



**PLYMOUTH COUNTY COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF
WOMEN AND GIRLS: ANNUAL REPORT
May 2022**

Commissioners of the Plymouth County Commission on the Status of Women and
Girls

Elisabeth Arruda
Laura Buckley
Phyllis Ellis
Karis L. North
Janice Johnson Plumer
Carolyn M. Riley
Dawn Sibor
Kristina Whiton-O'Brien

Elected Officers
Karis L. North: Chair
Carolyn M. Riley: Co-Vice-Chair
Janice Johnson Plumer: Co-Vice-Chair
Elisabeth Arruda and Dawn Sibor: Co-Secretary
Laura Buckley: Treasurer

Interns
Olivia Fiore and Lianis Ojeda

Purpose: The Plymouth County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls (“PCCSW”) was established by House Bill 1110, signed into law on March 15, 2018 as Chapter 45 of the Acts of 2018. The PCCSW’s mission is to provide a permanent, effective voice for the advancement of women and girls in Plymouth County.

The PCCSW is a nine-member body which represents all the towns and cities in Plymouth County including: Abington, Bridgewater, Brockton, Carver, Duxbury, East Bridgewater, Halifax, Hanover, Hanson, Hingham, Hull, Kingston, Lakeville, Marion, Marshfield, Mattapoisett, Middleborough, Norwell, Pembroke, Plymouth, Plympton, Rochester, Rockland, Scituate, Wareham, West Bridgewater, and Whitman.

The PCCSW is responsible for studying, reviewing and reporting on the status of women and girls in Plymouth County, and are charged with offering recommendations regarding policy that would improve access to opportunities and equality for women and girls in the region.

Through public hearings, public meetings, and coordination with resources within and residents of Plymouth County, the PCCSW will assess, take actions, and make recommendations to advance the women and girls of Plymouth County toward full equity in all areas of life and to promote rights and opportunities for all women and girls.

Membership: After approval by the legislature, the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women sought applicants for the PCCSW. Eight members were appointed to the inaugural PCCSW, and sworn in by Lieutenant Governor Karen Polito on July 11, 2018. Those original eight members are: Elisabeth Arruda, of Marion; Laura Buckley of Plymouth; Karis North of Hull; Kathryn Pevzner of Duxbury; Jordan Pouliot Latham of Rochester; Janice Johnson Plumer of Brockton; Carolyn M. Riley of Plymouth; and Kristina Whiton-O’Brien of Kingston.

The current Commissioners are: Elisabeth Arruda, Laura Buckley, Phyllis Ellis, Karis North, Janice Johnson Plumer, Carolyn Riley, and Dawn Sibor.

Founding member Kristina Whiton-O’Brien did not seek reappointment after December 21, 2021, so her seat is open. In addition, Commissioner Leona Martin resigned her seat on the Commission, and Commissioner Kelly Barbosa, who took that seat, moved out of state, and resigned her seat. Chair Karis North has resigned her seat effective May 31, 2022. As a result, there will be three openings for new Commissioners on the PCCSW. The PCCSW hopes that these seats can be filled as soon as possible, by September 2022.

Activities and Accomplishments: In its fourth year, and the second full year of the pandemic, the PCCSW focused on its legislative priorities, and utilized interns to assist the PCCSW, prepared a resource guide to be shared with our constituents and supporters in Plymouth County. A planned public hearing and discussion did not occur, in part due to lack of quorum and other barriers.

Resource Guide: With the assistance of two interns, Olivia Fiore and Lianis Ojeda, the PCCSW has prepared and has been updating and preparing a resource guide for its

constituents and supporters. The PCCSW anticipates making available hard copies, a PDF version, and an on-line link.

The PCCSW is working on establishing its own website, so that it has a more effective means of sharing information about its meetings, events, legislative priorities, and goals, and hosting its resource guide. Currently, meeting notices are posted in all of the cities and towns in Plymouth County, and on the PCCSW's Facebook and Instagram pages. The PCCSW has established a Gmail account: PCCSWMA@gmail.com and Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/Plymouth-County-Commission-on-the-Status-of-Women-2183371068549059/>. An Instagram page was established

@plymouthcountymacsw. Meeting agendas and notices of hearings and other events are posted to the Facebook page and the Instagram page.

Hearings/Public Forums: On Saturday December 11, 2021, the PCCSW held a public meeting with Plymouth County legislators, Plymouth County Treasurer O'Brien, and Brockton Mayor Sullivan. All Plymouth County State Representatives and Senators, and Plymouth County Commissioners, and other officials were invited. Attending the meeting were: Rep. Joan Meschino, Thomas J. O'Brien (Plymouth County Treasurer), Sen. Susan Moran, Tara Wilson from Sen. Moran's office, Dee Teehan Rep Cutler's office, Brockton Mayor Robert Sullivan. The meeting was the second in a series of annual legislative coffees with the Plymouth County delegation and officials, and is a useful forum for discussing legislative priorities and goals.

Legislative Agenda: A copy with descriptions of the PCCSW's legislative priorities and other endorsed legislation is attached hereto.

Priority legislation is:

An Act Supporting Working Parents Who Choose to Run for Public Office (S.475/H.769); An Act Relative to Wage Transparency (HD 253); An Act addressing barriers to care for mental health (S.2572); An Act providing affordable and accessible high quality early education and care to promote child development and well-being and support the economy in the Commonwealth (H.605/S.362)

Other Endorsed Legislation is: An Act to Increase Access to Disposable Menstrual Products in Prisons, Homeless Shelters, and Public Schools (S.1445/H.2354); An Act relative to work and family mobility during and subsequent to the COVID-19 emergency (H.3456/S.2289); An Act to require policies and training to prevent unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment (H.1935/S.1171); An Act updating the Open Meeting Law to support remote participation (H.3213/S.2104); An Act to enhance child care relief (S. 2553); An Act to Ensure Gender Parity and Racial and Ethnic Diversity on Public Boards and Commissions (H.3157/S.2077).

Preliminary Goals for 2022/2023:

1. Continue to hold annual Legislative Coffee.
2. Continue to refine and establish resources and contacts for the women and girls of Plymouth County. Consider holding a resource fair open to all.
3. Provide education and training related to jobs and salary negotiation.
4. Continue to explore grant opportunities and work to help break down barriers for women and girls who want to attend PCCSW events.
5. Continue to use Interns; update position description based on prior experience.
6. Improve marketing, outreach, and social media presence.
7. Build on everything we have learned so far!

Respectfully submitted,

Commissioners of the Plymouth County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls, via it's Chair, Karis L. North

APPENDIX A

PLYMOUTH COUNTY COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Priority Legislation for 2021-2022
Legislative Session - Final and
Approved

Priority Legislation

An Act Supporting Working Parents Who Choose to Run for Public Office (S.475/H.769)

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Patricia Jehlen and Reps. Mike Connolly and Joan Meschino (Status: Referred to Joint Committee on Election Laws on 1/22/2019)

Many working parents are discouraged from running for public office because of financial reasons. This bill would clarify that child care expenses for times while campaigning are not considered personal expenses.

An Act Relative to Wage Transparency (HD 253)

Lead Sponsors: Rep. Josh Cutler (Status: Referred to Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development)

The proposed bill would require larger employers to disclose pay ranges for a particular position.

An Act addressing barriers to care for mental health (S.2572)

Lead Sponsor: Senate Ways and Means (Status: Reported from the Committee)

Mental Health ABC Act 2.0 - Aimed at making behavioral health care more accessible and affordable. The “addressing barriers to [care](#)” legislation seeks to establish mental health parity, ensuring patients will not be denied access to care or encounter insurance inequities. Mental health care providers would be adequately reimbursed for their services.

An Act providing affordable and accessible high quality early education and care to promote child development and well-being and support the economy in the Commonwealth (H.605/S.362)

The Common Start legislation, H.605 (filed by Representatives Gordon & Madaro) & S.362 (filed by Senators Lewis & Moran), would establish a system of affordable, high-quality early education and child care for all Massachusetts families, over a 5-year timeline. This system would cover early education and care for children from birth through age 5, as well as after- and out-of-school time for children ages 5-12, and for children with special needs through age 15.

Other Endorsed Legislation

An Act to Increase Access to Disposable Menstrual Products in Prisons, Homeless Shelters, and Public Schools (S.1445/H.2354)

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Patricia Jehlen and Reps. Jay Livingstone and Christine Barber (Status: Referred to Joint Committee on Public Health 1/22/2019)

Formerly; An Act to Increase Access to Disposable Menstrual Products in Prisons, Homeless Shelters and Public Schools: H.1959/S.1274. This bill would provide access to free menstrual products to all menstruating individuals in schools, shelters & prisons

An Act relative to work and family mobility during and subsequent to the COVID-19 emergency (H.3456/S.2289)

Lead Sponsors: Rep. Tricia Farley-Bouvier & Rep. Christine P. Barber, Sen. Brendan P. Crighton (Status: Referred to Joint Committee on Transportation)

Formerly; An Act Relative to Work and Family Mobility H.3012/S.2061. This bill would enable all qualified state residents to apply for a standard Massachusetts driver's license or ID, regardless of immigrant status, while keeping our Commonwealth in full compliance with REAL ID requirements.

An Act to require policies and training to prevent unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment (H.1935/S.1171)

Lead Sponsors: Rep. Christine Barber and Sen. Cynthia Cream (Status: Referred to [Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development](#))

This bill would require Massachusetts employers to provide workplace-specific sexual harassment training that is live and interactive, as well as conduct climate surveys to identify risk factors and gauge the program's effectiveness. This training will promote respect in the workplace and avoid unlawful harassment, rather than simply focus on escaping liability.

An Act updating the Open Meeting Law to support remote participation (H.3213/S.2104)

Lead Sponsors: Rep. James J. O'Day and Se. Rebecca Rausch (Status: Referred to [Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight](#))

An Act to enhance child care relief (S. 2553)

Lead Sponsor: Sen. Su Moran (Status: Referred to the committee on [Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently](#))

The proposed bill would address the affordability of child care and improve access for families to high-quality programs. It will address both those COVID-induced declines in available childcare and make childcare a more broadly affordable and available option for more families in the long term.

An Act to Ensure Gender Parity and Racial and Ethnic Diversity on Public Boards and Commissions (H.3157/S.2077)

Lead Sponsors: Rep. Patricia Haddad and Sen. Jason Lewis (Status: Referred to [Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight](#))

This bill would promote diversity in leadership and governance that broadly reflects the demographics of our Commonwealth. The composition of each appointed public board and commission in the Commonwealth shall broadly reflect that of the general public.