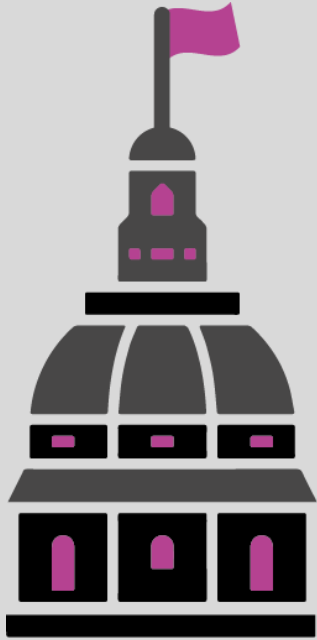


MLAW

Maryland Legislative
Agenda for Women

2021 Agenda



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2021 Agenda

Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women
305 W. Chesapeake Avenue, Suite 201, Towson, MD 21204
443-519-1005 phone/fax
mdlegagenda4women@yahoo.com
www.mdlegagendaforwomen.org



1994 - 2021

27 Years of Advocacy for Women's and Family Issues

MLAW is the only statewide coalition of women's groups and individuals that provides a non-partisan, independent voice for Maryland women and families. MLAW harnesses the **collective power of women** by mobilizing, coordinating and collaborating with networks, groups, and individuals from all over the state to **advocate for the passage of legislation to 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 97 pieces of legislation enacted by the Maryland General Assembly** since its inception.

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 an annual legislative briefing 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 27 years, but there is more to be done. **Join us and help us continue to make a difference for Maryland women and families.**



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

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Lynn Gilbert	Erin Prangley	Caren Williams

Administrative Staff: Jessica Morgan



Statement on Racism

The Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) unequivocally supports the Black Lives Matter movement and stands in solidarity with African American communities as an ally in the fight against systemic racism, racial injustice, and discrimination.

Diversity and equity are two of the core values through which MLAW strongly advocates for its legislative priorities centered around addressing issues of concern to women and that also disproportionately affect communities of color.

Too often, well-intended advocacy efforts ignore the unique challenges of the very communities the efforts aim to support. We are committed to ensuring that we are not just opposed to systemic racism and racist policies, but that we as an organization are actively working towards anti-racist solutions. As we work collaboratively with our members and partner networks towards solutions, we will be more deliberate about establishing meaningful relationships and dialogue with the communities being supported.

To that end, the MLAW Board of Directors will ensure the following:

1. All legislative proposals submitted for consideration for the annual MLAW Legislative Agenda must include information about racial impact and be reviewed by the Board of Directors using a racial equity lens.
2. The MLAW Legislative Agenda will include at least one racial equity bill per legislative session.
3. Presenters, sponsors, and advocates for proposed legislation and attendees at our events will be representative of the diverse and wonderful communities that we seek to uplift and support.
4. MLAW's Board of Directors and membership will represent diversity in perspectives, ideas, culture, backgrounds, race, and ethnicity.
5. MLAW will ensure broader and consistent outreach to gain a more diverse membership and increase engagement in MLAW's education and advocacy efforts.

For over 25 years MLAW has provided a non-partisan, independent voice for Maryland women and families, and we will continue to strive to be an organization that is committed to advocating for anti-racist, progressive legislation and policies that promote and protect the well being of Maryland women and their families and provides them opportunities to develop their full potential.

2021 MLAW SUPPORTERS

Organizations

AAUW Anne Arundel County
AAUW Easton Branch
AAUW Kensington Rockville Branch
American Association of University Women (AAUW) Maryland
Anne Arundel County NOW
Baltimore NOW (National Organization for Women)
Bound for Better, Advocates for Domestic Violence Survivors
Business and Professional Women Maryland
Calvert County Commission for Women
Cambridge Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
Charles County Commission for Women
Childway Early Learning Center
Church Women United
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Annapolis Alumnae Chapter
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Kappa Phi Chapter
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Baltimore County Alumnae Chapter
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Baltimore Metropolitan Alumnae Chapter
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Fort Washington Alumnae Chapter
Delta Sigma Theta Inc., Frederick County Alumnae Chapter
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Harford County Alumnae Chapter
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Kappa Psi Chapter
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Montgomery County MD Alumnae Chapter
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., North Arundel County Alumnae Chapter
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Potomac Valley Alumnae Chapter
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Prince George's County Alumnae Chapter
For All Seasons, Inc.
Hug Don't Shoot
Human Trafficking Prevention Project, University of Baltimore School of Law
League of Women Voters of Prince George's County (LWVPGC)
Lee Law, LLC
Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Maryland Family Network
Maryland Justice Project
Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence
Maryland NOW
Maryland Women's Heritage Center
Mission 50
MoCoWoMen
Montgomery County Commission for Women
Montgomery County NOW (National Organization for Women)
Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club
Montgomery County Young Democrats
NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland
National Coalition of 100 Black Women., Inc. Anne Arundel County Chapter
National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Prince George's County Chapter
Planned Parenthood of Maryland
Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington DC
Prince George's County Drug Policy Coalition, Inc.
Reproductive Justice Inside
Stella's Girls Inc.
The Rest Of A Life (TROAL)
Top Ladies of Distinction
Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc., Patuxent River Chapter
Top Ladies of Distinction, Prince George's County Chapter
UAW Local 1183
WISE
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

Nas Afi	Jessica Emerson	Ashley Lawrence	Sylvia Quinton
Lillian Agbeyegbe	Karan Engerman	Jamie Lewis	Gloria Ray
Antonell Aikens-Thompson	Nikita Evans	Allison Lewis	Heather Reichardt
Edith Allison	Fran Everett	Linna Liberchuk	Vera Reublinger
Isabel Argoti	Patricia Farmer	Dania Lofton	Anita Riley
Wandra Ashley-Williams	Ylonda Fauntleroy	Patricia Maclay, MD	Diane Roca
Shawn Ashworth	Barbara Feldmann	Linda Mahoney	Anita Rosen
Lee Bachu	Jeannette Feldner	Ruth Manchester	Constance Rosser
Diana M Bailey	Patricia Fenn	Barbara Marder	Morgan Rosser
Suzanne Bailey	Elena Martinez Fernandez	Meghan Marek	Fran Rothstein
Dyamond Bailey-Frazier	Mary Fisher	Beth Marrow	Niv Roy Ghatak
Alena Bandy	Ann Fisher	Ruth Martin	Diana Rubin
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Dian Belanger	Lisa Fuller	Brenda McChriston	Laurie-Anne Sayles
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Shruti Bhatnagar	Jennifer Hall	Kathy McKnight	Shuchi Sharma
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Sharon Blugis	Mary Anne Hardy	Ishrat Memon	Michelle Siri
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Kris Boyer	Amy Hecht-Zizes	Tracy Miller	Sydney Spencer
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Constance Buckley	Scott Houston	Yonelle Moore Lee, Esq.	C. R. Valeriann
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Sharron Cassavant	Ella Iams	Pilar Morgan	Edith C. Williams
Lucy Cassilly Godfrey	Anisah Ingram	Kayla Morgan	Hope Williams
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Alice Chambers	Sharon Jacob	Deborah Mosby	Dianne Williams
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Diana Conway	Linda Jones	Becca Niburg	Teresa Woorman
Monica Cooper	Tracy Jones	Kim Noble	Lynda Wright
Patricia Cornish	Sabrina Jones-Smith	Gary Norman	Dollie C. Wright
Kimberly Craig	Lisae C Jordan	Patsy Nwagbaraocha	Mary Wright
Janet Wert Crampton	Denise Joseph	Rosemarie O'Brien	Marva Younger
Sylvia Crowder	Elizabeth Joyce	Kirsten Oliver	
Melissa Curtin	Chelsea Kadish	Sarah Oliviera	
Sandy Daniels	Lois Kelberman	Sonja Osborne	
Greta T. Davis	Roxann King	Katrina Patterson	
Jane de Winter	Mary Klausner	Denise Perry	
Joanna Diamond	Mettah Kollmann	Diana Philip	
Nicole Drew	JoAnne Koravos	Erin Prangley	
Linda Eggbeer	Barbara Lake	Belinda Queen	
Jeanne Ellinport	Beth Anne Langrell	Delegate Pamela Queen	

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2021 Agenda Process and Bill 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.

This year we added a requirement that all legislative proposals submitted for consideration for the annual MLAW Legislative Agenda must include information about racial impact and be reviewed by the Board of Directors using a racial equity lens.

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 **2021 Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women.**



2021 Agenda Initiatives

SB57/HB748—Family Law – Child Custody and Visitation

Presented by: Senator Susan Lee

SB505/HB277—Criminal Law – First Degree Child Abuse – Continuing Course of Conduct

Presented by: Kathryn Marsh, Prince George’s County States Attorneys Office

SB250/HB147—Criminal Law – Sexual Crimes – Repeal of Spousal Defense (Love is No Defense to Sexual Crimes)

Presented by: Lisae Jordan, Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA)

SB427/HB205—Public Schools - Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products - Requirement

Presented by: Diana Philip, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland

SB172/HB463—Maryland Health Equity Resource Act

Presented by: Stephanie Klapper, Maryland Health Care for All

SB211/HB375—Labor and Employment - Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program – Establishment (Time to Care Act of 2021)

Presented by: Myles Hicks, Time to Care Coalition

SB486/HB581—Labor and Employment – Employment Standards During an Emergency (Maryland Essential Workers’ Protections Act)

Presented by: Ricarra Jones, SEIU1199

2020 Agenda - Veto Overrides

HB4—Public Safety – Rifles and Shotguns – Sales, Rentals, and Transfer

Presented by: Eric Greynolds, Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, Maryland

SB684—Correctional Services – Prerelease Unit for Women – Facilities and Services (Gender Responsive Prerelease Act)

Presented by: Nicole Hansen-Mundell, Out for Justice

Family Law – Child Custody and Visitation

Bill Numbers: [SB57/HB748](#)

Committee(s) bill is assigned to: Senate Judicial Proceedings

Lead Legislative Sponsor – Senate: Senator Susan Lee

Lead Legislative Sponsor – House: Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary

Lead Group: Secretary of State Address Confidentiality Program

Lead Group Contact: Brittany Lore, Brittany.Lore@maryland.gov

Describe the problem your bill attempts to address and how it relates to women:

The Courts are supposed to allow individuals access to justice, but for child custody disputes when there are allegations of child abuse or domestic violence, many victims are revictimised by the very institution designed to protect them. Across the country there is a growing problem with the acceptance of debunked junk science surrounding the Parental Alienation Syndrome. On top of that, judges are confused with existing Family Law Article 9-101, and fail to articulate what best interest of the child factors they weigh when they made rulings on child custody. In combination with the Daubert standard adoption, we must confront this space because the judiciary has no incentive for self examination.

Describe your proposed legislative solution and how it will benefit women:

Women will be better able to bring claims of abuse without fear that the very complaint to protect their child will be used against them during a custody proceeding. Judges apply the law improperly and pro se litigants have trouble with the common law best interest of the child standards. Codification of these standards and more clearly guiding judges and allow litigants to understand the proceedings and relevant factors. The articulation of the factors and application of the law should be paramount in this space that should be to protect women and children, not place them under increased stress and danger.

Provide a summary of your proposed legislation:

There is a legislative package of bills based off of the workgroup recently concluded in this area. The initial prefiled bill would clarify 9-101 of the family law article, and codify the best interest of the child factors.

Does your legislation benefit communities of color? If so, describe specifically how:

Not clear, but it would disproportionately harm vulnerable communities generally. Pro Se litigants should be able to better understand the relevant legal factors without having to sort through case law. There is likely a disparate impact on communities of color, with disparity of justice depending on wealth.

Criminal Law – First Degree Child Abuse – Continuing Course of Conduct

Bill Numbers: [SB505](#)/[HB277](#)

Committee(s) bill is assigned to: House Judiciary and Senate Judicial Proceedings

Lead Legislative Sponsor – Senate: Senator Shelly Hettleman

Lead Legislative Sponsor – House: Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary

Lead Group: Prince George's County State's Attorney's Office

Lead Group Contact: Kathryn Marsh, Assistant Chief Special Victim's Unit,
kamarsh@co.pg.md.us

Describe the problem your bill attempts to address and how it relates to women:

Currently first degree child abuse requires death of the child or a serious physical injury which is defined as a brain injury, bleeding within the skull, substantial risk of death, disfigurement or the loss or impairment of a bodily organ. First degree child abuse does not cover children with numerous healing fractures, repeated abuse, some burns or other injuries often diagnosed by medical professionals as torture. Instead these repeated injuries can only be covered by 2nd child abuse which is not a crime of violence, maxes out at ten years which only requires a perpetrator to serve 1/4 of their sentence before they're eligible for parole. This puts a continued course of child abuse on par with misdemeanor second degree assault and does not provide the same needed protections to women and families.

Describe your proposed legislative solution and how it will benefit women:

By making a continuing course of child abuse part of the first degree child abuse statute, it makes the continued course of action a crime of violence providing stiffer penalties that will better protect women and families.

Provide a summary of your proposed legislation:

This bill adds a continuing course of physical child abuse to the statute for first degree child abuse.

Does your legislation benefit communities of color? If so, describe specifically how:

This legislation protects all of the State's most vulnerable victims, our children, of all races and nationalities.

Criminal Law – Sexual Crimes – Repeal of Spousal Defense (Love is No Defense to Sexual Crimes)

Bill Numbers: [SB250/](#)[HB147](#)

Committee(s) bill is assigned to: Senate Judicial Proceedings, House Judiciary

Lead Legislative Sponsor – Senate: Senator Susan Lee

Lead Legislative Sponsor – House: Delegate Charlotte Crutchfield

Lead Group: Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA)

Lead Group Contact: Lisae C Jordan, Executive Director & Counsel, lcjordan@mcasa.org

Describe the problem your bill attempts to address and how it relates to women:

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.

Describe your proposed legislative solution and how it will benefit women:

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. This bill repeals Criminal Law §3-318. Marriage should never be a defense to a sex crime.

Provide a summary of your proposed legislation:

A bill to repeal the law allowing marriage as a defense to sex crimes.

Does your legislation benefit communities of color? If so, describe specifically how:

Black and Indigenous women who are victims of sex crimes receive less police protection, less interventions, fewer prosecutions of their assaulter, and less assistance. African American females experience intimate partner violence at a rate 35% higher than that of white females, and about 2.5 times the rate of women of other races, (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001). 48% of Latinas in one study reported that their partner's violence against them had increased since they immigrated to the US. (Dutton, Mary; Leslye Orloff, and Giselle Aguilar Hass. 2000, Characteristics of help-seeking behaviors, resources, and services needs of battered immigrant Latinas: Legal and Policy implications. Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law and Policy. 7(2)). This bill will help reform a criminal justice system that fails women of color.

Public Schools - Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products - Requirement

Bill Numbers: [SB427](#)/[HB205](#)

Committee(s) bill is assigned to: Senate Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs, House Ways & Means

Lead Legislative Sponsor – Senate: Senator Sarah Elfreth

Lead Legislative Sponsor – House: Delegate Kirill Reznik

Lead Group: Menstrual Equity Alliance for Maryland Students, a project by NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland

Lead Group Contact: Diana Philip, Executive Director, diana@prochoicemd.org

Describe the problem your bill attempts to address and how it relates to women:

Period poverty, defined as the inability to access menstrual hygiene products, and the corresponding issue of period stigma are barriers to education for many Maryland students. Recent data has shown that low-income women are likely to be unable to afford menstrual hygiene products in the U.S. A 2019 report in the Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology found that two-thirds of women living in poverty could not afford such products the previous year and one-fifth could not afford them on a monthly basis. The Maryland Department of Education reports that in 2019, 43.2% of Maryland public school students enrolled for free or reduced price meals, indicating that their families struggled to afford basic necessities and many of whom are students of menstruating age. Another recent study commissioned by Thinx and Period (a nonprofit fighting period poverty), found that 1 in 5 U.S. teens have struggled to afford period products or could not afford them at all. The same survey also found that 84% of students have missed class time or skipped school altogether due to a lack of access to menstrual hygiene products. Maryland passed a menstrual equity bill in 2017 for public school students experiencing housing instability, but the products are available only in school nurse offices, where distance and limited hours can create problems, as well as little awareness of the law.

Describe your proposed legislative solution and how it will benefit women:

The bill call for all public middle and high schools to install menstrual hygiene product dispensers in at least two restrooms in each building, and at least in one restroom in each elementary school by October 2021, and almost all restrooms by August 2025. Public schools will be required to install low cost, quality vending machines to supply maxi pads and tampons, free to students, with size-appropriate products. The legislation seeks to increase school attendance and extracurricular participation among menstruating students who lack access to such products, and decrease peer harassment that contributes to poor school climate.

Provide a summary of your proposed legislation:

Requires all public elementary, middle, and high schools to install menstrual hygiene product dispensers in restrooms over the next 5 year-period.

Does your legislation benefit communities of color? If so, describe specifically how:

Average age of menarche (first menstruation) is 12; today, anywhere from 30% – 50% of girls are getting their period before this age. Hispanic and African American girls menstruate before their white counterparts, on average and, generally, the age of menarche is continuing to decline. Access to menstrual hygiene products are a serious barrier to students' education and disproportionately impacts students of color from low-income families.

Maryland Health Equity Resource Act

Bill Number: [SB172/](#)[HB463](#)

Committee(s) bill is assigned to: Senate Budget & Taxation; House Health & Government Operations

Lead Legislative Sponsor – Senate: Senator Antonio Hayes

Lead Legislative Sponsor – House: Delegate Erik L. Barron

Lead Group: Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative

Lead Group Contact: Stephanie Klapper, Deputy Director, stephanie@healthcareforall.com

Describe the problem your bill attempts to address and how it relates to women:

Health inequities based on race, ethnicity, disability and place of residence persist throughout the state, as shown in maternal and infant mortality rates and other measures. Inequities are stark at the intersection of gender, race, and location. In Maryland, black mothers die due to pregnancy 4 times more than white mothers, with the disparity continuing to widen over time. The infant mortality rate for Black non-Hispanic infants is 2.5 times the rate for White non-Hispanic infants, with rates worse for rural black infants than urban black infants.

Describe your proposed legislative solution and how it will benefit women:

Health Equity Resource Communities would improve health equity, including for women. Communities would compete for grants, tax incentives, and health care provider loan repayment assistance to reduce disparities, including by race and gender, and improve health equity. Funding for the Communities, as well as programs to address substance use and mental health disorders, would come from a one penny per dollar increase in the state alcohol beverage sales tax starting in 2021. Unlike the Health Enterprise Zones pilot which ended after 5 years, money raised by the alcohol tax for the Health Equity Resource Communities would go directly into a dedicated fund for the program to help ensure longevity. This funding would also help create new mental health and substance use disorder programs. In addition to generating much needed funds, the tax itself will save lives and lower health care costs by reducing underage drinking, binge drinking, driving under the influence, and sexually transmitted infections, just like what happened after the last alcohol sales tax increase in 2011. Binge drinking comes with health risks and binge drinking rates are currently rising faster for women than men.

Provide a summary of your proposed legislation:

This legislation would create Health Equity Resource Communities which would be geographic locations in the state with poor health outcomes that compete for grants, tax incentives, and health care provider loan repayment assistance to increase access to culturally competent care and ultimately reduce health inequities; funding for the Communities, as well as programs to address substance use and mental health disorders, will come from a one penny per dollar increase in the state alcohol beverage sales tax starting in 2021.

Does your legislation benefit communities of color? If so, describe specifically how:

This proposal would improve health equity for communities of color. Stark health inequities by race and ethnicity persist, and have been further exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Black and

Latino residents are dying from COVID-19 at higher rates than white residents. Even prior to the pandemic, inequities by race, ethnicity, and location were apparent. In Baltimore City life expectancy is roughly 20 years less for people in certain West Baltimore ZIP codes compared to those living just a few miles away in more affluent, white areas, while rates of chronic disease and infant mortality are significantly higher for people of color. In Prince George's County, there was nearly a 16 year difference in life expectancy, with a concentration of poorer outcomes mostly in communities within the Beltway. For example, the life expectancy of predominantly Black Suitland is 70 years, compared to 86 years in predominantly White Greenbelt. This proposal would direct grants, tax incentives, and health care provider loan repayment assistance to communities that need them the most. Health equity resource communities would be modeled after the 2012-2016 Health Enterprise Zones Program which increased access to health resources, improved residents' health, reduced hospital admissions, and created cost savings. During that pilot, two of the communities were in areas that comprised primarily of people of color, and in three of the communities people of color were helped at higher rates than their makeup in the local population.

Labor and Employment - Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program – Establishment (Time to Care Act of 2021)

Bill Numbers: [SB211](#)/[HB375](#)

Committee(s) bill is assigned to: Senate Finance, House Economic Matters

Lead Legislative Sponsor – Senate: Senator Antonio Hayes

Lead Legislative Sponsor – House: Delegate Kris Valderrama

Lead Group: Maryland Rise, on behalf of The Time to Care Coalition

Lead Group Contact: Myles Hicks, Executive Director, myles@marylandrise.org, www.timetocare.net

Describe the problem your bill attempts to address and how it relates to women:

Many Marylanders can't take time to care because they lack paid family leave. The Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides unpaid leave and job protection to employees who work for businesses that employ 50 or more individuals who need to take up to 12 weeks of leave. In Maryland, even unpaid leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act is inaccessible for 56 percent of working people.

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.

Families are dependent on working women. In Maryland, 79% of mothers are in the workforce. Nearly 25% of women take 10 or fewer days of parental leave, potentially putting themselves and their children at risk physically and emotionally. Both women and men are responsible for caregiving for elderly and ill relatives (although this burden disproportionately falls on women).

The lack of a paid family and medical leave system leads to economic instability, particularly for women, and is also a major contributor to the wage gap between women and men, and women's financial vulnerability as they age. In our 2021 poll, 78% of participants said they "like a lot" the fact that the program would allow women--who are disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic--to take the leave they need without having to worry about their jobs.

Describe your proposed legislative solution and how it will benefit women:

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. New York, Washington, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Washington D.C. and California have similar programs. Similar legislation was recently signed into law in Connecticut and Oregon. Here in Maryland, this concept builds on legislation that passed in the 2018 Session which established a parental leave benefit for state employees and the work of the Task Force to Study Family and Medical Leave Insurance. The Time to Care Act was introduced in 2019 as HB 341 and SB 500 and in 2020 as HB 839/SB 539 and was a priority on both the 2019 and 2020 MLAW Agendas.

Provide a summary of your proposed legislation:

The "Time to Care Act" establishes a FAMLl 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 program provides wage replacement during the leave period ranging from \$50 to \$1000 per week. 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. Wage replacement benefits are drawn from a fund pool into which employers and employees contribute. Contributions are mandatory and are calculated based on the employee's wages.

An employee is eligible for FAMLl benefits if the employee:

- Is caring for a newborn child or child newly placed for adoption or foster care;
- Is caring for a family member with a serious health condition or disability;
- Has a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform his or her job;
- Is caring for a military service member who is next of kin;
- Has a specified need resulting from the military deployment of a family member.

Does your legislation benefit communities of color? If so, describe specifically how:

A paid family and medical leave program can help alleviate some of the health and economic disparities many people of color face. People of color tend to receive lower quality health care services and experience worse health outcomes than white people, magnifying their need for paid family and medical leave. Racial disparities in access to wealth and wealth building are compounded by a lack of access to paid family and medical leave. Disparities in access to other economic supports make it more difficult for families of color to absorb the financial shock of a serious family or medical need. Women of color suffer most from the combination of these disparities and challenges.

Labor and Employment – Employment Standards During an Emergency (Maryland Essential Workers' Protections Act)

Bill Numbers: [SB486](#)/[HB581](#)

Committee(s) bill is assigned to: Senate Finance, House Economic Matters

Lead Legislative Sponsor – Senate: Senator Malcolm Augustine

Lead Legislative Sponsor – House: Delegate Dereck Davis

Lead Group: 1199seiu

Lead Group Contact: Ricarra Jones, ricarra.jones@1199.org

Describe the problem your bill attempts to address and how it relates to women:

The problem this bill addresses are the challenges that essential workers are experiencing during the COVID 19 pandemic, the majority of whom are women. To date, essential workers have experienced unsafe working conditions where they have been physically harmed, loss of pay and benefits, health hazards, and unjust work orders. From COVID-19's inception, thousands of essential workers have also contracted this virus, and this bill not only provides protection to decrease the contraction rate, but it also provides other safeguards that give workers the confidence and security of knowing that they are not infecting their colleagues, family or community.

Describe your proposed legislative solution and how it will benefit women:

This bill will address various problems that have been experienced by essential workers due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If this bill is enacted, it will provide women with protections and procedures against unfair treatment by employers, including arbitrary retaliation. The protections in this bill will ensure better standards to have safe and healthy working conditions so women do not have to engage in unsafe work practices that put their lives in danger. It will allow women to receive pandemic pay and the opportunity to be covered by health insurance during pandemics. Workers need plans of action during pandemics and as such, this bill mandates that a fair plan be set in place so workers understand their responsibilities during this and any future pandemics.

For many women, pandemic and bereavement leave is also a big factor in order to care for their families and due to this, this bill ensures that workers are given leave to handle various severe circumstances. Last but certainly not least, this bill provides women the right to refuse dangerous work without retaliation if management encourages female essential workers to put their lives at risk. Conclusively, this bill provides workplace protections for essential workers to ensure that have safe working conditions during pandemics.

Provide a summary of your proposed legislation:

The Maryland Essential Worker Protections Act will provide essential workers with much needed protections in the workplace to ensure employee health and safety during pandemics.

Does your legislation benefit communities of color? If so, describe specifically how:

Yes, according to the Economic Policy Institute, most essential workers in the state of Maryland come from marginalized communities, are women, and are people of color. If this bill is passed, it will allow more people of color to work in safe conditions under pandemic circumstances. In action, this legislation will close many loopholes that have been exposed by this pandemic and unfortunately, have negatively impacted essential workers the most.

Public Safety – Rifles and Shotguns – Secondary Transactions (Veto Override)

Bill Numbers: HB4 (2020)

Committee(s) bill is assigned to: Senate Judicial Proceedings and House Judiciary

Lead Legislative Sponsor – Senate: Senator Susan Lee

Lead Legislative Sponsor – House: Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary

Lead Group: Moms Demand Action for Gunsense in America, Maryland Chapter

Lead Group Contact: Caroline Broder, brodercaroline@gmail.com

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.

Update: This bill passed the Maryland General Assembly in 2020. It was vetoed by Governor Hogan.

Correctional Services – Prerelease Unit for Women – Facilities and Services (Gender Responsive Prerelease Act) (Veto Override)

Bill Numbers: SB684 (2020)

Committee(s) bill is assigned to: Senate Judicial Proceedings and House Judiciary

Lead Legislative Sponsor – Senate: Senator Mary Washington

Lead Legislative Sponsor – House: Delegate Charlotte Crutchfield

Lead Group: Maryland Justice Project and Out for Justice

Lead Group Contact: Monica Cooper, monica@marylandjusticeproject.org; Nicole Hanson, nicole@out4justice.org

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.

Update: This bill passed the Maryland General Assembly in 2020. It was vetoed by Governor Hogan.

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Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women

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

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