



Celebrating 50 Years of Advancing Justice

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Friend of the WLC

As we all contemplate and celebrate [the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. across the state](#) today, the Maryland General Assembly is continuing on with its legislative session with a host of bills being heard in committees. Last week session convened and since then bills have steadily been dropping each morning and the committee calendars are quickly filling up. Below are some of the bills the WLC will be advocating on in the coming days. Of notable importance, particularly in light of the [horrific and terrifying stand-off at a Texas synagogue](#) this weekend, are the first of several hate-crime related bills we expect to see this session. The WLC has been an active member of a coalition of other advocates throughout the state seeking to address the steady increase of hate-based crimes of violence. This bill is a small step towards achieving that goal.

Tuesday, January 18, 2022

[HB0167 Commission to Establish a Maryland Women Veterans Memorial](#) (Health and Government Operations)

Maryland, like the [rest of the nation](#), has a shocking dearth of public monuments dedicated to women. Not surprisingly, there is no monument in Maryland dedicated solely to women veterans. This bill would establish a commission to provide recommendations for the funding, design, construction, and placement of an memorial dedicated to those deserving women.

Wednesday, January 19, 2022

[HB0070 Courts – Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation](#) (Judiciary)

Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP suits) use the court system to intentionally target survivors, whistleblowers, and advocates who speak out against powerful perpetrators, creating a chilling effect on other victims who may seek to do the same. They have become an all-too common tool at silencing criticism and intimidating victims, something we have seen firsthand when it comes to brave survivors who have sought legal redress either through the courts or through collegiate grievance systems. This legislation would have created a burden on plaintiffs in certain circumstances, in responding to a motion to dismiss, to show that an alleged SLAPP suit had substantial justification in law and fact.

[SB0071 Hate Crimes - Civil Remedy](#) (Judicial Proceedings)

The WLC has been working with other advocates for a number of years to strengthen our hate crime statutes and ensure that law enforcement have the tools and understanding necessary to properly charge and prosecute hate crimes. But often the criminal justice system is not enough to discourage these heinous acts or to support the victims and survivors. This bill, introduced for a second year in a row, would provide a civil remedy for victims, allowing them to recover for damages for economic and noneconomic harms caused by the acts.

[SB0151 Hate Crimes - False Statement to a Law Enforcement Officer](#) (Judicial Proceedings)

This bill makes clear that the very dangerous practice of calling law enforcement on another party based solely on that party's race, color, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender, disability, or national origin, or because that person is homeless is a hate crime. Weaponizing the police in this fashion, against communities already marginalized, is dangerous, reprehensible, and should not be tolerated.

Thursday, January 20, 2022

[HB0125 Motor Vehicle Insurance - Discrimination in Underwriting and Rating - Use of Gender](#) (Economic Matters)

On top of women having to [struggle with the “She-Cession”](#), a gender pay-gap that pays them at best 86 cents on the dollar (and significantly worse if they are Black or Latina women), and being forced to choose between caring for their families or continuing with their careers, women in Maryland also pay up to 39% more for their car insurance than identical male counterparts, for no reason other than the fact that they identify as women. This legislation will put an end to this discriminatory practice, which leaves women paying as much as \$154 more annually than they should be for car insurance. Allowing insurers to increase rates based on the gender of a driver disproportionately harms women, particularly women of color, exacerbating the financial inequality women already face.

We expect literally hundreds of more bills to drop in the next week or so, before the “[hopper](#)” is closed on [February 4th and 7th](#) for the House and Senate respectively. We will continue to monitor what bills will have a disproportionate effect on the physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy of women in Maryland. And we will let you know when it is time to act, although we don’t anticipate any committee voting sessions for several more weeks.

Until then, thank you for being advocates with us through this legislative session.

Onward,

The WLC Advocacy Team

P.S. As always, if you appreciate the work we do, whether in the General Assembly or through our [direct legal services](#) across the State, [give here!](#)

P.P.S. Make sure you mark down these upcoming events of interest from our sister-partners and allies:

- The [Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault](#) will host its [2022 Legislative Reception](#) virtually on Thursday, January 20th at 6pm. Join them as they honor Visionary Award recipients Delegate Brooke Lierman, Senator Charles Sydnor, and Senator Guy Guzzone.
- The [42nd Annual Women’s Legislative Briefing](#), hosted by the [Montgomery County Commission for Women](#), will be held virtually on Sunday, January 30th from 12:30-4:30pm.
- The [Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women](#) has announced their [2022 Legislative Agenda](#). Find out more about the bills they are supporting at their [Annual \(virtual\) Legislative Briefing](#) on Thursday, February 3rd, 5-6:30pm. Sign-on to support the agenda [here](#).
- The Legislature could show Maryland families real LOVE this year by passing the [Time to Care Act](#) to providing paid family leave when we need it most. Join advocates and the [Time to Care coalition](#) for a Rally to Support paid family leave at Lawyer’s Mall on Valentine’s Day, February 14th. More details TBD.
- Finally, join our friends at the [Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence](#) as they honor and remember the lives lost in the past year to intimate partner violence at their virtual [Memorial Service](#), February 22nd at 4pm.

GIVE TODAY

[Sponsorships and tickets now available for our 50th Anniversary Celebration & Awards Ceremony!](#)

About The Women’s Law Center of Maryland

The vision of the Women’s Law Center of Maryland is a legal system that provides justice and fairness for women. The Women’s Law Center’s mission is to ensure the physical safety, economic security, and autonomy of women throughout the State. We work towards this goal by providing direct legal representation, information and referral services, and legislative advocacy.

Our efforts to promote justice, fairness, and equality for women are only possible because of friends like you.

Give Today

The Women's Law Center of Maryland, Inc. is a charitable organization designated as tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3). A copy of our financial statement is available upon request. Documents and information submitted under the State of Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act are available from the Office of the Secretary of State of Maryland, Annapolis, MD 21401 for the cost of copying and postage.

