

2026



Legislative Session Report

on Women's Issues

Maryland Commission for Women



www.marylandwomen.org



About This Report

The 2026 Maryland legislative session addressed a wide range of women's issues. The Maryland Commission for Women led on legislation in three policy areas: increasing public awareness, advancing clinical training, and expanding insurance coverage around menopause; strengthening campus access to over-the-counter contraception; and modernizing our own statute to reflect our research, advocacy and partnerships with statewide women's groups and County/City Commissions for Women. This legislation also pays tribute to Maryland Speaker Emerita Adrienne Jones by renaming the African American Heritage Preservation Program in her honor.

The Maryland Commission for Women Policy & Legislation Committee monitored the progress of a wide range of policies affecting women in 2026. This report is the result of our work throughout the legislative session. We hope that this report will serve as a resource for the advocates, service providers, and researchers who work on a wide range of women's rights issues year-round.

The Maryland Commission for Women serves as a clearinghouse for women's issues across the state. Established through an Executive Order in 1965, the Commission was made permanent by the legislature in 1972. Our 25 Commissioners are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Maryland Senate. Half of our Commissioners are nominated by women's organizations across the state, ensuring we work collaboratively with community groups.

Maryland Commission for Women's 2026 Priority Issue Areas

Women in the Workforce & Society

Gender Based Occupational Segregation

Justice Impacted Women and Re-Entry

Pay Equity & Economic Equality

Workplace Discrimination

Women in Elected Office

Women's Health & Safety

Health Equity & Healthcare Access

Women's, Maternal & Child Health

Intimate Partner & Sexual Violence

Reproductive Rights & Justice

The Care Economy

Caregiving and Long-Term Care

Child Care Access & Affordability

Family & Medical Leave



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Letter from Executive Director and Chair

The Commission for Women tracked more than 100 bills during the 2026 legislative session. This includes our legislative priorities and the priorities of the major women's issues coalitions in Maryland: Women Legislators of Maryland, Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW), Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV), Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA), and the Reproductive Justice Coalition anchored by Reproductive Justice Maryland and the Maryland Women's Law Center.

In addition to legislation supported by Maryland's women's rights groups, this report includes other legislation that impacts women and may be of interest to researchers, elected officials, or advocates working to advance women's rights in Maryland. The report includes important dates and report deadlines for the legislation highlighted. Unsuccessful legislation included in the "Bills to Watch for Next Year" sections has either passed both legislative chambers in a different posture, passed in one chamber, or has already been identified as a priority by a women's rights group for resubmission next year.

This report acknowledges dozens of victories, large and small, for Maryland women. Thank you to all of the organizations and individuals who made this progress for Maryland's women possible.

Ariana Kelly
Ariana Kelly
Executive Director

LaShaune Stitt
Dr. LaShaune Stitt
Chair

LEGISLATION

Women in the Workforce & Society

Advancing Women's Rights.....	8
HB1300 African American Heritage Preservation Program and Maryland Commission for Women - Renaming and Alterations	
SB907 and HB1389 Female Genital Mutilation	
Educational Opportunities.....	9
SB420 and HB6 Pregnant and Parenting Students Plan and Reporting	
HB457 Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products	
SB532 and HB1076 Over-the-Counter Contraception - Access and Reporting	
Training & Professional Opportunities.....	10
SB187 and HB935 Female Incarcerated Individuals - The Monica Cooper Prerelease Act	
SB880 HB1248 Workgroup for an Inclusive State Workplace	
Women Dominated Professions.....	11
SB6 and HB106 Collective Bargaining for Non-Tenure Track Faculty	
SB238 and HB340 School Psychologist Interstate Licensure Compact	
Healthcare Access & Health Equity.....	11
SB656 and HB1533 Crown and Care Act	
Human Trafficking Prevention.....	12
SB370 and HB374 State Acupuncture Board - Revisions	
SB419 and HB42 State Board of Massage Therapy Examiners - Revisions	
SB473 and HB829 Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Training	
SB492 and HB975 Massage Therapy Advertising	
HB771 Health Occupations Human Trafficking Awareness Training	
Women's & Maternal Health.....	13
SB272 and HB393 Insurance Coverage for Scalp Cooling Systems	
SB891 and HB1118 Perinatal Behavioral Health	
SB892 and HB1365 Menopause Policy Initiatives: Provider Training, Coverage Requirements and Access to Care	
HB1364 Mammograms Arterial Calcification Notice	
SB496 Maryland Medical Assistance Program Coverage for the Treatment of Obesity	
HB1357 Consumer Protection Menstrual Hygiene Products - Labeling Requirements	

Preventing Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence.....15

SB81 and HB329 School Resource Officers Prohibition on Sexual Activity with Students

SB230 and HB138 Third Degree Sexual Offense - Burglary

SB294 and HB450 Protection of Identity of Victim of Sexual Assault or Stalking

SB433 and HB497 Temporary and Final Protective Orders - Duration

SB407 and HB501 Sexual Offense by a Person in a Position of Authority

Reproductive Rights & Justice.....17

SB169 and HB372 Hospitals Emergency Pregnancy-Related Medical Conditions - Procedures

The Care Economy

Child Care.....17

SB467 and HB561 Maryland Child Care Credential Program - Extension of Funding

SB503 and HB742 Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Program

HB849 Child Care Scholarship Program

HB1321 Child Care Scholarship Program Application Process and Copays

Long-Term Care & Aging19

SB113 and HB278 The Longevity Ready Maryland Act

SB340 and HB671 Office of Long Term Care Ombudsman- Mandatory Appropriation

Supporting Caregivers 20

SB668 and HB680 Children's Cabinet Fund Renaming and Funding for Grants to Local Management Boards

SB745 and HB634 LEAD Act of 2026

SB809 and HB1280 Supporting Our Caregiver Infrastructure Program - Feasibility Study

Upcoming Reports & Deadlines.....21

Top 5 Bills to Watch in 2027.....25

WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE AND SOCIETY

Advancing Women's Rights

HB1300 – African American Heritage Preservation Program and Maryland Commission for Women - Renaming and Alterations

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb1300/?ys=2026rs>

Sponsor: Delegate Terri Hill

Maryland Commission for Women Priority
Women Legislators of Maryland Support

This legislation modernizes the Maryland Commission for Women statute to recognize its work with the 17 County Commissions for Women across the state. It also updates the statute to reflect the scope of the research, advocacy, outreach, and public education conducted by the Commission and its partners. In addition, it pays tribute to Maryland's first woman Speaker of the House, Speaker Adrienne A. Jones, by renaming the African American Heritage Preservation Program in her honor.



SB907 and HB1389 - Public Health Female Genital Mutilation

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/SB0907?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Sara Love and Delegate Dana Jones

DMV Coalition to End FGM/C Priority
Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) Support

This legislation adds female genital mutilation to the family law definition of abuse. By doubling criminal penalties to up to 10 years in jail, it supports provider and community education about preventing the crime. Additionally, the law requires the revocation of health occupations licenses for anyone involved in the practice, alongside an annual report on incidences from the Department of Health to the General Assembly beginning in 2027.

Educational Opportunities

SB420 and HB6 - Pregnant and Parenting Students Plan and Reporting

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0006?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Mary Washington and Delegate Ken Kerr

This law requires Maryland's public four-year universities and community colleges to gather demographic data on whether their students are parents or legal guardians, including details like their children's ages and caregiving setups. It establishes a requirement for these universities, alongside all local community colleges, to create and publish a clear support plan on their websites mapping out public benefits, child care scholarships, adoption resources, and healthcare networks. By officially adding parental status to the definition of student data, the state can share this information with the Maryland Longitudinal Data System to track how parenting impacts graduation rates. The law also establishes a boundary around student privacy by clarifying that a student's actual pregnancy status is strictly excluded from these tracking systems.

HB457 - Institutions of Higher Education

Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0457?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Delegate Jessica Feldmark

Requires institutions of higher education with on campus housing to provide free menstrual hygiene products at student health centers.

SB532 and HB1076 - Higher Education

Over-the-Counter Contraception - Access and Reporting

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb1076?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Cheryl Kagan and Delegate Stephanie Smith

Maryland Commission for Women Priority

This legislation ensures the Maryland Higher Education Commission and the public have access to the Reproductive Health Services Plans developed by all four-year public campuses, which must cover contraception access, STI treatment, and abortion referrals. It also clarifies that two- and four-year public colleges are expected to provide access to all forms of FDA-approved, over-the-counter contraceptives, explicitly requiring access to emergency contraception, the O-pill, and condoms.



Training & Professional Opportunities

SB187 and HB935 - Rehabilitative Prerelease Services

Female Incarcerated Individuals - The Monica Cooper Prerelease Act

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/sb0187/?ys=2026rs>

Sponsor: Senator Mary Washington and Delegate Charlotte Crutchfield

MCASA Support

Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) Priority

Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) Support

Women's Law Center Support

This legislation aims to correct an inequity in Maryland's correctional system by ensuring women have access to the same rehabilitative prerelease services available to men. The bill adds reporting requirements for the Departments of General Services and Corrections, while mandating that the new facility be built as a dignified, noncarceral environment featuring private bathrooms, family visiting spaces, classrooms, an on-site career center, and a medical suite. The law requires the state to provide evidence-based, trauma-informed, and gender-responsive services directly on-site, which strictly prohibits the transportation of residents to other facilities to receive them. These mandatory services include community college and vocational training, substance use and mental health counseling, parenting workshops with family leave, and direct prerelease assistance applying for public benefits to ensure a seamless transition back into society.

SB880 and HB1248 - Workgroup for an Inclusive State Workplace

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB1248?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Ben Kramer and Delegate Sarah Wolek

Maryland Commission for Women Priority

Establishes a workgroup staffed by the Department of Benefits and Management to evaluate and develop a plan for creating part-time benefitted state jobs. The Maryland Commission for Women and other relevant state agencies will work with economists, advocates for caregivers, seniors, the disability community, and others to develop this plan.

Women Dominated Professions

SB6 and HB106 - Collective Bargaining for Non-Tenure Track Faculty

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/SB0006?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Ben Kramer and Delegate Linda Foley

This bill extends collective bargaining rights to nontenure track faculty at the University System of Maryland, Morgan State University, and St. Mary's College of Maryland. At least 60% of non-tenure positions in Maryland's higher education institutions are held by women.

SB238 and HB340 - School Psychologist Interstate Licensure Compact

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0340?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Malcolm Augustine and Delegate Bernice Mireku-North

This legislation enters Maryland into the interstate licensure compact for school psychologists. More than 80% of school psychologists are women. This legislation will make licensing in multiple states possible, creating workforce flexibility and bringing psychologists licensed in other states into Maryland.

Healthcare Access & Health Equity

SB656 and HB1533 - Crown and Care Act

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/sb0656/?ys=2026rs>

Sponsor: Senator Shaneka Henson and Delegate Tiffany Alston

This legislation establishes civil penalties for persons found to have sold or manufactured cosmetic hair products containing certain banned, harmful chemicals.

Human Trafficking Prevention

SB370 and HB374 - State Acupuncture Board - Revisions

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0374?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Malcolm Augustine and Delegate Jennifer White Holland

Montgomery County Commission for Women Priority

This legislation updates Maryland's acupuncture licensing laws to help local authorities prevent human trafficking. By defining "manual therapies" like acupressure, the bill closes a regulatory loophole often used by unlicensed businesses to avoid oversight. The law penalizes exploitative business owners by making it illegal to hire unlicensed individuals or aid unauthorized practice. First-time employer offenses are misdemeanors, but repeat violations escalate to a felony carrying up to five years in prison and a fine of 5,000 dollars per day. Supported by groups like the Montgomery County Commission for Women, these strict penalties target illicit business operations rather than the workers themselves.

SB419 and HB42 - State Board of Massage Therapy Examiners - Revisions

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0042?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Bryan Simonaire and Delegate Heather Bagnall

Updates to massage therapy licensure establish clear education requirements for out-of-state applicants and outline a process to convert existing practitioner registrations into full licenses. To strengthen oversight and help prevent human trafficking, the new law tightens screening by requiring both a state and national criminal history check to reactivate an inactive license. Registered practitioners who remain inactive or expired for over five years must also meet the state's newer licensing standards to resume practicing.

SB473 and HB829 - Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Training

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/SB0473?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Shelly Hettleman and Delegate Eric Ebersole

Montgomery County Commission for Women Priority

Requires human trafficking awareness training for licensed taxicab drivers, for-hire drivers, and transportation network drivers.

SB492 and HB975 - Massage Therapy Advertising

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0975?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Pam Beidle and Delegate Pam Guzzone

Montgomery County Commission for Women Priority

Prevents sexually explicit and misleading advertising that undermines legitimate massage practitioners, confuses the public, and can hide prostitution and human trafficking behind the word "massage."



HB771 - Health Occupations Human Trafficking Awareness Training

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0771/?ys=2026rs>

Sponsor: Delegate April Miller

MCASA Support
MNADV Support
Women's Law Center Support

Requires health professions' licensing boards to offer continuing education credits for training in human trafficking awareness. The bill also establishes requirements for such training programs.

Women's & Maternal Health

SB272 and HB393 - Insurance Coverage for Scalp Cooling Systems

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0393?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Dawn Gile and Delegate LaToya Nkongolo

This legislation requires insurance coverage for a treatment to help patients preserve their hair during chemotherapy.



SB891 and HB1118 - Perinatal Behavioral Health

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB1118?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Dawn Gile and Delegate Jennifer White Holland

Sponsored by the Chair of the newly established Maternal and Child Health Subcommittee of the House Health Committee, it updates and codifies the state's screening, training, and referral requirements to promote increased awareness and support for postpartum behavioral health.

SB892 and HB1365 - Menopause Policy Initiatives: Provider Training, Coverage

Requirements and Access to Care

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb1365?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Dawn Gile and Speaker Joseline Peña-Melnyk

Maryland Commission for Women Priority

This legislation from the Maryland Commission for Women will modernize menopause care across Maryland by developing and incentivizing clinical training for perimenopause and menopause care, requiring insurance coverage for symptom treatment, and investigating and reporting on policies that can support women in the workforce during this transition.

HB1364 - Mammograms Arterial Calcification Notice

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB1364?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Speaker Joseline Peña-Melnyk

This bill will require notification to women in their mammogram results letter if Breast Arterial Calcification (BAC) is present in their mammogram. BAC is the buildup of calcium in the arterial walls that can predict or discern the risk for cardiovascular disease.

SB496 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program Coverage for the Treatment of Obesity

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/sb0496?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senators Stephen Hershey, Jr. and Senator Clarence Lam

Alliance for Women's Health and Prevention Support

Authorizes the Maryland Medical Assistance Program (Medicaid) to offer comprehensive coverage for obesity treatment beginning January 1, 2027. This expanded coverage includes intensive behavioral therapy, bariatric surgery, and FDA-approved weight-management medications, including GLP-1 drugs such as Wegovy and Zepbound. Women are 70%+ of the population using GLP-1s for weight management.

HB1357 and CH0241 - Consumer Protection Menstrual Hygiene Products - Labeling Requirements

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb1357/?ys=2026rs>

Sponsors: Delegates Anne Kaiser

Women's Law Center Support

Starting April 1, 2028, this bill requires manufacturers to prominently list all ingredients, in order of predominance, on the packaging of menstrual products sold in Maryland. The mandate covers disposable and reusable items like tampons, pads, and cups, and specifically requires the disclosure of intentionally added fragrances and colorings. However, manufacturers are permitted to protect trade secrets by listing legally recognized "confidential substances" by their common names.

Preventing Intimate Partner & Sexual Violence

SB81 and HB329 - School Resource Officers Prohibition on Sexual Activity with Students

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0329?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Bill Folden and Delegate Karen Simpson

Maryland Commission for Women Priority
MCASA Support
MLAW Support
MNADV Support

This bill closes a loophole in existing law by prohibiting school resource officers from engaging in sexual relationships with high school students who have turned 18.

SB230 and HB138 - Third Degree Sexual Offense - Burglary

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/SB0230?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Chris West and Delegate Sandy Bartlett

This legislation increases penalties for individuals convicted of a sexual offense in connection with a burglary.

SB294 and HB450 - Protection of Identity of Victim of Sexual Assault or Stalking*

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/SB0294?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Sara Love and Delegate Michele Guyton

Maryland Commission for Women Priority
MCASA Support
MLAW Support
MNADV Support

This legislation ensures that victims of sexual assault or stalking are able to maintain their privacy by requiring court records to redact certain identifying information about them.

SB433 and HB497 - Family Law

Temporary and Final Protective Orders - Duration

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0497?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Sara Love and Delegate Karen Simpson

Maryland Commission for Women Priority
MLAW Priority
MCASA Support
MNADV Support
Women's Law Center Support
Women Legislators of Maryland Support

Extends from 7 to 14 days the duration of a temporary protective order before a final hearing, and authorizes courts to order respondents to pay for specific financial losses incurred as a direct result of abuse. It further protects petitioner privacy by requiring court records to redact certain identifying information about them.

SB407 and HB501 - Criminal Law

Sexual Offense by a Person in a Position of Authority

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0501?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Dawn Gile and Delegate Sandy Bartlett

MCASA Support
MNADV Support
Women's Law Center Support

The enacted legislation establishes a distinct criminal category that penalizes individuals in positions of authority, including teachers, coaches, and tutors, who engage in sexual misconduct with minors under their care. While a standard violation remains a misdemeanor carrying a one-year maximum prison sentence, the law introduces severe felony penalties for aggravated offenses. Specifically, if the victim is a child under thirteen years old, the maximum sentence increases to ten years in prison and a twenty-five thousand dollar fine. For repeat offenders with a history of serious sexual crimes, the maximum penalty escalates to twenty years in prison and a fifty thousand dollar fine alongside mandatory lifetime sex offender registration.

Reproductive Rights & Justice

SB169 and HB372 – Hospitals Emergency Pregnancy-Related Medical Conditions - Procedures

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/SB0169/?ys=2026rs>

Sponsor: Senator Clarence Lam and Delegate Lesley Lopez

Planned Parenthood of Maryland Support
Reproductive Justice Maryland Support
Women's Law Center of Maryland Support

Ensures Maryland hospitals will provide abortion care in emergency situations regardless of any changes in the federal EMTALA law. A hospital treating a patient with an emergency pregnancy-related medical condition would have to do what's needed to stabilize the patient, including the termination of the pregnancy, if needed. If unable to do so, the hospital would have to transfer the patient to another facility, so long as the transfer does not worsen the patient's condition.

CARE ECONOMY

Child Care

SB467 and HB561 - Maryland Child Care Credential Program - Extension of Funding

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0561?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Nancy King and Delegate Julie Palakovich Carr

Maryland State Child Care Association Support
United Way of Central Maryland Support

Requires \$5.3 million in annual funding for the child care credentialing program. The program invests in our childcare workforce. It supports professional development, improves child care quality, and incentivizes providers to pursue higher levels of training and education. This legislation also establishes long-term sustainability for this program.

SB503 and HB742 - Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Program

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/SB0503?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Nancy King and Delegate Jared Solomon

Maryland Family Network Support
Maryland State Child Care Association Support

Extends through 2030 a \$450,000 annual appropriation for a program that provides grants to increase the supply and sustainability of family child care homes, which are nearly all women-owned small businesses. This program (GO FCC) guides aspiring child care providers through the complex state licensing process, provides training on business concepts, and support for quality improvement and program sustainability. Coaches target recruiting in child care deserts and high-need communities. Program graduates are mostly women who become small business owners meeting a need in their communities. In the last 3 years, the program has opened 278 new family child care programs with nearly 2,000 new slots.

HB849 - Child Care Scholarship Program

Freeze in Enrollment - Exceptions and Waitlist

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0849/?ys=2026rs>

Sponsor: Delegate Bernice Mireku-North

MNADV Support
Women Legislators of Maryland Support
Maryland State Child Care Association Support

Ensures that the childcare scholarship waitlist prioritizes those with the greatest financial need, the children of the childcare workforce, and children under 3 years old. Also codifies the current practice of allowing families to bypass the waitlist if they receive TANF, TCA, or SSI benefits, as well as siblings of currently enrolled children.

HB1321 - Child Care Scholarship Program Application Process and Copays

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB1321/?ys=2026rs>

Sponsor: Delegate Julie Palakovich Carr

Women Legislators of Maryland Support
Maryland State Childcare Association Support

Aims to address the child care scholarship waitlist and prioritize families with the greatest need to receive care as quickly as possible. It authorizes the establishment of co-pays for families receiving childcare scholarships if their household income is above the federal poverty line. The co-pays may not be more than 7% of household income. Also requires applicants to receive information on publicly available Head Start and Pre-K programs, government assistance programs, and low-income tax credits.

Long-Term Care & Aging

SB113 and HB278 - The Longevity Ready Maryland Act

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0278?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Department Bill, Department of Aging and Commission on Aging

Maryland Commission for Women Support
Maryland Commission on Caregiving Support
AARP Maryland Support

Requires the Department of Aging to lead implementation of programming (the Longevity Ready Maryland Program) to modernize and improve services for older Marylanders. The legislation is the culmination of a three-year effort to modernize Maryland's approach to aging policy and programs. In 2024 Governor Moore's executive order laid the groundwork to create the state's first multisector plan for aging. Following a period of extensive stakeholder collaboration, the Longevity Ready Maryland plan was adopted in 2025. The 2026 Longevity Ready Maryland Act puts the plan's four goals into state statute. The plan envisions building a longevity ecosystem: promoting economic opportunity, preparing residents to afford longevity, and optimizing health, wellness, and mobility. Aging issues disproportionately impact women. Women live longer, have less retirement security, and provide more unpaid caregiving than men. READ MORE: <https://www.lifespan-network.org/2026/04/14/maryland-marks-new-era-for-aging-with-the-passage-of-the-longevity-ready-maryland-act/>



SB340 and HB671 - Office of Long Term Care Ombudsman- Mandatory Appropriation

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0671?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Shelly Hettleman and Delegate Emily Shetty

AARP Maryland Support
Alzheimer's Association Support

This bill establishes mandatory funding of \$2 million annually for the Long Term Care Ombudsman beginning in fiscal year 2027. Authorized under the Older Americans Act, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is a critical safeguard for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. It advocates for the health, safety, well-being, and rights of residents living in those facilities. 70% of Maryland's long term care residents are women.

Supporting Caregivers

SB668 and HB680 - Children's Cabinet Fund Renaming and Funding for Grants to Local Management Boards

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/SB0668?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Kevin Harris and Delegate Emily Shetty

Renames the Children's Cabinet Fund to the Children's Cabinet Interagency Fund, and requires sustained appropriations for local management boards through 2030, with a minimum increase in appropriations of \$500,000 in 2031. Local management boards (LMB's) are tasked with ensuring children's services and programs meet the needs of their communities.

SB745 and HB634 - LEAD Act of 2026

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0634/?ys=2026rs>

Sponsor: Senator Mike McKay and Delegate Aaron Kaufman

Maryland Commission on Caregiving Support

This legislation requires police training on how to interact with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, dementia, and autism. This legislation is especially relevant to women because nearly two thirds of individuals living with Alzheimer's are women. Additionally, nearly 75% of caregivers for people with autism are women.

SB809 and HB1280 - Supporting Our Caregiver Infrastructure Program - Feasibility Study

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB1280?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Nancy King and Delegate Greg Wims

AARP Maryland Support

Maryland Commission on Caregiving Support

Montgomery County Commission for Women Support

Requires The University of Maryland, College Park, in cooperation with the Department of Human Services, to undertake a feasibility study for establishing and operating a universal program to provide monthly payments to caregivers. This bill requires a rigorous study to examine potential increases in labor force participation, increased state and local tax revenues, reduced public benefit expenditures, and improvements to the overall economic vitality of the state. The report would be due July 1, 2028. The overwhelming majority of unpaid caregivers are women.

UPCOMING REPORTS & DEADLINES

2026 Deadlines

Higher Education Institutions - Over-the-Counter Contraception - Access and Reporting

Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC)

- July 1, 2026 - Public colleges must make all forms of over-the-counter contraception available directly on campus.
- September 1, 2026 - Colleges must submit their first annual report tracking campus access, distribution data, and student feedback to MHEC.
- October 1, 2026 - MHEC will submit to the General Assembly an annual report detailing this information as well as any trends.

Perinatal Behavioral Health Bill

- July 1, 2026 – The overall Act becomes law, allowing the state to begin preparation and impact analyses.
- December 1, 2026 – The Maryland Health Care Commission must submit its insurance impact and cost-sharing report to the Senate Finance and House Health Committees.
- January 1, 2027 – Insurance carriers and Medicaid must cover perinatal behavioral health screenings for all new or renewed policies.

Workgroup for an Inclusive State Workplace

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM)

- July 1 and December 1 each year, starting December 1, 2026 – The Pilot Program Progress Reports are due to the House Appropriations Committee (specifically reviewed by its Oversight Committee on Personnel), the Senate Finance Committee and the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee.
- September 15, 2027 - The Inclusive Workplace Workgroup Report due to the House Appropriations Committee and the Senate Finance Committee.

Institutions of Higher Education - Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products

- July 1, 2026 – The Act legally becomes Maryland state law.
- August 1, 2028 – The absolute deadline for Maryland colleges with on-campus housing to provide free menstrual hygiene products in their student health centers.

Pregnant and Parenting Students' Plans

- All Public Senior Higher Education Institutions
- August 1, 2026 - Plans must be posted on school websites.

Family Child Care Homes and Child Care Centers - Regulatory Analysis

- Maryland State Department of Education
- September 1, 2026 - Final report due to the Governor and the General Assembly.

Interested Parties Advisory Group (IPAG) - Home and Community-Based Services

- Maryland Department of Health
- September 1, 2026 – Report due (and annually thereafter) on issues related to access to home and community-based care

Mammograms - Arterial Calcification Notice

- Effective October 1, 2026

Menopause Policy Initiatives: Provider Training, Coverage Requirements and Access to Care

Maryland Department of Health (MDH)

- October 1, 2026 - Double-Credit Provider Training Begins: Health occupations boards must begin granting at least 2 hours of continuing education (CE) credit for every 1 hour spent on approved menopause training.

Assessment of State-Owned Facilities for Child Care Centers

Maryland Department of General Services

- December 1, 2026 - Report due to the General Assembly.

Health, Health Insurance, and Health Occupations - Perinatal Behavioral Health Conditions

Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC)

- December 1, 2026 - MHCC must report assessing the cost and operational impacts of mandating insurance coverage and limiting out-of-pocket costs for perinatal mental health screenings to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Health Committee.

Rehabilitative Prerelease Services - Female Incarcerated Individuals- The Monica Cooper Prerelease Act

Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

- December 15, 2026 - DPSCS must provide a preliminary report to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, the House Judiciary Committee, and the House Appropriations Committee on the progress the department has made to comply with the bill.

2027 Deadlines

Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program Effective Dates

Maryland Department of Labor

- January 1, 2027 - FAML I Program's contribution start date

Human Trafficking Training, Awareness, and Response

Maryland Department of Transportation

- January 1, 2027 - State and contract transportation employers must certify the initial employee training, and continue to do so annually thereafter.

Insurance Coverage for Scalp Cooling Systems

- Effective Date: January 1, 2027

Menopause Policy Initiatives: Provider Training, Coverage Requirements and Access to Care

Maryland Department of Health (MDH)

- January 1, 2027 - Insurance Coverage Mandate Takes Effect
- October 1, 2027 – State Accountability Reports Due to Maryland General Assembly from the Maryland Department of Health with the State Community Health Worker Advisory Committee to evaluate and submit an action plan increasing consumer access to menopause-related healthcare services through community health worker outreach as mandated by this bill.

Rehabilitative Prerelease Services - Female Incarcerated Individuals- The Monica Cooper Prerelease Act

Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS)

- Office of the Correctional Ombudsman (OCO)
- May 1, 2027 – DGS must update legislative committees on the design and construction of the prerelease facility.
- June 1, 2027 – OCO must assess DPSCS' progress and submit a yearly report, including findings and recommendations, to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, the House Judiciary Committee, the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, and the House Appropriations Committee.

Pregnant and Parenting Students - Plan and Reporting

Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC)

- September 1, 2027 - MHEC must submit its first annual report on the parental status of enrolled students data to the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, the Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment, and the House Appropriations Committee.

Workgroup for an Inclusive State Workplace

Department of Budget and Management (DBM)

- September 15, 2027 - the workgroup must provide its findings and recommendations in a report to the General Assembly.
- December 31, 2027- DBM must develop and distribute guidance to State agencies on expanding part-time employment opportunities, taking into consideration the workgroup's findings and recommendations.

Menopause Policy Initiatives: Health and Economic Security Recommendations

Maryland Commission for Women

- October 1, 2027 - The Maryland Commission for Women must submit its report to the General Assembly. The report will evaluate state policy opportunities to improve the health and economic security of individuals with perimenopausal, menopausal, and postmenopausal conditions, including both findings and recommendations.

Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Coverage for the Treatment of Obesity - Authorization

Maryland Department of Health (MDH)

- November 1, 2027 – MDH must report to the Senate Finance Committee, the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, the House Health Committee, and the House Appropriations Committee of the General Assembly on whether Medicaid has begun to provide comprehensive coverage for the treatment of obesity, including intensive behavioral therapy, bariatric surgery, and FDA-approved chronic weight management medications.

Public Health- Female Genital Mutilation

Maryland Department of Health

- December 1, 2027 - Annual Report: MDH will publish de-identified and disaggregated data detailing the exact number of FGM abuse reports submitted by mandatory reporters, individuals criminally prosecuted, individuals convicted of FGM offenses, civil lawsuits filed by victims, and civil actions resolved through settlement or adjudication.

2028 Deadlines

Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program Effective Dates

Maryland Department of Labor

- January 1, 2028 - Program benefit payments will begin

Rehabilitative Prerelease Services - Female Incarcerated Individuals- The Monica Cooper Prerelease Act

Office of the Correctional Ombudsman (OCO)

- June 1 - OCO must review and verify DPSCS' progress and submit an annual report, including findings and recommendation to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee and the House Judiciary Committee of the General Assembly.

Supporting Our Caregiver Infrastructure Program - Feasibility Study

University of Maryland, College Park and Maryland Department of Human Services

- July 1, 2028 - The University of Maryland, College Park will submit a final report focusing on the feasibility of establishing the Supporting Our Caregiver Infrastructure Program to provide universal monthly stipends, including an analysis of optimal stipend amounts and the program's overall economic impact on labor participation, tax revenues, public benefits enrollment, and State and local budget infrastructure.

Public Health- Female Genital Mutilation

Maryland Department of Health

- December 1, 2028 - Report due to Maryland General Assembly on incidence of FGM. The report should also be made available to the public.

5 BILLS TO WATCH IN 2027

These bills passed at least one chamber, but did not pass both the House and Senate in an identical form this year. They are likely to return next year.

1. **SB20 and HB83 - Family and Law Enforcement Protection Act**

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0083?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Shelly Hettleman and Delegate Sandy Bartlett

Status: Passed the House 89-32. Did not get a vote in the Senate.

Maryland Commission for Women Priority
MLAW Priority
MCASA Support
Women's Law Center Support

Closes a critical safety gap by requiring domestic violence respondents to immediately surrender all firearms and handgun permits at the Temporary Protective Order phase, rather than waiting for a final hearing. The bill establishes a strict 24-hour window for weapon transfer, mandates a 3-day law enforcement compliance check, and requires judges to actively question petitioners about an abuser's access to guns.

2. **SB254 and HB355 - Sexual Abuse Awareness and Prevention Program - Human and Sex Trafficking**

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0355?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Jason Gallion and Delegate Steve Johnson

Status: Passed the House 127-5. Did not get a vote in the Senate.

MCASA Support

Expands Maryland's existing school safety curricula by requiring the State Board of Education and participating nonpublic schools to integrate age-appropriate education on the awareness and prevention of human and sex trafficking. Specifically targeting students in grades 6 through 8, the bill mandates that this material be officially incorporated into the standard health curriculum and taught exclusively by teachers who are specially trained in sexual abuse and assault prevention instruction.

3. **HB536 - Reasonable Workplace Accommodations for Childbirth and Menopause**

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0536/?ys=2026rs>

Sponsor: Delegate Stephanie Smith

Status: Passed the House 105-19. Did not get a vote in the Senate.

Maryland Commission for Women Priority
Women's Law Center Support

This bill ensures that women experiencing short-term disabilities tied to childbirth or menopause are protected from workplace discrimination through the reasonable accommodations process. Existing law already includes these protections for temporary disabilities related to pregnancy.

4. **HB649 - Educational Opportunities for All Students**

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0649/?ys=2026rs>

Sponsor: Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

Status: Passed the House 100-35. Did not get a vote in the Senate.

Maryland Commission on Civil Rights Priority

This legislation would permit the Commission on Civil Rights to enforce prohibitions on discrimination in educational institutions.

5. **SB626 and HB1589 - Birth Certificate Modernization Act**

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/SB0626?ys=2026RS>

Sponsor: Senator Clarence Lam and Delegate Ashanti Martinez

Status: Passed the Senate 24-16 and passed the House 91-36 in a different form.

Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs Priority

The two chambers could not reach agreement on their policy differences so it did not move on to the Governor. This bill modernizes the administrative process for updating name and sex designations on birth certificates and state identification cards.



www.marylandwomen.org

Maryland Commission for Women

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