



Celebrating 50 Years of Advancing Justice

Listen. Engage. Advocate

Dear friend of the WLC,

Today is one of the most significant milestones within each legislative session: Cross Over Day! We have been talking about it for weeks and it has finally arrived. This is the day by which bills must have passed out of one chamber and "crossed over" to the other in order to progress to a law. Any bills that are passed out of their original Chamber after today will be referred to the opposing chambers Rules Committee and unlikely to see passage. The Legislature has been working non-stop and through the weekend to get as many bills passed as possible, but not every bill that has a hearing gets a vote. And not every voted on bill passes through the chamber.

We will have a full breakdown of which of our priority bills are still moving, and which ones will have to be revisited next year, later this week.

In the meantime, we now move on to cross-over hearings in subcommittees. These hearings are typically subject to rules limiting in-person (or virtual) testimony to sponsors only, as the bill has likely been heard already and time is short. But there are amendments to fight off, compromises to make, and final pushes required before the bill can get to the final floor votes. In any case, we will be there, advocating on the issues that matter the most when it comes to women's physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy.

Below are some bills with cross-over hearings scheduled for this week.

Tuesday, March 22nd

[SB31 - Public Information Act – Inspection of Records From Body-Worn Digital Recording Devices](#) (House Judiciary Committee) This bill would prevent abusers from obtaining copies of the body-worn digital recordings of law enforcement officers in certain circumstances, providing an important balance between victim safety and government transparency.

[HB 78 - Discrimination in Employment - Reasonable Accommodations for Applicants With Disabilities](#) (Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee) As we struggle to get women to return to the workforce, it is imperative to include women with disabilities in the conversation. This law would ensure employers provide applicants with the opportunities and accommodations they need to return to work.

Wednesday, March 23rd

[HB 817 - Criminal Law – Violation of a Protective Order – Merger Prohibition and Separate Sentence Authorization](#) (Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee) This bill is a technical bill that seeks to address issues that arose from a recent Court of Special Appeals case and would ensure that a conviction for a serious crime that carries a higher possible sentence does not get merged into the relatively low sentence for a violation of a protective order.

Thursday, March 24th

[HB 639 - Family Law - Grounds for Divorce](#) (Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee) House Bill 639 would allow individuals who still live under the same roof to move forward with divorce proceedings under certain circumstances and reduce the period of required separation before they can file for divorce from 12 months to 6 months. For many people, financial hardships prevent them from physically separating until a divorce is finalized, but the law does not allow them to file until they have lived apart. This will simplify divorce law in Maryland and help people get out of harmful relationships without unnecessary barriers.

Onward,

The WLC Advocacy Team

P.S. Join [Our Maryland](#) and [Planned Parenthood of Maryland](#) TOMORROW NIGHT at 6pm for a briefing with lobbyists and reproductive rights advocates on time-sensitive action to protect and expand access to abortion care, particularly for low-income, rural and out-of-state patients. After the policy briefing, stay on to phone bank – we'll be making calls to pro-choice Marylanders and asking them to contact their state senators in support of the Abortion Care Access bill package. Co-hosted by Westmoreland Congregational United Church of Christ, Women's Law Center of

Maryland, Reproductive Health Access Project – Mid Atlantic Cluster, the National Abortion Federation, and the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland. Register in advance for this meeting: [https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0rcOGpgD4uH9cM6_SOV71pVleW0pUGKraf](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0rcOGpgD4uH9cM6_SOV71pVleW0pUGKraf)

P.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!](#) And if this email was forwarded to you by a friend, make sure to sign up for our legislative alerts [here!](#)

P.P.P.S. Save the Date for the WLC's 50th Anniversary Celebration and Awards Ceremony on May 19th, 6pm, at Live! Casino & Hotel! Join us in presenting the 50th Anniversary Legacy of Leadership Award to The Honorable Mary Ellen Barbera, Chief Judge (Ret.), Court of Appeals of Maryland; the 50th Anniversary Power of the Present Award to The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones, Speaker, The Maryland House of Delegates; and the 50th Anniversary Foundation of the Future Award, to Susan Francis, Executive Director, Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service. For more information or to buy tickets, click [HERE](#).

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.

