

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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MAINE COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

1990

STATUS REPORT

to

THE GOVERNOR

and

THE LEGISLATURE

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1446  
.M2  
M3  
1990

JUN 7 1993

## GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO THINK AND ACT WITH FORESIGHT

"Foresight" is a systematic, institutionalized process for (1) looking ahead to identify issues that government should be addressing and for (2) bringing all available perspectives together so that ramifications of a proposed policy can be considered before a decision is made.

The Maine Commission for Women is working for an improved future of the women and girls in Maine with foresight. Educating society to women's changing roles, sensitizing employers to women's concerns; influencing government officials to enforce existing regulations and advocating for new legislation when needed are the undertakings and mandates of the Commission.

HOW HAS THE COMMISSION ACHIEVED THIS?

## EDUCATING SOCIETY TO WOMEN'S CHANGING ROLES

The MCW serves as a member and is often the catalyst and glue for numerous coalitions, task forces and committees formed to promote the overall well-being of women.

- . AFDC Advisory Committee
  - \* Support Enforcement
- . Apprenticeship & Training Council
  - \* Women & Minority Issues Committee
- . Child Care Advisory Committee
  - \* Legislative
  - \* Employer Supported Child Care
- . Commission on Domestic Violence
- . Consumer Advisory Group (Insurance)
- . Medicaid Advisory Commission
- . Special Select Commission on Access to Health Care
- . National Association of Commissions for Women
- . New England Association of Commissions for Women
  - (Hosted 1990 New England Regional conference)
- . Women's Legislative Agenda Coalition
  - (Serve as support staff. The MCW is the only state agency solely responsible for overseeing needs/concerns of Maine's women and girls.)
- . Adolescent Pregnancy Coalition
- . Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (Insurance)

\* Subcommittee

As stated in our statute, the MCW is mandated to advise the Executive and Legislative branches on issues of concern to women. The MCW works in collaboration with state agencies and private business on various projects and activities, as well.

Collaborative Work -

- . Dept. of Education - Coordinate Women's History Month statewide (7th year)
- . Dept. of Labor - Non-Traditional Occupations Brochure
  - Apprenticeship
  - Breakdown of statistics on women
  - Family Medical Leave
- . Dept. of Agriculture and Maine Humanities Council- slide presentation of women farmers
- . Maine State Library and Maine Humanities Council- film series
- . Legislature - Advisory Committee
  - Women's Day at the Legislature
- . Business Advisory Committee - Speakers on work issues
  - MCW Conference Planning Committee
  - Fundraising for various projects
- . Maine Bar Foundation - grant for Legal Rights Fact Sheets
- . Corporations/Industry - funding and in-kind services for "Women, Work, and Worth" conference and Women's History Month
- . Universities and colleges - intern projects
  - resource list of publications for and about women

Access to public -

- . Publications:
  - Maine Woman Monthly articles on various issues including promotion of Legal Rights Fact Sheets
  - Maine Teachers Association
  - Ripples (Girl Scouts)
  - Maine Street '90
  - Business & Professional Women
  - Center for Policy Alternatives -  
Women's Economic Justice Center (Wash. DC)

. TV

"Women and Poverty" - panelist (CBS)  
Interview with Kim Block on "Women, Work and Worth"  
conference  
Editorial - Family Medical Leave  
"Domestic Violence in Maine" - Interview with ABC news  
correspondent, Susan Chisolm

. Inform

. Regional forums hosted by Regional Commissions to gather  
information on issues of importance to women.

. PSA's

- Progress Awards
- Women's History Month
- Legal Rights Fact Sheets

. Other women's organizations - newsletters  
- joint projects

. Conferences:

USM - "Women in Management" - workshop presenter  
- Women's Law Association - panelist  
Business & Professional Women - Women's Agenda  
Conference -  
workshop  
presenter  
Joint Apprenticeship Training Council - Planning  
Committee  
Maine Studies Institute - Planning Committee  
Women's Business Development Corp. -  
Planning Committee (3rd year)  
Bowdoin College Women's Studies Conference  
(2nd year)

## SENSITIZING EMPLOYERS TO WOMEN'S CONCERNS

Our commitment is to help Maine's women "celebrate choices" in the employment arena through advocacy, support, education, and legislative action.

- . Adopted 3 year plan focusing on women, work, and family
- . Held workshops to improve employability
  - "Taking Charge of Your Career Within Your Organization"
  - "Preparing Yourself to Change Jobs"
  - "Debunking Money Myths"
  - "May I Have Your Attention Please?! Self-Marketing Made Easier"
  - "Risky Business: Making Decisions Today"
  - "Professional Lifestyles"
  - "Are You Ready? Skills Needed for a Changing Workplace"
  - "I Want to be Heard!"
  - "Reaching for Excellence: Exploring Career Options"
  - "How to Build a Career Ladder"
  - "Making the Most of Life's Changes"
  - "Celebrating Mistakes"
- . Joint Apprenticeship Training Council participation
  - Planning Committee for JATC Affirmative Action training
  - The MCW will participate in the North Eastern Regional Apprenticeship Conference (12 states) sponsored by the Department of Labor in June, 1991. We will coordinate a workshop on affirmative action, as well as set up a display on women and work.
- . Sex Equity Network - a coalition of public and private policymakers
- . Business Advisory Group - 17 statewide representatives from business and law
- . Public policy workshops - Bowdoin College, 5th Annual Maine Women's Studies Conference
  - (BPW) Women's Agenda Conference 1990 and 1991

## INFLUENCING GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO ENFORCE EXISTING REGULATIONS

The MCW seeks to encourage policymakers to understand the importance of making changes needed for Maine's future. Policies which support women in their dual roles at home and work which also cut across the life cycle are our focal points.

- . JATC conference - planning input to promote minority participation and opportunity.

MCW was named in Audit and Program Review statute to advise the DOL on Affirmative Action efforts in the area of recruiting and retaining women apprentices (participated on planning committee for conference). The MCW will continue collaboration with DOL, JAC's and businesses.

- . Dissemination of materials on issues of concern to Maine's women:
  - Family Medical Leave Law to employers through educational flyers
  - legal rights fact sheets
  - monthly column in publication, Maine Woman
  - intern fact sheets for constituents
  - Non-Traditional Occupations brochures (collaborating with DOL to update brochures)
- . Research clearinghouse for statistical data.
  - Working with Dept. of Labor to encourage the separation of statistical data of women and men (the MCW receives many constituent calls requesting such information).
- . Student intern program through Maine colleges and universities - for fact sheets researched and written for the purpose of disseminating information to constituents.
  - women and employment
  - family medical leave
  - women and poverty
  - gender bias in the courts



## ADVOCATING FOR NEW LEGISLATION

The MCW is committed to a tolerance of diverse lifestyles, beliefs and expression; to respect and reach out to those who are disadvantaged or have special needs; to reaffirming the importance of family in caring for children and the elderly; and to tackling the major challenges of the state's future and to those issues which have yet to emerge in the public debate.

- Family Medical Leave - Lead group for WLAC in organizing hearings (1988, 1990\_
- Advisor to other states; national organizations
- Domestic Abuse - Named in statute to serve on Governor's Task Force
- Department of Labor - Apprenticeship Division - Named in sunset review as advisor on recruitment of more women into apprenticeships.
- Women's Legislative Agenda Coalition - Provides support staff for coalition. Founder and one of lead groups since the birth of the coalition.
- MCW, working with WLAC, Sex Equity Task Force, businesses (Women Unlimited, Coastal Enterprises, etc.) to develop women's economic agenda.

### DIRECT SERVICE AND REFERRAL

The MCW responds to:

- . Lisa H. wanted to know where to complain about medical attention she was receiving during her pregnancy.
- . Ruth C. Dept. of the Air Force, wanted information on sexual harassment.
- . Wendy C. wanted sources of information and ideas for her own business.
- . Lester W. wanted to know if a self-help group existed for women who had surrendered children for adoption.
- . Paul P. wanted information on the effectiveness of Maine's Family Medical Leave Law.
- . John T. needed help against paying a medicaid bill he did not owe.
- . The Attorney General's office wanted information on federal grants for women buying homes.
- . Cindy R. wanted to know whom to contact for obtaining business loans and advice.
- . Displaced Homemakers requested information on programs to enhance computer literacy in older women.
- . Dan M. wanted to organize a group for divorced men.
- . A Madison High School teacher wanted someone to come speak to his class to raise the aspiration of his female students.
- . The Margaret Chase Smith Center for Public Policy wanted statistics on women appointed or elected in the U.S.
- . A marketing corporation wanted listings for women-owned businesses in Maine.
- . Donna C. wanted information on parental consent legislation in Maine.
- . Carmen D. wanted help in finding some beds for her children.
- . Kelley S. needed financial assistance in general.
- . Sen. E. from Virginia requested faxed material on Maine's new Domestic Abuse law. He was in the middle of a work session and needed the information immediately.

The members, past and future, appreciate the opportunity to serve the people of the State of Maine and look forward to a challenging and rewarding future in our efforts to meet the special needs of Maine women.

Respectfully submitted,

*Cynthia A. Langevin, Ph.D.*

Cynthia A. Langevin, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

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