

# The Oregon Commission for Women

## 2011 Activities Report



SHE FLIES  
WITH HER  
**OWN  
WINGS**



February 5, 2012

**Dear Governor Kitzhaber, Senators and Representatives, and Supporters of the Oregon Commission for Women,**

We are pleased to submit our 2011 activities report for the Oregon Commission for Women (OCFW). This report provides a brief review of what we've done this past year and what we look forward to accomplishing in 2012.

2011 was a building year for us, and we have put in place several strategies that will enable the Commission to be even more effective in coming years. We had several significant changes on the commission with the expiration of Commission Chair Sue Castner's term and the resignation of Commissioner Darlene Taylor. Senator Martha Schrader stepped down when she lost her Senate seat. New Commissioners Mariahm Stephenson and Stephanie Vardavas joined the commission, and we are excited to welcome Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson as our Senate liaison. We currently have two open positions and a third coming available in March. We have been recruiting new members and we expect to be back to a full complement after appointments are made in February.

We held a planning retreat in August. This was the first time the current commissioners had participated in a planning event for the OCFW. We refined our mission, discussed commission strengths and weaknesses, and identified realistic goals and actions for the 2012 year.

During the first half of 2011, we focused on legislation affecting women. The OCFW submitted testimony or worked with other state agencies to support or oppose several bills during the 2011 session and co-sponsored a day at the legislature for women. We intend to continue to be part of the legislative process as advocates for Oregon women in 2012.

In October, we recognized four outstanding Oregon women. The 2011 Women of Achievement awards, presented by Governor Kitzhaber and Secretary of State Kate Brown, honored women who have worked to make things better for women and children in Oregon.

Throughout the year, commissioners have participated in events celebrating the centennial of Oregon women's suffrage, encouraging women to become engaged by joining boards and commissions, and gathering women's organizations to discuss common issues and goals.

We are honored to serve the women of Oregon, and we look forward to a productive 2012 for the Commission.

Sincerely,



Sunny Petit

Chair, Oregon Commission for Women

# The Oregon Commission for Women

## Vision

We serve the people of Oregon to empower and support women through our special role as policy advisors to Oregon State government. The OCFW is a catalyst that empowers partnerships between governments and communities to ensure equality and strives to achieve and maintain a safe and healthy environment for women and girls throughout the state of Oregon.

## Mission Statement

The mission of the Oregon Commission for Women is to work for the implementation and establishment of economic, social, legal, and political equality for women and to maintain a continuing assessment of the issues and needs confronting women in Oregon.

## About the Commission

In 1964 Governor Mark Hatfield established the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women to advise him of the needs and concerns of women in Oregon. In 1983, Governor Victor Atiyeh gave the Commission independent agency status with a directive to continue its mission and the Legislature created the Oregon Commission for Women to work for the implementation and establishment of economic, legal, political, and social equality of women, and to continually assess the needs and issues of women and girls.

We achieve our mission of advocating for women's equality by providing information, education, and advocacy to the Governor, the Legislature, community leaders, and members of the public on issues important to the lives of Oregon's women. We produce a biannual report on the status of women in Oregon featuring the latest available statistics.

The Commission performs research and provides information and referrals for citizens with questions or problems. The Commission serves in advisory and informational capacities to public officials and non-profit organizations in Oregon and other states in order to benefit women and girls throughout the country.

The Commission often receives invitations to speak at conferences, workshops, businesses, organizations, and educational institutions on matters related to health, legal rights, domestic violence and the economic status of women. We communicate through electronic newsletters and social media. We celebrate the accomplishments of women in Oregon through our annual Women of Achievement Awards.

# 2011 Legislative Action

## Testimony

The OCFW submitted testimony or worked with other state agencies to submit testimony on the following bills:<sup>1</sup>

- **HB2213**, which enabled the OCFW to elect their own chair.
- **HB2235**, which created the Maternal Mental Health Patient and Provider Education Program
- HB2438, which addressed teen dating violence
- **HB2714A**, which removed the age defense for patronizing an underage prostitute
- HB2861, which addressed wage discrimination
- HB2862, which extended certain employee protections to persons working for educational purposes and for persons providing services without compensation
- HB2863, which expanded the definition of a place of public accommodation
- **HB5030**, which reduced Temporary Aid to Needy Families funds
- **SB433**, which expanded eligibility for medical assistance for low-income and uninsured women diagnosed with cervical or breast cancer
- **SB557**, which addresses protocols for sexual assault response
  - SB97, which addressed cultural competency for health care providers
  - HJM19, to urge the federal government to add reproductive services to required wellness coverage



## Day at the Legislature

The OCFW co-sponsored a day at the legislature with the Oregon League of Women Voters and the American Association of University Women. Speakers at the event provided a review of how the legislative process works. Attendees were then invited to attend committee hearings or visit specific legislative offices.

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<sup>1</sup> Bills shown in bold passed the legislature and were signed by Governor Kitzhaber.

# Additional Commission Activities in 2011

## Outreach and Advocacy

The OCFW participated in several events to reach out to women, partner with like organizations, to advocate for women’s equality, and to highlight issues of importance to women.

The OCFW put together a group of active women representing AAUW, the Oregon League of Women Voters, Family Forward Oregon, and the Mid-Valley Women’s Crisis service to meet with Frank Garcia, State Director of Diversity and Inclusion. The group discussed emerging and current priorities for women.



The OCFW testified at Multnomah County supporting a ban on BPA in children’s bottles, sippy cups, and thermoses. The ban passed.

We became a member of several partner organizations to enable us to broaden our reach: Oregon Tradeswomen, Oregon League of Women Voters, American Association of University Women, and the Association of Community College Women. Commissioners also serve as liaisons to the Environmental Justice Task Force and the Oregon Women’s Health and Wellness Alliance.

Commissioner Taylor saved the day when the primary sponsor of “Princess for a Day” pulled out of a Medford event that provides free prom dresses to young women. While the women were getting dresses and having their hair done, they were invited to learn about Oregon colleges, the OCFW, and reproductive health.

We maintained an active Facebook presence and sent out four electronic newsletters and several press releases.

OCFW sent a letter to the US Senate in support of S.596 “Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Deterrence and Victims Support Act of 2011.”



Commission members met with delegations from India, Turkey, and other countries as part of a US State Department/World Affairs Council program.

## Events

The OCFW selected four women to receive Oregon Women of Achievement Awards: Ms. Minlee Saks, Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Dr. Jill Ginsberg, and Dr. Rita Sullivan. All of these women represent the best of Oregon and work on programs that directly affect the lives of Oregon women and children. Governor Kitzhaber and Secretary of State Brown presented the awards at a reception at the state capitol.



Chair Petit presented current statistics on Oregon women as part of the Women's Health Care Lecture Series.

The OCFW co-sponsored an event with Vision 2020 to encourage more women to join boards and commissions. The event included presentations from Multnomah County Chair Jeff Cogen, Commissioner Judy Shiprack, Portland City Commissioner Amanda Fritz, and State Director of Appointments Kendall Clawson.

Commissioners attended events sponsored by the Oregon League of Minority Voters (OLMV) and the Oregon League of Women Voters. Chair Petit spoke at the OLMV State of Civil Rights dinner.

OCFW helped sponsor a Century of Action kickoff event. Century of Action is working to celebrate 100 years of women's suffrage in Oregon.



The OCFW attended meetings and coordinated with the Oregon Women's Health and Wellness Alliance to support/oppose bills that affect women. Members also participated in several conference calls with the White House and the US State Department.

## Commission Internal Business

Commissioners Sue Castner, Darlene V. Taylor, Erika Nebel, and Senator Martha Schraeder left the commission. Commissioners Mariahm Stephenson and Stephanie Vardavas joined the commission. The Commission is pleased to welcome Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson as our Senate liaison, joining Representative Betty Komp.

The OCFW has recruited three additional candidates who are awaiting confirmation.

Commissioner Greenleaf served on the committee to hire a new Executive Assistant for the Office of Advocacy Commissions.

The Commission revised its bylaws to be able to work more effectively with the fundraising arm, the Friends of the Oregon Commission for Women. We appointed several new members to the Friends board of directors to bring the organization into legal compliance.

The OCFW held a facilitated goal setting and strategy session in August. The OCFW feels that this session was very valuable to us in setting policy and strategy going forward. We developed a vision statement, determined the issues that we were interested in working on, took a realistic view of the capabilities of a volunteer organization, and selected several projects to work on.

The OCFW recruited several graduate students to serve as interns to help compile the latest statistics available on the status of women in Oregon. We will present the findings in our bi-annual Status of Oregon Women report, to be presented to the Governor and 2013 Legislature.

### **Current Commission members:**

Sunny Petit, Chair

Jenny Greenleaf, Vice-Chair

Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson

Representative Betty Komp

Megan Jacquot

Mariahm Stephenson

Karen Shimada

Stephanie Vardavas

More information about Commission members is available [on our website](#).

## Goals for 2012

The Commission has several goals for 2012:

- **2012 legislative testimony.** We plan to track and testify on several bills during the short February session. We will be looking at bills to keep Employment Related Daycare and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families at current levels. Other pieces of legislation of interest include teen dating violence prevention and a Betty Roberts memorial. We will support the “history bill” celebrating Women's 100 Years of Suffrage to be introduced by Senators Ferrioli and Rosenbaum.
- **Day at the Legislature.** We will again co-sponsor a day at the Legislature with the League of Women Voters and the American Association of University Women.
- **Housing discrimination.** We are investigating how to address housing discrimination, especially Section 8 housing, affecting single-mother-led families.
- **Sexual assault and domestic violence.** We will be highlighting the latest sexual assault and domestic violence statistics from the Centers for Disease Control. This study ranks Oregon as having a sexual violence rate that is second highest in the nation, and recent studies show black women have an extremely high rate of domestic violence and rape.
- **Website resources.** We are updating the resources section on the website. We have had an intern compile a list of useful resources. We will be adding this to our website after the state websites transition to SharePoint.
- **Reporting.** We will write a robust 2012 Status of Women in Oregon report using the latest available data. The report will provide a comprehensive picture of the current status of women and will be available for use by the Governor’s office and Legislature in early 2013.
- **Outreach.** OCFW will present a workshop at the AAUW state convention in Pendleton in April. We hope to convene a meeting of women’s organizations from across the state and will continue to work for gender parity for women on boards and commissions and in executive appointments.
- **Visibility.** We hope to have a presence in one of the parades of the Portland Rose Festival to celebrate the 2012 centennial of women’s suffrage in Oregon. It depends on whether sister organizations can successfully raise funds to pay entry fees.
- **Education.** We will continue to work with with Ben Cannon, the Governor's Education Advisor, on education policies.
- **2013 legislation.** We will work to develop a bill for the 2013 session relating to confidential name changes for survivors of domestic violence.