

Meeting Minutes
Permanent Commission on the Status of Women Minutes
November 12, 2014, 12-2:00pm
Nash School, Augusta

I. **Welcome and Introductions** Andrea

Attending in Person: Jessica Laliberte, Sarah Ruef-Lindquist, Elizabeth Ward Saxl, Andrea Irwin, Regina Rooney, Melissa Simones

Attending remotely: Marianne Moore, Rebekah Smith, Jennifer Burke, Samantha Lott Hale, Holly Stover

Absent: Fatuma Hussein, Jessica Maurer, Amy Gallant

II. **Review and Approve Minutes from October Meeting**

Motion to approve minutes from 10/8/14 meeting - Melissa, second - Regina, all in favor.

III. **Discuss Final Draft of Report and Policy Recommendations** Jen and Regina

Conclusion and executive summary missing until we decide about policy recommendations.

Still have work around citations. Everyone will have the opportunity to do line-item editing. Want to be sure that this is content that folks are comfortable with at this time. Send comments/suggestions to Regina.

Motion to approve the content of the final draft of the report, knowing that there may be line item editing later - Elizabeth, second – Marianne, all in favor.

Let's discuss policy recommendations line by line for the Commission. Want consensus. Ideas from Reports Committee emailed. For the sake of time, let's flag briefly, noting what might be missing where there no consensus. The Outreach Committee can work it out so that it brings consensus.

Education

Reading levels, HS grads

- What is an example of a policy that would positively affect reading levels? We need to give them something. Consensus that people are behind it, but they will want suggestions.
- Should we come up with one recommendation under each of the 5 dimensions?

Invest in female dominated occupations

- Susan Fiener - investigate more.

STEM

- Find out if we already have them and they just need more funding.
- Need to know the top 3 most likely to succeed.

Head Start

- Make broader. Wide-range of quality interventions.
- Big foundations looking at Early Childhood Education/evidence based education, not specifically Head Start.

Economic Security

- Change to women rather than care-givers.
- LD 1247 and Medicaid will also be in Health Section.

Child-Support Enforcement

- What does this mean? Sarah worked with Eliza Townsend. DHHS support is poor. Women are not getting enforcement support from DHHS. A lot of men (mostly) are not paying their child support and not subject to any enforcement proceedings.
- We would need advocates on the ground to move these recommendations and not send up red flags.
- No one opposed to the concept. Needs rewording.
- No data in the report on child support enforcement.

Incentivize child and elder-care

- Tax codes don't allow siblings to contribute to each other's retirement plan if the other is caregiving for a parent.
- Can we do at the state level without changing at the federal level? State provision would provide the model. Maine tax returns sometimes have additional deductions that you can take.
- This may need its own fact sheet.
- Add "tax-reform" to the language.

Minimum Wage

- A women's issue
- New England Women's Conference - Maine is at the bottom of everything: earning potential, livable wage.
- No consensus as written. Too many small businesses. They will be hurt the most and may not support it.
- Move forward with policies that address the wage gap between men and women; creation of high-tech jobs.
- No problem supporting equal pay for equal work.
- Reword this point to address wage gap.

LD 1247

- Bill from last session – expand Family Planning.
- Get back to it to save time.

Care Giver Paid Leave Act

- Covered at New England Women's Policy Conference. Family Medical Leave Plus.
- Isn't it also an insurance program rather than a benefit program?
- It's an employer participation program. Lots of support in RI. Makes the prospect of caregiving less devastating to people in the work force.
- Disparate impact on women and caregivers required to leave the work force.
- Maine Chamber likely would be against it/pushback from business community.
- Alternatives for consensus: increasing opportunity for leave for care-givers, policy at the state level to expand paid leave for all people, providing more flexibility and supports for workers are caregivers
- Can we outline in the report what Maine offers now compared to what is offered in other states? Worth adding to the content of the report so that it is not out of context.
- This would be the second issue in relation to care giving. Do we feel good about the recommendation from a few minutes ago and table this one?
- Don't want it to seem less important.
- Suggest amend that point for now. Needs to be broader. We can revisit.

Medicaid Expansion

- Correction - more than half are not women.
- Include in the recommendation: to expand Medicaid to..., support strategies to increase number of women..., to provide health coverage to 70,000 Mainers.
- Major concern with American Cancer Society.
- Unless we have another recommendation, we can all agree it's a good idea/appropriate. Let's not throw it away. Needs rewording and run by everyone.

Helping low-income, working mothers to go to school

- From Maine Women's Policy Center. Making it more accessible and more affordable in regards to cost and child care needed in order to attend.
- Success based on what the person puts in to it.
- Child care
- Perhaps, "Access to and supports for..."
- Support from attendees

Programs for young mothers

- Support from attendees
- Agreement that it is a bolster to have a policy recommendation in more than one area.
- Regina and Jen will work this up and send out a document for feedback with a timeframe.

IV. Other Committee Reports/Updates

a. Outreach – Andrea

Jen has agreed to stay on. Need a new Outreach Chair. Next step is to roll-out the report. If you'd consider this position, let us know. Vice-Chair may need to come up with another person.

b. Governance - Elizabeth

- One seat still outstanding – Jess/elder seat. Any ideas? Appointed by the governor.
- Cheryl Denz is very interested and getting her resume together. Senate president appointment. Can't be appointed by current Senate President.
- Tribal seat – Liz Neptune (Princeton) 4 people recommended her. Esther Attean also recommended. Elizabeth will be in touch with both to gauge interest. Invite them to attend one meeting before committing.
- The fact that we meet every month is a barrier for people from far away. Need longer meetings less often. Or, perhaps add one annual meeting that is longer.
- Gary Wolcott is a committee member.

c. Finance – Marianne

No conference call yet. Set a date and time now. Marianne, Rebekah, Andrea. Fridays are good.

V. Other Business

a. Commission File Storage – Shred surveys. File cabinet at Nash requested by Regina.

Elizabeth – should go electronic. Scan and digitize. Next month Google tutorial by Regina.

b. New England Women's Policy Conference Recap – Sarah/Holly

Room full of 400 men and women. Some very compelling keynote addresses. Some edgy conversations on not speaking up for women re: wage equality, etc. Provocative/challenging in a good way. Not a lot of small group conversations. Robust participation. Sarah on panel for Women's Funds in Philanthropy. RI had just elected their first woman governor. A few very powerful male speakers. 17 or 18 people went from Maine. Very well attended and organized. Andrea –Want to do again in 2016/biannual conference.

VI. Adjourn

- a. Next Meeting is Wednesday, December 10, 2014, 12-2pm