



The Commission on
Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity

CWCSEO

Connecticut General Assembly

MINUTES

CWCSEO Full Advisory Board Meeting

Thursday January 12th, 2023

10:00 AM to 12:00 PM

PRESENT: Karen Jarmoc, Alan Tan, Gladys Rivera, Tiana Hercules, Ada Fenick, Nancy Heaton, Mui Mui Hin-McCormick, Hilda Nieves, Jordan Grossman, Liz Bumgardner, Joan Barere, Penelope Young

STAFF PRESENT: Steven Hernandez, Tomas Nuccio, Megan Baker, Rosemary Lopez, Michael Werner, Werner Oyanadel, Melvette Hill

Opening Remarks from Co-Chairs

Steven Hernandez convened the meeting at 10:00 AM and introduced the co-chairs for opening remarks.

Alan Tan welcomes everyone and provided administrative updates. He informs the group that while this meeting is fully on zoom, the next meeting will be hybrid with meetings occurring in the legislative office building. He also encourages individuals to use the raise hand button on zoom to keep the discussion items on this agenda orderly.

Karen Jarmoc also welcomes everyone. Says that she, Tan, Hernandez, and TJ Nuccio to set this agenda. They elected to continue the focus on health, education success, economic success, and freedom from discrimination as well as the intersectionality of those issues from the perspective of the upcoming legislative session.

Hernandez pauses the discussion to acknowledge the loss of Quentin Q. Williams and honor his memory.

Open Floor Discussions on Key Policy Areas, Any Raised Concepts To-Date a. Health b. Educational success c. Economic success d. Free from discrimination

Hernandez introduces a presentation from the CWCSEO team. He states that the slides are talking prompts to start the conversation. He says that the Commission and the public would benefit from the board members reflections on these topics. He mentions that the staff had developed a new system for tracking legislation as it moves through the legislature last year and that a refined version will be used this year.

Hernandez begins the presentation by sharing the “movement” on policy initiatives relevant to the first of the four focuses of the Commission, namely health:



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- CT Paid Leave and Domestic Violence
- Trafficking in Persons Council (TIP) focused on increasing funding for trafficking victim services and victim funding language
- Placeholder bill regarding female genital mutilation and cutting (FGMC) and working with DPH to determine a budgetary line-item number

Jarmoc asks for a little more detail on domestic violence and paid medical leave

Megan Baker provides details on the connection between paid medical leave and domestic violence, noting that some of the 6 qualifying reasons for paid leave apply to domestic violence survivors, but the Lt. Governor's Office and Council on Women and Girls (COWAG) want to expand the coverage of paid leave to cover things like court dates and raise awareness and reduce stigmas around their use.

Jarmoc notes that the US Department of Justice (DOJ) has a workplace violence policy guide encouraging companies to voluntarily implement policies and provide trainings to create an environment where individuals are comfortable requesting time off and asks if there was any coordination with federal guidelines on this legislation

Baker responds that it's under discussion and that nothing is off the table

Jarmoc asks if there are any concepts being raised around healthcare affordability or healthcare specific to seniors

Werner Oyanadel responds that expanding access to the HUSKY Health Program to adults regardless of immigration status has been requested by several legislators and will be debated these years, noting that the bill was introduced to the Human Services Committee.

Ada Fenick asks how the Commission narrowed its focus to these initiatives and why others were not chosen

Hernandez responds that these priorities are highlights not limitations

Joan Barere emphasizes that children under 12 are currently HUSKY eligible regardless of immigration status. Also notes that the federal public health emergency is ending, and as such automatic renewal of Medicaid benefits will end, meaning that over 400,000 residents are at risk of losing coverage if they do not verify eligibility. Suggests coordinating with the CT Health Foundation on outreach to individuals at risk of losing coverage.

Hernandez encourages staff to partner with organizations and provide technical support on outreach.

Jarmoc notes that End Hunger Connecticut is pushing a policy regarding school meals and asked if there was any update on that or other health policies being discussed.



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Hernandez notes that the state is working with the federal government to identify sources of funding for school meals and that Access Health CT is creating a subsidiary to expand affordable coverage to low-income and undocumented individuals.

Michael Werner notes that the Commission has been participating in a food as medicine work group which will be soon finishing up its work. Not yet sure if a bill will come out of it.

Nancy Heaton notes that she is on the Governor's Task Force looking at changes to the Certificate of Need (CON) process. She said that the last task force's recommendations were ignored and they're planning to produce their recommendations shortly.

Hernandez expresses an interest in working together to bring those recommendations to the attention of legislators

New slide is displayed with additional health policy areas of focus:

- Husky Expansion
- Medicaid Reimbursements and School-Based Health Clinics
- Children's Mental Health Bill

Oyanadel reiterates information about HUSKY expansion previously shared and expresses interest in submitting testimony on the bill.

TJ Nuccio presents on the updates on a new bill regarding Medicaid reimbursements for school-based health clinics and a children's mental health bill. He noted that measures to address the teacher shortage could be combined with these bills.

Jordan Grossman presents an update on school meals. He noted the concept was before the children's committee and the end of free meals caused serious challenges.

Oyanadel introduces the next slide and presents an update regarding a proposed appropriation to fund direct services to refugees arriving from Venezuela, Ukraine, Afghanistan, and other places.

Nuccio and Oyanadel presents on an early voting bill that was introduced to the legislature. Baker also presents on a possible change in policy regarding no-excuse absentee voting.

Fenick notes that elections are run by volunteers and wants to explore how many days of early voting can be sustained by volunteers.

Oyanadel notes that the Secretary of State will be presenting a report to the legislature on the topic.

Melvette Hill presents on the Governor's proposed income tax reduction and a proposed housing bill introduced in the legislature.

Upcoming Events



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Hernandez presents the upcoming events, noting that there will be several events in February honoring Black History Month and focusing on educational opportunity. He also shares that the new website is about to go live and will have a page dedicated to upcoming and recent events.

Advisory Board Member Questions and Reflections

Hernandez asks for thoughts and reflections

Jarmoc asks for the continuation of 2-week updates from the staff on how bills are progressing, as well as who is supporting individual bills

Hernandez says that the procedure will be continued

Jarmoc asks for a reminder about the format of the next meeting

Hernandez notes that the next meeting will be at the Legislative Office Building with a Zoom option on Thursday, April 13th.

Tan notes that the hybrid option is managed by CTN, there will be updates on the legislature's procedures regarding hybrid meetings.

Adjournment

Hernandez adjourns the meeting