



UPCOMING EVENTS

Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women Annual Fall Conference - November 23 at 9:00 a.m. (Columbia)

MLAW celebrates 30 years of advocating for women's rights with legislative updates and networking.

Maryland Women's Heritage Center - November 24 at 3:00 p.m. (Baltimore)

Free artist reception featuring mixed media collages by Sandy K Cummings.



FULL BLOOM ON PAPER

A series of flower-inspired collages by

Sandy K Cummings

November 7, 2024 – January 4, 2025

Opening reception: November 24, 3-5 pm

Artist's talk: November 24, 4 pm



Maryland Women's Heritage Center
333 N. Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

sandykummings.com

Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club - December 9 at 7:00 p.m. (virtual)

Fred Yang talks about the 2024 election, including a discussion on women's rights and related issues.



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Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) Legislative Reception - January 16 at 6:30 pm. (Annapolis)

The MCASA reception brings together legislators, advocates, and community members to support policies on sexual assault prevention and survivor support.

Montgomery County Commission for Women 2025 Women's Legislative Briefing - January 25 at 11:30 a.m. (Rockville)

This statewide event unites advocates, policymakers, and emerging leaders to address issues affecting women and girls and preview the 2025 legislative session.



Are you hosting a public event addressing women's rights in Maryland? We'd love to hear about it! Please email details to C4.Women@maryland.gov

LOCAL SPOTLIGHT



We are excited to welcome new staff to the Commission!

Genesis Franco has joined our team as a **Management Associate**. In this role, she will be responsible for managing operations in our Rockville office. When you call or email our office, you will speak with Genesis! A Gaithersburg native, Genesis has an extensive background in healthcare administration and is excited to translate those skills into women's rights advocacy work. A fluent Spanish speaker, Genesis will lead our efforts on outreach in the Latino community. Genesis will also play a key role in planning and executing meetings and events, as well as responding to public inquiries.

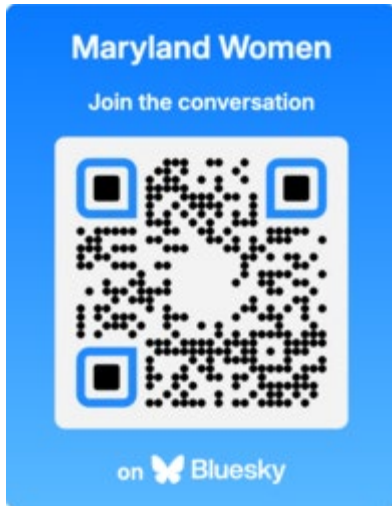
Danelle Buchman started in October as the Commission's new **Program Manager**. Residing in Howard County with her husband and two teen daughters, Danelle earned her Masters in Social Work from *Salisbury University*, and while overseas supporting her US Army Veteran husband's career, she also earned her MBA from the *University of Maryland Global Campus*. Prior to her time overseas, she gained extensive professional experience in the Maryland nonprofit community and has a strong dedication to advancing women's rights, volunteering her time with the Maryland Chapter of Postpartum Support International. Formerly a board member of *MLAW* and a staffer for Senator Barbara Mikulski, Danelle has a positive, "can-do" approach that brings energy and effectiveness to every initiative and is ready to help the Commission keep moving forward.



Danelle will lead Commission efforts to ensure we are a useful clearinghouse for information on women's rights activities across Maryland. She will also manage our undergraduate and graduate internship programs, our Maryland Women's Hall of Fame and Young Women of Achievement Awards, and lead communications initiatives, including the monthly newsletter, website, and social media.



Camille Fabiyi has been promoted to **Policy Assistant**. In this capacity she will bring her expertise to the work of our Policy Committee on all of our legislative initiatives in Annapolis. Camille's past experience in Annapolis includes serving as an intern for Chair Joseline Peña-Melnyk in the HGO Committee and working with Delegate Emily Shetty on the 2024 Consent Definition legislation. Camille is a senior at the *University of Maryland, College Park* majoring in *History and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies with a focus on Black women*. Camille has also been using her creativity and talents in social media to help with the Commission's communications efforts.



"Maryland Women" Bluesky Starter Pack!

Have you been meaning to join Bluesky?

Or, have you joined but don't know who to follow? Click on this QR code to sign up for Bluesky and get started with our "**Maryland Women**" starter pack. If you've already signed up, the QR code will take you directly to our starter pack so you can add Maryland Women.

We've created an instant online community by adding all of Maryland's female elected officials and individuals and organizations who support women's rights in Maryland to

our starter pack.

If you don't want the starter pack you can still follow the Commission on Bluesky at **@mdc4w.bsky.social**.

The starter pack can be accessed at the link below or by scanning the QR code to the left. <https://go.bsky.app/GB1LcqY>



Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) Annual Awards

The MNADV works to end sexual violence through advocacy, education, and support for survivors.

Executive Director Ariana Kelly was the keynote speaker at this year's MNADV Annual Awards Ceremony. This event celebrates individuals who have made a significant impact in eliminating intimate partner violence in Maryland.

Congratulations to this year's award winners:

- Distinguished Service and Impact Award: Inga James
- Health Care Response and Leadership Award: Dr. Jacquelyn Campbell
- Domestic Violence Advocate Award: Angeles T. Evans

- Outstanding Achievement Award: Rebecca Allyn
- Community Partner Award: Tameka Johnson-Brothers
- Leadership Award: Sara Elizabeth Powel
- David M. Sargent Lethality Assessment Program Award: Dara Arnold
- David M. Sargent Lethality Assessment Program Award: Kristin Keil

Read more about [this year's extraordinary honorees here!](#)

In the photo: Ariana Kelly, MDNADV Executive Director and Jennifer Pollitt Hill, Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence Executive Director.



The Daily Record's 2024 Women's Leadership Summit

At this annual event in Baltimore, the Commission's Executive Director Ariana Kelly moderated the Legislative Update panel. The panel's discussion focused on recent Maryland legislation affecting women and anticipated developments for 2025. They explored strategies for amplifying women's voices in the legislative process to drive meaningful change. Women's Caucus President **Delegate Dana Jones**, Maryland Women's Law Center Executive Director **Katie Curran O'Malley** and **Jeannette Ortiz** the Director of Government Affairs for the University of Maryland- Baltimore discussed the [2024 Maryland Maternal Health Act](#), child care and other priorities for the [Women Legislators of Maryland](#), and the future of reproductive rights.

POLICY AND ADVOCACY



MLAW Celebrates 30 Years

The **Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW)** is a coalition dedicated to advocating for policies that advance the status and rights of women across the state. MCW

is proud to have been the original home, staff, and fiscal sponsor for MLAW's first ten years. This year MLAW is celebrating 30 years.

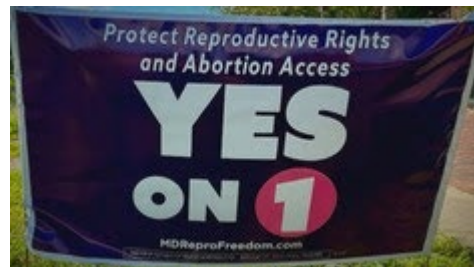
MLAW is honoring Commission for Women Executive Director Ariana Kelly with their Legislative Leadership Award. During her 14 year legislative career, Ariana was the lead sponsor of fourteen successful MLAW priority bills on issues ranging from pay equity to maternity leave to preventing sexual assault. Ariana was also the lead sponsor (along with retired Finance Committee Chair Delores Kelley) of the [Contraceptive Equity Act](#) and the [Abortion Care Access Act](#), two MLAW priority bills that made Maryland first in the nation for women's healthcare access.

Each year, MLAW sets a policy legislative agenda, focusing on issues such as health, safety, economic security, and equal rights for women. The Maryland Commission for Women is a key partner in MLAW's efforts, lending its expertise, resources, and advocacy to support and elevate MLAW's policy priorities. This collaboration ensures that the needs and voices of Maryland women are represented at every level of the legislative process, contributing to impactful policy changes statewide. Learn more at www.mdlegagendaforwomen.org/

Question 1 Passes Overwhelmingly in Maryland

76% of Maryland voters **approved Question 1**, a constitutional amendment that enshrines the right to abortion into state law.

Yes, 23 of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions voted YES on Question 1. *88% of Prince George's voters, 69% of Frederick Voters, 66% of Calvert voters, and even 61% of Carroll County voters chose to support abortion rights in Maryland.* Garrett County, the only jurisdiction without a majority for Question 1 was within 750 votes of approving abortion rights.



Read More about *why abortion care access is essential to ensure women's economic empowerment and well being* in this [Maryland Matters Op Ed](#) from Planned Parenthood's Wendy Frosh and the Commission's ED Ariana Kelly.

The Commission commends the coalition of advocates, policymakers, and voters who worked tirelessly to make this possible. This amendment represents a decisive victory in the ongoing fight for reproductive justice and a reaffirmation of Maryland's leadership in protecting women's rights.



FINALLY Maryland welcomes three women to our Congressional delegation.

After eight long years without any women, *Senator-elect Angela Alsobrooks, Congresswoman-elect April McLain Delaney (CD-6), and Congresswoman-elect Sarah Elfreth (CD-6)* will make Maryland's Congressional delegation 30% female.

The Commission celebrates all women in government and the continued effort for political representation at all levels of government. Senator-elect Alsobrooks and Congressman-elect Johnny Olszewski are leaving County Executive offices to head to Washington. Could these vacancies be filled by women? [Read this article](#) to learn about opportunities for more women in County Executive positions in Baltimore and Prince George's Counties.



Harriet Tubman received recognition as a Brigadier General in the Maryland National Guard in commemoration of Veteran's Day.

Governor Wes Moore honored her sacrifice and leadership at a ceremony at the American Legion Post 91 in Cambridge. Harriet Tubman was been inducted into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame in 1986. [Learn more at the Maryland National Guard website here.](#)

Local Student Named Rhodes Scholar

Sofia Corona was an eighth-grade student at Oklahoma Road Middle School in 2016 when she was recognized as one of the Maryland Commission for Women's "*Women of Tomorrow.*" Now a senior studying applied mathematics and economics at Harvard, she was just named a Rhodes Scholar! The US awards this prestigious international scholarship to just 32 students each year. It provides outstanding students the opportunity to pursue postgraduate studies at the University of Oxford, emphasizing academic excellence, leadership, and commitment to public service.

IN MEMORIAM



Ida G. Ruben, a steadfast advocate for women's rights and a prominent figure in Maryland politics, died on November 1, 2024, at the age of 95. Throughout her 32-year legislative career, Ruben was instrumental in enacting laws to protect victims of domestic violence and enforce child support payments. She served in the Maryland House of Delegates from 1975 to 1987 and in the Maryland Senate from 1987 to 2007, rising to the position of President Pro Tem. Her unwavering commitment to justice and equality has left an indelible mark on our community. More on Ida's life of service can be found [linked here](#).



Mary Pat Clarke, former president of the Baltimore City Council and tenant's rights advocates, died on November 10th, 2024, at the age of 83. Clarke served on the Baltimore City Council for over 32 years until she retired in 2020 and was the first female president from 1987-1995. Throughout her career she fought for smaller class sizes in public schools, tenants rights of refusal, and diversity in Baltimore politics. She was known as the epitome of a public servant who cared and prioritized the needs of her community. Her mentorship will endure within the Baltimore City Council and all Maryland women in government. Read more about her remarkable

life [here](#).

Lilly Ledbetter, a trailblazer in the fight for equal pay, passed away on October 12, 2024, at the age of 86. Her landmark lawsuit against Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. highlighted wage disparities and led to the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009, which made it easier for workers to challenge pay discrimination. Reflecting her legacy, Maryland enacted the Wage Range Transparency Act on October 1, 2024. This law requires employers to disclose salary ranges in job postings and provide detailed pay statements, aiming to promote transparency and address wage inequities. Ledbetter's enduring advocacy continues to inspire legislative efforts to ensure fair compensation practices. [Learn more about her legacy at NPR](#).



IN THE NEWS



A proposed Maryland state bill aims to **expand an at-home visiting program for newborns and their parents statewide**. The initiative seeks to provide comprehensive support to families during the critical early stages of a child's life, promoting health and well-being. If enacted, this legislation would ensure that all new parents across Maryland have access to essential resources and guidance in their own homes. [More in the Frederick News Times.](#)



The United States is set to make history with **a record number of women serving (13) as governors following recent elections**. This milestone reflects the growing representation of women in political leadership, showcasing their increasing influence and participation at the highest levels of state governance. With diverse backgrounds and perspectives, these leaders bring fresh approaches to addressing critical issues, reinforcing the importance of gender diversity in politics and policymaking. Photo courtesy of Politico. [Read more at NPR.](#)



President Biden recently issued an executive order aimed at **improving access to over-the-counter (OTC) contraception**, marking a significant step in reproductive healthcare. This directive seeks to reduce barriers by making contraceptives more affordable and widely available without a prescription, especially benefiting those in underserved and rural communities. [Read more in the New York Times.](#)



A recent report from the U.S. Department of Labor's Women's Bureau highlights the heavy financial burden childcare places on American families. For many, childcare costs rival housing expenses, making it a significant challenge for parents to balance work and family needs. This data underscores the need for policies that address affordability and access to quality childcare services. [More at the Department of Labor Blog.](#)



The Maryland Commission for Women

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