



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State Leaders Map Path to Gender Equity

Olympia, WA – On Friday March 1st, Nearly 200 esteemed guests from across Washington State flooded the Capitol Campus for the annual “Women at the Capitol” event. Washington State Women’s Commission (WSWC) partnered with Center for Women & Democracy, KD Hall Foundation, and Interagency Committee of State Employed Women for a powerful start to Women MAKING History month.

The day began with tea at the Governor’s Mansion where Supreme Court Justices Sheryl Gordon McCloud, Mary Yu, Debra Stephens, and Chief Justice Steven Gonzalez spoke candidly about their work. They answered questions about their processes for interpreting the law to the highest standard, the state of Washington’s justice system, and what it means to serve on the most diverse Supreme Court in the nation.

After tea, our guests moved to the Capitol Building for a thought-provoking panel discussion titled “Co-Creating the Future of Gender Pay Equity.” WSWC Executive Director Grace Yoo moderated the conversation between Kate Isler, CEO and co-founder of WMarketplace, April Sims, first women elected president of the Washington State Labor Council, Washington State Treasurer Mike Pellicciotti, and Ann Kucklick, from the University of Washington’s Center for Women’s Welfare.

The panelists representing government, academia, business, and labor, collectively identified the most pressing economic disparities facing women in the state, focusing particularly on the gender pay gap. Together, they identified strategies to close this gap, emphasizing the importance of individual and collective advocacy from employees, employer-led initiatives to promote representation in higher paying jobs and industries, and legislative measures to compensate for the responsibilities often left to women, and especially with women of color.

Treasurer Pellicciotti and Sims shared insights from their collaboration on various labor issues over the last year, including their successful advocacy for the Washington Saves bill (SB 6069) before and during the 2023-2024 Legislative session. The audience witnessed the bill's passage out of the House in real-time during the panel discussion, signaling that the journey towards a more equitable Washington is not only possible, but already underway.

The evening ended with a reception honoring the 2024 honorees and legislators dedicated to championing women's interests through policy, cultural initiatives, direct action, and advocacy. Several representatives came down to share their policy wins before rushing back to the House Floor to join in the final hours of debate before a significant cutoff in this Legislative Session.

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ABOUT THE WASHINGTON STATE WOMEN'S COMMISSION

The Washington State Women's Commission (WSWC) is an executive branch cabinet agency in the Office of Governor Inslee serving as the primary voice in government for Washington women and girls. Signed into law in 2018, WSWC develops policies and initiatives to address critical issues that disproportionately affect women, including childcare access and affordability, domestic and gender-based violence, equal pay, health care access, and intersectional inequities. Through strategic listening and collaboration, we represent the 3.8 million women and girls across the state.

Learn more at [wswc.wa.gov](https://www.wswc.wa.gov).