

1998 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

(Note: **Bill numbers in bold** are Legislative Agenda for MD Women 1998 Priority Bills and continuing issues.)

- HB4** Children and Families First Health Care Act of 1998. Would have provided health insurance to 60,000 uninsured children and pregnant women from low-income families. **Unfavorable Report.** (See HB97/SB85)
- HB9/SB194** Family Law-Grounds for Absolute Divorce-Domestic Violence. Enables married victims of domestic violence to file for an absolute (final) divorce on the grounds of cruelty of treatment or excessively vicious conduct, without the one year waiting period ordinarily required. **Passed.**
- HB19/SB470** Health Benefit Plans - Minimum Inpatient Hospitalization Coverage - Treatment for Breast and Testicular Cancer- **Unfavorable Report.**
- HB40** Child Support Guidelines - Child Care Expenses. Would have permitted addition of child care expenses when parent is in an educational program to the child support award. **Unfavorable Report.**
- HB41** Child Support Guidelines - Private Instruction or Tutoring. Would have permitted certain expenses for a child's tutoring to be added to child support award. **Unfavorable Report.**
- HB47** Health Benefit Plans - Coverage for Wigs for Hair Loss Resulting from Chemotherapy. Would have required health insurance plans and HMO's to provide coverage for a wig when hair loss results from chemotherapy. **Unfavorable Report.**
- HB66/SB233** Income Tax - Earned Income Tax Credit-Refunds. Make 10% of the MD Earned Income Tax Credit Refundable in cash. **Passed.**
- HB68** Anti-Discrimination Act. Would have added sexual orientation to the list of protected classes under Title 49B of the Human Relations Code. **Unfavorable Report.**
- HB97/SB85** Maryland Children's Health Program - Provides health insurance to 60,000 uninsured children and pregnant women from low-income families. Contains coverage for state-funded abortions. **HB97-Unfavorable Report, SB85-Passed.**
- HB161** Female Genital Mutilation - Prohibits the practice of female genital mutilation and imposes criminal penalties on those convicted of it. **Passed.**
- HB243** Program for Targeted Incentive Grants for Family Supported Early Childhood Education-Establishment. **Unfavorable Report**
- HB350** Department of Human Resources - Maryland Emergency Food Program. Establishes a program to provide funding to assist emergency food providers in purchasing food for needy individuals. **Passed**
- HB459/SB335** Health Benefit Plans - Coverage for Prescription Contraceptive Drugs or Devices. Provides that insurance plans covering prescription drugs and devices would include equal coverage for FDA approved contraceptive drugs and devices at the same co-payment cost as other drugs. The bill provides an exemption for "religious organizations." **Passed** Maryland is the first in the nation to legislate this coverage.

HB476/SB308

Labor and Employment-Liveable Wage. Would have raised Maryland's minimum hourly wage to \$7.20 by 1999 and \$7.70 by 2000. **Unfavorable report.**

HB590/SB688

Child Abuse - Out of Court Statements - Nurses. Adds categories of individuals (nurses, certain educators, and unlicensed physicians) to those individuals who can testify to a child's out-of court statements (hearsay) concerning his/her abuse. **(Note: These were not companion bills but were conformed in committee. The LAMW supports the elimination of categories.) Both bills passed.**

HB766/SB634

Breast Cancer Program (formerly Breast Cancer Screening Program) - Establishes a breast cancer screening program for low-income, uninsured and underinsured women. Provides at least biennial screening mammograms and clinical breast exams to qualified women 40-49, annual screening and clinical breast exams for women 50+, provides further diagnosis and treatments for individuals in need, and requires the Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene to work with interested parties on the issue of breast cancer. Governor Glendening provided 2.7 million dollars in a supplemental budget for breast cancer screening. **Passed.**

HB916/SB511

Cecil County - Commission for Women - Establishes a commission for women in Cecil County - (Maryland now has commissions for women in 16 of 24 jurisdictions.) **Passed.**

HB1073/SB614

Maryland Children's Initiative - Tobacco Tax for Children's Health and Learning. **Unfavorable Report.**

HB1143/SB119

Maryland Human Relations Commission - Hearings - Relief. This bill would have provided increased compensation for victims of employment discrimination. **Referred to interim study.**

SB145

Partial-Birth Abortions - Prohibition - **Failed.**

Prepared by the MD Commission for Women, April 1998