

**Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour
Girl Scouts of Central Maryland**

McDaniel College
Lewis Hall of Science - Decker Auditorium
2 College Hill
Westminster, Maryland
November 6, 2017 ♦ 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

The Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour traveled to the beautiful campus of McDaniel College in the rolling hills of the town of Westminster in the heart of Carroll County. There, thirty-three individuals gathered to discuss the concerns of young women in this state. The public forum was organized as a partnership between the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland and the Maryland Commission for Women, and was generously hosted by the college.

The attendees at the forum included young women college students, teen girls, parents, scout leaders, educators and representatives of both the Girl Scouts and McDaniel College. The participants articulately identified a wide range of issues and challenges for the women and girls of our state.

The evening began with welcoming remarks by Violet Apple, CEO of the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland who encouraged those in attendance to use their voices to speak up and speak out. Florence Hines, Vice President for Enrollment and Dean of Admissions at McDaniel College welcomed everyone to the campus and encouraged the young women there to take this opportunity to make their concerns known and to advocate for themselves and other women and girls. The event then opened into a discussion of the challenges facing women, young and old, in the state. The participants listed a total of 24 challenges and each participant was given five “votes” to place beside the issues she considered most important. From that process, five were selected as the top priorities. The group identified actions that could be taken to address each of the “top five” issues:

1. Need for More Women in Elected and Appointed Office
 - a. Institute campaign finance reform to “level the playing field” between men and women candidates
 - b. Encourage more women to run for elected office
 - c. Foster leadership in girls through such programs as the Girl Scouts of America, participation in school debate teams, etc.
 - d. Support the development of positive self esteem for girls
 - e. Encourage women to become politically engaged – even if they don’t run for office, they can make a difference
2. Young Women’s Mental Health, including eating disorders, anxiety, depression and suicide
 - a. Use social media to address this issue
 - b. Provide healthy role models
 - c. Add Developmental Psychology to the high school curriculum

- d. Encourage more open discussion of women's mental health issues
 - e. Teach "mental health first aide" so that people know how and when to respond to perceived mental health issues
3. The Stigma Associated with Women's Menstruation
 - a. Provide more education about women's basic, physiology and natural biological functions
 - b. Develop more awareness of existing resources and how to access them
 - c. Include this issue in high school health curriculum
 4. Gender-based Inequality in Academics and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Courses and Careers
 - a. Develop unbiased career assessment testing and training
 - b. Educate the public on the role parents play in their children's education and career choices
 - c. Require more training for faculty on this issue
 - d. Hire more women on the STEM faculty
 - e. Require accountability from school STEM departments on recruiting and retaining female students in STEM classes
 5. Intersectionality of Sexism and Racism, Especially as it Affects African American Women and Girls
 - a. Develop a campaign to increase public awareness of the "double jeopardy" women and girls of color face with the combination of racial and gender prejudice
 - b. Conduct more social research into the disparities confronting women and girls of color and publicize that information widely
 - c. Develop partnerships and collaboration between organizations working on these issues

The chart on the next page lists all the issues identified during the course of the public forum and shows the number of votes each one received from those in attendance as they considered the priority level of each issue in comparison to the others.

Number of Votes	Issue
9	Need for More Women in Elected and Appointed Office
8	Young Women's Mental Health, including eating disorders, anxiety, depression and suicide
7	The Stigma Associated with Women's Menstrual Health Issues
6	Gender-based Inequality in Academics and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Courses and Careers
5	Intersectionality of Sexism and Racism, Especially as it Affects African American Women and Girls
4	The high cost of higher education and resulting student loan debt
4	Portrayal of Women in the Media
4	Need to Teach Healthy Relationships in Schools
4	Lack of Affordable Child Care
4	Reproductive Rights for Women, Including Insurance Coverage for Birth Control
3	Gender-based inequalities in school athletics
3	Lack of Parental Leave – Maternity and Paternity leave
3	Human Sex Trafficking
3	Women Caring for Children and Elders at the Same Time
3	Sexualizing of Women – Pressure to Conform to Standards of Beauty
3	Lack of Self Esteem for Girls
2	Pay Inequity
2	Sexual Assault - Including on College Campuses
1	Lack of Respect for Differences
1	Unequal Dress Codes for Boys and Girls in Secondary Schools
1	Glass Ceilings in the Workplace
0	Rape Culture, Street Harassment of Women and Girls
0	Sexualization of Women's Natural Body Functions, Including Breast Feeding
0	Lack of Access to OB/GYN and Maternity Health Care
80	24 Issues

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Girl Scouts of Central Maryland & McDaniel College

Photo Album




girl scouts
of central maryland





