



WASHINGTON STATE WOMEN'S COMMISSION

Plenary Meeting Minutes | April 1, 2022

9:00am - 12:30pm | Hybrid

Opening:

The regular meeting of the Washington State Women's Commissioner was called to order at 9:00 am on April 1, 2022, in the Helen Sommers building in Olympia, WA by Michelle Merriweather.

Welcome & Director's Report

- Approval of Agenda
 - The agenda was unanimously approved as distributed.
- Approval of Minutes
 - The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved as distributed.
- Director gave a brief outline Director's Report.

Legislative Updates

- The 2022 Legislative Session was 60 days

Sen. Lisa Wellman

- 600 Bills were pre-filed, possibly a record number
- Called attention to women's economic empowerment bills
 - SB 5600 - expanded apprenticeship programs
 - SB 5764 - supports apprenticeship programs in interfacing with higher education
 - SB 5720 - Financial Literacy
 - SB 5762 - wage and salary information disclosure
- Several women's health bills: postpartum contraception for all patients, postpartum depression, breast milk donation, midwifery practice and birth doula costs can be covered by Medicaid, \$350 million into Paid Family Leave Program, need for pharmaceutical grade ingredients in cosmetics, the need for interpreters in civil cases
- Looking for avenues for women to increase pay and move up

Rep. Mary Dye

- Rep. Dye spoke to the following policy focus area for the 2022: impact of individual homes and families, clean energy transformation, cap and trade policy
- Discussed the importance of the state's net positive trade balance with trade of clean hydro energy, exportation of food grown in Washington, economic loss in a family budget
- Suggests tour of industrial farming operations at next Plenary meeting

Rep. Jamila Taylor

- Rep. Taylor highlighted significant priorities to address: gender based violence, expansion of resources to Sexual Violence Law Center, Legislative Black Caucus prioritized healthcare, fund flagship station for community health center/ Harriet Tubman Community Health Center in South Seattle and looking to expand, Funding for African American Health board to address medical racism, language access in the court system, the inclusion of coercive control in the DV definition, digital equity, MMIW, youth violence prevention

Commissioner Vicki Lowe

- Vicki highlighted State level bills: MMIW, Surprise Billing, importance of Tribal governments to take over long term care and support service programs from the state - stressed the importance of community care focus.

Commissioner Grace Huang

- Grace highlighted federal level bills: passage of VAWA (Violence Against Women Act), restoration of tribal jurisdiction over sexual assault committed on tribal land, investments in tribal communities and investments in legal assistance to tribal for victim services. included in Omnibus spending, newly funded program to support LGBTQ community and the unique needs they have in dealing with domestic and sexual violence

Updates from the Governor's Office

RaShelle Davis | Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor

- Over 300 Bills passed during Session; very optimistic and encouraged by Legislative Session accomplishments
- Transportation: \$500 million of the next several years to ensure state readiness for zero emission vehicles and develop infrastructure funding
- Climate Change Package: designed to build a clean energy future
 - Funding and investments for jobs and tax incentives for clean energy sector
- Housing and Homelessness
 - Investments and advances made
 - Major impact in every region of the country
 - Lt. Governor's office did an economic analysis
 - Key findings: Washington state lowest in study for keeping up with housing and building housing based on growth and anticipated needs
 - 100's of millions of dollars added to K-12 education investments to help with coming out of Covid and support students
- Healthcare
 - Over \$100 Million provide for behavioral health systems and workforce
 - Department of Health is continuing to lead Covid recovery efforts, vaccinations, testing, and monitoring

- Bills impacting Women's Health
 - The Kirsten Harris Talley Bill would provide Medicaid coverage of birth doulas
 - Development of an Alert System for missing first nation women
- Interim:
 - Agencies are setting up programs passed during Session.
 - Evaluating budgets and legislative priorities for 2023.

Director's Report

Regina Malveaux | Director, Washington State Women's Commission

- Bylaws, Regina requests everyone review the Bylaw before the 3rd Quarter Plenary meeting in June
 - June Plenary Meeting will hold discussion and vote on leadership positions
 - Legislative Advisors invited to stay on but may need new appointments
- Announcements of Grace's second term on the Commission ending June 30th
- Vicki and Quinn invited to a second term
- Need for recruitment to fill upcoming opening
- Women on Corporate Boards research

Commission Calendaring

Regina Malveaux | Director, Washington State Women's Commission

- Friday, July 8th with a 1/2 day on the 9th - Strategic Retreat - in person

Attorney General's Sexual Assault Coordinated Community Response (SACCR) Task Force

Lauren Vlas | Policy Analyst, Washington State Attorney General's Office

- Staffs sexual assault related policy which included the SACCR Taskforce, and the Sexual Assault Forensic Examination best practices advisory group
 - Group was created in 2020 with the passage of SB 6158
 - Multidisciplinary group made up representing survivors, law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, the legislature, local governments, and medical professionals (urban and rural)
- Task forces objectives
 - Development of guidelines to improve community coordination and response to adult, adolescent, and child sexual assault
 - highlights the different community-based systems
 - Trauma informed victim practices
 - Communication between care teams
 - Create guiding principles to center communities disproportionately affected
 - Medical response
 - Addresses shortage of trained sexual assault nurse examiners
 - Washington state specific sexual assault kit for tracking purposes

Refugees in Washington

Mahnaz Eshetu | Executive Director, ReWa (Refugees Women's Alliance)

- ReWa was established 36 years ago by refugee women who sought to give back to their community

- Began with ESL classes and expanded to childcare, DV services, employment case management, housing assistance, behavioral health services, afterschool services with youth development activities
 - The whole of the mission is to empower refugees and establish an infrastructure for the families to thrive
- The focus has changed over the years away from Southeast Asians only helping Southeast Asians to working and families from all over the world coming to the US as Refugees; the composition of refugees changes dependent on world events
- Budget is around \$11 million, when the organization began the budget was \$35,000

Public Comment, Next Steps, & Closing Remarks

Regina Malveaux | Director, Washington State Women's Commission

Michelle Merriweather | Chair, Washington State Women's Commission

- After hearing from all the presenters, the Commission agrees to follow up on several dates to establish a strategic plan to direct 2023 commission work.

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 12:00 pm by Chair Michelle Merriweather. The next plenary meeting will be at 9:00 am on June 24th, 2022, in Wenatchee, WA.

Minutes submitted by: Leah White