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MARYLAND COMMISSION *for* **WOMEN**

ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024



2023-2024 Annual Report

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Message from the Secretary

Maryland Department of Human Services

Rafael López



I am honored to share the 2024 Annual Report of the Maryland Commission for Women. Together with the Department of Human Services, the Maryland Commission for Women works tirelessly to ensure our state government addresses the diverse and evolving needs of women and girls, striving toward a more just and equitable society.

The Commission's work reflects the core values of the Moore-Miller administration, especially in confronting the challenges that perpetuate inequities for all individuals who identify as women and girls. We are inspired by the Commission's commitment to challenge the status quo. Recent statistics underscore the persistent inequities faced by women.

Next year, we will celebrate the Commission's 60th anniversary under the leadership of our new Chair, LaShaune Stitt, and our new Executive Director Ariana Kelly at the helm. As a former State Senator and President of the Women Legislators of Maryland, Ariana is widely respected across the state for her dedication to advancing women's rights. With her bold vision, extensive experience, and deep community connections, we are confident she will lead us toward a brighter, more equitable future.

We also extend our gratitude to the former Executive Director Judith Vaughan-Prather for her decade of service, and to former Chair Tawanda Bailey for her leadership during the leadership transition. Commissioner Bailey's guidance in the search for a new Executive Director, along with her efforts to maintain community engagement, and celebrate Women's History Month, has been invaluable.

We are grateful to the Commission, its partners, and its network of supporters who are bringing our mission to life with urgency and action. Together, we will continue to create a world where every woman and girl has the opportunity to thrive and live extraordinary lives on their own terms.

In service,

Rafael López
Secretary



"Women made up 47% of the U.S. civilian labor force in 2023, up from 30% in 1950 – but growth has stagnated".

"Women still lag in top leadership positions in business and government".

"The gender pay gap – the difference between the median earnings of men and women – has remained relatively flat in the United States over the past two decades".

~Pew Research Center (February 2024)

Message from the Chair

Tawanda A. Bailey



This has been an exciting year of transition and accomplishment for the Maryland Commission for Women. We achieved monumental policy and advocacy wins, honored some of Maryland's most remarkable women, and welcomed a bold and visionary new Executive Director. As we look forward to even more exciting changes in the year to come, it is my pleasure to present our 2023-2024 annual report.

Our Maryland Women's Hall of Fame honors remarkable women from throughout Maryland's history. This fall, the remarkable museum quality exhibit found a new home. In partnership with the Maryland Women's Heritage Center and Notre Dame of Maryland University, the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame is now housed in the Knott Science and Innovation Center at the Notre Dame campus in Baltimore. The exhibit is open daily to the public to inspire students and encourage future women leaders to dream big! Special thanks to Notre Dame President and former MCW Commissioner Marylou Lam for envisioning this partnership.

In November, after more than a decade as our Executive Director, Judith Vaughan-Prather announced her retirement. Working with Judy has been a tremendous pleasure for me personally, and all the Commissioners. Her passion, dedication and hard work has been at the core of the Commission's success. The Women of Maryland are better off, thanks to her service.

As we began the search for our new Executive Director, we received tremendous support from the team at the Department of Human Services, led by Secretary Rafael López. The Secretary's Special Assistant Angelique Salizan went above and beyond to keep us moving forward. Commission Management Associate, Tammy Wise, also stepped up to handle multiple responsibilities, as did many of our hard-working Commissioners.



The Awards and Recognition Committee (ARC) knew the show must go on! Chaired by Pier Blake, alongside Vice-Chairs Lenita Walker and Gloria Dent, our annual Women's History Month event honoring Hall of Fame inductees as well as Young Women Leaders was spectacular. It was a privilege to hear Hall of Fame inductee Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi offer advice on leadership to the five young women honorees. Our Policy and Advocacy Committee, chaired by Essita Duncan, successfully advocated for four pieces of legislation. And, in a victory close to my heart, the Commission successfully advocated for the Maryland State Firefighters Association to modernize their name.

In May, we welcomed our new Executive Director, former State Senator Ariana Kelly. Ariana brings a bold, new vision that will revitalize the Commission as we enter our 60th year. Her accomplishment and relationships within the women's rights movement in Maryland are remarkable. Ariana was the lead Senate sponsor of three of our four legislative priorities in 2024! She has been recognized as a women's rights leader with awards for her work by many of our nonprofit partners, including Planned Parenthood, Maryland Family Network, and SIECUS. She also served as President of Women Legislators of Maryland during the #MeToo era. Prior to her 14 years of legislative service, Ariana worked with MomsRising, Pro-Choice Maryland, PBS' To The Contrary, and Girls Inc. The Commission is overjoyed to have her as our new Executive Director.

As I complete my second four-year term and my service as Chair, I am inspired by the foundation we have laid together for the future. The Commissioners have elected extraordinary new leadership in LaShaune Stitt as Chair and Christine Lee as Second Vice Chair. Pat Lambert was elevated to First Vice Chair. I extend my deepest gratitude to them for taking on these important roles, as well as my tremendous appreciation to my extraordinary First Vice Chair Maxine Griffin Somerville who has also completed her term of service.

I am proud of the work we have accomplished together and know that we will continue to forge forward with this work on behalf of all the women and girls of this great state.

Letter from the Executive Director



This was a year of transition for the Maryland Commission for Women. After ten years leading the Commission, Executive Director Judith Vaughn-Prather retired in December. Commissioners gathered to celebrate Judy's extraordinary service to the women of Maryland. Maryland women will benefit from Judy's leadership and commitment to building a more equitable state for generations to come. Thank you, Judy, for your service!

During the Executive Director search, three individuals came together to ensure the Commission did not miss a beat. Chair Tawanda Bailey took on additional tasks and showed true leadership in partnering with Management Associate, Tammy Wise, to keep the Commission going. Angelique Salizan, Special Assistant to Secretary Rafael López, provided exceptional staff support to the Commission throughout the Executive Director transition. For this, we are truly thankful.

At the close of the 2024 legislative session, I retired from the Maryland Senate to begin a new adventure as Executive Director of the Maryland Commission for Women. In the legislature, I represented District 16 for 14 years, in both the House and the Senate. I served on the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, as Vice Chair of the House Health and Government Operations Committee, and as Chair of the Joint Committee for Children, Youth and Families.

During my time in the legislature, I partnered with the Commission for Women, and women's rights advocacy groups across the state. I was one of the lead sponsors of the Paid Family and Medical Leave legislation, the Abortion Care Access Act, and the Contraceptive Equity Act. As President of Women Legislators of Maryland, I also led the women legislators to reform the sexual harassment policies for Maryland state government. I am proud to have been the lead sponsor of legislation ensuring sexual assault and rape laws apply when someone assaults their spouse, and legislation ensuring salaries are included in job postings, which will help reduce the pay gap.

During the 2024 session, I was lead sponsor of three Commission priorities: The Equal Rights Amendment Resolution (with Delegate Edith Patterson), the bill defining consent and repealing the need of threat of force for sex crimes (with Delegate Emily Shetty), and legislation preventing the solicitation of child pornography from minors. I was also a proud co-sponsor of the Commission's fourth successful priority, Senator Elfreth and Delegate Vogel's legislation to establish security grant funds for reproductive health care clinics.

My passion for women's issues is what brought me from the Senate to the Commission. I have tremendous respect and admiration for the people, women, men and non-binary individuals, working across Maryland to advance women's rights. I know firsthand how hard it is for these leaders to accomplish their goals. They're faced with extremely limited resources, skepticism that disparities and discrimination still exist, and too few women in positions of power across the state.

At the end of June 2024, the Commissioners elected Dr. LaShaune Stitt as their Chair, Patricia Lambert as first Vice Chair, and Christine Lee as Second Vice Chair. As this extraordinary team looks ahead to fiscal year 2025, we are working to lay a solid foundation for expanded work in the years to come. Together, we can fulfill the ambitious goal of full economic, social, and political equity for all women.

The Honorable Ariana Kelly
Executive Director

The Maryland Commission for Women 2023 – 2024 Officers

Commission for Women Officers



Maxine Griffin Somerville
FIRST VICE CHAIR
Charles County



Tawanda A. Bailey
CHAIR
Frederick County



Patricia McHugh Lambert
SECOND VICE CHAIR
Carroll County

Commissioners

Pier Blake	Howard County
Jonothan Carrington	Prince George's County
Gloria Dent	Anne Arundel County
Essita R. Duncan, Esq.	Prince George's County
Judith Kain Emmel	Anne Arundel County
Kathryn M. Fiddler, D.N.P.	Somerset County
Maggi G. Gaines	Baltimore City
Linda Hahn	Prince George's County
Sarah Ackerstein Klein	Montgomery County
Lauren Lambert MBA	Prince George's County
Christine Lee	Howard County
Brenda J. McChriston	Howard County
Evelyne S. Steward	Montgomery County
LaShaune Stitt, EdD	Baltimore County
Lenita A. Walker	Prince George's County
Monica Watkins	Baltimore County
Tamara E. Wilson, D. Min	Baltimore City

Full biographies for our commissioners are available on the Maryland Commission for Women website.

COMMISSION STAFF:

The Honorable Ariana Kelly, Executive Director (May, 2024 - present)

Judith Vaughan-Prather (retired December 2023)

Tammy Wise, Management Associate

Camille Fabiyi, Intern

Alex Osterhues, Intern

About the Commission



The Maryland Commission for Women was established in 1965 following the model of the President's Commission on the Status of Women developed by President John F. Kennedy in partnership with the Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor. This landmark Commission, chaired by former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, developed a blueprint for women's full equality.

All 50 states followed Mrs. Roosevelt's lead and soon developed state commissions with the same goal. Fifty-nine years strong, Maryland's Commission for Women is an office in the Department of Human Services. The Commission is a 25-member advisory board. Commissioners are appointed by the Governor to four-year terms, with confirmation by the Maryland State Senate.

The legislative mandate of the Commission is to work directly with government agencies, community organizations, and the public to:

- Stimulate and encourage study and review of the status of women
- Strengthen families by directing attention to critical problems facing women at home, in the workplace, and within communities
- Recommend methods of overcoming discrimination against women
- Encourage women to become candidates for public office
- Support effective methods for women to develop skills, education and training to succeed professionally
- Provide informed advice to the executive and legislative branches of government, through formal recommendations and legislative testimony
- Serve as a statewide clearinghouse for activities on women's status
- Make surveys and appoint advisory committees in fields including education, social services, labor and employment, law enforcement, health and safety, legal rights, family relations, human relations, volunteer services and new and expanded services.
- Secure appropriate recognition of women's accomplishments and contributions

Since 1965, the Commission for Women has been an essential resource and innovator for Maryland policymakers and community groups working toward women's equality. As an incubator, the Commission has launched two essential nonprofit organizations serving Maryland women: the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women and the Maryland Women's Heritage Center.

Research on Women

The Commission issues a Status of Women in Maryland (SWIM) report every ten years in conjunction with the release of U.S. Census data. Our most recent SWIM Report was published in April 2021. This report compiles research and statistics on women from a variety of federal and state sources as well as private research firms. The information presented in these reports highlights gender differences and inequities, and is intended to serve as a resource for developing statewide legislation, programs, and policies to ensure brighter futures for all residents of Maryland. In addition to the SWIM report, the Commission partners with various organizations to conduct and publish additional research and surveys on a variety of topics related to women in Maryland.

Policy Recommendations

Rooted in research and community partnerships, the Commission provides strong recommendations to the executive and legislative branches on policies that impact women. The Commission also works with state agencies, local governments, and advocacy organizations to track and monitor ongoing implementation of a wide range of policies that impact women's lives.

In recent years, the Commission has encouraged the protection and expansion of reproductive rights and abortion access, the establishment of a paid family and medical leave program, the strengthening of equal pay laws, protections for victims of domestic violence, investment in child care programs and our childcare workforce, and legal protections for sexual assault survivors.

The nonprofit, Maryland's Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW), evolved from two statewide women's conferences hosted by the Commission for Women in 1987 and 1991. In January 1993, a formal coalition of women's organizations was formed, with the Commission providing the administrative support and funding. This launched the first legislative agenda in 1994. The Commission for Women housed and staffed MLAW until it became an independent nonprofit in 2004. The MLAW coalition organizes an annual legislative agenda to advance a wide range of priorities for women and families, with continued financial support from the Commission for Women.

In addition to supporting the MLAW legislative agenda, the Commission for Women also identifies key policy and advocacy priorities to champion during the legislative session and throughout the year.

Encouraging Women's Political Participation

The Commission for Women tracks data on women candidates for elected office in Maryland. We also partner with the Women Legislators of Maryland, League of Women Voters of Maryland, Center for American Women in Politics, Run Vote Lead, She Should Run, Maryland's local Commissions for Women and other nonpartisan organizations on developing programming to encourage women to run for office in Maryland.

The Commission also partners with student groups at the college and high school level to encourage young women's political participation. Our annual Young Women Leaders Award identifies and honors future leaders in a variety of fields, including politics. Our undergraduate internship program familiarizes college students with the political process and provides the opportunity for young women to work in partnership with female elected leaders.

At the close of FY2024, the Commission notes that, although women have made great electoral gains, Maryland still has no women in our federal delegation. Also, Maryland has never elected a woman as Governor.

Maryland's Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

The Commission is a central hub for information on the diverse activities of women's organizations across the state. This allows advocates to work more efficiently and effectively. We work to prevent duplication of efforts and help advocates build relationships with potential nonprofit allies, elected officials, and state and local government agencies.

The Commission works in partnership with traditional and non-traditional women's groups, local and statewide groups, and ethnic affinity groups. We partner with sororities, religious groups, and professional associations. It is essential in our work that we maintain relationships and a working knowledge of the goals and priorities of a wide array of women's groups across Maryland.

We are longtime active participants in Maryland's Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) and Maryland's Network Against Domestic Violence (MDNADV) and the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) coalition. We were a founding member of the Marylanders for Reproductive Rights Coalition (MRC) that was active from the 1980s - 2010 and are an active participant in the post-Dobbs abortion access coalition being formed in 2024.

The Maryland Commission for Women maintains active relationships with all 17 County Commissions for Women in Maryland. We host an annual roundtable conversation to foster relationship building and help Commissioners identify potential opportunities to partner with other jurisdictions on similar projects.

Our commissioners serve as representatives on a variety of workgroups and task forces across Maryland, bringing an essential women's rights perspective to state government work. Staff and commissioners also engage in public speaking in a variety of forums across the state to bring attention to critical issues facing Maryland women.

Strengthening Women's Economic Power

A focus on women's professional development and economic independence is central to the mission of the Commission for Women. This core tenant of our mission has evolved throughout the years.

We have worked to support displaced homemakers and developed resources for women experiencing divorce in partnership with the Maryland Women's Law Center. We have developed programming for women in non-traditional fields and created talent banks for women seeking Board service opportunities in partnership with local Chambers of Commerce and Maryland's Business and Professional Women. We have supported legislation and conducted educational programs to reduce sexual harassment in the workplace.

Recently, we have focused on research and policy development to increase women's workforce participation after the pandemic. We participated in Maryland's Task Force to Study Paid Family and Medical Leave Programs which resulted in the Time To Care Act, and are working to facilitate implementation of this program. We also work to expand access to affordable child care in Maryland.

We have partnered with the Maryland Department of Labor to ensure effective implementation of equal pay laws and to increase access to apprenticeships and other job training programs for women. We also partner with higher education institutions across the state on programming to prepare young women for the workforce.

Recognizing Women's Accomplishments

The Commission created and maintains the *Maryland Women's Hall of Fame*, housed at Notre Dame University of Maryland, and online through the Maryland Archives. The Commission and the Maryland Archives share an intern to maintain *Maryland Women's Hall of Fame* records. The *Hall of Fame* honors 212 Maryland women who have remarkable accomplishments in fields including the arts, science, business, athletics, and politics.

The *Maryland Women's Heritage Center* is an outgrowth of the Maryland Women's History Project started by the Commission for Women in 1980, in partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education. This ongoing work became a Commission standing committee, and in 2004 the Commission launched the *Maryland Women's Heritage Center* as an independent nonprofit organization with shared staff between the Commission and the *Women's Heritage Center*. From 2004 to 2010 the Commission worked to establish the *Women's Heritage Center's* physical location in Baltimore as a first of its kind state-based women's history museum and educational center. The Commission continues to have representation on the *Maryland Women's Heritage Center's* Board and provides limited financial support, although the organizations no longer share staff.

2024 Commission for Women Accomplishments

Community Engagement Accomplishments

The Commission significantly increased our community engagement in 2024, with most of the activity taking place after the new Executive Director began on May 6, 2024. This increased level of community engagement will continue in 2025.

We focused on revamping our communications infrastructure, expanding our youth outreach programs, and maintaining and strengthening statewide visibility to ensure we are fulfilling our responsibility as the state's clearinghouse on women's issues.

Revamped Communications Infrastructure



- The Commission refreshed our Facebook page and established X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram accounts and a social media link tree.
- Starting in May, the Commission began regularly posting on all three social media accounts to strengthen our online presence. We created an annual social media calendar with a target of posting 3 times a week on each account.
- Commission accounts began following state and local women's groups and student groups across Maryland. We repost events, announcements and opportunities from these groups regularly to expand their reach.
- In June 2024 we began a project of overhauling the Commission for Women website. This work will be completed in 2025.
- In June 2024 we launched a monthly newsletter for women's issues stakeholders across the state. The newsletter includes state government updates on women's rights, relevant news articles on women's issues, a spotlight on the work of one of our local Commissions for Women, and an events calendar that shares upcoming events and registration information for a wide variety of women's rights and cultural events.

Expanded Youth Outreach

Executive Director Ariana Kelly spoke to the fifth grade Gender Equality Club at Federal Hill Preparatory Academy, a public school in Baltimore. The discussion was student-led and focused on defining gender-based discrimination and action steps to reduce discrimination. Students enjoyed learning about maternity and paternity leave policies, and how they have changed over recent decades. Students and Executive Director Kelly also talked about gender roles and how societal expectations have changed over time. The Gender Equality Club produced an education video about what they had learned when researching the issues featuring Executive Director Kelly.



On June 18, Executive Director Ariana Kelly joined an all-star panel of legislative advocates from Maryland to participate in Girls State, a statewide project of the American Legion Auxiliary. Girls State is the premiere leadership development program for young women who have completed their Junior Year of high school. Young women from across the state convened at Salisbury University in Easton, MD, to form an elected government and learn the legislative process. Commission for Women Young Woman Leader Honoree Kiera Caffrey was elected Governor of the Girls State Community. The young women discussed real legislation, learned how lobbying and the legislative process works, and voted to adopt new policies.

This spring, the Commission also began planning for on-campus events in partnership with student groups at Frostburg State University and Towson University in the fall of 2024. Additionally, we began development of a campus student groups list, to promote connections between grassroots organizations and campus groups.

Commission's Internship Program

Thanks to generous support from the Department of Human Services, in May 2024, the Commission launched a paid undergraduate internship program. After a robust applicant process, Alex Osterhues (they/them) from Montgomery County and Camille Fabiyi (she/her) from Prince George's County were selected for the internships.

As interns, they work on a wide range of projects with Commissioners including research, communications and outreach. In Fall 2024 Alex will continue working on research projects remotely. This will help Alex fulfill their ambition to publish a research paper prior to applying to medical school.

Camille will continue to work from the Commission office in Baltimore where she will become our social media lead and develop a leadership program for young women in partnership with the Commission.

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Camille will continue to work from the Commission office in Baltimore where she will become our social media lead and develop a leadership program for young women in partnership with the Commission.

Meet The Commission for Women Interns:



Alex Osterhues, Tulane University

My name is Alex Osterhues, and I am so excited to be interning at the Maryland Commission for Women this summer. I am now entering my junior year at Tulane University, where I study neuroscience with a minor in gender studies and cell biology.

My passion is reproductive justice, and I hope to become a doctor to advocate for the rights of women. I have enjoyed supporting the commission with our local Commissions roundtable and developing our social media presence. I am also helping to draft our annual report and reviewing and updating current research on the status of women in Maryland.

This experience has taught me so much about how government and local organizations operate, and I would recommend this internship to anyone interested in working in the women's rights field.



Camille Fabiyi, University of Maryland - College Park

Hi! My name is Camille Fabiyi, and I am a senior at the University of Maryland, majoring in History and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies with a focus on Black women.

I have previously interned for Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk during the 2023 legislative session, and for Delegate Emily Shetty during the 2024 legislative session. During both of these internships, I had the opportunity to work with powerful women delegates who used their positions to advocate for Maryland women every day. This past session, I was assigned by Delegate Shetty to be the

point person for HB496 Definition of Consent which was a priority bill for the Commission for Women. This bill was very important to me, and it was such an achievement when Governor Moore signed it into law on May 16, 2024.

I am passionate about promoting gender equality and supporting initiatives that empower women throughout the state. As an intern at the Maryland Commission for Women, my work focuses on addressing the unique challenges and celebrating the contributions of Black women in our communities.

I am thoroughly enjoying my experience here. My academic background has equipped me with the knowledge and skills to contribute effectively to the Commission's efforts. I am excited to be part of such a meaningful organization dedicated to making a difference.

Commission At Work Across Maryland

- November 4, Executive Director Judith Vaughan-Prather was joined by fourteen commissioners from the state and local commissions at the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women statewide conference at UMBC.
- January 28, Management Associate Tammy Wise represented the Commission at a booth at the Montgomery County Commission for Women's statewide Women's Legislative Briefing in Gaithersburg. The Commission sponsored this event, and Chair Tawanda Bailey and Commissioner Lenita Walker attended.
- In February, Management Associate Tammy Wise developed and distributed a flier for Black History Month highlighting the accomplishments of African American inductees into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame. This information was shared with local Commissions and partners across the state.
- April 11, Commission Vice President Pat Lambert gave a presentation on the status of women in Maryland and the work of the Commission to the League of Women Voters of Carroll County.
- April 16, Commissioner Judith Emmel represented the Commission at the MD250 Commission planning for Maryland's participation in the United States semi quincentennial.
- Commissioner Lenita Walker served on the MLAW Board and participated in numerous meetings, including the May 8 Legislative Wrap-Up.
- Commission Chair Tawanda Bailey served as the Commission representative on the Maryland Women's Heritage Center Board and participated in projects in support of their work throughout the year.
- Commissioner Jonathan Carrington represented the Commission as liaison to the Governor's Commission on LGBTQIA+ issues. The Commission welcomed Jeremy Browning, the LGBTQIA+ Commission Executive Director to our April meeting to discuss the potential for future collaboration.
- Commissioner Maxine Griffin Somerville served as liaison to the National Association of Commissions for Women as they organized their first annual conference in several years.
- In January, commissioners voted to participate in the Freedom in Reproduction Maryland campaign and attended the kickoff rally in Annapolis on January 21 with First Lady Dawn Moore, House Speaker Adrienne Jones, and Senate President Bill Ferguson. On May



13 and June 25, Executive Director Ariana Kelly participated in the coalition meetings in support of Maryland's reproductive freedom referendum.

- Commissioner Lauren Lambert participated in planning meetings for the Women Moving Forward Conference on April 23 and May 7. The Commission has a longstanding commitment to supporting incarcerated women with a successful return to the community. In 2024 the Commission continued with this work through supporting the Women Moving Forward Pre-Release Conference held in partnership with the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (MCIW). The conference was initiated by the [National Association of Women Judges \(NAWJ\)](#), and is supported by a diverse group of organizations working to support incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women. The goal of the conference is to provide approximately 150 women who are within 6 to 9 months of release with resources and information necessary to support their successful return to the community. The 2024 conference is scheduled for October 5.
- On May 7, the Commission sponsored the Maryland Women's Law Center (WLC) annual celebration and awards ceremony. This event honored Attorney General Anthony Brown. We also welcomed former first lady and judge Katie O'Malley as the new Executive Director of this essential women's rights organization in Maryland. We continue to refer Maryland women to the WLC for legal services and partner with WLC on a wide array of policy efforts.
- On June 1, Executive Director Ariana Kelly spoke on a panel at the NOW State Conference in Annapolis alongside Equal Rights Amendment advocates from Free State Justice and the Women's Equity Center and Action Network (WeCAN).
- In June, Executive Director Ariana Kelly conducted meetings with the Presidents of Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women and the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence to begin big picture strategy discussions about the future of the women's movement in Maryland.

2024 CFW Roundtable Meeting – May 30, 2024

YOU'RE INVITED

Annual Maryland Commission for Women
ROUNDTABLE

Keynote Speaker
Ariana Kelly
Executive Director

MAY 30, 2024
Virtually
5:00 PM - 7:30 PM

MARYLAND
COMMISSION
for WOMEN
www.marylandwomen.org

Registration required. Please RSVP by May 24.
<https://maryland-gov-dhs.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/?d1sd-6trz8sCZxNK9axEYO-UnilHSdkB0>

RESEATING THE TABLE

The Maryland Commission for Women (CFW) convenes an annual CFW Roundtable Meeting, inviting all the city and county Commissions for Women in the state to share information about their projects, priorities, initiatives and strategies.

Commissions for Women are each established independently by the government of a jurisdiction (state, county, or city). They are advisory boards to that government, and their commissioners are typically appointed by the executive of that government and serve as volunteers to provide a voice for the women and girls of that jurisdiction into the deliberations of their government.

Each CFW is created differently – some are established by law, some by executive order; some have funding and staff; and some have few public resources to carry out their work.

In Maryland, there are 24 major jurisdictions – 23 counties and Baltimore City. There are now a total of 17 county/city CFWs in our state. Only California boasts more.

Fourteen Maryland's local Commissions joined our 2024 annual roundtable meeting with 50 commissioners attending. Ariana Kelly, the new Maryland Commission for Women Executive Director gave a keynote address inspiring attendees with her reasons for leaving the Maryland Senate to pursue Commission work. The rest of the meeting was devoted to the roundtable discussion and breakout groups in which the CFW representatives shared their priorities, initiatives and challenges.

Breakout groups focused on the three topics below. The Maryland Commission for Women's 2025 Annual Plan will incorporate suggestions from the local commissioners generated in the breakout groups.

Strengthening and Broadening our Network

- Share advocacy and legislative connections across the network.
- Create a sharable directory of commissioners' email and phone numbers, a listserv or WhatsApp group for local commissions.
- Establish a "big sister" program where experienced commissioners can support new commissioners.
- Ensure awards programs at the state level reflect statewide representation.

Visibility and Public Image

- State websites could be updated more regularly with legislative information and include contact information for the local commission chairs.
- Commissions should increase use of social media where possible (not all commissions allow social media use). For some commissions, sharing posts created by the state commission is easier than creating their own posts
- Local magazines and newspapers will cover Commission events.
- It is worth the time to get to know your local counsel person, show up to their events and invite them to your events
- Commissions have reported success leveraging community businesses that support women

Maximizing our Impact Through Policy Outcomes

- There is significant interest in an Advocacy 101 training for local commissions. However, it is noted that not all local commissions can participate in advocacy. There is also interest from commissioners in a joint lobby day with the caveat that not all jurisdictions agree on all policy issues.
- The state commission can help local commissions by identifying overlapping programmatic initiatives in different jurisdictions and facilitating partnerships.
- Different commissions are taking different approaches to ensuring menstrual equity. Some are partnering with libraries and local health departments directly, others are partnering with nonprofit organizations.

The suggestions from the breakout groups will inform the Maryland Commission for Women's planning for 2025.

Policy, Advocacy and Legislation



For 59 years, the Commission for Women has provided guidance to Maryland's executive and legislative branches of government on a wide array of issues impacting women. We also engage in advocacy on behalf of women independently and in partnership with allies. Our recent recommendations have included the creation of a state paid family and medical leave program, increased investments in child care, and a state constitutional amendment affirming reproductive freedom.

In 2024, the Commission committed itself to significantly increasing its policy, legislative and advocacy efforts. We began to study the ways in which the Commission has previously supported agencies implementing policies impacting women across government, and setting the groundwork for future partnerships with state and local government. We also reviewed how other Commissions with more robust policy and legislative programs structure their work. We began to re- envision what is possible in a new era, with a new administration and relatively new presiding officers in the General Assembly, and the possibility that there will once again be women in our federal delegation.

As 2024 has been a year of transition, much of our work has been in laying the foundation for increased policy, advocacy, and legislative work in 2025. However, we do have notable accomplishments to report this year. 2024 saw major accomplishments in a number of long-fought battles to advance women's rights, from a major victory on inclusive language from the firefighters to a fundamental re-framing and modernization of our sexual assault statute.



Maryland State Firefighters Association Name Change

For several years, the Commission has been urging the association formerly known as the Maryland State Firefighters Association to modernize its name. The exclusion of female firefighters from its name not only erased the contributions of many women in Maryland's fire service, it also made women looking at fire service careers feel unwelcome.

In May 2024 the Commission for Women sent a second letter to MSFA leadership urging them to adopt a modern gender neutral name. On June 18, 2024 MSFA officially announced their name change to the more inclusive and welcoming Maryland State Firefighters Association.

Partnerships with State Agencies

The Commission for Women has a robust history of working in partnerships with state agencies to advance policies supporting women and girls. In the closing months of the fiscal year, we began laying the foundation for future partnerships across state government.

- On May 6, Executive Director Ariana Kelly met with Department of Human Services Secretary Rafael López to discuss the future vision for the Commission for Women. Ms. Kelly also met with DHS Senior Leadership to discuss potential partnerships around social services, foster care and child support programs.
- On June 20, Executive Director Ariana Kelly met with the Maryland Secretary of Aging Carmel Roques to discuss future policy initiatives impacting women as they age.

- The Commission has been utilizing Comptroller Brooke Lierman’s January 2024 State of the Economy Report highlighting her work on women’s workforce participation since the pandemic.
- The Commission’s June email newsletter promoted the Maryland Department of Labor’s 2024 Equal Pay Report as part of our Black Equal Pay Day communications. We will redistribute this information in October for Latina Equal Pay Day.
- Executive Director Ariana Kelly regularly attends the Governor’s Family Violence Council meetings and shares the results of their 2024 focus groups across our communications channels.
- The Commission is actively monitoring the implementation of the FAMLI program (paid family and medical leave insurance) at the Maryland Department of Labor and the Abortion Care Clinical Training Program in the Maryland Department of Health and ensuring community stakeholders have access to necessary information as these programs are developed.

In the year ahead, the Commission plans to build out these and other partnerships. Our goal is to elevate work across agencies, provide access to technical expertise and research, and facilitate communication and coordination with community stakeholders.

Women’s Rights Coalition Work

As part of its responsibility to serve as a clearinghouse for activities on women’s rights across the state, the Commission for Women is an active participant in several statewide coalitions working on a wide array of women’s rights issues.

ERA Coalition

Maryland voters adopted an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to our state Constitution in 1978. The Maryland Commission for Women advocated for years in favor of this statewide initiative. However, the proposed ERA for the U.S. Constitution, endorsed by the Maryland Commission for Women and ratified by the Maryland General Assembly in 1972, has never been enacted by the federal government.

There has been a renewed interest among grassroots women’s groups in publishing the federal ERA. In recent years, three additional state legislatures, Nevada (2017), Illinois (2018), and Virginia (2020), have ratified the federal Equal Rights Amendment. This brings the total number of states that have ratified the ERA to 38, which is the number required for an amendment to be adopted. Legal questions have been raised concerning whether or not a timeline has been or will be imposed on ERA ratification, and if state legislatures can revoke their support for the ERA. Maryland’s Attorney General Anthony Brown has weighed in on the question in support of ERA advocates who believe the requisite number of state ratifications has been secured.

In September 2023, the Commission voted to join a newly-formed coalition in support of adopting the federal Equal Rights Amendment. As part of this coalition, on February 19, 2024, the Commission participated in an exhilarating multigenerational and multi-ethnic rally in Annapolis. This rally, held in collaboration with the Women Legislators of Maryland, supported a joint resolution request. This resolution, SJ1, became one of the Commission’s top legislative priorities. The Commission was represented at the victory luncheon for SJ1 hosted by Women Legislators of Maryland President Edith Patterson.

Commission Executive Director Ariana Kelly also participated in a panel at the Maryland National Organization for Women Conference on the Equal Rights Amendment in June 2024, together with Camila Reynolds-Dominguez from Free State Justice and Stephanie McGencey from WeCAN.



Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA)



MCASA is the federally-recognized state sexual assault coalition. It is responsible for certifying comprehensive rape crisis/sexual assault programs ensure services are survivor-centered. MCASA includes the Sexual Assault Legal Institute (SALI), which provides direct legal services to survivors of all ages across the state of Maryland. MCASA's mission is to help prevent sexual assault, advocate for accessible, compassionate care for survivors of sexual violence, and works to hold offenders accountable.

The Commission for Women is a longtime MCASA member. We support MCASA's work financially, and by sharing their resources and training information across our network, including the local Commissions and campus groups. We also frequently support MCASA legislative priorities. The Commission was a strong supporter of the successful legislation sponsored by Delegate Charlotte Crutchfield and Senator Ariana Kelly and Former Senator (now Secretary of State) Susan Lee to eliminate the spousal defense for sexual assault. In 2024, MCASA's priority legislation, SB758 Sen. Kelly/HB496 Del. Shetty, Sexual Crimes - Definition of Consent and Repeal of Force was also one of the Commission for Women's top legislative priorities. This legislation was signed into law by Governor Moore on May 16th.

Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW)

MLAW is a statewide coalition of women's groups and individuals formed to provide a non-partisan voice for Maryland women and families. The group advocates for legislation and policy that promotes and protects the well being of Maryland women and their families and provides them opportunities to develop their full potential. MLAW began as a project of the Maryland Commission for Women in 1993 and became independent in 2004. The Commission is still an active member of MLAW and a supporter of the MLAW legislative Agenda. The Commission is represented on the MLAW Board, and multiple Commissioners and the Executive Director attend this annual conference. In 2024, the Commission sponsored nine individuals serving on local Commissions for Women to attend this conference. (fact check). In the fall of 2024, Commission Executive Director Ariana Kelly is scheduled to receive the Legislative Leadership Award from the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women.

Successful legislation the Commission supported through the MLAW agenda included *Equal Pay for Equal Work- Wage Transparency*. This bill sponsored by Delegate Jennifer White-Holland and Senator Ariana Kelly requires wage transparency from employers in all job postings. Advocates in support of the bill included the Maryland Center on Economic Policy, the National Women's Law Center, and the Maryland Department of Labor. MLAW also supported the *Homecare Worker Misclassification Act*, legislation from Delegate Robbyn Lewis and the Public Justice Center, that prevents the misclassification of home care workers as independent contractors. Economic exploitation of homecare workers is especially important to the Commission for Women because women, especially women of color and immigrant women, are overrepresented in this industry.

Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV)

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence is the state domestic violence coalition that brings together victim service providers, allied professionals, and concerned individuals for the common purpose of reducing intimate partner and family violence and its harmful effects on Marylanders. MNADV's vision is that one day Maryland will be a state where families and relationships thrive on mutual trust and respect and where there is no place for violence.

In June 2024, Commission for Women Executive Director Ariana Kelly met with MNADV Executive Director Jennifer Pollitt Hill to discuss the Commission's interest in strengthening our participation in the network. Ms. Kelly is scheduled to give the keynote address at the Network's annual event in Fall 2024. We have also supported several of MNADV legislative priorities, promoted upcoming MNADV trainings through our communications channels, and provided limited financial support. The Maryland Commission for Women shares MNADV's goals, including that of ensuring adequate funding for intimate partner and family violence victim service providers.

MNADV has a robust intersectional legislative agenda. The coalition supports legislation that impacts the complex needs of victims and survivors of family violence including access to safe and affordable housing and laws that ensure prohibited individuals do not have access to firearms. MNADV was a critical supporter of numerous pieces of successful legislation in 2024.

Of particular note is SB 439 *Victims of Domestic Violence Program - Certification and Grant Fund*. Although the Commission did not take a position on this legislation, we will be monitoring its implementation. Sponsored by Senator Sarah Elfreth, the legislation creates the Victims of Domestic Violence Program Grant Fund as a special, non-lapsing fund in the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services effective October 1. It authorizes the Governor to include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$5,000,000 to this Fund. In addition, the legislation requires domestic violence programs to be certified by the federally recognized State domestic violence coalition as a comprehensive domestic violence program.

Right to Reproductive Freedom Coalition

In June 2024, the Commission joined the newly forming Right to Reproductive Freedom Coalition. This group, spearheaded by Reproductive Justice Maryland, is working to protect reproductive rights across Maryland and encourage support for Question 1, the ballot initiative to add reproductive freedom to the Maryland constitution. The coalition meets twice monthly, with organizing and outreach activities taking place in between meetings.

The coalition includes religious, public health, women's rights, civil rights, and other community groups from every region of the state. Commission Executive Director Ariana Kelly is scheduled to speak at numerous events in support of this work throughout the fall, including a Jewish Community Relations Council event in September, an NAACP Maryland event in September, and a Reproductive Rights Day of Action event in western Maryland in October.

The Commission for Women's Legislative Agenda

The Commission directly supports policy initiatives and legislation to advance the rights of women and families. Our Policy and Legislation Committee was chaired in 2024 by Commissioner Essita Duncan. The Policy and Legislation Committee actively supported four new pieces of successful legislation, and two bills that did not advance.

PASSED LEGISLATION:

1) SB113 Senator Kelly and Senator James/HB 99 Vice Chair Bartlett *Sexual Solicitation of a Minor Through Child Pornography - Prohibition*

This legislation was brought to the attention of the Commission by the Frederick County State's Attorneys and the National Coalition of 100 Black Women. It closes a loophole in the child pornography law preventing online undercover investigations of individuals soliciting child pornography from minors. This legislation passed both chambers and was signed into law by Governor Moore.

2) SB 975 Senator Elfreth/HB1091 Delegate Vogel

Supporting Reproductive Health Care Clinics Act

This legislation establishes a Reproductive Health Care Clinic Security Program within the Maryland Department of Health to assist with costs associated with security improvements and security related operational expenses. The legislation authorizes but does not require the appropriation of \$500,000 to the program. This legislation passed both chambers and was signed into law by Governor Moore. The Commission will be monitoring the appropriation to this program.

3) SJ1 Senator Kelly/ JR1 Delegate Patterson, President of Women Legislators of Maryland

A Resolution Affirming the Equal Rights Amendment

This joint resolution was signed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House. It urges the Biden Administration to publish the Federal Equal Rights Amendment as the 28th Amendment to the Constitution and to pass a joint resolution affirming the ERA as the 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. It passed the Senate with a bipartisan 37-10 vote, and the House with a bipartisan vote of 104-21.

4) SB758 Senator Kelly/HB496 Delegate Shetty

Sexual Crimes - Definition of Consent and Repeal of Force

This legislation fundamentally reframes sexual assault law in Maryland. It repeals the requirement that a victim prove threat of force to prove sexual assault, and instead establishes a definition of consent. It was supported by a broad coalition of advocates, including the State's Attorney's Association, MCASA, MLAW, various campus groups, the Women's Law Center of Maryland, Women Legislators of Maryland and more. Opposition came from the Maryland Criminal Defense Attorneys Association. Despite having February hearings on both bills, these bills faced difficulty getting a vote. The House version of this legislation passed unanimously on April 5, in the days prior to legislative adjournment. The Senate version passed second reading unanimously on April 4 but was never brought up for a third reading vote in the Senate. With the House version on his desk, Governor Moore signed the bill into law on May 16, 2024.

UNSUCCESSFUL LEGISLATION:

SB 71 Senator Carter/HB 1191 Delegate Mireku-North

*Correctional Services - Pregnancy and Postpartum Support
(Prevention of Forced Infant Separation Act)*

This bill was introduced for a third time in 2024. The Senate bill passed late in session and received a House hearing. However, neither the Senate bill nor the House version received a vote in the House. Support for pregnant incarcerated individuals is a priority for the Commission and we will continue to support this legislation. We will meet with advocates and legislative sponsors over the interim to try to identify and eliminate the roadblocks to passage for this legislation.

SB153 Senator Jackson

Maryland Department of Transportation- Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Awareness, Training and Response

This bill was introduced for a second time in 2024. The legislation did not receive a vote. At the hearing, Turnaround, Inc., The Human Trafficking Information Project, the Maryland Hospital Association and the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force all provided informational testimony suggesting amendments to the legislation should it be passed. The Maryland Psychological Association, Uber Technologies, and the Baltimore Commission for Women all supported the legislation with suggested amendments. The Maryland Public Service Commission and the Department of Transportation also submitted informational testimony identifying concerns about the costs associated with the potential mandate.

Honoring Maryland Women

In addition to partnering with the women's rights community to facilitate efficiencies and elevate their work, tracking data and conducting research on pressing women's rights issues, and making critical policy recommendations to the executive and legislative branches, the Commission for Women is also charged with ensuring the accomplishments of women in Maryland are appropriately recognized.

In 2024, we accomplished this goal in five different ways:

1. Active participation in Maryland's 250 Commission. The Commission is actively engaged in planning for the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding. The 250 Commission is the state's official representative to any national coordination efforts. It is charged with ensuring any celebrations are inclusive of the experiences of all Marylanders. The Commission representative, Judith Emmel, works to ensure the stories of women are included in this work.
2. Maintenance of the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame online in partnership with the Maryland Archives. The Commission funded and supervised a graduate student intern in updating and verifying the biographies of the 212 Maryland Women's Hall of Fame inductees. The Maryland Women's Hall of Fame is a rich source of biographies of women who made significant and lasting contributions to the history and culture of our state and our nation. Established in 1985 as a partnership between the Maryland Commission for Women and the Women Legislators of Maryland, the Hall of Fame honors Maryland women whose lives and work are of historic significance to the economic, political, and cultural life of the state. The online Hall of Fame is available here: <https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/educ/exhibits/womenshallfame/html/index.html>
3. Partnership with Notre Dame of Maryland University to establish the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame Exhibit. On November 6, a museum quality exhibit featuring panels with biographical information on the inductees in the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame is now on display on campus at Notre Dame of Maryland University in Baltimore. A ribbon cutting ceremony was attended by representatives of the University, the Maryland Women's Heritage Center, and The Maryland Commission for Women.
4. Honoring Five Young Women Leaders from across the state. The Commission worked with guidance counselors and community leaders across the state to identify nominees for our Young Women Leader honor. These honorees receive a scholarship from the Commission, and acknowledgement at the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony.



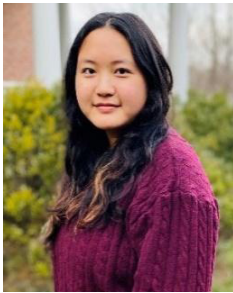
The 2024 Young Women Leaders Selection Committee members came from educational and professional associations from across the state. In addition to representatives from the Maryland Commission for Women, the Selection Committee included Dr. Ida Jones from the Maryland Women's Heritage Center; Dr. April Logan, Professor at Salisbury State University; Anna S. Sholl, Esq., Executive Director of the Maryland State Bar Association; and Dr. Traki Taylor, Provost and Vice President of Frostburg State University.

2024 Maryland Young Women Leaders Honorees



Kiera Caffrey, 11th Grade, *St. Timothy's School, Baltimore County*

Kiera Caffrey was recognized for her exceptional leadership and commitment to community service, which includes founding the Baltimore Teen Giving Circle and leading significant philanthropic efforts that raised funds for local causes. She was nominated by Salli Ward, Co-Chair of the Baltimore Women's Giving Circle, for her academic achievements, passion for financial literacy, and dedication to servant leadership.



Emily Dong, 10th Grade, *River Hill High School, Howard County*

Emily Dong earned her award for her outstanding academic performance, creative talents, and deep commitment to civic engagement. She co-founded the Loving Hands Alliance, providing meals to those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic, and has been a leader in various community service initiatives. Her nomination was supported by Yun Lu, Vice Chair of the Howard County Board of Education, who highlighted Emily's dedication to improving her community.



Lily Peng, 12th Grade, *River Hill High School, Howard County*

Lily Peng was honored for her advocacy for AAPI rights and educational equity, as well as her remarkable academic achievements, including a perfect ACT score and numerous AP Scholar awards. She co-founded Project Lotus, an organization focused on increasing AAPI representation, and has led significant community events. Lily was nominated by Kimberly Eggborn, Coordinator of Elementary Social Studies for Howard County Public Schools, who praised her leadership and commitment to diversity.



Fariza Samadova, 11th Grade, *Western School of Technology and Environmental Science, Baltimore County*

Fariza Samadova was recognized for her remarkable resilience and leadership, balancing her role as a family caregiver with her academic pursuits and community involvement. An immigrant from Uzbekistan, Fariza has excelled in advanced coursework while also dedicating herself to advocacy, particularly in women's rights and educational equity. She founded the Girl Up Western Tech club, which raises awareness and funds for women in need globally. Nominated by Andrea Tavernia, School Counseling Chair, Fariza is celebrated for her unwavering commitment to uplifting others and making a positive impact in her community.



Brooke Silver, 12th Grade, *Bethesda Chevy Chase High School, Howard County*

Brooke Silver was recognized for her leadership in promoting inclusivity and supporting her school community through various initiatives, including her work with Once Upon A Prom and as Editor-in-Chief of her school's newspaper. She has also contributed to mentoring young women in business through her internship at the International Women's Forum. Rona Patron, her club advisor, nominated her for her unwavering commitment to making a positive impact on her peers and community.

5. Induction of five new members of the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame at our Women's History Month Event. On March 21, 2024 the Commission joined Governor Wes Moore, First Lady Dawn Flythe Moore, DHS Secretary Rafael López, and our partners at the Maryland Women's Heritage Center in inducting five trailblazing women leaders into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame.



Left to right, with Governor and Mrs. Moore, the inductees are Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller, Secretary of State Susan C. Lee, Maryland Comptroller Brooke Lierman, U.S. Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi, and Maryland Speaker Adrienne A. Jones.

The Five History Makers Inducted to the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame in 2024 are:

Speaker Adrienne A. Jones The first woman to serve as a presiding officer in the Maryland General Assembly. Speaker Jones set a record in appointing diverse women to leadership positions, led the House of Delegates through the COVID pandemic, and has championed an unprecedented agenda in support of women and communities of color. She is the lead sponsor of the legislation amending the Maryland constitution to protect abortion rights.

Secretary of State Susan C. Lee is the first Asian American Secretary of State, and the first Asian American elected to the Maryland Senate. Secretary Lee served twenty years in the legislature prior to her appointment to the Cabinet. She has been a longtime advocate for women's rights and was lead sponsor of the state's Equal Pay for Equal Work law. Throughout her service on the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee and the House Judiciary Committee, Secretary Lee was a champion for survivors of violence against women.

Comptroller Brooke Lierman is the first woman ever elected to constitutional office in Maryland. Prior to her statewide election she represented Baltimore's 46th district in the Maryland House of Delegates

from 2015 to 2023. In the legislature she advocated for public transit, public education, and funding for sex trafficking and gun violence prevention programs. Comptroller Lierman was a founding Board of Emerge Maryland and graduated from its first class of women. She also co-founded Baltimore Women United.

Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller is the second woman and first woman of color elected Lieutenant Governor in Maryland's history. She is also the first immigrant elected to statewide office in Maryland. Lieutenant Governor Miller served in the Maryland House of Delegates prior to her election (2011-2019) as Lieutenant Governor, where she advocated fiercely for paid family leave and sexual assault survivors. As Lieutenant Governor, she also co-chairs the Governor's Family Violence Council and chairs the Maryland Council on Interfaith Outreach.

United States Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi was born and raised in Baltimore in a family with a strong history of public service. Speaker Emerita Pelosi served as the first woman elected Speaker of the House of Representatives from 2007 to 2011. She made history again when she earned this position - third in line to the Presidency - a second time from 2019 to 2023. She was the chief architect of landmark legislative accomplishments including the Affordable Care Act and the American Rescue Plan. She also led the fight to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." Married to Paul Pelosi, she is a mother of five and a grandmother of ten.

Full biographies of these incredible Maryland women are available at the Maryland State Archives link above.

Looking Forward

Maryland's Commission for Women envisions a bright future! We have big, bold plans for the 2025 program year. Guided by the Moore-Miller Administration values, we plan to be data-driven, heart lead and audacious. In the year ahead we plan to:

- Re-imagine our women's history month celebration to be more inclusive and accessible.
- Strengthen our relationships with the advocacy community to better fulfill our responsibility as the state's clearinghouse on women's issues.
- Develop more support for local Commissions for Women as they do their important work across the state.
- Elevate our policy and advocacy work and return to our tradition of making specific policy recommendations to the executive and legislative branches.
- Grow our internship program to include graduate students.
- Fully overhaul our website and improve our social media presence.

And that's just the beginning! The Commission is grateful for the support of the Moore Administration and the Department of Human Services. It is also aware of the challenges and opportunities facing the women of Maryland at this period of renewed interest in women's rights. We are proud of our accomplishments in 2024 and eager to build on this work in the years to come.





Maryland
Department of
Human Services

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Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Rafael López, Secretary