



**In Their Own Words:**



# **The Voices of Maryland Women**

## **Listening Tour & Survey Report**

*August 18, 2018*



[www.marylandwomen.org](http://www.marylandwomen.org)



Domestic violence and  
**sexual assault** . . . Drug  
abuse . . . Paid time off . . .  
Affordable **child care** . . .  
Employment discrimination  
and  
**unequal pay** . . . Balancing  
demands of work and **family**  
. . . Too few **women** in  
**leadership** positions . . .  
Single mothers and older  
women in **poverty** . . .

# Maryland Commission for Women

The Maryland Commission for Women was first established in 1965 and was set in state law in 1971. An office in the Department of Human Services, the Commission is a 25-member advisory board whose duties outlined in its enabling legislation include:

- Study the status of women in our state
- Recommend methods of overcoming discrimination
- Recognize women's accomplishments and contributions
- Provide informed advice to the executive and legislative branches of government on the issues concerning the women of our state

Commissioners are appointed by the Governor to four-year terms, with confirmation by the Maryland State Senate, and serve without compensation.

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Mythili (Lee) Bachu, Chair July 2015 – June 2018

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Tawanda Bailey	Lauren Lambert	Carole Jaar Sepe
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Tammy Bresnahan	Bonnie Luna	Evelyne Steward
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Yun Jung Yang and Nicole Ingram, Co-Chairs 2016 – 2017  
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Lee Bachu	Bonnie Luna	Ummu Bradley Thomas
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Marianne Brackney	Betsy Ramirez	A. Diane Williams
Tammy Bresnahan	Carole Jaar Sepe	Marylou Yam
Deborah Cartee	Corinna Shen	

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Drs. Rita Kirshstein and Bliss Cartwright were instrumental in the analysis and interpretation of the data collected from this two-part initiative, and devised brilliant strategies for combining the statistics derived from an online survey with the information stemming from a series of public forums into a cohesive and meaningful number set that accurately informs us about the needs and concerns of the women of Maryland. We very much appreciate the expertise these two sociologists contributed to this project.

We also want to thank Ms. Bev Thoms, a volunteer in the MCW office, who conducted much of the research for the demographic data contained in Part II of this report.

Former Commissioner Betsy Ramirez and Commissioner Corinna Shen provided the translations of the survey in Spanish and Chinese. Attorney Jong-Joon Chun and Commissioner Marianne Brackney provided the Korean translation of the survey. Commissioners Ramirez, Brackney, Shen and Yun Jung Yang were instrumental in helping with outreach to these communities to ensure that their voices were included in this project. Sidwell Friends High School student intern Sydney Yi provided the support needed to insert hard-copy survey responses into the Survey Monkey application, working with Commissioner Yang to translate the handwritten Korean responses. Commissioner Shen and Jeannie Shen provided the translation for the written Chinese responses to open-ended questions, and Commissioner Carole Jaar Sepe provided the Spanish translation for written responses. Their assistance was important in ensuring that the richness of Maryland's diverse population is represented in this study.

The Commission is appreciative of the support it receives from the Maryland Department of Human Services, and especially for the leadership of Secretary Lourdes Padilla and her Special Assistant Samantha Blizzard whose guidance for this office is invaluable throughout the year.

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# In Their Own Words: The Voices of Maryland Women

*Domestic violence and sexual assault . . . Drug abuse . . . Paid time off . . . Affordable child care . . .  
Employment discrimination and unequal pay . . . Balancing demands of work and family . . .  
Too few women in leadership positions . . . Single mothers and older women in poverty . . .*

*And the list of issues that women face goes on and on and on some more.*

## INTRODUCTION

Each member of the Maryland Commission for Women (MCW) could easily identify problems she knows are important to women. Our news media report daily on issues women face. Local and national organizations release reports describing a wide range of concerns that women must deal with in 2018. Scholars write about gender differences and discrimination in education, medical care, and employment, to name just a few areas.

Wanting to be responsive to the specific concerns and needs of women in Maryland, the MCW decided to ask women directly about the challenges they encounter in their everyday lives. Through a series of public forums, Commissioners listened as over 700 women spoke out, often passionately, about issues that concerned them. And for women who could not attend one of these sessions, an online survey recorded the responses of close to another 700 women.

This report shares what we heard.

In October 2015, the MCW initiated the Listening Tour Project with the following goals:

- Assess the needs of women across Maryland's diverse regions
- Identify and define challenges women in the state are facing
- Strengthen collaboration with and among local women's groups, service providers and county Commissions for Women
- Develop an action plan to address identified issues

The MCW spent close to a year developing the project and the first forum was held on July 13, 2016. Between that date and November 6, 2017, a total of 19 public forums were held in all of Maryland's five regions. The Commissioners traveled more than 3,000 miles across the state – from the western panhandle to the eastern shore – asking Maryland women to “talk to us.”

County Commissions for Women and other organizations in each region were invited to partner with the MCW in organizing the listening sessions. At each of these two-hour forums, women were invited to discuss the challenges they faced in their everyday lives. Participants were asked to prioritize the issues raised and to develop recommendations to resolve these issues. Participants included residents of the area, service providers, legislators and policy-makers, advocates and representatives of community organizations.<sup>1</sup>

To ensure that women who were not able to attend one of the forums could voice their concerns, the MCW developed an online survey that was available in four languages: English, Spanish, Korean and Chinese. The survey asked women to select from a list of pre-defined issues those they believed affected women in their community as well as issues that affected them personally. In addition, the survey included a number of background questions such as education and income levels, age, race, marital status, and county of residence, among others.

## PART I: THE LISTENING TOUR AND SURVEY

Slightly over 1,400 individuals voiced their opinions on issues facing women in Maryland. The forums attracted 723 individuals and another 684 completed online surveys.

We did not ask women attending the forums to provide information about their backgrounds but we could see that the forum participants varied in age and race/ethnicity. From comments made, we also know that some were married, some were divorced and some were single; some participants were employed and others were not.

We know with certainty, however, that the women's voices at the forums represent all five regions of the state of Maryland. Table 1 below provides the number of participants by region as well as those participating in two special interest forums.

**Table 1**  
**Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour Participants by Region, Interest Group**

Region	Number of Forum Participants
Capital ( <i>Frederick, Montgomery, Prince George's</i> )	151
Central ( <i>Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Baltimore City, Carroll, Harford, Howard</i> )	253
Eastern ( <i>Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, Worcester</i> )	54
Southern ( <i>Calvert, Charles, St. Mary's</i> )	115
Western ( <i>Allegany, Garrett, Washington</i> )	99
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>672</b>
<b>Special Interest Forums</b>	
Maryland Correctional Institute for Women	18
Girl Scouts	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>723</b>

We know more specifically who our survey participants are, given that they responded to questions about their backgrounds. Like our forum participants, survey respondents live across the state of Maryland (see Table 2).

**Table 2**  
**Survey Respondents by Region**

Region	Number of Forum Participants
Capital ( <i>Frederick, Montgomery, Prince George's</i> )	229
Central ( <i>Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Baltimore City, Carroll, Harford, Howard</i> )	218
Eastern ( <i>Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, Worcester</i> )	55
Southern ( <i>Calvert, Charles, St. Mary's</i> )	101
Western ( <i>Allegany, Garrett, Washington</i> )	75
Information not provided	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>684</b>



Women could respond to the survey in one of four different languages:

- 606 responded in English
- 38 responded in Spanish
- 23 responded in Korean
- 16 responded in Chinese

We also know that survey respondents varied by age:

- 25 percent were 35 or younger
- 49 percent were between the ages of 36 and 55
- 26 percent were over age 56

Survey respondents represented different racial groups:

- 70 percent were White or Caucasian
- 13 percent were Black or African American
- 9 percent were Asian
- 7 percent were Hispanic or Latina

The employment status of those completing the survey varied:

- 58 percent were employed full time
- 13 percent were self employed
- 10 percent were retire

The respondents were fairly well educated:

- 47 percent had an advanced degree (Master's, J.D., Ph.D., etc.)
- One third of all respondents (33 percent) had a Bachelor's degree
- Only 5.5 percent had a high school diploma or less

The annual household income of over half the respondents exceeded \$100,000:

- 11 percent had household incomes over \$200,000
- 39 percent had household incomes between \$101,000 and \$200,000
- 18 percent were \$55,000 and under

We cannot claim that either our forum participants or survey respondents are a statistically representative sample but we are reassured that the 1,400+ voices that we heard from represent a broad spectrum of Maryland women.

## The Issues

Women attending the forums were asked to talk about the challenges they faced in their everyday lives. Women filling out the online survey selected from a group of pre-defined issues both those that affected women in the area in which they live and those that affected them personally. Survey respondents could also write in issues that were not included on the survey list.<sup>2</sup> Women expressed concerns over a wide range of issues, all of which we believe are important and deserve attention. The five issues, however, that received the most mentions across the forums and surveys include:

1. Domestic violence/sexual assault
2. Paid time off from work at time of birth or adoption, or the need for extended leave for medical reasons
3. Drug abuse or addiction problems
4. Number of women in leadership positions (government, corporate, education, etc.)
5. Access to quality, affordable child care

Survey responses provide an opportunity to examine the importance of these issues to different groups of women. Below are a few highlights on each of the issues:

### Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

- Over half of Black or African American and Hispanic women noted this issue, compared to 40 percent of White and 29 percent of Asian women.
- The higher the education level, the less likely women were to believe that domestic violence was an important issue.
  - 38 percent of women with advanced degrees indicated domestic violence to be a problem.
  - 57 percent of women with a high school diploma noted this issue.

*“Prevention of domestic violence, assault, and discriminatory practices must focus on the behavior of boys and men. These issues should be addressed in and out of schools and workplaces.”*

*A Survey Respondent*



## Paid Time Off for Extended Parental and Medical Leave

- Younger women were far more likely to consider these leave issues to be important: 69 percent of women 35 and younger noted this issue while only 27 percent of women 66 or older considered paid time off important.
- Race/ethnic differences are also notable. The percentages of women from different racial groups checking this issue are:
  - Asian – 19 percent
  - Black or African American – 31 percent
  - Hispanic or Latina – 37 percent
  - White or Caucasian – 45 percent
- The higher the education level, the more likely women were to mention paid time off/extended leave.
  - 42 percent of women with an Associate’s, Bachelor’s or advanced degree indicated this issue to be important.
  - 27 percent of women with a high school diploma or less thought it important.

*“I just returned to work eight weeks after an emergency c-section, with a child who only just learned how to nurse. Neither of us was ready for me to be back. However, all of my paid time off had run out ... and I couldn’t afford to stay home unpaid.”*

*A Survey Respondent*

## Women and Drug Abuse or Addiction Problems

- Women 65 or older were most likely to mention drug abuse or addiction problems (36 percent). Only 24 percent of women in the 18 to 35 age category noted this as an issue.
- Almost a third of White or Caucasian women (31 percent) indicated drug abuse to be a problem compared to 22 percent of Black or African American respondents, 20 percent of Hispanic or Latina women, and only 11 percent of Asian women.
- The higher the education level, the less likely were women to note drug abuse or addiction as a problem. A quarter (25 percent) of women with advanced degrees indicated this as an issue compared to 38 percent of women with less than a high school diploma.



*“Needs to be more support for parents of children with a drug addiction. Very hard to find affordable, good treatment.”*

*A Survey Respondent*

## Women in Leadership Positions



- Over half of White or Caucasian women (52 percent) believed that too few women in leadership positions is an important issue, while the other three racial groups noted this around 43 percent of the time.
- Household income and education were strongly related to whether women noted this issue to be important. The higher the income and education levels, the more likely women were to mention this issue.

*"[My county] needs to promote and recognize its many strong female leaders/positive role models more often and offer more leadership training to school age girls and college women to develop new generations of capable women."*

*A Survey Respondent*

## Access to Affordable, Quality Child Care

- Not surprisingly, younger women were more likely to indicate affordable child care was a problem. Whereas 60 percent of women under the age of 35 specified this issue to be important, between 41 and 47 percent of women in the other age groups noted it.
- White or Caucasian women were more likely than women from the other racial groups to indicate child care issues as a problem.
- Higher income groups were somewhat more likely than lower income groups to mention affordable child care as a problem.
- Education level once again proved to be a strong indicator of whether or not women believed this issue to be important.
  - Advanced Degree – 53 percent
  - Associate or Bachelor's Degree – 49 percent
  - Some college credits – 34 percent
  - High School or less – 27 percent



*"Affordable childcare has been a hot topic for decades at this point. When one is 'affordable' it is not quality. I am not willing to sacrifice the care of my children for cost savings. Unfortunately, not everyone has the ability to do this!"*

*A Survey Respondent*

While these may be the five issues that received the most mentions across both the forums and the survey, and while our survey results show that women vary in the importance they place on each of these issues, numerous other concerns also rose to the surface.

Survey respondents noted in substantial numbers issues related to health care (access to both affordable health insurance and healthcare facilities or services), balancing the demands of work and family, and equal pay. And affordable housing for people of limited income was in the top 10 for both survey and forum participants.

The forums also provided an opportunity to focus on particular subpopulations. The 18 women participating in our forum held in the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women, for example, focused on issues related to re-entry, transitional and rehabilitation services as well as the need to address domestic violence. This particular forum was co-sponsored with Out For Justice, Inc., an “ex-offender, member-led organization that promotes . . . reform of policies that adversely affect the ex-offender re-entering into society successfully.”

A forum organized with the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland attracted young women college students, teen girls, parents, scout leaders, educators and representatives of both the Girl Scouts and McDaniel College, where the event was held. Over 20 different challenges were noted but the top five included the need for more women in elected and appointed office, young women’s mental health issues (including eating disorders, anxiety, depression and suicide), the stigma associated with women’s menstruation, gender-based inequalities in academics and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and the intersectionality of sexism and racism.

Participants in the forum held in conjunction with the Women of the World festival at Notre Dame of Maryland University also noted an educational issue as the top concern: weaknesses in the educational system that impact girls disparately, including lack of STEM preparation for girls.

Table 3 lists the top issue from each of the forums, further illustrating the variety of issues that women believe to be important.



**Table 3**  
**Top Issues by Forum Location**

<b>Forum Location</b>	<b>Top Issue</b>
Allegany County	Impact of the “Appalachian culture,” specifically on women and girls
Anne Arundel County	The “opioid epidemic”
Baltimore City	<i>(Four issues tied for first place)</i> Need for transitional services for girls “aging out” of foster care Need for education on independent living skills Need for more transparency in the state legislative process Too few women in elected and appointed office
Baltimore County	Harassment and discrimination against women wearing hijabs
Calvert County	Lack of women, including minority women, in elected office
Charles County	Need for better paying jobs in the county, jobs that pay a living wage
Frederick County	Lack of public knowledge of and access to existing services and resources
Garrett County	Poverty, especially for single mothers
Girl Scouts of Central Maryland	Need for more women in elected & appointed office
Harford County	Sexual assault
Howard County	The compounding effects of sexism and racism, including the portrayal of women in the media and negative views of women and girls in leadership positions
Maryland Correctional Institution for Women	Need for a pre-release/work-release facility and services for women, separate from the prison
Mid Shore and Upper Eastern Shore	Lack of public transportation
Montgomery County	Guns in the hands of domestic violence perpetrators
Prince George’s County	Need for affordable and accessible quality child care – both after school and pre-kindergarten
St. Mary’s County	Domestic violence
Washington County	Child support enforcement inconsistencies across jurisdictions, insensitive and unresponsive staff, lack of enforcement
Women of the World (WOW) Conference at Notre Dame of Maryland University, Baltimore City	Weaknesses in the educational system that impact girls disparately, including lack of STEM preparation for girls
Worcester County	Affordable, adequate housing

## PART II: NEXT STEPS

Many voices raised many issues and the Maryland Commission for Women has listened. The following sections describe some of what we know about each of the “top five” issues for women in our state. Since this project asked Maryland women to speak for themselves, this report does not include recommendations from the MCW on each issue. Instead, it lists some of the steps the respondents and participants said they thought would help improve the situation.

### Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

The women participating in the Listening Tour identified violence against women, specifically domestic violence and sexual assault, among their top five issues. It is no wonder, considering the statistics on these crimes in our state.

*“Domestic Violence in my community is a well-kept secret.”*

*A Survey Respondent*

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence tells us that 46 people lost their lives to domestic violence from July 2016 to June 2017, down from 55 in the previous year, but up from 42 in the year preceding that. There were 1,784 temporary protective orders and 1,308 final protective orders granted in Fiscal Year 2016 and there were 15,301 domestic violence-related crimes reported in Maryland in Fiscal Year 2015.<sup>3</sup>

According to the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault, 19 percent of the adult women living in this state have experienced rape at some point in their lifetime, and about 44 percent report having experienced other forms of sexual assault in their lifetime.<sup>4</sup>

#### What the participants in the Listening Tour told us is needed:

- Increase funding for services, including preventive services, and support more options for victims, including the choice to leave the area
- Develop more affordable transitional housing
- Ensure that culturally relevant services are available to meet the needs of our diverse population
- Provide training for service providers that includes the dual needs of victims of both trauma and addictions
- Enforce existing laws
- Provide training for law enforcement and prosecutors to eliminate further victimization of complainants
- Establish special victims units in every prosecutor’s office
- Coordinate law enforcement databases
- Teach healthy relationships and conflict resolution in schools



*“As it relates to domestic violence and human trafficking, there needs to be greater awareness that this is happening and programs in place to identify, rescue and rehabilitate these survivors.”*

*A Survey Respondent*

## Paid Time Off for Extended Parental and Medical Leave

The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) requires public and private employers with 50 or more employees to provide at least 12 weeks of unpaid leave for the birth and care of a newborn child, placement of a foster or adopted child, care for immediate family members with serious health conditions, or when the employee's own serious health condition prevents work. Eligible employees must have worked for the employer for at least one year and at least 1,250 hours during the past 12 months.<sup>5</sup>

The Maryland Parental Leave Act provides that businesses with 15 to 49 workers must provide their employees with at least six weeks of unpaid parental leave in a 12-month period for the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child. The employer must maintain existing group health care coverage but may be able to require repayment of the premium if the employee does not return to work. Eligibility for this coverage is similar to the FMLA.<sup>6</sup>

*"We have no state laws guaranteeing PAID time off for giving birth so we have to save sick and annual leave well in advance of getting pregnant."*

*A Survey Respondent*

The Maryland Flexible Leave Act provides that private-sector employers with 15 or more employees and who provide paid leave to employees must permit employees to use earned paid leave to care for sick members of their immediate families (child, spouse or parent).<sup>7</sup>

*"Our country does not offer paid maternity/paternity leave. Many European countries not only have paid leave but it is for an extended amount of time, sometimes up to 18 months. When a country shows it values pregnant and birthing mothers it truly values families."*

*A Survey Respondent*

The Maryland Healthy Working Families Act requires that employers with 15 or more workers provide paid sick and safe leave, and employers with fewer workers must allow their workers to earn unpaid sick leave.<sup>8</sup>

SB0859/HB0775 was passed and signed by the Governor. This bill, which takes effect October 1, 2018, provides employees in the executive branch of state government to up to 60 days (12 weeks) of paid parental leave to care for a child immediately following birth or adoption.<sup>9</sup>

Participants at the Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour, especially in the more rural jurisdictions, told us their communities need economic development that encourages businesses with "women-friendly" jobs, offering good benefits, including paid time off.

Clearly more consideration of how to best address this issue is needed, keeping in mind the needs of both the employers and the employees.

### What the participants in the Listening Tour told us is needed:

- Recruit industries that offer "woman-friendly" jobs, including paid family and medical leave
- Focus economic development on jobs with living wages, benefits and retirement plans
- Utilize the anchor institutions (university, college, hospital) to increase the number of jobs with benefits and a living wage

*"I think maternity leave should be extended. Too many women don't get it at all, or it's just not long enough. Babies need their moms and moms need their babies. Having to go back to work as early as six weeks or even 12 weeks is awful for the whole health of the family."*

*A Survey Respondent*

## Women and Drug Abuse or Addiction Problems

The women who participated in the Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour identified drug abuse and addictions as one of their top five issues, and with good reason.

In February 2017, Governor Larry Hogan declared a state of emergency in response to the rapidly escalating opioid crisis in Maryland. Drug overdoses, mostly from opioids, kill far more Marylanders than car crashes and homicides. Eighty-nine percent of all intoxication deaths that occurred in Maryland in 2016 were opioid-related. Opioid-related deaths increased by 70 percent between 2015 and 2016, and have nearly quadrupled since 2010. There were 1,468 fatal drug overdoses in our state from January to September 2016, exceeding the 1,259 deaths that occurred in all of 2015.<sup>10</sup>

Among women, the number of opioid-related deaths has quintupled since 2000. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, opioid overdose deaths by Maryland women increased from 90 in 1999 to 506 in 2016.<sup>11</sup>

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) tells us that women tend to use substances differently than men, sometimes requiring smaller amounts of drugs for shorter amounts of time to become dependent. In addition, women who are victims of domestic violence are at increased risk of substance use. Additionally, divorce, loss of child custody, or the death of a partner or child can trigger women's substance use or other mental health disorders.<sup>12</sup>

According to the U.S. Office on Women's Health, the pathway to addiction in women is complicated by family, pregnancy, hormones and demographics. Treatment modalities are also complex and different from that of men.<sup>13</sup>

Researchers at Harvard University tell us that "traditional addiction treatment programs were developed based on research in men."<sup>14</sup> Women speaking at the public forums in the Listening Tour told us that there are too few addiction rehabilitation services that are designed to meet women's needs. The lack of access to residential rehabilitation services that would permit a mother to keep her children with her presents a serious obstacle for women needing help. In fact, fear of losing their children may prevent many female substance abusers from seeking any kind of help.

In January, 2018, Governor Larry Hogan and Lt. Governor Boyd Rutherford unveiled a series of executive actions and proposed legislation to continue the administration's fight against the heroin and opioid crisis. The governor also authorized the Attorney General to file suit against select opioid manufacturers and distributors on the grounds that they have misled the public and helped to create the addiction crisis gripping Maryland and the nation. In addition, the Governor's Fiscal Year 2019 budget dedicated \$159 million to non-Medicaid substance use disorder and addiction programs and includes \$13.7 million in new funding for the state's response to the heroin and opioid epidemic. The budget also includes \$3 million in grant funding for local boards of education to implement prevention and education programs, and provides \$1.2 million to expand treatment programs and job readiness training for the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Corrections' pre-release population, as well as 15 new positions at the Maryland Department of Health to assist inmates in applying for Medicaid eligibility prior to release. Importantly, the governor's capital budget provides funding for Helping Up Mission in Baltimore City and Westminster Rescue Mission in Carroll County to expand treatment services for women.<sup>15</sup>

## What the participants in the Listening Tour told us is needed:

- Increase the availability of treatment services, including inpatient treatment programs
- Expand rehabilitation services for pregnant women and affected newborns
- Provide a comprehensive continuum of care and treatment for women addicts with children including transitional housing and services that include their children
- Encourage trauma-informed therapies and services for women addicts
- Provide multi-lingual, culturally-competent services and therapies
- Enact legislation and regulations that restrict prescribing and dispensing addictive medications
- Develop more services aimed at prevention, including in the schools
- Address substance abuse early on when young people are seen in juvenile court for small offenses such as underage drinking or possession of minor amounts of marijuana
- Explore “best practices” in other jurisdictions (Specifically mentioned during the forums were: “Not My Child,” the “Oxford House” model of self-run, self-supported recovery houses, and the TAMAR (trauma, addictions, mental health and recovery) program for women in corrections facilities in Maryland.)
- Increase requirements for accountability among doctors and pharmacists; train doctors regarding the dangers of over-prescribing addictive drugs



*“Young women are grappling with addiction in K-12 and overdosing as mothers and grandmothers later on in life. Women need help.”*

*A Survey Respondent*

## Women in Leadership Positions



The women who talked to us often remarked that if there were more women in policy, legislative and corporate decision-making positions, most of the issues raised at these public forums would be addressed with the women's perspective taken fully into consideration. However, here are some numbers that give context to the concerns raised by the women who talked to us during the Listening Tour:

In Maryland, only 15 percent of the seats on corporate boards of directors are held by women, falling below even the disproportionately low national average of 22.2 percent for Fortune 500 companies.<sup>16</sup>

Of the 24 major jurisdictions in Maryland (23 counties plus Baltimore City), only two (Frederick County and Baltimore City) have a female chief executive.

Presently, Maryland has no women in its 10-member delegation to Congress, including both the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives.<sup>17</sup>

Maryland has no women holding state-wide elected executive office.<sup>18</sup> (This includes only offices filled by general elections.)

In the 2018 Maryland General Assembly, only 13 of the 47 state Senators (28 percent) are women, and only 49 of the 141 members of the House of Delegates (35 percent) are women, meaning that women comprise only 33 percent of the Maryland legislature.<sup>19</sup> While this ratio places Maryland ninth among the 50 states in the representation of women in state legislatures, it is still far from the 51.6 percent that women comprise of the population of our state.



### What the participants in the Listening Tour told us is needed:

- Develop programs that encourage women to be politically engaged and to run for office
- Offer leadership training for girls in schools and provide leadership experience starting at a young age
- Create more student positions on official boards, committees and commissions
- Demand that more women are in decision-making roles in the media
- Establish mentorship programs including with women in business and encourage employers to build mentoring across differences
- Provide information about how to get appointed to county and state boards, committees and commissions
- Require gender respect and equality training for all public officials
- Institute a “watch” program for public meetings, hearings and other events to hold public officials accountable for their language and behavior
- Institute campaign finance reform to “level the playing field” between men and women candidates

## Access to Quality, Affordable Child Care

According to the Maryland Family Network,<sup>20</sup> 72,000 babies are born each year in this state and there are 360,000 children five years old or younger in Maryland. The mothers of 80 percent of these children are in the workforce. Only 28 percent of Maryland's young children are cared for in their own homes while 60 percent are in regulated child care. The price of regulated child care can be prohibitive – often costing working families more than college tuition. In fact, in 10 of Maryland's 24 major jurisdictions, the estimated child care cost is over \$19,000 annually – and it is more than \$27,000 and \$26,000 in Montgomery and Howard Counties, respectively. All this, while the Maryland State Child Care Association<sup>21</sup> estimates the average compensation of child care staff at \$26,000 per year. The Institute for Women's Policy Research ranked Maryland as 35 of the 50 states in the percentage of working women's median wages required for infant care expenses,<sup>22</sup> meaning that women in 34 states need a smaller percentage of their earnings to cover the cost of caring for their infants while they are at work.

Four general child care issues were raised frequently in the public forums:

1. The cost of tuition as a percent of working families' income
2. The income eligibility limits for child care tuition subsidies
3. The reimbursement rates for child care providers
4. The low wages of child care workers

The Maryland Family Network tells us that state-by-state comparisons indicate that Maryland has a lower income eligibility level than most other states, requires higher co-payments and provides lower reimbursements rates for providers.

During the 2018 session of the Maryland General Assembly, SB0379/HB043023 passed and was approved by the Governor. This bill increases the state's mandatory Child Care Subsidy Program to not less than 60% of the most recent market rate survey or its equivalent by the year 2022, phasing in the increase over the next four years.<sup>23</sup>

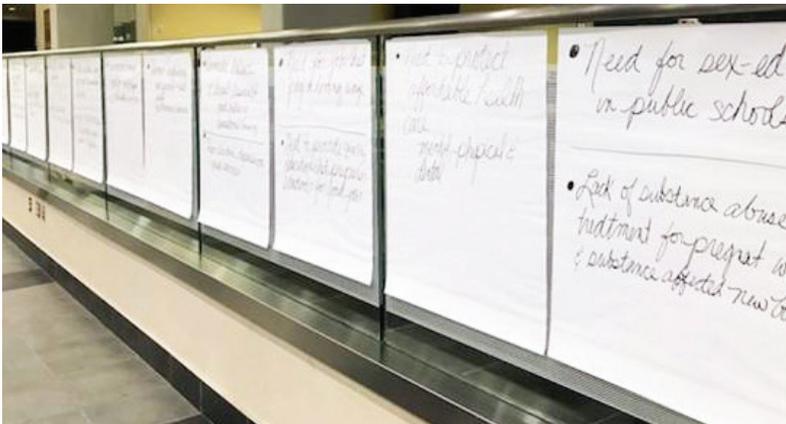
### What the participants in the Listening Tour told us is needed:

- Raise the income-eligibility limits for child care subsidies
- Expand tax credits for middle income families for child care expenses
- Develop incentives for employers to provide child care benefits, including on-site centers
- Make additional resources and training available for both center-based and in-home child care providers
- Establish a dedicated tax on casino revenues to support these increases
- Simplify in-home child care provider certification process
- Establish incentives for provision of overnight child care
- Establish school-age child care programs with schedules consistent with "normal" work schedules (not closing for spring break, snow days or professional days, for example)
- Initiate state-wide incentive programs to recruit more child care providers
- Encourage and make available licensure training to increase the number of family care providers

## WE LISTENED. NOW, WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Clearly, to address these issues, there is much work to be done by our elected officials, program administrators, service providers, policy makers and advocates. More study is needed on some of the issues and their recommendations. This project asked Maryland women to speak for themselves. Therefore, this report does not include recommendations from the MCW on each issue. Instead, it lists some of the steps the respondents and participants said they thought would help improve the situation. The Maryland Commission for Women will use this information to guide its work for years to come. In addition, the Commission invites the many organizations that co-sponsored the forums with us to continue supporting women and to take steps toward addressing the issues raised during this initiative.

We firmly believe that all the concerns noted by the 1,400+ women who participated in the Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour, either by attending a forum or submitting a survey, are important. It will be through concerted efforts at the state, county, city and community levels that women's lives in Maryland will be improved.



*"I think in many ways Maryland is a very woman friendly state and I'm very proud of the strides we've made, but I also think we always need to be looking forward and looking at ways to progress and improve. Thank you!"*

*A Survey Respondent*

## APPENDIX

### Voices of Maryland Women

The Maryland Commission for Women conducted a series of 19 public forums around the state inviting women in Maryland's diverse regions and communities to talk to us about the challenges they encounter in their everyday lives. The Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour has been a coordinated partnership with county Commissions for Women and other organizations from the western panhandle to the eastern shore to hold listening sessions in their communities. Listening Tour dates, destinations and our hosts for each public forum are listed below.

Visit [www.marylandwomen.org](http://www.marylandwomen.org) for a report on each session.

Listening Tour Destinations		
Date	Location	Co-Host
July 13, 2016	<b>Washington County</b> Washington Technical High School, Hagerstown	Washington County Commission for Women
August 29, 2016	<b>Baltimore County</b> County Library, Towson Branch	Baltimore County Commission for Women
September 20, 2016	<b>Garrett County</b> Ace's Run Restaurant, Oakland	Garrett County Commission for Women
October 7, 2016	<b>Women of the World Festival</b> NDMU Campus, Baltimore City	Notre Dame of Maryland University
October 8, 2106	<b>Howard County</b> Howard County Senior Center, Ellicott City	Howard County Commission for Women
October 27, 2016	<b>Prince George's County</b> Prince George's Community College, Largo	Prince George's County Commission for Women
November 17, 2016	<b>Calvert County</b> College of Southern Maryland, Prince Frederick	Calvert County Commission for Women
April 8, 2017	<b>Women Moving Forward</b> MD Correctional Institution for Women, Jessup	Out For Justice, Inc.
April 18, 2017	<b>Montgomery County</b> Silver Spring Civic Building, Silver Spring	Montgomery County Commission for Women
May 4, 2017	<b>Frederick County</b> Hood College, Frederick	Frederick County Commission for Women
May 23, 2017	<b>Charles County</b> College of Southern Maryland, La Plata	Charles County Commission for Women
June 8, 2017	<b>Anne Arundel County</b> Anne Arundel Community College, Arnold	Anne Arundel County Commission for Women
July 11, 2017	<b>Harford County</b> Abingdon Library, Abingdon	Harford County Commission for Women
August 9, 2017	<b>Allegany County</b> Allegany College, Cumberland	Allegany County Commission for Women
September 28, 2017	<b>St. Mary's County</b> Chesapeake Building, Leonardtown	St. Mary's County Commission for Women
October 17, 2017	<b>Worcester County &amp; Lower Shore</b> Board of Education Building, Newark	Worcester County Commission for Women
October 23, 2017	<b>Baltimore City</b> AFSCME Building	Baltimore City Councilwoman Sharon Green Middleton
October 24, 2017	<b>Mid and Upper Eastern Shore</b> Chesapeake College, Wye Mills	Senator Adelaide C. Eckardt
November 6, 2017	<b>Girl Scouts</b> McDaniel College Campus, Westminster	Girl Scouts of Central Maryland and McDaniel College

## ENDNOTES AND REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> For summaries of each of these events, go to <http://dhr.maryland.gov/maryland-commission-women/programs/voices-maryland-listening-tour/>

<sup>2</sup> Because of the open nature of the public forums, issues presented were wide-ranging and often differed in the way they were stated. Sometimes an issue was broadly defined (e.g., “domestic violence”), and sometimes a specific aspect of a broader issue was listed (e.g., “need for culturally sensitive services for victims of domestic violence”). Overall, a total of more than 150 issues were identified. For each forum, a report was developed listing the “top five” issues that received the most “votes” at that forum. We also reported the number of “votes” that every issue received. For the final report, we were able to add all the “votes” on every issue across all the forums. We then combined those that were closely related into more general issues so that the responses could be compared to those of the survey. For the survey, we combined the responses to two questions: Question (15), “What do you consider to be the most important challenges facing women in the area where you live?” and Question (16) “Which of these are serious problems in your life, whether for you personally or for someone in your household?” Both questions contained the same close-ended choices. Question (15) requested respondents to list the five most important items, and Question (16) requested respondents to list all applicable items. Since the total number of items varied by respondent, we first eliminated duplicate responses to Questions (15) and (16). Then we weighted the combined responses by the reciprocal of each respondent’s total responses (i.e., 1/respondent total). This gives the greatest weight to respondents with relatively few responses and discounts respondents with a large number of responses. To obtain the overall results, we first computed the item percentages for the forum and survey responses separately. For example, domestic violence appeared in 5.7 percent of the survey responses and 14.8 percent of the forum responses. To combine the forum and survey results, we averaged the forum and survey item percentages together. For example, the overall percentage for domestic violence was 10.3 percent  $((5.7 + 14.8)/2)$ . These average percentages give equal weight to the forum and survey data sources.

<sup>3</sup> The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence: <https://mnadv.org/resources/get-the-facts/>

<sup>4</sup> Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault: [https://www.mcasa.org/assets/files/GeneralMDSexualAssaultFSUpdated\\_4.25.18.pdf](https://www.mcasa.org/assets/files/GeneralMDSexualAssaultFSUpdated_4.25.18.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, (FMLA) Family and Medical Leave Act: <https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/benefits-leave/fmla>

<sup>6</sup> Report of the Task Force to Study Family and Medical Leave Insurance, Department of Legislative Services, Office of Policy Analysis, Annapolis, MD December 1, 2017, page 3.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, Note 6, page 2.

<sup>8</sup> Maryland Earned Sick and Safe Leave Employee Notice: <https://www.dllr.state.md.us/paidleave/paidleaveposter.shtml>

<sup>9</sup> Senate Bill 859: State Employees – Parental Leave: <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmg/frmMain.aspx?pid=billpage&stab=01&id=sb0859&tab=subject3&ys=2018RS>

<sup>10</sup> Washington Post, Maryland Governor Declares State of Emergency for Opioid Crisis, March 1, 2017: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/md-politics/hogan-declares-opioid-state-of-emergency/2017/03/01/5c22fcfa-fe2f-11e6-99b4-9e613afeb09f\\_story.html?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.7b5d2371832b](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/md-politics/hogan-declares-opioid-state-of-emergency/2017/03/01/5c22fcfa-fe2f-11e6-99b4-9e613afeb09f_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.7b5d2371832b)

<sup>11</sup> Henry J Kaiser Family Foundation, Opioid Overdose Deaths by Gender: <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/opioid-overdose-deaths-by-gender/?dataView=2&activeTab=graph&currentTimeframe=0&startTimeframe=17&selectedDistributions=female&selectedRows=percent7Bpercent22statespercent22:percent7Bpercent22marylandpercent22:percent7Bpercent7Dpercent7D&sortModel=percent7Bpercent22colldpercent22:percent22Locationpercent22,percent22sortpercent22:percent22ascpercent22percent7D>

<sup>12</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse, Sex and Gender Differences in Substance Use, April 2017: <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/substance-use-in-women>

<sup>13</sup> Office on Women’s Health, White Paper: Opioid Use, Misuse, and Overdose in Women, December 2016: <https://www.womenshealth.gov/files/documents/white-paper-opioid-508.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Harvard Health Publishing, Harvard Medical School, Addiction in Women, Harvard Mental Health Letter, January 2010: [https://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletter\\_article/addiction-in-women](https://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletter_article/addiction-in-women)

<sup>15</sup> Hogan-Rutherford Administration Announces 2018 Anti-Opioid Initiatives: <http://governor.maryland.gov/2018/01/23/hogan-rutherford-administration-announces-2018-anti-opioid-initiatives/>

<sup>16</sup> 2018 Ten Year Reflection Census Report: Women Board Directors in Maryland, Executive Alliance: [https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/88781c\\_78b9879991e041d7addbbd4c630fef7a.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/88781c_78b9879991e041d7addbbd4c630fef7a.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Rutgers University Eagleton Institute of Politics, Center for American Women in Politics: <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/state-by-state>

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, Note 17

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, Note 17

<sup>20</sup> Presentation to the Maryland General Assembly Women’s Caucus, December 11, 2017, Clinton Macsherry and Beth G. Morrow, Maryland Family Network.

<sup>21</sup> Caring for Maryland’s Most Important Natural Resource, Presentation to the Maryland General Assembly Women’s Caucus, December 11, 2017 by the Maryland State Child Care Association.

<sup>22</sup> IWPR Status of Women in the States, Child Care By State: <https://statusofwomensdata.org/explore-the-data/work-family/additional-state-data/child-care-by-state>

<sup>23</sup> SB 379: Education - Child Care Subsidies - Mandatory Funding Levels: <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmg/frmMain.aspx?pid=billpage&tab=subject3&id=s-b0379&stab=01&ys=2018RS>



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