

Maryland Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 15, 2026
5:00 PM
Virtual

Commissioners Attending:

LaShaune Stitt, Chair
Patricia Lambert, First Vice Chair
Christine Lee, Second Vice Chair
Tazeen Ahmad
PierBlake
Judy Carbone
Gloria Dent
Tekisha Everette
Linda Han
Jodi Kelber
Joyce King
Sarah Klein
Gabriela Lemus
Fiona Oliphant
Stacey Rebbert
Michelle Siri
Monica Watkins

Commissioners Absent:

Brenda Brown Rever
Maggi Gaines
Shanna Pearson-Merkowitz
Nyki Robinson

Staff Attending:

Ariana Kelly, Executive Director
Brett Jordan, Program Manager
Genesis Franco, Management Associate

Additional Attendees:

Judi Emmel, Commissioner, Maryland 250
Commission

5:00 I. Call to Order.....LaShaune Stitt, Chair
The meeting was called to order at 5:02 p.m. Chair Stitt welcomed all Commissioners and

guests.

- A. Land Acknowledgement
- B. Attendance for January Meeting
- C. Approval of Agenda and November Minutes

Chair LaShaune Stitt called for approval of the agenda and November Minutes. The agenda and minutes were approved following an amendment to the minutes proposed by Commissioner Jodi Kelber and seconded by Commissioner Gabriella Lemus, and it passed unanimously.

5:10 II. Research, Policy and Legislation Committee Presentations

- Overview and Strategic Plan Responsibilities.....Monica Watkins
Monica Watkins presented the committee’s strategic plan, highlighting goals on partnerships, women’s health, workforce, and the care economy..
 - A. Q&A from Commissioners
- Policy Issues..... Shanna Pearson-Merkowitz/Michele Siri
Michelle Siri reported on the Policy Issues Subcommittee, focusing on women’s economic security across the lifespan. The subcommittee plans to use research to inform policy recommendations for the June annual report, and commissioners can support efforts through research, analysis, and drafting policy proposals.
 - A. Q&A from Commissioners
- Legislation.....Maggi Gaines/Sarah Klein
Sarah Klein talked about the legislative subcommittee’s process for evaluating bills, which involves completing a consistent evaluation form, discussing within the subcommittee, and then sending recommendations to the full commission for a vote.

1. Vote:

- A. Prescription Privacy Protection Act
Chair Stitt moved to approve the bill. Commissioner Judy Carbone supported the motion. Commissioner Gabriela Lemus seconded it, and the motion passed unanimously.
- B. Campus Reproductive Health Cleanup Bill
Chair Stitt moved to approve the bill. Commissioner Jodi Kelber supported the motion. Commissioners Gabriela Lemus and Michelle Siri seconded it, and the motion passed unanimously.
- C. Coerced Debt Relief Bill
Chair Stitt moved to approve the bill. Commissioner Sarah Klein supported the motion. Commissioner Fiona Oliphant seconded it, and the motion passed unanimously.
- D. Statement on Child Care Scholarship Program
Chair Stitt moved to approve, Commissioner Judy Carbone supported the

motion. Commissioner Tazeen Ahmad seconded it, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Q&A from Commissioners

- OTC.....Christine Lee
Christine Lee presented the OTC subcommittee’s report, focusing on hormonal over-the-counter (OTC) contraception, including Plan B, its generic, and the O pill. The Commission is currently engaged in two related projects: the OTC Birth Control Collaborative and the Community College Birth Control Vending Machine Grant Program.

A. Q&A from Commissioners

6:10 III. Hall of Fame Update

A. Discuss Hall of Fame Process

The Commission is awaiting a date confirmation from the First Lady’s office.

B. Announce Honorees

The final honorees include four living and four posthumous inductees.

C. Next steps

6:25 IV. Staff Report

Executive Director Ariana Kelly provided updates on the strategic plan, noting completed and upcoming projects. The Commission has also strengthened outreach, modernized programs, and built relationships with local and state partners.

6:35 V. Calendar & New Business

Over the next six months, the Commission plans to advance key projects, strengthen partnerships, and share policy recommendations. Several events and meetings are scheduled to support these efforts.

7:00 VI. Adjournment.....LaShaune Stitt, Chair

Chair Stitt thanked everyone for attending the meeting today. There being no further business, she adjourned the meeting at 6:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Ariana Kelly, Executive Director
Maryland Commission for Women
1/30/2026