

# The Oregon Commission for Women

## 2014 - 2015 Report

### 1 ABOUT THE OREGON COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

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#### **Our vision:**

We serve the people of Oregon to empower and support women through our special roles as policy advisors to Oregon state policy makers and leaders. The OCFW is a catalyst that empowers partnerships between state government and women in rural and urban areas to ensure success for all women by addressing issues at the policy level.

#### **Our mission:**

Created under the administration of Governor Mark Hatfield, organized in its current role under Governor Atiyeh, and serving 10 administrations, the OCFW's statutory mission is focused on establishing economic, social, legal and political equality for women through continuing assessment of the most pressing needs of women and girls statewide.

#### **Our strategic focus:**

To accomplish its mission, the OCFW works both within its committee structure and as a committee of the whole, collaboratively with the Governor, state legislators, agency leadership, community partners, and the other Advocacy Commissions to study issues and promote policy that reduce barriers and increase access and success for women in six strategic focus areas.

- Education
- Jobs and the economy
- Healthcare
- Justice, safety and policing
- Housing and stable families
- Civic engagement



#### **Who we are:**

The OCFW is composed of nine distinguished community members who are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, along with two legislators, appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House respectively.

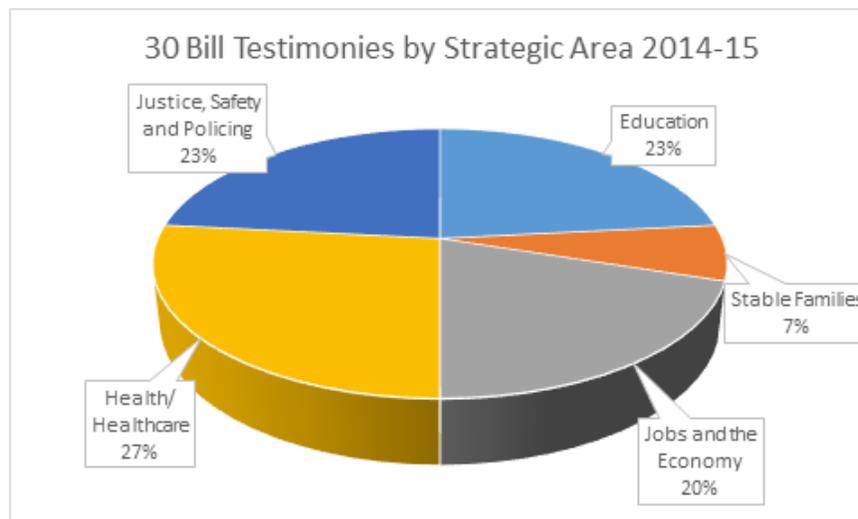
**What we do:**

The Commission members work collaboratively to raise awareness and address challenges facing women and girls across the state. We do this by researching issues, informing discussions and providing advice for state policy makers, including the Governor, legislators and departmental leaders, on ways to improve the success of women and girls throughout Oregon. We believe that leadership among women and its historical context is also critical to our success and work to grow such opportunities for women and girls, annually holding the Women of Achievement awards, and providing leadership experiences and scholarships for diverse, emerging leaders statewide.

## 2 OCFW STATUTORY ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2014 - 2015

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### ADVOCACY



The OCFW monitored 36 bills in 6 focus areas for the 2015 legislative session with regular reports to the Commissioners. In 2015, the Commission supported 21 bills with testimony during the long legislative session and supported its full slate of bills with advocacy at the Capitol at its joint legislative day with AAUW. Along with 9 bill testimonies in 2014 session, OCFW has testified on 30 bills affecting the success of women and girls in Oregon 2014-15.

**OCFW helped pass historic bills for women in the 2015 Session:**

- SB 454A, Mandatory sick time for all employees. PASSED
- SB 478, Phasing out harmful chemicals in kids' products. PASSED
- SB 525A, Prohibits possession of firearms by person subject to restraining order. PASSED
- HB 2205, Funding to end Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children. PASSED
- SB 939/SB 5507, Re-funding the Family Preservation Project for incarcerated mothers. PASSED

## OCFW PROPOSED LEGISLATION IS ADDED TO BOLI'S SUPPORTED BILLS

The **OCFW Committee on Women's Economic Security** reviewed other states' examples of legislative support and presented a slate of bills from Minnesota that addressed a number of women's economic issues. The Commission discussed the committee's findings and selected two areas on which they worked with the OCFW legislators to propose new legislation for the 2015 Oregon legislature. See the full committee report in Appendix A.

The bills were:

**SB 492\***: Authorizes use of accrued sick leave or personal business leave by certain employees who are victims of domestic violence, harassment, sexual assault or stalking

**SB 491\***: Assuring state contactors for large contracts have provisions in place regarding wage equity

The OCFW met with the Bureau of Labor and Industries, which brought these bills into its list of supported bills in the legislature and, with testimony from the OCFW, helped pass both bills.

## 2015 OCFW PRIORITY BILLS

### Education

1. HB 2968, Track funding/outcomes for students in poverty, [Testimony](#) (OCFW). PASSED
2. HB 3308A, Address disparities in higher education among underserved communities, [Testimony](#) (OCAPIA/OCBA/OCHA/OCFW). PASSED
3. SB 187A, Student data protection, support letter, (OCAPIA/OCBA/OCHA/OCFW). PASSED
4. SB 215, OEIB sunset, Invited testimony, (OCAPIA/OCBA/OCHA/OCFW). PASSED

### Healthcare

5. SB 445, Requires medical marijuana facilities and marijuana retailers to post notice of harmful effects of marijuana on pregnant women, [Testimony](#) (OCFW)
6. SB 478, Phasing out harmful chemicals in kids' products, [Testimony](#) (OCFW). PASSED
7. HB 2600, Requires continuation of group health insurance coverage for employee on family leave, [Testimony](#) (OCFW). PASSED
8. HB 2934A, OHA to develop recommendations on a basic health plan, [Testimony](#) (OCAPIA/OCFW). PASSED

### Jobs/Economy

9. SB 454A, Requires all employers to implement sick time for employees, [Testimony](#) (OCAPIA/OCBA/OCHA/OCFW). PASSED
10. SB 491, Requirements in public contracting for compliance with pay equity provisions of state law, [Testimony](#) (OCFW). PASSED

11. HB 2005, Requires All Employers to Implement Paid Sick Time for Employees, [Testimony \(OCAPIA/OCBA/OCHA/OCFW\)](#)
12. HB 2006, Makes practice of paying employees of opposite sex who hold equivalent jobs at different wage rates unlawful employment practice, [Request for work session \(OCFW\)](#)
13. HB 2007A, Prohibits disciplinary action against employee that inquires about or discloses wage information unlawful employment practice, [Testimony \(OCFW\)](#). PASSED
14. HB 2010, Authorizes employee of certain employers to request flexible, predictable or stable work schedule, [Testimony \(OCFW\)](#)

### Justice, Safety and Policing

15. SB 525A, Prohibits possession of firearm or ammunition by person who is subject to restraining order, [Testimony \(OCFW\)](#). PASSED
16. SB 759A, Requires certain higher education to provide service for students who report sexual assault, [Testimony \(OCFW\)](#). PASSED
17. HB 2002, Requires procedures for receiving and recording profiling complaints, [Testimony \(OCAPIA/OCBA/OCHA/OCFW\)](#). PASSED
18. HB 2205, Establishes Fund to End Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, [Testimony \(OCAPIA/OCHA/OCFW\)](#). PASSED
19. HB 2776, Protective Orders for victims of domestic violence, [Testimony \(OCFW\)](#). PASSED

### Stable Families

20. SB 492, Authorizes use of accrued sick leave or personal business leave by victims of domestic violence, harassment, sexual assault or stalking, [Testimony \(OCFW\)](#). PASSED
21. SB 939/SB 5507, Directs Department of Corrections to enter into contracts with nonprofit entities to create programs to assist children of incarcerated parents, [Testimony \(OCAPIA/OCBA/OCHA/OCFW\)](#). PASSED



*Incarcerated mother at Coffee Creek*

## 2015 JOINT LEGISLATIVE DAY WITH AAUW

The OCFW joined the AAUW for a joint Legislative Day at the Capitol on May 12, 2015. The attendees included 10 students from Western Oregon University School of Public Health, guests of OCFW Commissioner Doris Cancel-Tirado. The 50 participants were welcomed by presentations from House Speaker Tina Kotek and Senator Betsy Johnson, who spoke on

women's economic issues, affordable housing, and the state budgeting process. The attending Commissioners, their guest students, and AAUW members visited in small groups with the Office of the Senate President and other scheduled meetings with individual legislators on women's issues including provision of sick leave, wage transparency, and other key issues.



## OCFW 2015-17 BUDGET WIN FOR ADDITIONAL OACO STAFF

On March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015, OCFW Chair Stephanie Vardavas joined the OACO Administrator and the Chairs from the Oregon Commissions on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OCAPIA,) Black Affairs (OCBA,) and Hispanic Affairs (OCHA) to present the Advocacy Commissions' budget request to the Joint Ways and Means General Government Committee. The 2015 session marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the OACO administrative agency for the Advocacy Commissions, supporting the development and work of the OAC's with two staff since 2005. Supported by testimony from Advocacy Commission Chairs, Senator Jackie Winters, Representative Lew Frederick (on behalf of the 8 OAC legislative members), the Governor's Office, AAUW, Urban League, APANO, the Center for Intercultural



Organizing, and others, the General Government committee cast a historic vote to increase the OAC's staff support at the work session for the OACO budget bill.

The budget passed the House and the Senate in May, 2015. It includes a reclassification for OACO's Executive Assistant and new permanent Policy Analyst position, .5 FTE. Though the Commissioners and legislators of Joint Ways and Means had hoped to approve further support for the statutory work of the OAC's, all agreed that in a challenging

budget year the investment in additional staff for the Commissions marks the Governor's and legislature's appreciation for the important public policy work of the OAC's.

## PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH

The OCFW provides Masters, PhD, and Law students with for-credit public policy internships addressing our strategic priorities. The research is conducted jointly with state partners, and the Governor’s Office to study data, best practices, effective policies, literature review, analyze gaps, suggest remedies and produce reports used by the Advocacy Commissions and their partners to inform new policies, develop strategic approaches and craft bills that improve the success of women and girls statewide.

### INCARCERATED WOMEN IN OREGON: ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN AND REVIEW

In 2014 and 2015 the OCFW partnered with the Oregon State Library Reference Division and the Department of Corrections (DOC) to compile data on incarcerated women in Oregon and

the needs of this population and their families as a foundation for

additional public policy research.

In 2015, the Commission hosted a research intern jointly with the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs to begin a legislative

environmental scan and national literature/program review on

effective policies for reuniting incarcerated women with their

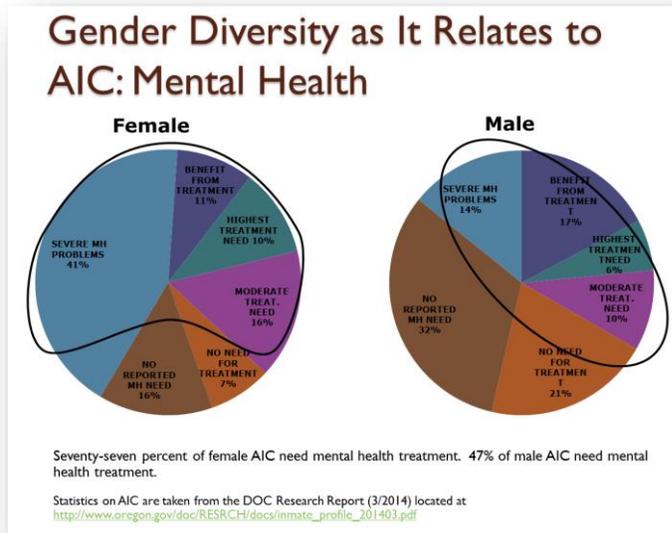
families following their time in

corrections, reducing recidivism,

and reducing behavioral issues in their children. The study also

draws implications for incarcerated men and their families. During the

summer and fall of 2015 the research



is being reviewed by a reactor panel to consider next steps in further research and policy implications. See the full report by Emlyn Foxen, OCFW research intern, at

<http://www.oregon.gov/women/Pages/publications.aspx>

### LONGITUDINAL RESEARCH ON TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN FOR SEX

#### 2<sup>ND</sup> PHASE: THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE SELLERS IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY

In 2014-15 the OCFW and other OAC’s partnered with the US Attorney’s Office and Dr.

Christopher Carey of PSU’s Hatfield School on preliminary identification of perpetrator

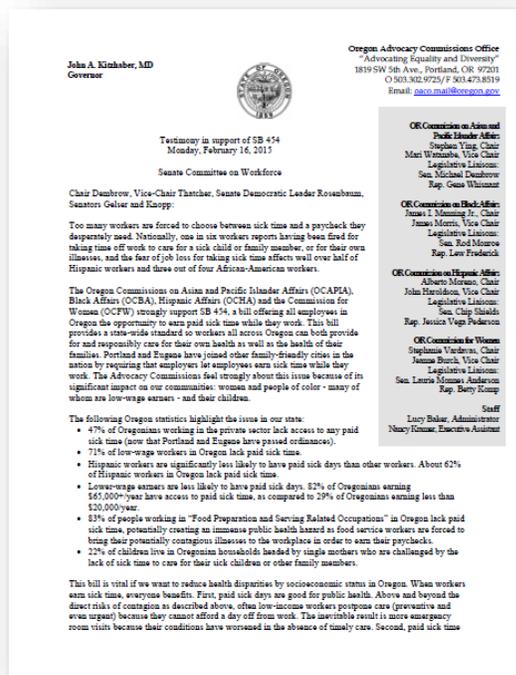
breakdown for sex trafficking of children in Multnomah County. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the

first longitudinal study of the CSEC (commercial sexual exploitation of children) in the nation, designed to determine the demographics and history of the sellers of children for sex, their history of involvement with DHS and the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA), demographic profile, number of arrests for CSEC and other crimes, and other information helpful to understanding the nature of the CSEC trade through its perpetrators. The time consuming research requires review of confidential databases maintained by the Multnomah Co. Sheriff's Office for individual offenders convicted of CSEC and cross referencing their information with DHS, OYA, and DOC databases.

## EQUITY REFERENCE AND DATA PARTNERSHIP WITH STATE LIBRARY

The OCFW partnered with the State Library Government Information and Library Services Division during the 2015 legislative session to provide equity focused data and reference

information on bills of interest to the OCFW and other Advocacy Commissions. The information guided the choice of supported bills by the OCFW and added supporting information to the Commission's testimony during session which will be expanded during 2015-16 as part of the overall underpinning to the Commissions' work on equity related policy and key legislation.



***“We are proud to work with the Oregon Advocacy Commissions as they research and report on important equity issues. Working together, the OACs and the State Library provide policy makers and Oregonians with the references and data necessary to make informed policy decisions affecting communities of color and women statewide.”***

- MaryKay Dahlgreen, Oregon State Librarian

## GROWING LEADERSHIP FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

The Oregon Commission for Women works to grow the number and influence of diverse women within all branches of state government, its key initiatives, departmental leadership and policy work. To do this, the OCFW reaches out to youth and women in diverse communities statewide to inspire the desire to lead, access training and mentoring opportunities, and to create pathways to lifelong leadership.

## 5 INSPIRING LEADERS: 2014 ANNUAL WOMEN OF ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

The OCFW hosted its Annual Women of Achievement Awards luncheon in May 2015 with Governor Kate Brown and Master of Ceremonies Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum. Friends and family members of those honored joined OCFW Commissioners, legislators, community leaders, and students from area community colleges and universities to honor some of Oregon's most inspiring women. Each honoree shared her story of challenge and leadership with the attendees. The 2014 honorees included former Senator Joanne Verger, Judge Jill Tanner, Portland Housing Center Founder Peg Malloy, *Mother's Bistro* owner Lisa Schroeder, and writer Cheryl Strayed.

## 8 YOUNG LEADERS ATTEND NEW LEADERSHIP OREGON THROUGH OCFW

The graduating class of 2015 NEW Leadership Oregon, representing diverse college students



with hometowns from Klamath Falls to Portland, included 8 scholarship recipients from OCFW. New Leadership Oregon is a women's leadership initiative that trains the next generation of leaders, preparing them to solve tomorrow's problems. It is located in PSU's Mark Hatfield School of Government. As part of OCFW's focus on lifelong leadership, the Commission provided scholarships for eight Oregon college students to attend. The awardees were: Fahima Osman, Karla Beatrice Andrade, Gloria Pinzon

Marin, Elyse Cogburn, Zarah Gaeta, Katie Harvey, Heather Gormand, and Maya Ward-Fineman.

## INTERNSHIPS FOR OCFW'S PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH

The OCFW provides students interested in public policy with high-level for-credit internships for undergraduate Honors, Masters, PhD and Law students researching strategic public policy issues of importance to the OCFW and the women of Oregon. Individual Commissioners and OAC legislators serve as champions for the research and as mentors for the students on the public policy implications of their work. In June 2015, Emlyn Foxen, a rising senior at Pomona University, became the Commission's first undergrad Honors student to hold an OCFW public policy internship on incarcerated women. PSU Master's student Billie Puyear also received an Advocacy Commissions internship researching the history and demographics of those who had been arrested in Multnomah County for selling children for sex.

## NEW COMMISSIONER'S HANDBOOK FOR INCOMING COMMISSIONERS

In 2014 the OCFW wrote and initiated a new handbook for incoming commissioners. Focused on informed leadership and effective service, it highlights the statutory work of the Commission, its partnerships, and its service to affect policy solutions to long-standing challenges to women and girls in Oregon. See it by clicking <http://www.oregon.gov/women/pdfs/OCFW%20Handbook%2005%2014.pdf>.

## 3 THE OCFW COMMISSIONERS 2014 AND 2015

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### APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE:

*Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson; Gresham*

### APPOINTED BY THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE:

*Representative Betty Komp; Woodburn*

### APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR AND CONFIRMED BY THE SENATE:

Stephanie Vardavas JD, OCFW Chair; Legislative Committee Chair; Portland

Jeanne Burch, Vice Chair; Fossil

Dr. Doris Cancel-Tirado; Corvallis

Megan Jacquot JD; Coos Bay

Sheri Malstrom; Beaverton

Jessica Rodriguez-Montegna; Portland

Dr. Barbara Spencer, Women's Econ. Security Committee Chair; Portland

Stephanie Swanson; Portland

## 4 APPENDIX A

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### OCFW WOMEN'S ECONOMIC SECURITY COMMITTEE REPORT, 2015

There are many barriers holding Oregonian women back from economic security and the Women's Economic Security Committee believes there is work to do to ensure a sound economic foundation for the women in this state. In fact, we believe that leveling the playing field for economic equity benefits all of Oregon.

The economic problem in Oregon is stark. According to recent statistics from the US Census Bureau, the median earnings for Oregon women working full-time year-round were just 79 percent of median earnings for white males, causing a pay gap of 21 percent. This imbalance is even larger for women of color. African American women are paid 64% and Latinas are paid just 54 % of median earnings for white males. Pay inequality based on gender and race creates an earnings gap that impairs lifetime savings, housing, education and retirement. The gap begins early in the careers of all women and builds throughout the earning years, thus impacting the retirement years.

Our support for women's economic security is built on the belief that reducing financial barriers for women is not just the right thing to do; it builds a stronger economic foundation for all citizens of this state. Providing equal opportunities for pay for women who make up half of the state's workforce is critical to the success of this state's economic future.

The biennium work plan for the Women's Economic Security Committee supported the following goals:

- Pay women the same as men for comparable work and living wages to help Oregonian families that depend on women's income to achieve and maintain the middle class American dream. Pay transparency at the workplace is the first step in policy development.
- Help women *and* men balance family and work responsibilities in order to reduce costly turnover and increase productivity through state-wide public policy programs for paid sick leave and childcare.
- Open up non-traditional job opportunities for women and girls in male-dominated job sectors to increase the talent pool and maximize opportunities for both employee and employer efficiency and productivity.
- Support retirement financial opportunities that provide a sound savings plan for all state residents, especially women, who are not offered retirement plans by their employers but need additional economic security post-retirement to promote financial, health and mental well-being.

The Committee is working with elected officials, government leaders, community partners, advocacy groups and others concerned about these issues. We are joining with the following

## Oregon Commission for Women

supportive partners: the Bureau of Labor and Industry, Family Forward, AAUW, the League of Women Voters, AARP and the State Treasurer's Office, with a 2015 legislative agenda that supports economic policies which address these issues.

To date, the Committee for Women's Economic security has achieved the following results:

- Our own two legislative representatives have championed these issues and submitted two legislative concepts, SB 491 – Equal Pay Requirements for State Contractors and SB 492 – Sick Leave for Domestic Violence Victims, for the 2015 session.
- The Bureau of Labor and Industries has included these two OCFW-sponsored bills in their 2015 legislative agenda.
- The Committee has reviewed the Retirement Fund Proposal from the Oregon State Treasurer's Office and is joining AARP in its sponsorship.
- The Committee has reached out to key females in Eastern Oregon to identify their specific economic issues and ensure that key recommendations before the legislators address their unique needs.
- The Committee has met with key legislators who are actively promoting these issues and the Committee will track, review and support their legislation with providing letters of support and hearing testimony. To date, testimony has been submitted on legislative bills related to pay equity, pay transparency, paid sick time and flexible work schedules (SB 454, SB454A, SB491, HB 2005, HB 2006, and HB 2007A and HB 2010).

In conclusion, with the involvement and support of interested parties, we actively championed recommendations and legislation to bring down economic barriers for women and to build a more economically stronger Oregon for all. The efforts during this biennium have set a strong foundation for future Committee advocacy.