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## The Lobbyist No. 25 (May 1999)

Maine Women's Lobby Staff

*Maine Women's Lobby*

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a publication of the  
**MAINE  
WOMEN'S  
LOBBY**  
and the Women's  
Development Institute

## WDI-SPONSORED LEADERSHIP & EDUCATIONAL EVENT BRINGS 70 GIRLS TO THE STATE HOUSE

*By Elizabeth Sheehan,  
MW L Board Member and Adult Mentor  
for the Girls' Day at the State House*

On March 23, 1999, the newspaper headlines should have read "70 girls from Fort Kent To South Berwick took charge of Maine State Legislature for the Day." It was an event worth reporting, a day definitely worth funding and as a board member of the Maine Women's Lobby an activity without question worth doing! We began the day in the Moose room with staggered groups of girls setting off on a State House scavenger hunt. They combed the halls in search of, among other things, the name of the only women whose portrait hangs in the hall of flags and the L.D. number and title of one public law recently signed by the governor. For some, it was their first time in the building, and they were all cracker jack fast. All morning the State House was filled with ten groups of girls, ages 11-15, marching fearlessly into their three legislative activities. They served as pages in the House chamber while representatives debated the statewide smoking ban in restaurants.

*Article continued on Page 2*

### *Inside this issue*

- Girls Day at the State House
- Legislative Update
- Choice Update
- Board Openings Announced
- Grants Received
- Facts About Working Families

#### **MWL Seeking New Board Members**

The Maine Women's Lobby will have seven openings on our Board of Directors this fall. New members will be elected in September and serve 3-year terms. Board members are expected to serve on at least one committee: Legislative, Fundraising or Media and Marketing. Board members also attend monthly meetings in Augusta as well as MWL functions throughout the year. We're particularly looking for new recruits from Western Maine and the Bangor area. Lobby members willing to make a commitment to the continued success and vitality of the Lobby are encouraged to apply -- just send us a brief letter of intent and your resume, or call the office at 622-0851 with any questions.

# WDI-SPONSORED EVENT (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

During another workshop, the girls discussed their position on L.D. 1516: An Act to Require High School Students to Earn a Certificate of Mastery Before Graduating. They defined their position, developed a message and created buttons to convey their opinions! Finally, they practiced the art of making policy as legislators, proponents and opponents in a mock public hearing on the bill. They were shy, bold, articulate and courageous! The busy day continued after lunch as girls paired off to shadow a representative or senator—to experience one hour in the life of a legislator.

For the final session, Speaker of the House Steve Rowe invited the girls into the House Chamber. The girls filled the new leather seats on both sides of the aisle and for 45 minutes listened, raised their hands, and once recognized stood and posed their questions squarely into the microphone. "If women and men are equal, why are women paid less?" "Who decides where the Representatives sit?" Speaker Rowe was a most gracious host. His encouragement to the girls was heartfelt. He ended with a story that I have retold already several times about his daughter, who called late one evening while he was still at the State House. She was asking for help with a speech for her civics class. "I'm running for Congress," she said. Well, that's wonderful, he replied, and then asked, "What about President? Who's running for President?" She quickly explained that four boys she knew were very qualified and they were running for president. His heart sank as he realized she had assumed she was not qualified. You are just as talented and qualified as the boys, he encouraged, and proceeded to help her with the speech.

A few days later, the phone rang again. It was her. "Guess what Dad," she said, "I ran for President and I won!" Our hope is that the encouraging words of Speaker Rowe and the firsthand experi-



Left: Speaker of the House Steven Rowe addresses 70 girls in the House Chamber as part of Girls' Day at the State House. Photo by John Monroe

Right: Participants take part in a mock hearing in an effort to understand how the Legislative process works. Photo by John Monroe



ence of how the legislative process works will inspire the girls to set their sights high and accomplish great things. As one of the girls wrote on her evaluation at the end of the day, "I learned about being a page, how it is to participate in a mock public hearing, and how the Representatives and Senators do their work." Another wrote, "I learned that no matter what your goal is, you can do it!"

Thanks to all of the legislators and adult mentors who helped make the Day such a success! A special thanks to the sponsors of the 1999 Girls' Day, without whose support the event would not have been possible: Maritimes & Northeast Pipeline, Duke Energy North America, The Chinnet Company, Plum Creek Timber Company, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Maine, and Bath Iron Works.

## BALANCING FAMILY & WORK: FACTS ABOUT WORKING FAMILIES

Women juggle complex roles to perform well on the job, earn enough to support their family, run a household and care for children and elder relatives. As another Mother's Day comes and goes, isn't it time Maine had a policy agenda that helps ease the highwire routine many caregivers and mothers undertake daily? Below are some of the many challenges mothers face as they struggle to balance work and family – and what can be done to support mothers, not penalize them.

The majority of women hold down two full time jobs. They are breadwinners and they are caregivers.

- Nationwide, 63% of mothers with children under 6 work outside the home;
- 78% of mothers with school-aged children work outside the home;
- Maine ranks eighth in the nation of percentage of mothers with young children working outside the home;

Many parents can't find before and after school care their children need. For families with small children, child care is the greatest expense after housing and food.

- Nearly five million school-aged children across the nation spend time as latch key kids without adult supervision.
- Maine ranks in the bottom third of states with public schools with extended-day programs.

*Continued on Back Page*

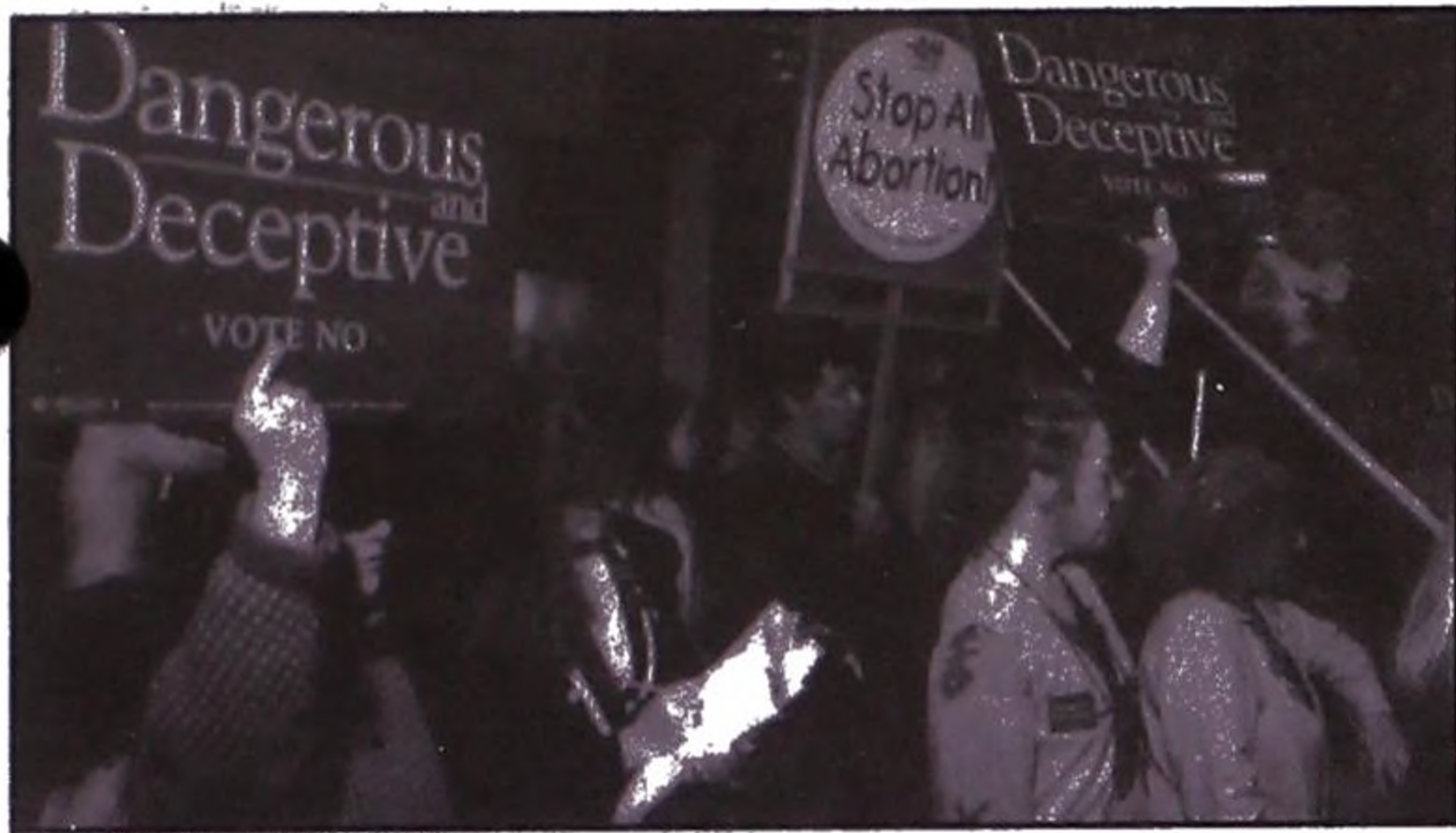


Photo by John Monroe

## PRO-CHOICE SUPPORTERS MAKE SHOW OF STRENGTH AT PUBLIC HEARING

Maine Women's Lobby friends and members joined other supporters of the Campaign to Protect Women's Health to make an impressive show of force at a public hearing in April on a series of bills limiting access to comprehensive reproductive health care. More than 300 people attended the hearing, which was held at the Augusta Civic Center.

Advocates for the rights and health of Maine women testified in opposition to these bills before the Judiciary Committee, citing a range of legal ethical, practical, and medical problems with them. The bills heard at the hearing included a 24-hour waiting period, parental notification, state-scripted counseling, and a ban on so-called "partial birth" abortions. Each of these bills has been defeated before, some as many as 8 times.

Prominent leaders representing the Maine Women's Lobby, Lawyers for Choice, the Maine Interfaith Council for Reproductive Choice, the Family Planning Association, Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, and the Campaign to Protect Women's Health political action committee expressed outrage and concern over this "package of dangerous, unnecessary and unconstitutional bills designed to impede access to medical options for women faced with difficult choices."

Attorney and Maine Women's Lobby Board Member Barbara Alexander called attention to the unconstitutionality of the proposed abortion procedure ban, noting that "in 19 out of 20 federal court proceedings they have been enjoined and deemed to be so broadly written that they could outlaw the safest and most common abortion procedures used in every stage of pregnancy." She also voiced concern about subjecting physicians to criminal fines and possible incarceration, and questioned the need to overturn current Maine law that provides protections for the life and health of the woman.

Other opponents of the bills included Dr. Dora Mills, who presented testimony for Governor King's Administration, Marvin Ellison, co-chair of the Maine Interfaith Council for Reproductive Choices (MICRC), and Karen Stram, former chair of Maine's Republican party and a member of the Campaign to Protect Women's Health. Brenda Sexton, M.D., State Director of the American Medical Women's Association, summed up the concerns of many within the medical community, testifying that the abortion ban bill "is dangerous because the intrusion into decision making by physicians about specific medical procedures is unprecedented and could have devastating consequences on the quality of medical care that women in Maine receive."

A big thanks to all of the Maine Women's Lobby friends and members who turned out for the hearing. It was great to see so many of you in person! We can win, but only with your support. The public hearing was just the first step in the legislative process for these bills, particularly the proposed abortion ban, which will most likely be decided by voters this fall. We need you to stay active and involved between now and November. For more information on what you can do to help, see sidebar. To find out more about the issue, call the Lobby offices at 622-0851 or the Campaign to Protect Women's Health at 842-6461.

# SIDEBAR

We need *your* help to protect the future of Choice in Maine. Here's what you can do:

- ☐ Volunteer to host a house meeting. Get friends and neighbors together to discuss the proposed abortion ban and build skills to respond to it — we'll help you organize it and provide materials!
  - ☐ Write a letter to the editor of your local paper opposing the ban;
  - ☐ Call or write a letter to your legislators urging them to oppose the ban and thanking them for their support if they're pro-choice;
  - ☐ Send a donation to support the political action committee that has been formed to fight the abortion ban referendum. Checks should be made out to "The Campaign to Protect Women's Health" and sent to P.O. Box 10899, Portland, ME 04104.
  - ☐ Volunteer to do phone banking, data entry or other office work.
  - ☐ Other. We need your energy, skills and enthusiasm to help defeat the ban. Tell us how *you* would like to help:
- 

If you can help with any of the above, please call us at 622-0851, email us at [MwomenL@aol.com](mailto:MwomenL@aol.com), or return this form to our address below. Thanks for your support!

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to:  
Maine Women's Lobby, PO Box 15, Hallowell, ME 04347

As you know, legislators are elected for 2-year terms and in their first year may introduce any piece of legislation that they feel is necessary. This year almost 3,000 bills were introduced. The legislature is approximately 2/3 of the way through the session. Most Public Hearings have taken place, committees have and are now sending bills to the House and Senate to be debated and either passed or killed. Many of the bills that we care about have come out of committee as Divided Report and therefore we have serious work ahead of us educating the entire legislature. Also, the Committees have "carried over" to next January a number of bills that they did not have time to fully address this session.

**FYI**—ONTP stands for Ought Not To Pass and OTP is Ought to Pass

## **REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS/HEALTH CARE—**

**Our goal this session is to defeat all anti-choice bills, including the Abortion Ban**

D. 571: An Act to Prohibit Partial-birth Abortion. Sponsor: Rep. Mack (R-Standish). Judiciary Committee. This bill was identical to the initiated bill and the Committee voted unanimously ONTP

D. 1593: An Act to Ban Partial Birth Abortions. Initiated Bill —This is the bill that the Christian Civic League and others gathered signatures to have introduced. This bill received a divided report from the Judiciary Committee with a Majority ONTP. The House and Senate will debate the bill. There is no way to kill this bill. If the legislature does not pass it, the bill appears on the November 1999 ballot. This is the position we are supporting.

D. 137: An Act to Require Parental Notification for Minors Seeking Abortions. Sponsor: Rep. Ahearne (D-Madawaska). Judiciary Committee This bill requires parental notification before an abortion is performed or induced on a pregnant minor. Maine currently has an "adult involvement" law that has served as model legislation across the country. The Committee also issued a divided report on this bill with a Majority ONTP

D. 917: An Act to Ban Partial Birth Abortion Except to Protect the Life Health of the Mother. Sponsor: Rep. Cameron (R-Rumford). Judiciary Committee. Unanimous ONTP

D. 2123: An Act to Require a 24-hour Waiting Period before an Abortion May Be Performed Sponsor : Rep Ahearne (D-Madawaska) Judiciary Committee. The Committee issued a divided report with the Majority voting ONTP

D. 1168: An Act to Provide Equity in Prescription Insurance for Contraceptive Coverage. Sponsor: Sen. Pingree (D-Knox). Committee on Banking and Insurance. Requires insurance companies that cover prescriptions to also cover contraception. According to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, 97% of indemnity plans cover prescription drugs, 49% of indemnity plans do not routinely cover any contraception method at all, only 33% cover the Pill, and only 15 % cover the 5 most common FDA approved methods of contraception. Divided Report 12-1 OTP (Rep. Glynn voted ONTP).

D. 1168: An Act to Provide Equity in Prescription Insurance for Contraceptive Coverage. Sponsor: Rep. Townsend (D-Portland). Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee. This bill provides an increase in General Fund appropriations during the 2000-2001 biennium to purchase family planning and pregnancy prevention services. May be *Carried over*.

D. 1477: An Act to Promote Healthy Maine Families. Sponsor: Sen. Pingree (D-Knox). Health and Human Services Committee. This proposal would provide Medicaid coverage to the parents of the children covered by last year's Medicaid expansion. It would make Medicaid available to nearly 10,500 parents in families with income under 150% of the federal poverty level—\$20,820 for a family of 3. The Committee voted unanimously to provide this coverage, however divided over how to fund it. Three members voted to fund it with the tobacco settlement money, and 10 voted to fund it any way possible.

D. 2215 An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission on Eating Disorders Sponsor: Rep. Kane for the Health and Human Services Committee. This bill would establish an Office of Eating Disorders in the Dept. of Human Services, as well as an Advisory Board and requires a report back to the Health and Human Services Committee by February 1, 2000. The bill has a fiscal note and will compete with other bills on the Appropriations table.

D. 1669 An Act to Ensure Continuous Improvement in Pollution Prevention. Sponsor: Sen. Treat (D-Kennebec) Committee on Natural Resources. This bill would build on the success of the previous Toxic Use Reduction program help reduce the health threat to women in the workplace and communities. Young children, women of childbearing age, and pregnant women are the most vulnerable to toxic chemicals in fish and shellfish. The Natural Resources Committee is developing their own version of this bill which has received tentative unanimous support.

## **ECONOMIC SECURITY**

Minimum wage L.D.s 357, 427, 1262, and 1891 are all bills to raise the minimum wage. Most will likely be carried over to next January. They range from raise to \$6.15 per hour by January 1, 2001 to a bill that would send the issue out to referendum. For more information on these bills, call the Lobby offices at 622-0851.

An Act to Increase Access to Basic Needs for Low-income Maine Children and Families. Sen. Rand (D-Portland) Health and Human Services Committee. The five percent increase in this bill has been moved into the Part II budget. This bill gives the Commissioner the authority to raise benefits administratively if there is a projected budget surplus in the TANF or ASPIRE account. Maine has the lowest TANF benefit in New England.

D. 174: An Act to Improve Access to Education for Parents as Scholars Program Participants. Sponsor: Rep. Quint (D-Portland) Health and Human Services Committee. The Parents as Scholars Program is being cited as a national model for allowing parents who are eligible for TANF to pursue post secondary education. Currently, the participation requirement doubles after the first two years. This legislation reduces this additional participation requirement to make student's program more manageable.

# LEGISLATIVE ALERT: LEGISLATION 1999 (CONT.)

L.D. 103: An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission to Study Poverty among Working Parents with regard to State Earned Income Credit. Sponsor: Rep. Povich (D-Ellsworth). Taxation Committee. The Committee voted unanimous OTP for 5% non refundable tax-credit. Since this bill has a fiscal note attached it is sitting on the Appropriations Table with other bills that need to be funded.

S.P. 612 Joint Order-Relative to Establishing the Task Force on Transportation, Access, Air Pollution Reduction and Family Self-sufficiency. Sponsor Sen. Treat. Health and Human Services Committee. This initiative would establish a vehicle exchange program that replaces older polluting cars with newer, less polluting ones for low-income people. It would complement the state's TANF and welfare to work program by providing reliable transportation for people who meet the income guidelines. It would also help reduce ozone and air pollution. Majority OTP.

L.D. 1512 An Act to Amend Maine's Family and Medical Leave Law Sponsor: Sen. Cathcart (D-Penobscot) This bill expands the family and medical leave law to allow parents to take care of a sick child, attend a child's medical or dental appointment and to attend parent teacher conferences.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

L.D. 944: An Act to Provide Employment Leave for Victims of Crime. Sponsor: Rep. Saxl (D-Portland). Labor Committee. It requires employees to permit victims of sexual assault, domestic violence and stalking to take unpaid leave to attend court, receive medical treatment and to take other remedial and selfprotective measures.

L.D. 2021: An Act to Establish the Commission to Propose an Alternative Process for the Payment of Forensic Examinations for Sexual Assault Victims. Sponsor: Rep. Norbert Criminal Justice Committee. This bill creates a Commission to examine how to best meet the needs of sexual assault survivors concerning payment for forensic exams. Unanimous OTP

L.D. 231: An Act to Initiate Covenant Marriage in the State. Sponsor: Rep. Snowe-Mello (R-Poland). Judiciary Committee. This would have created two types of marriage contracts in Maine. The new "Covenant" Marriage contract would require couples to go through extensive counseling or live apart for a prolonged period of time before being permitted to divorce. A victim of domestic abuse would be required to PROVE that she was a victim before being able to obtain a speeder divorce. Judiciary Committee Voted 11-2 ONTP. House voted to accept the Majority ONTP 93-52 with 5 Absent.

## ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

L.D. 703: An Act to Create the Maine Civil Rights Act of 1999. Sponsor: Rep Mack(R-Standish). Judiciary Committee. The title of this bill is deceptive. This bill is actually an anti-affirmative action bill and would have eliminated affirmative action programs for women and minorities. Affirmative action helps counter both intentional and unintentional biases by taking reasonable and positive steps to open up opportunities for QUALIFIED women and minorities to compete based on merit. The Committee Voted 11-2 ONTP and it was killed by the House and Senate.

## CHILD CARE

L.D. 1603: An Act to Create Quality Child Care Investment Incentives Sponsor: Sen. Longley (D-Liberty). This bill would provide refundable tax credits for parents, plus credits for employers, for corporations (who do charitable giving) and for any other investors in quality childcare. It received a unanimous OTP from the Taxation Committee.

L.D. 1066: An Act to Establish the Early Care and Education Revolving Loan Program. Sponsor: Sen. Longley (D-Liberty). Business and Economic Development. This bill would create a \$300,000 revolving loan fund at the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) for child care businesses intending to add quality to their child care business. It would also create a \$300,000 tuition assistance program at FAME to give scholarships to encourage and help child care workers take courses in child development. It received a unanimous OTP.

L.D. 1446: An Act to Create a Finance Commission on Quality Child Care. Sponsor: Sen. Longley (D-Liberty). Business and Economic Development Committee. The Finance Commission would be comprised of legislators and professionals in areas of economic development, finance, child care, education and parenting. It will explore the variety of policies advancing quality child care and early education and make specific recommendations by Dec. 1, 1999. Status: Unanimous OTP

L.D. 1447: An Act to Promote Maine's Family-Friendly Business and Investment Strategies. Sponsor: Senator Longley (D-Liberty) Business and Economic Development Committee. This bill would allow for day care to be an "allowable project cost" for a TIF. If towns wish to use the money this way, it not only allows money for facilities, but also, potentially money to underwrite the expense of running a child care, including salaries and continuing education. Potentially, it could be one of the biggest funding mechanisms for quality care passed this session, because there is no fiscal note. Status: 11-2 OTP

A broad-based Coalition has been formed to support a package of child-centered legislation. The Coalition includes child care providers, the Maine Children's Alliance, and other advocates and has adopted the theme "Start ME Right" to talk about the wide-ranging proposals that have been introduced to create public policies that support healthy, safe, thriving children.

# Join the MAINE WOMEN'S LOBBY



Founded in 1978, the Maine Women's Lobby is a statewide, nonpartisan, nonprofit membership organization dedicated to optimizing the lives of Maine women and girls through public policy development and legislative action. The Women's Development Institute, MWL's sister organization, was founded in 1990 as a non-lobbying organization focusing on research, education and public outreach on issues affecting Maine women and girls.

## All Maine Women's Lobby members receive:

- Our quarterly newsletter
- Legislative alerts
- Support to become effective advocates for women and girls
- Invitations to participate in our annual events

## Membership

\_\_\_ \$60 Household

\_\_\_ \$35 Individual

\_\_\_ \$10 Student \_\_\_\_\_ Name of School

\_\_\_ Other\* \_\_\_\_\_

*\*MWL is committed to representing women of all economic means. Any contribution you are able to make entitles you to membership.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

House District #: \_\_\_\_\_ Senate District #: \_\_\_\_\_

## Payment type

☐ My check, payable to MWL, is enclosed.

Visa or Mastercard #: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (as it appears on card): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please do not give my name to other groups.

## Balancing Family & Work (continued)

Closing the gap in the availability of care will ease the balance between family and work. Below are some of the other ways we can help caregivers be successful at all their responsibilities:

- Expand health care coverage to Maine's uninsured parents. A sudden or chronic health problem that prevents an uninsured parent from working can financially devastate a family.
- Provide flexible work policies for mothers and caregivers.
- Recognize eldercare as a critical need, and start a national discussion on we provide informal care for our oldest citizens.

Let's make recognizing the important work that mothers do a more than once-a-year event. To find out what's being done in Maine to help women balance family and work, see MWL legislative update.

Many of the statistics above were provided by the Center for Policy Alternatives, Washington, D.C.

## WDI RECEIVES GENEROUS GRANTS

The Women's Development Institute was recently awarded an \$8,000 grant from the Haymarket People's Fund for the second year of the Women's Leadership Project, a joint program of WDI, the Maine Equal Justice Partners, and the Maine Association of Interdependent Neighborhoods. WDI also recently received a \$5,000 grant from the Maine Women's Fund for general operating expenses. A big thanks to these organizations for their investment in our work! These funds will go a long way towards helping us improve the lives of Maine women and girls through public policy development and systemic change.

## COMING SOON TO A MAILBOX NEAR YOU: GREAT ESCAPES RAFFLE TICKETS

In the next few weeks MWL members will be receiving raffle tickets for our annual Great Escape Drawing. This year prizes include a \$500 savings bond, a two-night stay at the Radisson Hotel in Portland for two people, a stay at the Bethel Inn, and a whitewater rafting trip on the Kennebec with Moxie Outdoor Adventures. The drawing will take place on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Members help us raise a significant portion of the income it takes to continue to operate over the summer by selling tickets to friends, family, and co-workers. We are investing in your future – the raffle is an easy way for you to invest in the future of the Maine Women's Lobby!

## THINGS TO KNOW AND DO:

**May 14 – 17: Grassroots Organizers Workshop**, Camp Winona, Bridgeton. FMI, call Nancy Galland at 567-4075.

**May 18-31, University of Maine at Presque Isle: Maine Gay-Lesbian-Bi-Trans Symposium XXV**, hosted by the women and men of Northern Lambda Nord. A screening of Bob Poirier's independent film "Tangible Fathers," and keynotes by Diane Elze, founder of OUTRIGHT, and Robin Metcalfe, community historian, visual arts curator, and activist from Halifax, Nova Scotia. FMI, call (207) 298-2088 or (800) 468-2088.

**May 23, Bowdoin College, Brunswick: Maine Coalition for Equal Rights workshop** to formulate the philosophy, direction and structure of a campaign for equal rights for the LGBT community. FMI, call Barb Wood in Portland, 871-1555 or Ron Hersom in Bangor, 941-0969.

**May 26, 11:30 – 1:30 PM, State House: Women's Action for New Directions "Women Take Action!"** (WTA) luncheon. Discuss how federal spending decisions affect the lives of women and children, and ways we can work together to change federal funding priorities. FMI, call Deborah Walden at WAND at (603) 743-0880.

**May 26-27, Augusta Civic Center: Blaine House Conference & Exposition for Small Business**, hosted by Governor King. FMI, call the Maine Development Foundation at 622-6345 or [www.mdf.org](http://www.mdf.org)

**June 2, 2PM - 6PM, Augusta Civic Center. Eradicating Breast Cancer**, featuring Dr. Susan Love, surgeon and internationally recognized expert on breast cancer. FMI, call the Maine Breast Cancer Coalition at 1-800-928-2644.

**June 5: New Hope for Women's Fourth Annual Move-a-thon:** For more information about the events, call Karen Grove, New Hope's Fund Developer, at 594-2128. New Hope for Women provides services to victims of domestic violence and their families in Knox, Lincoln and Waldo counties.

**July 10, Boston: Women on the Edge of Time: Facing the New Millenium.** open to all New England women, seminars on women's health and economic equity, and networking with women from across the nation. FMI, call the Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women at (860) 240-8300.

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