

**Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour
Harford County**

Abingdon Library – Abingdon, Maryland

July 11, 2017, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Hosted by the Harford County Commission for Women, the Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour traveled to the Abingdon Public Library where a crowd of nearly 50 people gathered to talk to the Maryland Commission for Women about the concerns of women and girls in their community.

The evening began with welcoming remarks by Mary Hastler, Chair of the Harford County Commission for Women and Chief Executive Officer of the Harford County Libraries,. Maryland Commission for Women Chair Lee Bachu brought greetings followed by an open forum on the challenges facing women in this northeastern region of Maryland.

The attendees at the forum included individuals and representatives of women's and community advocacy organizations from both Harford and Cecil Counties. They identified a wide range of issues and challenges for the women of this area, selected those they thought were most important, and discussed possible remedies.

The attendees listed a total of 28 challenges facing the women of Harford and Cecil Counties. Each participant was given five "votes" to place beside the issues they thought were most important and together determined which they thought were the "top five" most important issues for women here. The participants then discussed actions that could be taken to address those issues:

1. Sexual Assault

- a. Establish greater penalties for perpetrators
- b. Provide gender bias sensitivity training for judicial, legal and public safety personnel
- c. Include the meaning and importance of "consent" early in school curricula
- d. Encourage parent educators to include the issue of consent in curricula
- e. Pass the Rape Survivors Family Protection Act

2. Access to Affordable Health Care for All

- a. Pass universal health care legislation
- b. Include affordable equitable health and mental health services for women including reproductive health and maternity care
- c. Ensure public awareness of minors' rights to health care and information

3. Affordable Housing – Rental and Home Ownership

- a. Require developers to include affordable housing in all new developments
- b. Utilize land trusts and land corporations
- c. Conduct an awareness campaign regarding the value of these programs

4. Need for More Support Services for the Aging and their Caregivers

- a. Establish a comprehensive network of services to seniors
- b. Create affordable supportive housing for seniors
- c. Provide respite care for caregivers
- d. Include services for seniors with disabilities

5. Need for a Women's Counseling and Resource Center

- a. Provide funding
- b. Provide a facility
- c. Provide specialized training for the service providers

The chart on the next page lists all the issues that were identified during the course of this 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
15	Sexual Assault
14	Access to Affordable Health Care for All
12	Affordable Housing – Rental and Home Ownership
11	Need for a Women’s Counseling and Resource Center
11	Need for more support services for the aging and their caretakers
10	Need for more women in elected and appointed office
9	Access to affordable child care
9	Need to maintain funding for services for women and children
8	Need for shelters for homeless women with children
7	Need for access to free, confidential and safe reproductive health care services such as provided by Planned Parenthood
7	Single mothers living in poverty
7	Need for more mental health services
6	Drug addiction and overdoses, lack of treatment and post-recovery sustaining services
4	Need for services and programs for pregnant teens
3	Human trafficking
3	Gender equality
3	Need for legal services for women facing domestic violence
2	LGBT equality
2	Need for better and more public transportation and provisions for pedestrian and biker safety
2	Need for services for youth
2	Need for transitional services for girls aging out of foster care
2	Maternal mortality – need for more public awareness
2	Need for more culturally sensitive and multilingual services for people for the immigrant community
1	Need for a shared client data base among service providers
1	End underage marriage, make 18 the minimum legal age
1	Need for a Commission for Women in every county in Maryland
0	Need for greater focus on prevention in women’s health care
0	Child support, including for grandparents
154	28 Issues

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Harford County: Voices of Maryland Women

Photo Album









