

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

**Meeting # 3**

May 6, 2021

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

**Topic:** Laws, regulations, policies, and practices that are hurting women’s economic stability.

**Meeting Goal:** Based on the survey result and discussion at the meeting, identify laws, regulations, policies, and practices that are barriers to women achieving and maintaining economic security.

<b>Actual Start Time:</b> 5:05 p.m. <b>Actual End Time:</b> 7:00 p.m.	<b>Quorum:</b> 11/15 <b>Location:</b> Teleconference/Zoom
<b><u>Voting Members in Attendance</u></b>  Barbara Battiste Christina Ewig Betty Folliard Nancy Jost Batala McFarlane Lulete Mola Kate Perushek Erin Maye Quade Connie Smallman Sayda Sadia Tarannum Alene Tchourumoff	<b><u>Ad Hoc Members:</u></b> Donna Cassutt Liz Kramer Lt. Gov. Peggy Flannagan Melissa Raphan  <b><u>AGO Staff in Attendance</u></b>  Keith Ellison Donna Cassutt Liz Kramer Sadaf Rahmani Carly Melin Caitlin Micko Dan Murphy
<b><u>Others/Guests:</u></b> Lauryn Schothorst Bethany Winkels Katie Lim Sophie Leininger Molly Sigel Jane Sidley Aviva Breen Beth Gendler Patty Tanji Peggy Kaproth De’Vonna Pittman (guest speaker)	

\*May have been others that were present but missed

**Notes**

**5:00 p.m.      Opening Remarks, Review Agenda, and Meeting Topic and Goals  
Co-Chairs, Erin Maye Quade and Donna Cassutt**

- Recap of why last meeting was postponed.
- Acknowledgement of recent community events.

- Reminder to use inclusive language, the spectrum of gender identity/use of the term “women” can be all encompassing.
- Reminder to write “stack” in chat for Q&A.
- Reviewed agenda.
- Acknowledgement of comments previously raised to keep in mind that ideas/solutions tend to be oriented toward white-, middle- or upper-class women. Encouragement to think of lower income bracket workers and non-white women.
- Upcoming Listening Session on May 17, 2021 via Zoom. Was re-scheduled from April 19, 2021. Hosted through the Phillis Wheatly Community Center. All members and public invited.
- Co-chair Cassutt led a grounding/breathing exercise.

### **5:15 p.m. Holding Space to Acknowledge and Process Recent Events in Our Community.**

- Co-chair Cassutt: Acknowledgement of recent community events, killing of Daunte Wright, Chauvin trial, pandemic hardship. One silver lining, more are looking at each other as humans and emotional beings!
- Betty Folliard: Feel debt of gratitude to AG Ellison and team for Chauvin trial and accountability brought.
- AG Ellison: Chauvin trial is not more important than other areas the AGO works on, much work is less in public view but just as important.
- Nancy Jost: Powerful moment of her, her daughter and granddaughter at the at Daunte Wright protests, proud moment and that three generations of women were there.
- Sadia Tarannum: Thank you to AG Ellison for Chauvin trial work. Acknowledgement on the many needs in the community. Difficulty picking what needs are priorities and what we should focus on to make change. Acknowledged that there is lots of people and activists showing up, doing the work, and acting. Also acknowledged that there is lots of planning going on but little action. The time for action is now, not just continuing to plan.
- Alene Tchourumoff: Acknowledged this has been a heavy year, moving from crisis to crisis, the Federal Reserve is trying to tackle structural racism in economy, not just individuals. Acknowledged that the Asian and Asian Pacific Islander population is often invisible or overlooked, appreciated this task force of raising their voices.
- AG Ellison provided brief comments on the anti-AAPI discrimination work the AGO is looking into. This is an issue that needs focus and put in the spotlight. Acknowledged that the AAPIO community was the first community to have government policy aimed at excluding them and there has been a long history of these policies (i.e. Chinese exclusion act, Japanese American internment, death of Vincent Chin etc.).
- Acknowledgement of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Day.
- Lt. Gov. Flanagan acknowledged Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women Awareness Day and encouraged members to see the 5,000 dresses on the State Capitol lawn.

### **5:32 p.m. Review and Discuss Survey Results & Highlights.**

The survey is still open, please pass around to your networks. Sadaf will make a template email with the survey link for members to pass around. Lt. Gov. Flanagan will look into putting the link in the Governor’s or Lt. Governor’s social media pages.

Total number of survey responses: Approximately 50 responses.

Overview of the survey response summary as follows:

Question 3: Work Place Policies and Practices Hurting Women's Economic Security:

1. Pay Discrimination.
  - a. Lack of Salary Transparency.
  - b. Women less likely to ask for a raise and/or negotiate salaries.
  - c. Asking women for salary history.
2. Childcare.
  - a. No Flexibility in working hours and schedules for women with children.
  - b. Employers not offering child care support to working women.
  - c. Taking unpaid time off to provide care to children/family members.
3. Lack of Paid Time Off.
  - a. Insufficient paid parental leave (for both parents).
  - b. Lack of paid FMLA.
  - c. No paid leave to take care of family members and sick paid time.
4. Sex and Racial Discrimination.
  - a. No clear policies or procedures to report workplace harassment.
  - b. Black and Brown women not being taken seriously for the experts they are.
  - c. No implicit bias training in traditionally male dominated industries.

Question 4: Federal, State, and Local Laws & Regulations

1. Lack of Equal Pay Legislation.
2. Not banning asking for salary history.
3. Low State and Federal minimum wage rates.
4. Family and Medical Leave Act allowing employers to provide 12-weeks of unpaid time off.
5. Fair Labor Standard Act's 40 hours/week requirement for overtime pay.
6. Allowing employers to opt out of contraception coverage on religious grounds.

Question 5: Solutions

1. Workplace Solutions:

- a. Offer training to women on salary negotiations .
  - b. Clear anti-harassment and discrimination policies and complaint reporting procedures.
  - c. Mandatory anti-bias training.
  - d. Allow new parents to work part-time and/or allow for flexible scheduling and hours.
  - e. Assist employees with childcare costs.
  - f. Stop asking potential candidates about their past salary, and provide salary transparency.
2. Federal Solutions:
- a. Change FMLA to require employers to offer job-protected paid leave to employees.
  - b. Require employers to offer paid parental and sick leave.
  - c. Raise federal minimum wage to a living wage.
  - d. Provide more federal resources for school programs to increase girls interest in STEM.
  - e. Update FMLA to allow for different pay structures and make it easier for women to work from home and earn overtime.
3. State Solutions:
- a. Law that caps daycare prices.
  - b. Create incentives for employers to help pay for daycare.
  - c. Increase state minimum wage to a more livable wage.
  - d. Require employers to provide salary transparency.
  - e. Ban employers from asking about past salary history.
  - f. Pass fair workweek laws- “Right to Request” laws.
  - g. Require employers to offer benefits to part-time employees.
  - h. Provide financial resources for black/brown/POC women entrepreneurs.

**Discussion:**

Betty Folliard: Indicated that the ERA will affect all the categories when finalized.

Connie Smallman: Suggestion to use language of “non-traditional industries” instead of “male dominated” in question 3, #4-C.

Betty Folliard: Suggested that any training should include men, not just women on how to equitably ensure salary negotiations.

EMQ: Indicated that research shows that using salary negotiations benefits men. If women negotiate “better,” they could be seen as pushy or unlikeable.

Alene Tchourumoff: Asked why should women negotiate in the first place? Provide a range that is fair, pay people what you think is appropriate per job class and qualifications. Would be interesting to do a statistical analysis to see whether there is any deviation between women, black communities, other communities of color, and indigenous communities. Reflect on the perspective of low/moderate income workers, make sure that the task force is thinking of them, especially during the pandemic when they have been disproportionately impacted.

Sayda Tarannum: Asked whether we could get data from Fortune 500 companies in Twin Cities? (AGO staff will investigate whether we can get these statistics).

Bethany Winkels: Asked what does health care access mean? Acknowledged that the entire health care industry is orientated toward the male body. Asked who has access? Who is getting trained? Who can access mental health? Indicated that we are setting people up for failure with the current broken system. Stated that more acknowledgement is needed that the patch work health care work in the for-profit healthcare industry is failing and killing women and non-white community members. We need to tie all issues together- if there was more upstream intervention, in other words the root cause vs treating symptoms.

EMQ: Often stated that women have “abnormal heart attack symptoms,” that is not the case. The symptoms are normal for women, just not the same as men!

Nancy Jost: Indicated that childcare is not just an issue for those who need childcare, but also those that provide childcare. It is a huge industry and one of the least paying jobs you can get with a four-year college degree.

Barbara Battiste: Indicated that childcare is such a huge crisis. Indicated that even President Biden is exploring this issue. Acknowledged that during WWII, Eleanor Roosevelt made partnership to set up model daycare facilities within factories where women were working. Stated that employers need to step up and offer employees assistance with childcare. Why aren't companies partnering with community and nonprofits to provide childcare facilities? Also noted that in addition to childcare, this request should be expanded to caretaking in general. Indicated that women are often the caretaker, especially for older family members. Is there a way that women can get credit in social security when taking care of children and other family members?

Lulete Mola: Acknowledged that the binary of women and men isn't always the same, especially in non-white communities. Should also keep in mind where men of color fall in our work for the entire family wellbeing.

EMQ: Acknowledged that the U.S. does not treat children as a public good. We leave it to individual people to figure out childcare. The root cause is that society and government does not treat children as a public good or something that is important to the larger society. If we treat children as a public good in law, the policy and change will come.

Betty Folliard: Indicated that the problem is that these recommendations are falling on deaf ears. The task forces' recommendations will fall on deaf ears, especially with entrenched leadership in

Senate that is preventing from women to be heard or even a vote on these issues. That is the challenge, how do we overcome? Fighting the same issues again and again year after year.

Liz Kramer: Indicated it would be wonderful to have government pay those who are doing care giving. Acknowledged the Marshall Plan for Moms.

Connie Smallman: Suggested that in addition to getting data from Fortune 500 companies, it would be great to get data from unions for the total hours and years in a union, which is needed to improve pensions.

Nancy Jost: Acknowledged Period Poverty. 26.4 million people in the U.S. cannot afford menstrual products.

Melissa Raphan: Indicated that it would be interesting to see what higher education institutes are doing for childcare.

Christina Ewig: Indicated that the issue with higher educational institutes providing child care is that space is limited, not all kids can get in.

Nancy Jost: Indicated that many colleges are moving away from a child education program and degree.

EMQ: Asked whether there are any places, companies, or industries that are doing childcare “right.” Is there a model?

Bethany Winkels: Indicated there are different countries doing it better, but those are cultural and policy priorities of those countries.

Barbara Batiste: Acknowledged that there are some employers have gotten it right. For example, there is a small telephone company has created a childcare place for employers in rural Minnesota. Would be interesting to have a survey see which industries or businesses provide childcare

Christina Ewig: Indicated that the child tax credit with the stimulus plan is a step in the right direction. Tax credits in other countries have impacted women in poverty. Indicated that change is needed to the entire model in our country.

**6:04 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. Break.**

**6:15 p.m. Speaker – De’Vonna Pittman, Director of Inclusive Growth, Center for Economic Inclusion on Dismantling Racist Laws, Regulations, Policies, and Practices and Building New Inclusive Economic Engines.**

Presentation will be shared.

**6:25 p.m. Q&A Discussion with De’Vonna Pittman.**

Barbara Battiste: State WESA contains information that can be helpful for the Center for Economic Inclusion.

Melissa Raphan: Indicated that there are a number of companies (law firms) that have money and should have a vendor policy in terms of where money is spent. Asked whether there was a model policy or list of ways to make it easier for firms and companies to spend the money in places that work on inclusivity.

De’Vonna Pittman: Indicated that lists exist, but how do we get all of the lists in one place?

Connie Smallman: Asked what terms to use instead of BIPOC? Terms are important!

De’Vonna Pittman: Instead of BIPOC, say Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, and people of color.

#### **6:40 p.m. Public Comments.**

No public comments.

#### **6:50 p.m. Next meeting goals & expectations.**

Next meeting is June 14, 2021. The topic is the intersection of racial and gender inequality, black, brown, and native women experience.

Suggestions for next meeting:

- Share common language at beginning/definitions so everyone is starting from the same spot.
- Small groups?
- Hear from and keep in mind sex workers, their voices should be heard.
- Suggestion of Carol Jenkins, CEO of the ERA Coalition as a guest speaker.
- Younger voices, high school and college age, would be helpful.

Email Sadaf on any other thoughts for next meeting.

#### **7:00 p.m. Adjourn.**