



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

**Maine Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (MePCSW)**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**December 8, 2025**

**12:00 – 1:30 P.M.**

**MePCSW Members in Attendance:** Anne Gass, Keita Whitten Foster, Karen Keim, Julie Mallett, Maulian Bryant, Kate Easter, Eisha Khan, Jennifer Wilkey, Samantha Lott Hale, Dania Bowie, Chris Hastedt, Darylen Cote, Sue Mackey Andrews, Fatuma Hussein, Jill Barkley Roy, Rebecca Austin, Eva White

**MePCSW Members Absent:** Khadija El Barkaoui

**Staff and Guests:** Elinor Higgins (MePCSW ED) and Christine Rudalevige (USM Data Fellow)

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**Facilitators:** Samantha Lott Hale, MePCSW Chair

### **Old Business and Public Comment**

1. Review, discuss, and approve October meeting minutes
  - a. Motion to approve: Kate
  - b. Second: Anne
  - c. Vote: Unanimous approval
2. Any members of the public may introduce themselves and speak for 3 minutes
  - a. No members of the public present

### **New Business**

1. Budget update: research in partnership with the budget office has identified a \$25,000 per year general fund allocation for the MePCSW. Requesting the creation of an account for this funding along with the personal services budget for the Commission
2. MePCSW Committee Action Items
  - a. Community Outreach Committee
    - i. Provided overview of community outreach plan for 2026. The plan includes three parts: leveraging commissioners' existing connections to reach organizations (Part 1), organizing a statewide webinar (Part 2), and conducting regional follow-up meetings (Part 3).
    - ii. Discussion:
      1. The need to ensure that interconnected initiatives stay aligned
      2. Capacity challenges and taking the opportunity to pilot strategies

- 3. Ensuring that we don't duplicate during outreach efforts – need to track
  - iii. Vote to approve the plan:
    - 1. Motion to approve: Darylen
    - 2. Second: Dania
    - 3. Vote: Unanimous approval
- b. Policy and Legislation Committee
  - i. Provided overview of the a tiered approach for prioritizing bills for legislative advocacy. Tier 1 contains the highest priority bills which directly impact MePCSW's work and require maximum time and engagement. Tier 2 and 3 bills will be prioritized as capacity allows, though Commissioners can still testify on Tier 2 and 3 bills as individuals.
    - 1. Decided to add language about consulting Commissioners with relevant expertise when making time-sensitive decisions.
    - 2. Delegated decision-making authority to the Policy and Legislation Committee for sorting bills across the three tiers.
    - 3. Vote:
      - a. Motion to approve: Keita
      - b. Second: Darylen
      - c. Vote: Unanimous approval
  - ii. Noted that materials will be distributed shortly to support outreach to legislators
- c. Research and Reporting Committee
  - i. Provided overview of data dashboard development, with the review of data sources and a plan to track data indicators across a few different buckets of information.
  - ii. Reviewed a decision-making matrix for MePCSW reporting. Matrix includes considerations about state government context, alignment with community priorities, connections to ongoing Commission work, duplication, and potential impact
    - 1. Began discussing how political considerations should be taken into account when making decisions, including discussion about how the Commission has been impacted in the past – plan to continue discussion at a future meeting
  - iii. Shared overview of different advisory roles for MePCSW reporting
  - iv. Vote held on adopting the advisory roles and decision-making matrix:
    - 1. Motion to approve: Keita
    - 2. Second: Anne
    - 3. Vote: unanimous approval
  - v. Shared plan for utilizing Microsoft form to facilitate ongoing information gathering

### 3. Six Months of the MePCSW Strategic Plan

- a. Executive director provided an overview of progress toward strategic goals, including updates to the plan, challenges in measuring progress in some areas, and next steps for 2026.

**Wrap-up and Next Steps**

1. Plan to send out meetings schedule for 2026 later in the week.