

Connecticut Commission on
Women, Children *and* Seniors



2017 Legislative Agenda

(Updated Jan. 11, 2017)

The Commission on Women, Children and Seniors (CWCS) provides information, research and analysis to elected officials and the public regarding issues affecting the state's women, children and older adults, without regard to ethnicity or socioeconomic standing. As appropriate, our work also seeks to inform – and is informed by – federal policies that have an effect on our residents.

This Legislative Agenda is a culmination of non-partisan public policy initiatives in the best interests of Connecticut's women, children and older adults. As such, it is an evolving agenda designed to be responsive to both state and federal policies as they impact our target vulnerable and under-served populations.

Legislative Priorities

Legislative priorities are policy measures that the CWCS takes the lead on, in partnership with others.

Paid Family and Medical Leave

Establish a system of paid family and medical leave that can support Connecticut's working families when they need time from work to care for themselves, a loved one, or for the birth or adoption of a child.

Literacy

Expand sustainable scientific and research-based literacy efforts in under-performing schools and districts and develop assessment and implementation tools for reading instruction readiness.

School Climate

Play an active role in the Legislature's review and revision of Connecticut school climate and anti-bullying laws and participate in a nationwide collaborative to develop and model Social and Emotional Learning Standards.

Aging Services Network

Adequately support and hold harmless providers of care for the aging and disability community with no additional cuts in service or rate reductions.

CWCS Issue Areas

Issue areas are general policy topics that the CWCS supports, in partnership with others.

Access to Comprehensive Health Care – Reduce gender, racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare by increasing coverage and privacy, ensuring that preventative care includes a diversity of

needs, and that care is not compromised as hospital and healthcare systems are acquired and merged.

Gender-based Ratings – Monitor changes to the Affordable Care Act for trends in health insurance premiums to prevent gender-based ratings that require women to pay more than men for the same services.

Human Trafficking – Prevent and address sex and labor trafficking by supporting policy measures identified by the Trafficking in Personals Council.

Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security – Monitor trends in – and proposed changes to – these programs to ensure that seniors are protected.

Achievement Gap – Promote policies inside and outside the school system to close persistent gaps in educational achievement among the poor and children of color.

Childcare – Provide livable wages for childcare providers and affordable childcare to families so they are able to parent in safe and healthy environments.

Concussions – Protect children and teens from concussion and other traumatic brain injuries by supporting policy efforts that require best practices and more awareness on the part of coaches and parents.

Long-Term Care – Assist State agencies and policy makers in developing and modifying programs that serve all persons in need of long-term care.

School Climate – Support schools efforts to reduce suspension and expulsion rates by increasing teacher training and support. Support policies to reduce bullying in schools, including those based on race, ethnic history, religion, and sexual orientation.

Minority Teacher Recruitment – Collaborate with the State Department of Education and institutions of higher education on strategies to increase the number of culturally sensitive and ethnic minority administrators and teachers in the state of Connecticut school system.

Pay Equity – Promote wage equality by eliminating gender segregation in the labor market through data collection, stronger anti-discrimination laws and standard wage initiatives.

Reproductive Justice – Ensure all women’s right to have children, not have children, parent the children they have in safe and healthy environments, and have bodily autonomy and freedom from any form of reproductive oppression.

Senior Centers – Strengthen the connection between senior centers and the State by serving as the administrative staff for the task force established through S.A. 16-7, *An Act Concerning Senior Centers*.

Two Generational System Change and Service Delivery – Promote two-generational approaches and systems reform at the state and local level that provide opportunities for and meet the needs of vulnerable children and their parents together.

Violence Against Women – Promote the rights of all women to bodily autonomy by confronting, addressing, and preventing all forms of violence against women including rape, sexual assault and abuse, domestic and intimate partner violence, stalking, sexual harassment and emotional abuse.

Disabled Children and their Families – Monitor the changes and funding reductions that would affect children (from birth through age 21) who are entitled to educational and other services, including transitional services and family supports.

Safety Nets – Monitor trends in funding of – and access to – such vital Safety Net supports as Care4Kids, TANF, SSI/SSDI
