside prostitution convictions stemming from their trafficking experience, prostitution is only one of many crimes these survivors are commonly forced to commit. Under Maryland's current "vacating convictions" law, only prostitution convictions are eligible for vacatur. As a result, the number of survivors able to access this form of legal relief is low, while the need for legal relief remains high. Additionally, the singular focus on prostitution convictions means that criminalized survivors of labor trafficking are completely ineligible for relief. Survivors who are unable to access this form of relief continue to experience stigma as well as difficulties reintegrating back into society following their victimization.

This proposed change in law will expand Maryland's current "vacating convictions" law to apply explicitly to survivors of labor trafficking, as well as expand the number of crimes eligible for vacatur. Without these changes, Maryland's vacatur law will continue to leave a large number of survivors without the legal relief they so desperately need to heal from the trauma of their exploitation and become productive members of their communities. Criminalized survivors in Maryland deserve access to legal relief that reflects their lived experiences and that provides them access to the stability and independence they deserve.

# Public Safety—Rifles and Shotguns—Secondary Transactions

**Bill Number:** SB208/HB4

**Synopsis:** This bill would close a loophole in Maryland law to require a background check on all gun sales.

**Committee(s):** Senate Judicial Proceedings  
House Judiciary

**Bill Sponsor(s):** Senator Susan Lee, 410-841-3124  
Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, 410-841-3471

**Lead Group(s):** Moms Demand Action for Gunsense in America, Maryland Chapter  
Caroline Broder, 703-507 1081, brodercaroline@gmail.com  
Bridget McCullough, 301-466-5177, smwandmbm@aol.com

## **Background:**

Maryland law prohibits the possession of any firearms—including handguns, rifles and shotguns—by people with dangerous histories, including people who have been convicted of crimes of violence, domestic abusers, and those who have been made subject to an Extreme Risk Protective Order because they pose a danger to themselves or others.

Background checks are the most effective way to keep guns out of the hands of those who are legally prohibited from having them. Yet, federal law only requires a background check on guns sold by licensed gun dealers, creating a dangerous loophole that leaves unlicensed gun sales, like those negotiated over the internet or at gun shows, unregulated and unchecked.

For two decades, Maryland law has partially addressed this loophole by requiring a background check on all handgun sales in the state, including sales by unlicensed sellers. But a gap in Maryland law makes it easy for prohibited purchasers to buy rifles and shotguns from unlicensed sellers with no background check and no questions asked.

Maryland should close this dangerous loophole by requiring a background check for all rifle and shotgun sales.



# Labor and Employment—Wage History and Wage Range

**Bill Number:** HB123/SB217

**Synopsis:** This bill prohibits employers from using an applicant's previous salary to determine an employee's new salary.

**Committee(s):** House Economic Matters  
Senate Finance

**Bill Sponsor(s):** Delegate Karen Lewis-Young, 410-841-3436  
Senator Susan Lee, 410-841-3124

**Lead Group(s):** National Women's Law Center  
Andrea Johnson  
ajohnson@nwlc.org, 202-319-3041

## **Background:**

America was founded on the idea that all of us are created equal. This ideal should hold true at home and at work. Paying people fairly for the work that they do should not depend on gender or race, but America is falling short on this ideal across all sectors of the economy. The federal Equal Pay Act of 1963 and the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 helped to close the gender pay gap, but they were not enough. Despite the passage of these laws, women on average still only make 80 cents for every dollar a man makes. The situation is even worse for women of color. African American women make 60 cents, and Latinas only 55 cents per each dollar made by a white man.

The wage gap damages the long-term security of women and their families. Over a woman's lifetime, the gender gap is estimated to cost her between \$500,000 and \$1.2 million. This is a staggering amount of unfair lost income, and it means less money to make ends meet, save to purchase a home, send kids to college, or retire with dignity.

A 2015 study discovered 93% of voters want to ensure women and men receive equal pay for equal work, and a 2014 survey found that equal pay was ranked as the most important issue to working class women.

While stopping employers from asking salary history and making compensation information more transparent will not completely close the wage, these measures are huge leaps in the right direction. It is incredibly important to pass pay equity now since the wage gap has barely decreased in the last decade.

# Labor and Employment— Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program—Establishment

**Bill Number:** HB839/SB539

**Synopsis:** The Time to Care Act establishes a Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program through which employees may take up to 12 weeks of paid leave from their jobs to care for new children, other family members with serious health conditions or disabilities, or themselves. The benefit level is calculated based on the employee's weekly wage and the State's average weekly wage. In general, the amount received by low-income employees reflects a higher percentage of their total wages.

**Committee(s):** House Economic Matters  
Senate Finance

**Bill Sponsor(s):** Delegate Kris Valderrama, 410-841-3210  
Senator Antonia Hayes, 410-841-3656

**Lead Group(s):** Maryland Family Network  
Clinton Macsherry  
410-370-9429, [cmacsherry@marylandfamilynetwork.org](mailto:cmacsherry@marylandfamilynetwork.org)

## **Background:**

We all need time to care—for new babies, for aging parents, for loved ones with health needs or disabilities, or for ourselves.

Yet many Marylanders can't take time to care because they lack paid family leave. Only 17% of U.S. workers have access to paid family leave and fewer than 40% have paid personal leave for short-term disabilities. Unpaid leave forces too many Americans, especially those whose needs are the greatest, to choose between income and family when illness strikes, when new babies arrive, or when the needs of a family member with a disability intensify. Nearly 25% of women, for example, take 10 or fewer days of parental leave, potentially putting themselves and their children at risk physically and emotionally.

Eight states and the District of Columbia have created paid leave programs and the federal government just enacted paid family leave for federal employees. Paid leave programs are proven to reduce poverty and improve public health outcomes.

The Time to Care Act establishes a Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program making paid leave available to Maryland workers for up to 12 weeks following the birth or adoption of a child and when needed to provide care for a family member or oneself. The leave would be funded through an insurance pool, into which workers and their employers contribute.

# Correctional Facilities—Prerelease Unit for Women— Requirement to Operate

**Bill Number:** HB608/SB682

**Synopsis:** This bill would require, instead of authorizing, the commissioner to operate a prerelease unit for women.

**Committee(s):** House Judiciary  
Senate Judicial Proceedings

**Bill Sponsor(s):** Delegate Charlotte Crutchfield, 410-841-3485  
Senator Mary Washington, 410-841-3145

**Lead Group(s):** Maryland Justice Project  
Monica Cooper, 443-462-6924, [monica@marylandjusticeproject.org](mailto:monica@marylandjusticeproject.org)  
Out for Justice, Nicole Hanson, 443-600-0920, [nicole@out4justice.org](mailto:nicole@out4justice.org)

## **Background:**

In 2009 the Department of Corrections shut down the one and only Pre-release Center for Women and sent the participants back to the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (MCIW). To this day D.O.C is trying to run a Pre-Release Center for Women inside a Maximum Security Facility from prison cells. This essentially does not fit the criteria of a Pre-release Center and it is Discriminatory on its face. There are 9 separate Brick and Mortar Pre-Release Centers for Men and Zero for Women. Every human being released from incarceration should have the same opportunities and access to programs and jobs which are put in place for individuals to have a successful re-entry to the community. This is an equity issue, a title IX issue and a gender discrimination issue. Women deserve the same opportunity to heal become whole and return to their families as tax paying citizens just like the men.

Baltimore Pre-Release Unit for Women began in July 1975 as Community Corrections Center for Women. In 1978, Center was renamed Pre-Release Unit for Women and placed under jurisdiction of Maryland Correctional Pre-Release System (Code Correctional Services Article, secs. 3-301 through 3-305). Unit moved from 4500 Park Heights Avenue to 301 North Calverton Road in July 1991. At that time, it was renamed Baltimore Pre-Release Unit for Women with a capacity for 136 inmates. It was placed under jurisdiction of Maryland Correctional Institution for Women - Jessup in Nov. 1999.

Under the Maryland Women Pre-Release Unit Code Annotated 3-303, it is the commissioner duties to provide rehabilitative pre-release services to develop, implement, assist, and make sure pre-release women needs are met. However, due to overcrowding most women are released without ever obtaining any educational, wellness, or substance abuse help needed to successfully integrate and transition back into their communities. They never receive work release opportunities. Furthermore, due to not receiving aid two-thirds of the women incarcerated, thirty-one percent are repeat offenders.

Legislation re-establishing a separate Brick and Mortar Pre-release Center for Women will finally provide gender equity for incarcerated women. Per a former resident who was recently released after 19 years' "women are being released after years of incarceration with no transitioning, training, programing, or work release to prepare them for the real world. One example was a woman being recently released where she never had any computer training, never attended any programing preparing her for her release, and she never participated in work release". We must insist that the Department of Public Safety and Correction provide equity among its Men and Women being released from incarceration.

# *Demonstrate Your Womanpower with MLAW*

## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO TAKE ACTION ON LEGISLATION

MLAW (Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women) is a statewide group of organizations and individuals working to provide an independent, non-partisan voice advocating for critical legislation and policies affecting women and their families. Visit our website at [www.mdlegagendaforwomen.org](http://www.mdlegagendaforwomen.org) for more information.

**Here are a few steps you can take to stay informed about legislation you care about and to let your legislators know your position.**



**SIGN UP FOR MLAW'S YAHOO LIST SERVE** to receive information, updates, alerts, and other information of interest.



**LEARN MORE** about the issues you care about.



**CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS** during the session:

- ★ Call, write, e-mail, fax or visit legislators to express your support or opposition to legislation. You can find who your state legislators are, their contact information, copies of bills, hearing schedules and more at <http://mlis.state.md.us>.
- ★ Contact the lead group or groups to find out more about what you can do to support or oppose legislative proposals or other issues.
- ★ Attend a legislative hearing and be a visible supporter.
- ★ Submit written or give oral testimony.
- ★ Find out how your legislators voted – and hold them accountable – by letters or by your next opportunity to vote for them.



**SPREAD THE WORD** – promote the MLAW Agenda and other issues to friends and colleagues and encourage them to take action.



**MAINTAIN FOCUS** on key areas: health care, reproductive rights, economics, family law, domestic and sexual violence.



**JOIN MLAW** to support an independent voice for women's and family issues.



**PARTICIPATE** – and build women's collective power.

**Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women**

305 W. Chesapeake Avenue, Suite 201 • Towson, MD 21204

Phone/Fax: 443-519-1005 • [mdlegagenda4women@yahoo.com](mailto:mdlegagenda4women@yahoo.com) • [www.mdlegagendaforwomen.org](http://www.mdlegagendaforwomen.org)



# Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women

*Celebrating 25 Years of Advocacy: 1994-2019*

## 2019-2020 Membership Form

MLAW's membership year is July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020

### ***I Want to Make a Difference!***

#### ***I Want to be an MLAW Member***

**Type of Membership** (check only one):

- ☐ \$40 - Individual
- ☐ \$75 - Organization revenue under \$25,000
- ☐ \$125 - Organization revenue over \$25,000

*If you are joining as both an individual and an organization, please complete a separate form for EACH membership.*

#### ***I Want to Do More by Making an Additional Donation***

☐ \$500   ☐ \$250   ☐ \$100   ☐ \$50   Other \_\_\_\_\_

☐ **Help us celebrate with a special donation of \$25 for 25 years**

*This donation may also be made in honor of a special person in your life.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Payment:**

☐ A check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_, made payable to MLAW, is enclosed.

☐ I want to pay through PayPal. Go to the MLAW website at:  
<http://www.mdlegagendaforwomen.org>

**Individual or Organization:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Please spell out organization name. No acronyms.*

**Contact Name** (for organizations only) \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**IMPORTANT!** Please include an email address. Most of the business of MLAW will be conducted via email.

**Mail this completed form to:**

**MLAW**

**305 W. Chesapeake Avenue, Suite 201**

**Towson, MD 21204**

*The Maryland Legislative Agenda for Maryland Women (MLAW) is a 501(c)4 organization. Because we engage in legislative advocacy, contributions to MLAW are not tax-deductible.*