



MLAW
Maryland Legislative
Agenda for Women

2024
LEGISLATIVE AGENDA
FINAL REPORT



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PASSED

HB 496/SB 758 – Sexual Crimes - Definition of Consent and Repeal of Force

Sponsors: Delegate Emily Shetty and Delegate Elizabeth Embry and 55 co-sponsors; Senator Ariana Kelly and 18 co-sponsors

This legislation requires certain facts to be considered when determining whether a lack of consent exists for certain sexual crimes, based on a totality of the circumstances, including the words and conduct of the victim and the defendant. It alters the elements of second-degree rape to remove the requirement of use of force or threat of force. Consent may be withdrawn and lack of consent may be communicated through words or conduct.

HB 99/SB 113 – Criminal Law - Sexual Solicitation of a Minor Through Child Pornography - Prohibition

Sponsors: Delegate Sandy Bartlett; Senator Ariana Kelly

This legislation expands sexual solicitation of a minor to include production of child pornography. It prohibits an individual from knowingly soliciting a minor or law enforcement officer posing as a minor to engage in certain prohibited sexual acts. The law will enable law enforcement to hold offenders accountable and protect female children that are being victimized online.

HJ 1/SJ 1 – Affirming the Federal Equal Rights Amendment

Sponsors: Delegate Edith Patterson and Delegate Lesley Lopez and 72 co-sponsors; Senator Ariana Kelly and 13 co-sponsors

This joint resolution expresses the sense of the Maryland Legislature that the “Equal Rights Amendment” has met all Article V requirements for an amendment to the United States Constitution and is valid as the 28th amendment. It urges the President and Congress to affirm the validity of the Equal Rights Amendment and direct the Archivist of the United States to certify and publish it as the 28th amendment.

HB 39/SB 197 – Residential Services Agencies - Reimbursement - Personal Assistance Services (Homecare Worker Rights Act of 2024)

Sponsors: Delegate Robbyn Lewis; Senator Arthur Ellis

This legislation authorizes the Maryland Department of Health to reimburse a residential serve agency for personal assistance services only if they are provided by an *employee*. It ensures that home care workers (84% of Maryland’s home care workers are women) who work for agencies that receive Medicaid reimbursements are not misclassified as independent contractors and therefore are entitled to overtime, sick and safe leave, unemployment insurance, and workers’ compensation.

HB 1091/SB 975 – Maryland Department of Health – Reproductive Health Care Clinic Security Grant Program – Establishment (Supporting Reproductive Health Care Clinics Act)

[Substituted for HB 1412/SB 947 – Abortion Care Access Grant Program and Fund – Establishment]
Sponsors: Delegate Joe Vogel and 7 co-sponsors and Senator Sarah Elfreth and 16 co-sponsors

This bill was substituted for HB 1412/SB 947. It establishes the Reproductive Health Care Clinic Security Grant Program in the Maryland Department of Health to assist clinics with costs associated with security improvements and safety operational expenses. Authorizes the Governor to include \$500,000 for the program in the 2026 budget.

HB 649/SB 525 – Labor and Employment – Equal Pay for Equal Work - Wage Range Transparency

Sponsors: Delegate Jennifer White Holland and 22 co-sponsors; Senators Ariana Kelly and Dawn Gile

This legislation creates wage transparency by requiring employers to include pay ranges and a general description of benefits and other compensation in job postings, helping Maryland businesses attract and retain talent, save time and resources, and address the gender and racial/ethnic pay gap.

HB 691/SB 119 – Legally Protected Health Care - Gender-Affirming Treatment

Sponsors: Delegate David Moon and 17 co-sponsors; Senators Clarence Lam, Shelly Hettleman, and Jeff Waldstreicher

This legislation extends current shielding protections that protect reproductive health care (passed last year) to cover gender-affirming care. This legislation codifies and expand protections for providers, patients, and parents.

NOT PASSED

HB 869/SB 753 – Public Safety - Firearm Background Checks, Victim Notification, and the Maryland State Police Gun Center

Sponsors: Delegate Sandy Bartlett; Senator Shelly Hettleman

This bill would have established a process and a requirement for law enforcement and victim notification if a prohibited person attempts to purchase a firearm and fails the background check. An individual becomes a prohibited person when they are a respondent on a final protective order in Maryland. Because a majority of domestic violence homicides are committed with firearms, this would save women's lives.

HB 482/SB 398 – Criminal Injuries Compensation Board - Victims of Nonfatal Strangulation

Sponsors: Delegate Karen Simpson and 20 co-sponsors; Senators William Folden, Kramer, Ready and West

This bill would have required that nonfatal strangulation forensic examination expenses be paid for through the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. Strangulation is an indicator of lethality in domestic violence. Existing law does not require reimbursement for forensic examinations, emergency medical care, or other eligible expenses for survivors of nonfatal strangulation that do not result from an alleged rape, sexual offense, or sexual abuse. This bill would have removed financial barriers for seeking medical treatment in the aftermath of domestic violence and could save women's lives.