

**Illinois Council on Women and Girls  
(20 ILCS 5130)**

**Annual Report  
January 2020**



**Chaired by Illinois Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton**

**Letter from Lt. Governor Stratton**

*“History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again.”*

– Maya Angelou

In the last year, I’ve witnessed something special: a diverse group of women from across Illinois came together to form the Council on Women and Girls, identify the challenges faced by women and girls, and discuss solutions to these challenges.

For far too long, women – especially women of color – were excluded from the policymaking process. The 19<sup>th</sup> amendment, granting women the right to vote, was ratified only 100 years ago, and another 45 years passed before the signing of the Voting Rights Act, outlawing racially discriminatory voting practices. Still, even today we see the needs of women and girls are often second thoughts, if thought of at all.

The creation of the Illinois Council on Women and Girls forges a new path that brings women and girls to the forefront of policy discussions.

As the first Black woman to hold the role of Lieutenant Governor in the history of Illinois, this work is deeply important to me. My journey as a state representative in the Illinois General Assembly and now as Lieutenant Governor is one I use to elevate the experiences of women and girls. In my role as Lieutenant Governor I’ve spent the last year uplifting efforts that improve the lives of women and girls – discussing prenatal mortality, celebrating the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment, visiting women-led businesses, and addressing #MeToo and the movement’s meaning in Illinois.

The creation of the Illinois Council on Women and Girls is the culmination of the work of generations of women, both cisgender and transgender, who fought fearlessly for representation and for equity.

The Council has been extremely busy since the celebration of its creation in April 2019. Our first official meeting offered time for introductions and a thorough discussion of the Council’s areas of focus. Council members decided to prioritize gender-based violence, health & healthcare, leadership & inclusion, and academic & economic opportunity through four committees named after each issue area. Members of the Council’s committees shaped the Council’s recommendations, which are presented in this report.

I am deeply thankful to the council members and guest participants for attending our meetings and calls, completing countless hours of research and discussion, and contributing their time and expertise. I am also grateful to Senator Jacqueline Collins and Representative Anna Moeller for realizing the need for this council and creating an institution that is leading the fight for gender equity in the State of Illinois.

As Chair of the Illinois Council on Women and Girls, I humbly submit the following report to Governor J.B. Pritzker and the members of the Illinois General Assembly. With great anticipation, I look forward to collaborating toward a future shaped by women and girls.

Sincerely,



Juliana Stratton  
Illinois Lieutenant Governor  
Chair, Illinois Council on Women and Girls



**Lt. Governor Stratton speaking at the  
Illinois Council on Women and Girls' Inaugural Celebration**

## **Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

Pursuant to 20 ILCS 5130/30, this report from the Illinois Council on Women and Girls describes the creation and membership of the Council, activities the Council conducted, and its policy and advocacy recommendations for the Governor and General Assembly. These recommendations are furnished to improve the lives of women, girls, and all other Illinoisans as it relates to the four issue-based committees the Council opted to create: Gender-Based Violence, Health & Healthcare, Leadership & Inclusion, and Academic & Economic Opportunity.

### **Council Overview and Activities**

The Illinois Council on Women and Girls was established pursuant to law, which mandates that the Council is to “advise the Governor and the General Assembly on policy issues impacting women and girls in” Illinois.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the statute, 20 ILCS 5130, establishes a 32-member council composition, including ex-officio members representing state agencies and individuals appointed by the Governor and the General Assembly.

Following an April 9, 2019 inaugural celebration of the Council, council members held three quarterly meetings, and served on at least one of four issue-based committees that held quarterly meetings between council meetings.

### **Status Reports and Recommendations**

Committees made 14 recommendations, four related to gender-based violence, four related to academic & economic opportunity, three related to leadership & inclusion, and three related to health & healthcare. The Council will utilize these recommendations to help advise the Governor’s Office and General Assembly on ways to advance policy and advocacy that improves the lives of women and girls in Illinois. To this end, the Council on Women and Girls will engage with relevant stakeholders in and outside of government to see these recommendations realized throughout the State.

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## **Council Overview and Activities**

### **Legislative Mandate**

The goal of the Illinois Council on Women and Girls, pursuant to 20 ILCS 5130/15, is to “advise the Governor and the General Assembly on policy issues impacting women and girls in” Illinois. Policy issues include, but are not limited to:<sup>2</sup>

- Advancing civic participation of women and girls in the State
- Advocating for programs and policies that work to end the gender pay gap and discrimination in professional and academic opportunities
- Promoting resources and opportunities for academic and professional growth
- Improving legal protections and recourse regarding sexual harassment in the workplace
- Reducing violence against women
- Improving standards of, and access to, healthcare in general and reproductive healthcare in particular
- Researching the disparate impacts of a lack of access to healthcare on women
- Improving protections for transgender individuals, especially protections against violence and harassment
- Increasing fair and equal access to culturally competent healthcare, housing, employment, and other factors related to the quality of life
- Disseminating information to, and building of relationships with, state agencies and commissions in furtherance of the Council’s goals
- Increasing attention around the inclusion of women, especially those of color, in decision-making capacities

### **Council Composition**

The following 32 members compose the Illinois Council on Women and Girls, per 20 ILCS 5130/20:

- 16 public members appointed by the General Assembly
  - 4 appointed by the House Speaker
  - 4 appointed by the House Minority Leader
  - 4 appointed by the Senate President
  - 4 appointed by the Senate Minority Leader
- 1 representative of the Governor's Office appointed by the Governor
- 4 public members appointed by the Governor
- 11 ex-officio members or their designees
  - Lieutenant Governor
  - Chief of the Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Services, Department of Human Services
  - Director, Executive Director, or Superintendent of the following State Agencies:
    - Department on Aging
    - Department of Human Rights

- Department of Children and Family Services
- Department of Healthcare and Family Services
- Department of Public Health
- Department of Labor
- State Board of Education
- Board of Higher Education
- Community College Board

### **Membership**

Below are the public members appointed to the Council at the time of the creation of this report. Ex-officio members or their designees and the representative of the Governor's Office are not listed below.

Aileen Kim  
Amanda Basso  
Amina Jaffer  
Brandy Donaldson  
Candace Coleman  
Vidhya Prakash  
Drella Savage  
Ines Kutlesa  
Jennifer Lee  
Kaethe Morris Hoffer  
Maaria Mozaffar  
Monique Garcia  
Nikita Richards  
Pamela Althoff  
Rhonda Thomas  
Rochelle Crump  
Sylvia Perez Matos-Collins  
Theresa Forthofer  
Veronica Espina  
Wendy Pollack

### **Creating and Building the Illinois Council on Women and Girls**

The bill creating the Illinois Council on Women and Girls, Public Act 100-913, was championed by Senator Jacqueline Collins and Representative Anna Moeller. The Act was signed into law in 2018, with appointments to the Council announced on April 9, 2019. On this date, Governor Pritzker joined Lieutenant Governor Stratton and First Lady M.K. Pritzker to celebrate the formation of the Illinois Council on Women and Girls. At this

inauguration event, Lieutenant Governor Stratton was appointed chair of the Council by Governor Pritzker.

The Council has since held three quarterly meetings, the first being on June 12, 2019, at which the Council formed four committees: Gender-Based Violence, Health & Healthcare, Leadership & Inclusion, and Academic & Economic Opportunity. The additional quarterly meetings on September 18 and December 18 were used to discuss the development of this annual report, propose recommendations for including within this report, and finalize the report ahead of the 2020 legislative session. This work was supplemented by committee meetings, which occurred between council meetings, and in which council members proposed, reviewed, and discussed recommendations.



**Representative Anna Moeller (left) and Senator Jacqueline Collins (right) with Lt. Governor Stratton at a Springfield event for the Illinois Council on Women and Girls**

## **Status Reports and Recommendations**

### **Introduction**

The following status reports describe the challenges and opportunities women and girls face in the State of Illinois. The status reports are a brief description of the landscape relevant to the different committees, and do not reflect the entire policy landscape that women, girls, and others face in Illinois. Status reports are made for each issue-area committee, with committee recommendations appended to the end of the status reports.

### **Gender-Based Violence Status Report**

Sexual and gender-based violence “refers to any act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and is based on gender norms and unequal power relationships.”<sup>3</sup> This includes acts of domestic violence, defined as an offense between people who have a domestic relationship through blood, marriage, dating, caretaking, common dwelling, etc.<sup>4</sup>

- Considering domestic battery alone, there were over 68,000 occurrences reported in Illinois in 2018<sup>5</sup>

From 2011-2015, 37,000+ Illinoisans received services from rape crisis centers operated by the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA). Of those survivors who accessed these services:<sup>6</sup>

- 89.4% were female
- 86% knew their perpetrators from previous interactions
- 93.2% were younger than 50 years of age

Gender-based violence disproportionately affects Black and Latinx Illinoisans<sup>7</sup>. Of those who accessed ICASA services:<sup>8</sup>

- 25% identified as Latinx (Latinx people represented 16.8% of Illinois’ population in 2017)
- 25.4% identified as Black (Black people represented 14.3% of Illinois’ population in 2017)
- 74.5% identified as White (White people represented 71.9% of Illinois’ population in 2017)<sup>9</sup>

Gender-based violence against transgender women of color is particularly prevalent.<sup>10</sup>

- “At least [81% of] victims of anti-transgender fatal violence since 2013 were transgender women of color”
- Black transgender women represent “71% of all known victims [of anti-transgender fatal violence] since 2013”
- “At least 22 transgender and gender non-conforming people have been killed in the U.S. since the beginning of 2019,” 91% of who were Black women

### **Gender-Based Violence Recommendations**

- 1) Improve efficiency for publicly funded crime laboratories to reduce rape kit backlogs.

- 2) Increase visibility and support networks by implementing public awareness campaigns about gender-based violence and available resources in rural communities with messaging targeting veterans, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ communities.
- 3) Provide localized accounts of the prevalence of gender-based violence across the State by collaborating with local governments.
- 4) Reduce the overall trauma associated with gender-based violence by ensuring that elementary and secondary school students who are parents, expectant parents, or survivors of gender-based violence can safely stay in school, succeed academically, and complete their education. This will lead to academic success by providing access to trauma-informed services recommended by experts in gender-based violence for students of all ages.



**Lt. Governor Stratton Speaking at the December 18, 2019  
Convening of the Illinois Council on Women and Girls**

### **Academic & Economic Opportunity Status Report**

Great strides have been made in girls' equity and academic outcomes, yet these outcomes have not translated into professional equity or representation in certain academic fields.

- As of 2012, females represented 57% of those enrolled in postsecondary education in the United States, and they made up 46% of the 1.1 million students enrolled in pre-kindergarten education<sup>11</sup>
- Women represent only 30% of all Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) degree holders, and only 24% of STEM jobs despite making up nearly half of all undergraduate-degree holders<sup>12</sup>
- The perception of discrimination in an industry has been found to deter women from pursuing careers in said field<sup>13</sup>

Women's academic outcomes are skewed along racial lines, with Black girls facing greater punitive disciplinary measures in school and lower college completion than their White counterparts.

- Black girls are suspended at six times the rate of White girls nationally<sup>14</sup>
- Among women aged 25-35, less than 25% of Black women possess 4-year degrees, compared to more than 40% among White women in the same age group<sup>15</sup>

In the workforce, women experience a pay gap so severe that they typically need an extra degree to make as much as men, despite making up most of the college educated workforce.<sup>16</sup> This gap is further exacerbated along racial lines.

- In 2017, Illinoisan women who worked full time earned 78 cents on the dollar compared to similarly employed men. They are not expected to see equal pay until 2065<sup>17</sup>
- Black and Latinx women in Illinois respectively earned 62.6 and 49.2 cents on the dollar compared to White men in the same period<sup>18</sup>

Illinois has limited access to affordable childcare.

- The annual cost of childcare for an infant and for-year old at a childcare center in Illinois is 33% of the median income for families with children<sup>19</sup>

Under current policies, women continue to be underrepresented in important sectors of the workforce, and underpaid relative to their male counterparts. Greater focus needs to be put on the barriers to equity, especially for underrepresented women.

### **Academic & Economic Opportunity Recommendations**

- 1) Empower girls and young women by creating opportunities for them to engage with the executive branch on issues important to their communities.
- 2) Integrate efforts to better serve students and parents on and around Illinois military bases by increasing collaboration among existing institutions, like the Illinois Educational Opportunities for Military Children Council and the Military Economic Development Committee.
- 3) Allow more women to enter and remain in the workforce by increasing access to affordable childcare, especially for working women and women in school.
- 4) Encourage girls and women to pursue higher education to increase their wage potential by increasing opportunities for trauma-informed services for students who experience gender-based violence.



**The Illinois Council on Women and Girls, convened on June 12, 2019**

### **Leadership & Inclusion Status Report**

From 2015-2016, women made up over 57% of those conferred bachelor's degrees and more than 59% of those conferred master's degrees by postsecondary institutions across the U.S.<sup>20</sup> However, they remain substantially underrepresented in leadership roles across professional industries.<sup>21</sup>

- They earned 48.5% of all law degrees from 2015-2016,<sup>22</sup> but represented only 22.7% of partners and 19% of equity partners during the same time<sup>23</sup>
- They earned 47.5% of all medical degrees from 2015-2016,<sup>24</sup> yet represented only 19% of permanent medical school deans as of January 2019<sup>25</sup>

The leadership representation gap is stark in corporate and political fields, and is further skewed when analyzed along racial lines. Women comprise(d):

- Approximately 40% of all management roles in 2018,<sup>26</sup> but:
  - Only 6.6% of Fortune 500 CEO roles in 2019<sup>27</sup>
  - Women of color represent 0.2% of Fortune 500 CEOs as of January 2019<sup>28</sup>
- ~24% of federal congressional seats in 2019,<sup>29</sup> but:
  - Only ~9% of federal congressional seats were held by women of color in 2019
  - Only ~4% of federal congressional seats were held by Black women in 2019

- Only ~1.5% of federal congressional seats (or 8 out of 535 seats) were held by Asian American/Pacific Islander women in 2019
- Native American women held only 2 of the 535 federal congressional seats (or less than 0.4%) in 2019
- Approximately 28% of seats in state legislatures in 2019,<sup>30</sup> 18% of gubernatorial seats within the 50 states as of 2019,<sup>31</sup> and 23% of mayoral seats in the largest 100 U.S. cities as of August 2018<sup>32</sup>
- 35.6% of seats in the Illinois state legislature in 2019, which, while above average, is still far from gender parity<sup>33</sup>

Despite greater female representation in Illinois politics compared to the national average, Chicago and Illinois lag behind the national average in the growth of women-owned businesses. Since pre-recession 2007:

- The total number of women-owned firms in the Chicago metropolitan area have increased 47% and revenues have increased 18%; woman-owned firms grew 35% and revenues increased 19% at the state level; however, women-owned businesses grew nearly 58% and revenue increased 46% as national averages<sup>34</sup>

Given the significant gap between women's general representation in professional disciplines and their leadership within these fields, a focus on both early stage leadership and career opportunities as well as improvements to fair market access for minority-owned businesses is necessary to not only improve women's representation within industry, but also their representation among industry leaders.

### **Leadership & Inclusion Recommendations**

- 1) Encourage the involvement of women and girls in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) career pipelines by examining existing and new opportunities for entry. Specifically, opportunities to enter STEAM career pipelines should be focused on access for current and former youth in foster care, youth with disabilities, youth from LGBTQ+ communities, immigrants and refugees, and racially diverse groups.
- 2) Provide school groups the opportunity to understand how engagement in our systems of government can expand opportunities for underrepresented people by utilizing local youth advisory boards led by elected leaders.
- 3) Improve professional opportunities by encouraging the expansion of internships targeting young women through partnerships between schools and high-growth industries.

### **Health & Healthcare Status Report**

Illinois is a national leader in reproductive rights protections.

- In June 2019, Governor Pritzker signed the Reproductive Health Act into law, establishing a woman's "fundamental right" to reproductive healthcare and abortion services.<sup>35</sup>

However,

- Affordable access to family planning services remains a challenge in Illinois
  - 772,510 cisgender women between the ages of 13 and 44 required publicly funded contraceptive services in 2014, but only 154,660 women (20%) were serviced by publicly supported family planning centers<sup>36</sup>
- Illinois' maternal and infant mortality rates are above the national average, and especially severe for non-Latinx Black women.
  - Illinois' infant mortality rate, at 6.1 deaths per 1,000 live births, was higher than the national rate of 5.8 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2017<sup>37</sup>
  - Illinois' pregnancy-related mortality ratio was 23 pregnancy-related deaths per 100,000 births in 2015,<sup>38</sup> higher than the national rate of 17.2 pregnancy-related deaths per 100,000 births for 2011-2015<sup>39</sup>
  - In Illinois, non-Latinx Black women were six times as likely to die of a pregnancy-related condition as non-Latinx White women in 2015<sup>40</sup>

The gap in maternal mortality among marginalized racial groups and the lack of access to affordable family planning services warrants additional study, stakeholder outreach, and a renewed commitment to upholding the recommendations of the Illinois Maternal Morbidity and Mortality Report.

### **Health & Healthcare Recommendations**

- 1) Expand access to postpartum healthcare coverage to help reduce disparities.
- 2) Increase access to substance use and mental health services for pregnant and postpartum women to reduce rates of maternal morbidity.
- 3) Highlight healthcare disparities by improving data collection.



**The Illinois Council on Women and Girls, Gathered at Healthy Hood Chicago**

### **Next Steps**

Moving forward, the Council will convene working groups that include council members and other relevant stakeholders to advance the recommendations herein. These efforts will not only ensure the Council has the necessary supports for the successful implementation of its recommendations, but will also provide the foundation for future women-and-girl-conscious policy and advocacy in the State.

### **Acknowledgements**

The Illinois Council on Women and Girls is made up of public guests and appointed and ex-officio members who contributed their time, talent, and ideas to the work of the Council and this report.

The Council is extremely grateful to the governmental bodies, non-profits organizations, and companies that gave their time to discuss the Illinois Council on Women and Girls and this report. The Council would especially like to thank the law offices of Baker McKenzie, Guardian Angel Community Services, and Healthy Hood Chicago for allowing the Council to use their venues for quarterly meetings held throughout 2019.

The Office of Lieutenant Governor Stratton served in an administrative capacity to support council convenings and the drafting of this report.

### **References**

*Editors note: discrepancies in how studies obtained data limits continuity related to differences in sex and gender as it relates to statistics referenced in this report. This report uses terms such as women, cis/transgender women, and female according to terms used from source material for the purposes of supporting data.*

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