

Attorney General’s Task Force on Expanding the Economic Security of Women

Meeting # 4

June 14, 2021

5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Topic: How Gendered Racism Shortchange Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, and Women of Color

Meeting Goal: Discuss the unique challenges that Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, and Women of Color’s face in achieving and maintaining economic security. Recommend solutions that promote the economic security of BILAWOC’s.

Actual Start Time: 5:03 p.m. Actual End Time: 7:16 p.m.	Members Present: 10/15 Location: Teleconference/Zoom
<u>Voting Members in Attendance</u> Barbara Battiste Christina Ewig Betty Folliard Cheniqua Johnson Nancy Jost Lulete Mola Erin Maye Quade Connie Smallman Sayda Sadia Tarannum Sen. Dave Senjem	<u>Ad Hoc Members:</u> Donna Cassutt Melissa Raphan <u>AGO Staff in Attendance</u> Donna Cassutt Sadaf Rahmani Caitlin Micko Dan Murphy
<u>Others/Guests:</u> Bethany Winkels Com. Rebecca Lucero Sophie Leininger Abigail Hencheck Cheniqua Johnson Mary Gastner Deepika Bala Irina Vaynerman (guest speaker) Nelly T. Collins Oppong Wycliff Chakua “Angela”	

*May have been others that were present but missed

Notes

5:00 p.m. Opening Remarks, Review Agenda, and Meeting Topic and Goals

- Donna Cassutt welcomed all, passed lead of the meeting to Sadaf.
- Sadaf introduced topic of meeting: Discuss challenges/solutions BILAWOC face to achieve economic security.

- Agenda introduced and adopted.
- Barbara Batiste introduced two public members she invited, both of whom will provide public testimony at the end of the meeting:
 - Deepika Balasubramanian
 - Comfort Dondo

5:07 p.m. Listening Session Report Back

- Sadaf provided a recap regarding the most recent listening session, which occurred on May 17, 2021. Some of the major themes that came up during the listening session were: childcare issues, healthcare issues, medical providers not receiving antiracism training, racism as public health issue, pensions, student loan debt, and food insecurity, among others.
- A recording of the listening session can be found [here](#).
- Other listening sessions will be held, hopefully in person. Contact Sadaf if you have ideas as to where a listening session should be held and on what topic.
- Conversation about how listening sessions should be organized, what populations/communities they should focus on, and whether we should look at the task force's overall mission to help answer questions regarding future listening sessions.
- Conversation about task force's direction and plan for future meetings to help in deciding how listening sessions should be structured/scheduled.

5:26 p.m. Group Discussion: Convergence of Race & Gender Discrimination

- Discussion on Intersectionality. What identities intersect that make women more vulnerable to racial and gender discrimination and bias?
- Intersectionality defined as “interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.”
- EMQ talked about colorism and the role it plays in racism.
- Lulete provided background into intersectionality and it's development by Dr. Kimberle Crenshaw. Asked, how do we embed intersectionality in the work of the task force? We all agree it is important, but can we incorporate it?
- Sadaf provided background into intersectionality and how the questions fit in with the work of the taskforce. Asked, how do we incorporate all voices, especially those who are often overlooked due to intersectionality.

- Cheniqua stated that asking whether we should look at intersectionality seems like a step backward. If we are trying to get specific recommendations as a task force, we need to look at intersectionality and ask our selves who are the populations and communities we don't or haven't previously seen.
- EMQ stated that the taskforce and target audience consist of people from different places. The data for certain populations just does not exist, that information/facts would be helpful for recommendations.
- Betty stated that the Office of the Economic Status of Women, if it comes back, can provide data and information. Identified the need to highlight those most severely hit by economic inequity and inequality, while also looking across, age/race/gender/different pieces of intersectionality.
- Melissa stated that it seems as if currently, the task force is in the data collection phase, but indicated that looking ahead may help us answer the questions we are discussing. From a practical perspective, how in our report are we going to discuss intersectionality?
- Lulete stated that there is a big risk when the task/target of the task force is so broad, there are things we risk when we do not have a strategic focus. Asked whether we want to focus on the impact COVID had on BILAWOC and how disparities have widened as a result? Should we make strategic decisions to focus on people who were disproportionately impacted by COVID? Or should we focus on those who were left out the last time legislation (i.e., WESA) was proposed? Asked what the task force's specific focus is and indicated it would be helpful to have strategic questions.
- Christina suggested looking at the end goal and potential legislation. Suggested looking at the issues/gaps in WESA, offering the fact that WESA attempted to help the issue of sick leave, but BILAWOC often do not work in employment that offers sick leave. Suggested looking at the way legislation is structured and how the end legislation language can leave out certain populations. Indicated that looking at where the task force is going will help in applying the fact finding we are doing now and how we can incorporate it into the final product.
- Melissa reiterated that determining what the gaps in WESA are and what groups are left out would be helpful.
- Sadaf stated that next meeting, the impacts of COVID will be discussed. Sadaf explained the report process and rough plan going forward.
- Lulete asked whether a report on different issues is productive. Indicated that information already exists and it is not a lack of information that is an issue but a lack on a particular focus or strategy. Asked whether it would be more helpful for task force to say what it would take to address certain issues, concerns that a broad scope of recommendations might not be as impactful.

- Cheniqua asked whether research questions used when AGO staff is researching and gathering information could be shared with taskforce members. Asked whether there is opportunity for feedback and sharing of information between those compiling the report and taskforce members. Also asked who are the target audiences/recipients of the report?
- Sadaf stated that a rough outline and vision of the report will be shared so members can have a good idea of what the end product looks like. Stated that the report is for legislators and the public.
- Nancy indicated that the report could focus on various issues and then for each issue look how it impacts different communities and identities, a way to incorporate intersectionality in the report. Indicated that it is easier to make legislative recommendations around issues instead of broad recommendations.
- Bethany asked for clarification on the larger process, asking about drafts and next steps. What is the final goal and deadline? Wondered whether things could be brainstormed and discussed before a draft is made or at least an outline. Indicated that the task force should focus on refining a vision for what the report should look like.
- Commissioner Lucero stated that structure would be helpful.
- Cheniqua stated that based on a recap of the issues the task force has discussed, can we find legislation or proposed ideas at the legislature that either did not pass or at least proposed? That could be helpful in determining solutions and what options have not been previously thought of. For example, there is a lot of work done regarding childcare, could we find out what has been proposed and what is currently in the works? Indicated the next few meetings should focus on the report and solutions instead of a broad discussion of issues.
- Nancy indicated it could be helpful to have a bill tracker of all bills that have been propose at the legislature to get examples of what ideas/solutions to issues have been discussed and where gaps in legislation exist.
- Sadaf will send out notes from previous meeting and thoughts/outline on report/final product.

6:15 p.m. Break

6:20 p.m. Speaker – Strengthening Minnesota’s Anti-Discrimination Laws

Irina Vaynerman, Deputy Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Human Rights

Presentation and Q&A

6:55 p.m. Public Comments

If you missed the testifiers due to time constraints, you can watch their testimony by watching the recording of the meeting. Additionally, testifiers will provide the taskforce with written information regarding what issues they think the taskforce should address.

- Testimony from Deepika Balasubramanian regarding H4-EAD Visa Holders. There are approximately 290,000 H4-EAD holders in Minnesota. Due to delays in processing, among other reasons, many women including BILAWOC will lose their jobs.
- Testimony from Comfort Dondo regarding survivors and victims of gender-based violence in the African diaspora. Comfort's story is not unique to the African diaspora, many in the community lack access to legal systems, cultural specific housing, and do not have knowledge of their rights.

6:50 p.m. Wrap-up and Adjourn

Finished at 7:16 p.m. Next meeting July 14, 2021.