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## The Lobbyist No. 27 (Fall 1999)

Maine Women's Lobby Staff

*Maine Women's Lobby*

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MWL Program Assistant Liz Keith with interns Krista Haapala and Martha Trombley at the NO on 1 Coalition's election night victory celebration in Portland



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

NO on 1 Campaign Manager Jeanette Fruen with phone bank captain and former MWL intern Shay Bellas

## We Won!

By Martha Trombley

By 11:30 p.m. on November 2<sup>nd</sup> it was apparent that all of our efforts had paid off. The headlines Wednesday morning said it all... "Abortion Ban Rejected." It is absolutely invigorating to think that Mainers got out and voted NO, protecting one of our most fundamental liberties – the right to choose. It's times like this when we should all be proud to live in a pro-choice state; a state that protects the right of women to choose even at times when huge amounts of money are spent to ban that right.

For the last year the Lobby has devoted a significant amount of time and effort to defeating the abortion ban. It was in the fall of 1998 that the Lobby Board voted to allow the staff to play a major role in the campaign. Laura Fortman, the Executive Director of the Lobby

was a member of the steering committee, responsible for making crucial decisions regarding the campaign strategy and finance. Liz Keith, Program Assistant at the Lobby, was the Volunteer Coordinator for the Augusta area. Liz gathered volunteers together and organized phone banking. In addition, she helped support the efforts of Lobby members and their friends by providing materials so that they could hold events for choice in order to discuss the referendum.

The November 2<sup>nd</sup> vote sends a clear and pro-choice message to not only Maine legislators but also national legislators. The people of Maine have spoken out and are not in favor of supporting a vague, misleading and unnecessary ban. The No on 1 coalition was a statewide effort and was successful in delivering the message to Maine voters that the real issue was a



potential ban on all abortions. An amazing number of pro-choice Mainers came out in opposition of the ban, including about 30 organization from all across Maine.

The Lobby would like to thank the scores of members who volunteered their time to the coalition by phone banking, writing letters to the editor, helping out at the campaign headquarters in Portland, hosting a house meeting and of course by making generous donations. Thank you for caring enough about women's reproductive rights to stand with us on this very crucial issue. We would never have been able to defeat this ban without all of your help.



The following are several key issues that the Maine Women's Lobby will be working on in the upcoming session.

## Economic Security

**L.R. 3816: An Act to Increase Access to High Quality Jobs through the Workforce Investment Act**

Sponsor: Senator Douglass (D-Androscoggin)

This legislation proposes to establish priorities, and set minimum standards and service requirements for the state's implementation of the Federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA, PL 105-220) in the year 2000. Specifically, this legislation will establish state-wide wage and benefit standards for training programs and targets a substantial portion of the fund for actual training.

**L.R. 3560: An Act to Remove Barriers to Adequate Transportation for Low Income Working Parents.**

Sponsor: Rep. McGlocklin (D-Emden).

This bill would allow low-income people with vehicles who qualify for subsidized child care to also qualify for food stamp eligibility. Currently, ownership of a vehicle is determined an asset for purposes of food stamp eligibility, while it is not for subsidized child care.

## *minimum wage*

For the past 2 years, legislation to increase the minimum wage has passed the House and Senate only to be vetoed by the Governor. A recent study by the Institute for Women's Policy Research and the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, D.C. indicated that increasing the minimum wage to \$6.15/hr. would benefit approximately 36,000 working women in Maine. Once again, there are several "carry over" bills that promote increasing the minimum wage.

**L.D. 357: An Act Raising the Minimum Wage.**

Sponsor: Rep. Hatch (D-Skowhegan). Labor Committee

This bill would send increasing the minimum wage out to be voted on by the people in a referendum.

**L.D. 1262: An Act to Increase the Minimum Wage in Maine.**

Sponsor: Sen. Pingree (D-Knox). Labor Committee

This bill would increase the minimum wage by \$1.00 in .50 increments over a 2 year period.

## *corporate accountability*

Five bills have been introduced that deal with "corporate accountability." The following bill is one that we are particularly interested in because of its impact on working conditions for women.

**L.R. 3625: An Act to Improve Standards for Public Assistance to Maine Employers**

Sponsor: Senator Pingree (D-Knox)

The purpose of this bill is to establish additional standards for the delivery of Maine's limited tax resources for economic development purposes. Employers receiving more than \$10,000 per year in economic development incentives will be required to pay a living wage, provide health insurance and pension benefits, and comply with federal, state and local laws.

## Health Care

**L.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. Even though LD 1477 garnered considerable support from legislators, it still faces significant competition for funding from either the general fund, or tobacco settlement funds in this next legislative session. Legislators will need to see strong public support for this bill if it is to be funded and provide the critically needed health care to Maine families.

## Civil Rights

**L.D. 2239: An Act to Ensure Civil Rights and Prevent Discrimination.** Sponsor: Senator Abromson (R-Cumberland)

In the spring of 1997, after a 20-year battle, the Maine legislature granted protection to all Maine citizens in employment, housing, credit, public accommodation regardless of their sexual orientation. Unfortunately, that law was overturned on Feb. 10, 1998 by a "people's veto". The legislature will take up the issue once again in Jan. 2000. There is a referendum provision attached to the bill and if the legislature endorses the bill, it will go to the people for final approval in Nov. 2000.

**LR 3466 An Act Concerning Offensive Names.**

Sponsor: Rep. Soctomah (Passamaquoddy)

This bill would amend Maine's current law prohibiting the use of offensive names by adding the word "squaw" to the definition of offensive place names and prohibit its use to designate "any natural geographic feature or any street, alley, or other road...or any political subdivision of the State."



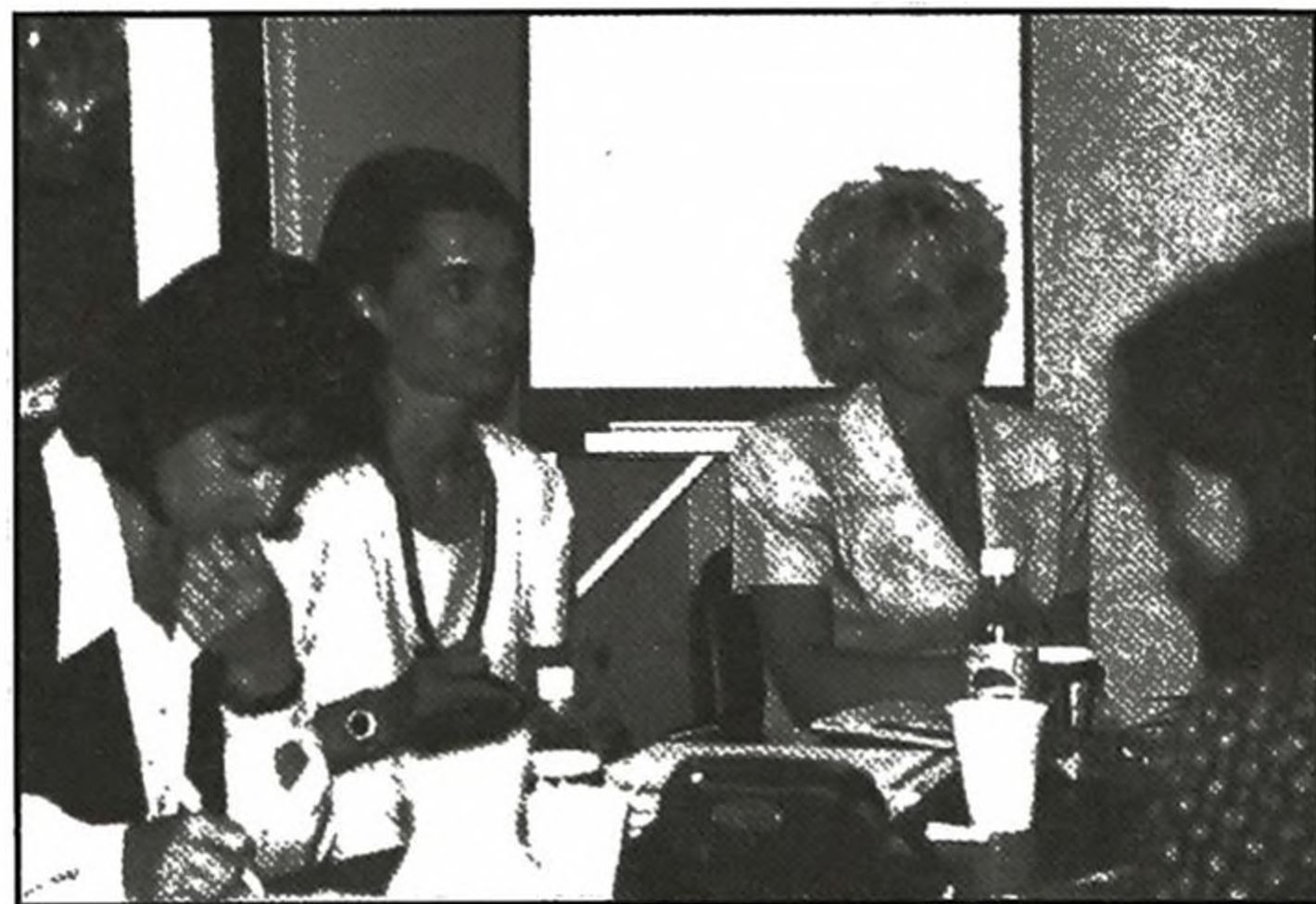
# Alert

Beginning in January of 2000, the Maine Department of Labor will hold a series of public hearings on their proposed rules for implementing An Act to Protect Victims of Crime in the Workplace. Dozens of Lobby members made crucial phone calls to their legislators in the final days of the last legislative session to galvanize support for this groundbreaking bill, which helps provide economic security for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.

The DOL's hearings will shape how this law is implemented by employers across the state. We need supporters of this law to turn out in force to ensure it's enacted in a way that provides meaningful support to women trying to recover from violent crime. Hearings will be held on January 10<sup>th</sup> at Southern Maine Technical College in South Portland; January 11<sup>th</sup> at Jeff's Catering & Convention Center in Brewer; and January 13<sup>th</sup> at the Caribou Inn and Convention Center in Caribou. All three hearings will begin at 7 p.m. Please call us now at 622-0851 if you can attend!

Maybe a friend emailed you a petition or you received an alert from a national women's organization explaining the plight of these women. When it overthrew the existing government in 1996, the Taliban declared an end to women's basic human rights. Afghan women can no longer hold jobs, leave their homes without being accompanied by a male relative, or attend school. They cannot appear in public without being completely veiled. Many have been denied medical attention.

The Taliban's reign of terror against Afghan women is unconscionable and groups in the U.S. and across the globe are organizing to fight back. A leader in this effort is the Feminist Majority Foundation. In addition to extensive background on the Taliban's war on women, the Feminist Majority Foundation's website contains numerous ways for people to take action. Visit [www.feminist.org/action](http://www.feminist.org/action) or call the Feminist Majority at (703) 522-2214 to send an unequivocal message to our elected leaders and U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Peter Burleigh that the U.S. must take immediate action to restore women's human rights in Afghanistan.



*Slovakian women discuss the differences between policy-making in Maine and Slovakia.*

## *Women's Lobby Meets with Delegation of Slovakian Women*

Six Slovakian women visited Maine this summer for a training program organized by Maine Centers for Women, Work and Community. The women were all members of the Rural Women's Leadership Network in Slovakia and came to Maine to learn about women's participation in community and economic development and politics in Maine. As part of their tour they met with MWL Executive Director and Lobbyist Laura Fortman to discuss the ways ordinary citizens can have an impact on the policy-making process. The women were impressed by how accessible legislators are in Maine and the numerous ways people can express their opinions on an issue. The workshop closed with a "message development" exercise led by Chris Rusnov of the Maine Equal Justice Partners and Liz Keith, in which the participants explored simple, inexpensive ways to promote the Rural Women's Leadership Forum to the public. Their messages were then made into buttons, a very American technique of making one's voice heard. The participants said buttons are slowly catching on in Slovakia and they were looking forward to wearing the ones they had created to encourage this trend.

## *Save the Date!*

January 29, 2000

Changing Maine: A Conference for Social Change

8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Augusta. For people who are interested in working on the root cause of social problems in Maine. Workshops will be offered on multi-issue organizing, common vision, developing personal and community power, and more. For more information and registration, call Maine Initiatives at 622-6294 or visit [www.maineinitiatives.org](http://www.maineinitiatives.org).

April 27, 2000

Take Our Daughters To Work Day.  
Look for details in our next newsletter!



# WOMEN'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP FORUM INSPIRES POTENTIAL CANDIDATES

On November 13, the Women's Development Institute hosted the Women's Political Leadership Forum, a day-long conference designed to encourage women to run for office and sharpen some of the skills it takes to get there. Fifty women attended the event, which featured a keynote presentation by Laura Liswood, co-founder of the Council of Women World Leaders at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government and producer of a documentary film on women heads of state. Liswood's discussion of the importance of women taking on leadership roles set a fitting tone for the day. She highlighted the progress women heads of state have made around the globe, how they achieved their success, and the style of leadership that has made them so effective. Participants found it galvanizing to hear how crucial it is for women to take on the challenge of making our voices heard in our own country.

Other speakers included Lewiston Mayor Kaileigh Tara, State Auditor Gail Chase, and Assistant Senate Majority Leader Anne Rand. Each had a unique and inspiring story of overcoming self-doubt about their qualifications and deciding to run for office. Alison Smith of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections ran an afternoon workshop on taking advantage of Maine's new and groundbreaking public funding system for candidates. Sue Jones McPhee helped participants learn to keep "the butterflies flying in formation" when public speaking. Laura Fortman conducted a workshop on being an effective advocate. Sarah Walton, State President of the League of Women Voters of Maine, moderated a lively roundtable discussion of running and winning a campaign with Rep. Judy Powers, Appropriations Committee, Executive Director of the Maine Democratic Party Barbara Rath, and Karen Stram, former Chair of the Maine Republican Party. While the presenters spoke from a variety of perspectives, one message was shared by all: that personal experience, motivation, and a sincere desire to serve one's community can be one's biggest strengths in running for office.

We hope this event encouraged women to take on leadership roles in public policy – whether it be in elected office, on a state commission, or as an active community member. Thanks to the organizations who co-sponsored the event: the League of Women Voters of Maine, Women Unlimited, the Women's Labor Institute, the Institute for Civic Leadership, Maine Centers for Women, Work and Community, Maine N.O.W. and the Maine Women's Fund. A special thanks to AT&T, Energy East and Central Maine Power for their generous funding of the event. And good luck to our women candidates for office!

## Open Seats

Running for office is always easier if there is an "open seat". Due to term limits, there will be a number of open seats in the 2000 election cycle so please consider running! The following legislators are term limited:

**Sen. Chellie Pingree** Dist. 12—Camden, Criehaven, Cushing, Friendship, Hope, Isle Au Haut, Matinicus Island, No. Haven, Owls Head, Rockland, Rockport, So. Thomaston, St. George, Thomaston, Union, Vinalhaven, Warren and Washington.

**Senator Mark Lawrence** Dist. 35—Cape Neddick, Eliot, Kittery, Ogunquit, So. Berwick, York and part of Berwick.

**Senator Judy Paradis** Dist. 1—northern Aroostook County

**Senator Richard Carey** Dist. 14—Albion, Belgrade, Belgrade Lakes, Benton, Mount Vernon, Oakland, Sidney, Waterville and part of Winslow

**Senator Leo Kieffer** Dist. 2—Caribou, Easton, Fort Fairfield, Limestone and Presque Isle

**Senator Phil Harriman** Dist. 23—Brunswick, Freeport and Yarmouth

**Senator Jane Amero** Dist. 30—Cape Elizabeth, So. Portland and part of Scarborough

**Rep. Steve Rowe** Dist. 35—part of Portland

**Rep. Eliza Townsend** Dist. 36—part of Portland

**Rep. Mike Brennan** Dist. 37—part of Portland

**Rep. Pam Hatch** Dist. 98—part of Skowhegan

**Rep. Jane Saxl** Dist. 120—part of Bangor

**Rep. Cassie Stevens** Dist. 123—part of Orono

**Rep. Doug Ahearne** Dist. 150—Frenchville, Madawaska, Perham, St. Agatha, Westmanland and unorganized territories

**Rep. Ken Lemont** Dist. 1—most of Kittery

**Rep. Harry True** Dist. 45—Brownfield, Cornish, Fryburg, Hiram, Porter and Stow

**Rep. Robert Cameron** Dist. 70—Milton, Rumford, Woodstock

**Rep. David Lindahl** Dist. 105—Belfast, Isleboro and Northport

**Rep. Ruel Cross** Dist. 112—Atkinson, Bradford, Dover-Foxcroft, Parkman and Sangerville

**Rep. Debra Plowman** Dist. 114—Dixmont, Hampden, Newburgh

**Rep. Richard Campbell** Dist. 116—Eddington, Bradley, Holden, Veazie and part of Brewer

**Rep. Henry Joy** Dist. 141—Amity, Bancroft, Crystal, Dyer Brook, Haynesville, Hersey, Island Falls, Linneus, Oakfield, Orient, Mattawamkeag, Patten, Sherman and Weston and Glenwood, Wytotitlock, Macwahoc and Reed Plantations and Benedicta and Kingman Townships



# MWL SPANS THE STATE WITH THREE BREAKFAST FORUMS

Fall not only signifies the start of school, dropping temperatures and fewer tourists- but it is also the season for the Maine Women's Lobby Breakfasts of Champions. For the first time, the Lobby hosted three Breakfasts, one each in Portland, Presque Isle and Bangor. All three forums focused on two very important issues to the Lobby: violence against women and the abortion ban referendum.

September 30th marked the Portland event, which was attended by nearly 150 people. The enthusiasm and energy of both the audience, the speakers, and the program made one forget the early hour. To start, the Lobby acknowledged the legislators who had supported our efforts to pass an Act to Protect Victims of Crime in the Workplace. House Majority Leader Mike Saxl, who sponsored the bill, shared his thoughts on the passage of this groundbreaking legislation at the Portland Breakfast. During the panel discussion of the upcoming abortion ban, the Portland audience heard from Reverend Jill Saxby of the First Parish Church in Portland, Jeanette Fruen, the "No on 1" Coalition Campaign Manager and our very own Barbara Alexander, an attorney and founding/current board member of the Maine Women's Lobby. The interchange and exchange between the panelists and audience provided a thoughtful and in depth discussion of this misleading ballot initiative.

Lobby Executive Director Laura Fortman and NO on 1 Field Director Karin Clough headed north for the Presque Isle Breakfast on October 6. They were joined by the Reverend Bob Grove-Markwood, a United Church of Christ Minister, who spoke about the referendum and women's right to reproductive choice from a religious and ethical perspective. The event, which was held at the University of Maine at Presque Isle, helped introduce area women to the work of the Maine Women's Lobby. Special thanks to Jenn Fuller, a Presque Isle Women's Leadership Project participant, for helping us to organize the forum!

The Bangor Breakfast was held on October 21. Once again, we were greeted by a warm and enthusiastic crowd of Bangor-area Lobby supporters and community members. Senator Mary Cathcart, Senate sponsor of An Act to Protect Victims of Crime in the Workplace, explained how this bill will help provide economic security to survivors of domestic violence, stalking and sexual assault. Rabbi Larry Milder of Congregation Beth El in Bangor, Jeanette Fruen, and new Lobby Board Member Suzanne Brunner, a professor at the University of Maine School of Nursing, discussed the abortion ban referendum from a variety of perspectives and answered questions from the audience. Over 100 people attended the event, many of whom were joining us for the second year in a row.

The three Breakfasts raised a combined total of over \$8,500 to support Lobby activities. A special thanks goes out to Table 12 in Portland with their \$50 challenges! For all of you who attended or supported this year's Breakfasts, many thanks, your donations ensure that we can continue advocating for Maine women and girls. See you next year!



*MWL Executive Director Laura Fortman and Board Chair Barbara Ginley (center).*

## *Women's Lobby Participates in Assessment of Beijing Conference*

MWL Board Chair Barbara Ginley and Executive Director Laura Fortman traveled to Manchester, New Hampshire on November 6<sup>th</sup> for a conference assessing the progress made since the United Nations 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Women. Assessments are taking place around the globe in preparation for the upcoming UN Women's Conference 2000. Women from Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont gathered to evaluate how far we've come in implementing the "Platform for Action" signed by 189 countries in Beijing in 1995. The agenda calls for economic opportunity and security for women, for quality education and healthcare, for full participation of women politically and economically, for equality, and for the promotion of human rights of women. Barbara and Laura gave presentations assessing the progress Maine is making in the areas of poverty and health care. The Maine contingent also included representatives from Maine N.O.W., Maine Centers for Women, Work and Community, Assistant Senate Majority Leader Anne Rand, and Lisa Pohlmann of the Maine Center for Economic Policy, who facilitated the workshop on poverty. For more information on the U.S.'s commitment to the "Platform for Action," email [spiritofbeijing@netscape.net](mailto:spiritofbeijing@netscape.net).



## NEW BOARD MEMBERS ELECTED

The Maine Women's Lobby welcomed seven new Board members this fall. Kelly Arata, Jocelyn Barret (a former MWL intern), Suzanne Brunner, Elaine Cinciva, Amanda Dority, Kate Dufour and Melissa MacCrae are off to a running start. Throughout the year they'll be contributing to the Lobby's legislative, fundraising, and marketing efforts. We're delighted to have them aboard and look forward to a fun and productive year ahead!

## WELCOME 1999-2000 INTERNS

My name is Krista Haapala. I received my Bachelor's degree in Political Science and Public Service from Albion College. I am currently attending Boston College Graduate School of Social Work, majoring in Community Organizing and Policy. Before graduate school, I worked in fundraising and volunteered as a sexual assault survivor advocate. While interning, I am working on the Women's Leadership Project and the Pay Equity Campaign. After I receive my Master's of Social Work in May 2000, I plan to apply my community organizing and policy skills and focus my career on helping improve the status of women in society.

My name is Martha Trombley. I'm a senior at the University of Southern Maine majoring in Political Science while minoring in Women's Studies. I expect to graduate in August of 2000. As an intern for the Maine Women's Lobby my primary focus this fall was working on the the campaign to defeat Question 1 on the November ballot. I coordinated the Augusta phone bank on Wednesday nights and recruited phone bank volunteers. I believe that choice is one of the most important pillars of freedom that we as women possess. After graduation I hope to continue the efforts in improving the lives of women.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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*Optimizing the lives of Maine women and girls through  
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