

Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour
Baltimore County

Baltimore County Library - Towson Branch

August 29, 2016, 6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

More than sixty individuals participated in the Baltimore County session of the Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour. The event was organized as a partnership of the Baltimore County Commission for Women and the Maryland Commission for Women.

The evening began with a reception and commemoration of Women's Equality Day – celebrating the 96th anniversary of the passage of the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution granting women the right to vote. The program was opened by Baltimore County Executive Kevin Kamenetz who presented the Baltimore County Commission for Women with a citation and praised its good work. Delegate Adrienne Jones, Speaker Pro Tem of the Maryland House of Delegates presented a citation jointly to both Commissions and Senator Katherine Klausmeier presented citations to each of the two Commissions. Also in attendance was Baltimore County Councilman Todd Crandell. MCW Vice Chair A. Diane Williams thanked Baltimore County for hosting this evening's event and congratulated the organizers on the wonderful attendance.

The attendees at the forum included elected and appointed officials, individuals and representatives of women's and community advocacy organizations. They identified a wide range of issues and challenges for the women of Baltimore County, selected five they thought were most important, and discussed possible remedies.

The attendees listed a total of 29 challenges facing the women of Baltimore County. Each participant was given five "votes" to place beside the issues they thought were most important. They were told they could place one "vote" on five different issues, or as many as all five votes on the one issue they thought was most important. From that process, five were selected as the top priorities. The group then identified actions that could be taken to address the issues:

1. Harassment and discrimination against women wearing hijabs
 - a. Provide more education about Islam in public forums
 - b. Encourage more women who wear hijabs to participate in public events, including at schools, and as speakers on panels
 - c. Initiate a state-sponsored public relations campaign, including social media
 - d. Establish a state commission on Islamic affairs

2. Insufficient funding for public schools and child care, especially for the early grades, all-day pre-kindergarten and Head Start programs
 - a. Expand tax credits for middle income families for child care expenses
 - b. Engage in visible advocacy on the state education budget in both the executive and the legislative branches
 - c. Engage in visible advocacy on local (county/city) education budgets for schools, pre-schools and child care programs

3. Human Trafficking in Labor and Sex
 - a. Conduct a public education campaign on the issue
 - b. Educate parents about social media recruitment of teens and pre-teens
 - c. Increase police enforcement of existing laws
 - d. Enact more proactive legislation
 - e. Provide more services for victims
4. Need for Legal Aid in Civil Cases including domestic violence, employment, housing, divorce, child custody and support
 - a. Raise awareness of the need
 - b. Enact legislation providing a right to civil council similar to the right to a defense
5. Too few women in public office
 - a. Encourage financial support for female candidates
 - b. Reach out to youth, provide leadership training
 - c. Provide scholarships and/or student loan forgiveness for women studying public policy
 - d. Commissions for Women offer seminars on running for office

The chart on the next page lists all the issues that were identified during the course of the public forum and shows the number of votes each one received from those in attendance, as they considered the priority level of each issue in comparison to the others.



Number of Votes	Issue
25	Harassment and discrimination against Muslim women wearing headscarves Need for more Muslim women in the public eye Need for more education on what Islam is, in public forums
15	Need for fully funded public schools, especially the early grades
13	Civil legal aid – affordable representation for civil cases such as domestic violence, family law, employment, housing
13	Human trafficking
10	More women in public office
9	Equal pay
7	Access to affordable child care
7	Financial literacy education in the public schools
7	Need for long term treatment programs for substance abuse
7	Women caring for aging parents
6	Low income aging women: need for affordable health care, in-home care, aging in place
5	Workplace discrimination against women wearing hijabs
5	Teaching life skills in schools
4	Affordable housing
4	Comprehensive mental health care for vulnerable women
4	Need for services for the LGBT community, and specifically for LGBT youth
3	Women providing career mentoring to other women
3	Sexual abuse of girls
3	Fair work scheduling
3	Access to abortion for students
3	Transportation for seniors
2	All day pre-kindergarten and/or Head Start for everyone
2	Domestic violence
2	Need for visible advocacy on women’s issues in the Maryland General Assembly
2	Earned paid sick leave
2	Reproductive health care for women in prison, especially pregnant women
1	Parental leave at time of birth or adoption
1	Access to family planning for students
1	Legal assistance for refugee women
169	Total Votes – 31 Issues

August 29, 2016

Baltimore County: Voices of Maryland Women

Photo Album









