



Maine Permanent Commission on **THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

Maine Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (MePCSW)

Meeting Minutes

August 19, 2026

11:00 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.

MePCSW Members in Attendance: Sue Mackey Andrews, Chris Hastedt, Eisha Khan, Jennifer Wilkey, Anne Gass, Khadija El Barkaoui, Darylen Cote, Eva White, Jill Barkley Roy

MePCSW Members Absent: Samantha Lott Hale, Fatuma Hussein, Maulian Bryant, Dania Bowie, Julie Mallett, Kate Easter, Rebecca Austin

Staff and Guests: Elinor Higgins (MePCSW ED)

Members of the Public: Elle Snyder, Policy Director for Maine Senate President's office

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Facilitator: Eisha Khan, Research and Reporting Committee chair, filling in for the MePCSW Chair

Old Business and Public Comment

1. Welcome
2. Review, discuss, and approve June meeting minutes
 - a. Motion to approve: Darylen
 - b. Second: Sue
 - c. Vote: Unanimous vote to approve
3. Any members of the public may introduce themselves and speak for 3 minutes
 - a. Elle Snyder joined from the Senate President's office, shared that they were interested in opportunities to partner and to learn more about Commission work. Elle joined the Policy and Legislation Committee meeting for discussion.
4. Elinor shared opportunity to attend the Southern Maine Labor Council's Labor Day Breakfast.

Committee Work Time

MePCSW committees broke out into separate virtual rooms to discuss key decisions and upcoming work. Came back together to share highlights from each discussion.

- Policy and Legislation Committee – reviewed plan for report launch and advocacy event, discussed timing and the option of timing this event with March 8th, International Women's Day. Discussed process for developing policy

recommendations for the 2026 report, agreed to connect with partner orgs to understand what their priorities are for the upcoming legislative session.

- Community Outreach Committee – looked ahead to upcoming outreach events and suggested using a Google calendar or something similar to keep everyone organized around key dates. Talked about ongoing issues they are hearing about in community including access issues in rural areas, birthing center closures, doula services, issues facing older women, lacking financial capacity to access community supports. Expressed interest in learning more about domestic violence services funding and where things are – could be a future presentation. Suggested having some handouts for scheduled listening sessions to share information about discrimination issues and resources.
- Research and Reporting Committee – approved advisory group plan and highlighted plans to focus on the report in the coming months. Interested in adapting community feedback into some kind of community impact statement. Would like to meet with data fellow, Christine, to get a warm hand off from her as she ends her time with MePCSW.

New Business

- Reviewed draft of MePCSW core operating principles and discussed potential edits from the June meeting. Had a discussion focused on whether to include a detailed list of identity categories in the first principle, with concerns raised about potential political pushback and exclusion risks. The team agreed to modify the language to use "for example" followed by the list with plans to review and vote on the updated language at the next meeting. Khadija offered to provide HR-appropriate language suggestions.
- Elinor presented two draft budget initiatives for review, both aimed at funding for contractor services around research and data. Discussed and voted to approve the draft budget request.
 - a. Motion to approve: Sue
 - b. Second: Darylen
 - c. Vote: Unanimous vote to approve
- Elinor provided an update on commission membership, noting three open seats and ongoing efforts to identify and recruit potential candidates, with plans to share candidate lists with the governance committee soon.