



## Celebrating 50 Years of Advancing Justice

Dear Jessica,

We are now more than a month into session, which means that any bills introduced from this week on will have to first be referred to the chamber's Rules Committee before moving on to the regular process of legislative hearings. This also means that the universe is more or less limited to the roughly 2100 bills that are currently at play, and it will mostly just shrink from here on out.

Some of those bills are already out of the running as they have been withdrawn by their sponsor, including [SB107 - Correctional Services - Pregnant Incarcerated Individuals - Substance Use Disorder Assessment and Treatment](#), which would have ensured a continuity of care for substance abuse treatment for pregnant incarcerated individuals.

Others we are watching as they have been referred to the Rules Committee, and cannot move forward unless approved by that Committee first, like [HB1256 Labor and Employment - Payment of Minimum Wage - Tipped Employees](#), which will help bring tipped workers up to minimum wage.

And thankfully others have already moved forward in the process, with favorable reports out of committees, and passing second or even third reader in their respective chamber. Three bills we have supported have passed third reader and are crossing-over to the opposite chamber, two in the Senate and one in the House.

A priority bill for the WLC and all victim services providers, [SB148 Victim Services Programs - Supplementing Federal Funding and Support \(Victim Services Stabilization Act\)](#), will provide stable funding and support for trauma-informed services for victims of crime, including those survivors of intimate partner violence our attorneys represent in court every day. I am happy to report that this bill has passed through the Senate! Focus will now shift to the House as the cross-filed bill, HB186, awaits a vote from the Appropriations Committee.

A small, but important bill, [SB52 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs – Waiver – Diapers and Menstrual Hygiene Products](#) will allow families to utilize SNAP benefits to purchase diapers and menstrual hygiene products, both of which play a significant role in improving health outcomes. It too has passed third reader and is headed over to the House, where its cross-file, HB87, also awaits a vote.

**Ask the Appropriations Committee to vote FAVORABLY  
on HB186 and HB87, as well as the Senate cross-files SB148 and SB52  
[HERE](#).**

Across the street in the House, [HB16 Primary and Secondary Education – Title IX – Notice \(Hear Our Voices Act\)](#) has passed third reader and if it eventually makes it into law will require public schools to create a process for filing sexual misconduct complaints. We expect it to move to the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee soon.

Finally, another important bill that has been introduced for several years in a row is up for its committee vote TODAY. [HB297 Criminal Law - Victims of Child Sex Trafficking and Human Trafficking - Safe Harbor and Service Response](#) was heard in the Judiciary Committee last week and is scheduled for a vote today. This desperately needed legislation would protect children who have been trafficked from being charged with prosecution and other crimes related to the trafficking.

**Please [contact members](#) of the Judiciary committee THIS MORNING  
to ask them to vote favorably on HB297.**

Other bills that were heard this week that will need your support in the weeks to come include: [HB477 - Public Senior Higher Education Institutions -](#)

[Reproductive Health Services Plans – Requirements](#); [HB283 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Gender-Affirming Treatment \(Trans Health Equity Act\)](#); [HB181 Four-Day Workweek Pilot Program and Income Tax Credit – Established \(Four-Day Workweek Act of 2023\)](#); [SB344 - Income Tax - Caregiver Tax Credit](#); and [HB630 - Public Utilities - Primary and Secondary Account Holders - Domestic Violence Protections](#).

Finally, next week is a BIG week for reproductive rights as the Speaker-sponsored [HB705 – Declaration of Rights – Right to Reproductive Freedom](#), which will enshrine the right to abortion and reproductive health care within our state constitution, gets its hearing on Tuesday, February 21<sup>st</sup>. Stay tuned for how you can ensure reproductive rights for generations of Marylanders to come!

Thanks for your commitment to these issues and for pledging to take action and contact legislators. Time and again we hear from elected officials that they moved a bill forward due to the groundswell of support they received from folks like you, or conversely, that a good bill died because no one voiced their support. That is why we are so grateful for your time and dedication!

Onward,



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.S. **Save the Date for the WLC’s Annual Celebration and Awards Ceremony on May 3rd at 6pm at Citron!** Join us in presenting the Rosalyn B. Bell Award to Marla Zide, Esq.; the Dorothy Beatty Memorial Award to Robyn Elliott; and the Access to Justice Award to Natasha M. Dartigue, Esq. and Debbie Feinstein, Esq. For more information or to buy tickets, click [HERE](#).

P.P.P.S. Save the date for these upcoming events from our partners and friends!

[Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence Annual Memorial Service](#) - Tuesday, February 21st at 4pm on Zoom

Hosted by the Women Legislators of Maryland, Executive Alliance, Planned Parenthood of Maryland, and Pro Choice Maryland, the **2023 Gender Justice Rally** will be held March 6th at 6pm at Lawyer's Mall in Annapolis. Register to attend [HERE!](#)

Have an event you'd like to share with us? Send us an [email!](#)

#### 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.*



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