

# California Women's Policy Summit

## Jan 16, 2014 Sacramento

The theme was Advancing Women's Health, Wealth and Power.

The Summit also had a mentoring component with 70 young women exploring careers in government and public policy.

The General Session was about advancing Women's Health: "**Implementing Health Care Reform and Mobilizing Women's Networks**", was moderated by **Diana S. Dooley**, Secretary of California Health and Human Services.

Sandra Cook from "Sisters with Options" and "Black Women for Wellness" talked about how Black women have more disease, disability and death. We need to outreach to Black Beauty and Nail Salons which are cultural centers/support groups for black women and promote the Affordable Care Act.

Maria Lemus from "Vision y Compromiso" stressed the need to support healthcare workers and using "promotores" to encourage Latinas to sign up for ACA.

The Morning Workshop we attended was about advancing Women's Wealth: "**Women, Poverty & Economic Empowerment**" was moderated by **State Senator Holly J. Mitchell**.

California has the highest poverty rate in the US: 22% One quarter of all women and children in California are poor, 2 million in deep poverty. There have been recent massive cuts in services for the poor.

**Jessica Bartholow**, from "Western Center on Law and Poverty," stressed the need to repeal the Maximum Family Grant (MFG) rule which denies basic assistance to any child conceived while a member of the household is receiving CalWORKS cash aid (a form of forced birth control); to increase CalWORKS grant levels and postpone the welfare-to-work 24 month cut-off if CalWORKS clients are not receiving early services; and to repeal the lifetime ban for someone who has past felony drug convictions to receive CalWORKS and CalFresh and childcare to enable them to go to work.

**Katie Joaquin**, from "California Domestic Worker's Coalition" stated that there are over 250,000 domestic workers in California with median wages of \$10 an hour.

The lack of their worker rights are imbedded in history; slavery and the devaluing of women's labor in the home and due to domestic work not being considered a legitimate job and the fact that they work in isolation. "We need to change the narrative and the policies." She stressed the need to enforce implementation of the California Domestic Worker Bill of Rights AB241 and recognize the dignity and value of the domestic workforce that cares for our homes and loved ones.

**Nikole Collins-Puri**, from "Women's Foundation of California" wants the Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign a Women and Workforce Investment bill that would recruit, train, place and retain low-income women in high-wage, high-demand fields that

are nontraditional for their gender, allowing women to move into living wage employment that result in self-sufficiency; increase the number of women in high-skill training opportunities including nontraditional pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship positions; and minimize the barriers of inadequate child care, unreliable transportation and inflexible hours. California needs to create a State Plan that is required if HR 951: Women and Workforce Investment for Nontraditional Jobs (introduced March 2013 in Congress) is passed.

\*We could work with our local Workforce Investment Act Program.

**Melissa Jacobs** spoke about the California Community College CalWORKS program. The ultimate objective of the community college CalWORKS program is to help students achieve educational goals that lead to long term self-sufficient employment. 81% of CalWORKS students are female. Despite funding declines, community college CalWORKS programs are very successful. From 2007-2013:

AA degrees increased 260% (3,101 to 11,172)

AS degrees increased 347% (1,320 to 5,904)

Certificates (60+ units) increased 103% (92 to 187)

Certificates (30-<60) increased 342% (1,193 to 5,274)

Certificates (18-<30) increased 302% (834 to 3,351)

Policy objective #1: Have permanent staff, intensive case management and follow-up services to help CalWORKS students deal with new legislation (SB 1041 and SB 1456) which shortens the time period to 24 months that supportive services can be provided and that mandates specific student behaviors.

Policy Objective #2: The Legislature should allocate adequate funding to the California Community College for job development services that specifically address the CalWORKS student.

At the Summit Luncheon **Sandra Fluke** talked about “**Reproductive Rights, Freedom & Justice: A Vision for California’s Future**.”

California is #1 in Reproductive Rights according to NARAL - 45 years of safe abortion. California has a responsibility to other states to push the envelope. “If we stop moving forward we die.” We need to bring more young people into the movement. The future is “Reproductive Justice” not pro-abortion. We need to include new issues such as toxins that affect reproduction, testicular cancer, injuries that affect veterans’ ability to reproduce, sterilization of men and women in prison, timing of having children (when on welfare), LGBT issues as well as abortion rights.

We need to ensure that everyone has access to health care; reach people who have not heard the message before; go back to talking like we did before Roe vs Wade - how reproductive rights affect our daily lives.

The Afternoon Workshop we attended was “**Title IX Compliance: Opening Doors for Girls and Young Women**” which focuses on three areas- equal access to athletic opportunities, policies against sexual harassment, and prevention of discrimination against pregnant teens. The moderator, **Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson**, said the biggest threat to parity is football. She suggested that we recruit school board members, PTA members, soccer parents, student leaders, high school journalists and athletes,

and AAUW members to help with our Title IX project.

The California Title IX Coalition, made up of AAUW of California, California Center for Research on Women & Families (sponsor of this summit), California Women's Law Center, Equal Right Advocates and Legal Society - Employment Law Center. They produced A Title IX Compliance Check List composed of 4 modules.

Module 1: Title IX Coordinator

Module 2: Athletics

Module 3: Sexual Harassment

Module 4: Pregnant Teens

The Coalition invites us( they would like at least 20 communities involved) to use this checklist to assess our local high school's compliance with Title IX and identify action steps to bring the school into compliance if they are not. They also invite us to present our findings at a legislative hearing in Sacramento in May. Information on technical assistance, the upcoming hearing and other updates can be found on the Title IX page at [www.ccrwf.org](http://www.ccrwf.org).

Common excuses for inequity include:

“they don't have any money”

“girls aren't interested”

“we will have to do it later”

The Closing Session was about advancing Women's Power, “**Building Political Power: What are we doing...and what else needs to happen to achieve equity?**” and was moderated by **Kate Karpilow**, Director of CCRWF, California Center for Research on Women & Families, who hosted this summit.

Recently, there has been a decrease in women in the California State Senate and Assembly. We need to identify empty seats and fill them with women.

**Betsy Cotton**, Director of “close the gap California” spoke about the need to do more to get women elected. Women hold only 26% of offices throughout the state. Two thirds of Board of Supervisors have 1 woman or no women. Women don't want to run because of family obligations and lack of privacy. Recruitment is critical. We need to look at the most winnable offices. Political Parties need to state goals for percent of women in office (50%). Women need support - childcare, proxy voting, and adequate compensation. Institutional barriers, such as “winner takes all” are harder on women. Rank voting and campaign finance reform, getting money out of politics, will help women candidates.

**Assemblywoman Cristina Garcia** said we need a woman speaker of the house, half of the committee chairs in both houses to be women and same amount of money for women candidates. Speak up, donate to women running, run for office or find someone to run for office. Do it for yourself and the next generation.

**Kimberly Ellis**, Director of “Emerge California” said her organization has recruited and

trained 300 women, half have run for office, 70% have won.

To get more women elected we need to:

- 1- Educate women on the importance of women in leadership.
- 2- Recruit, they have to be asked 7 times; ask smart and capable women early & often.
- 3- Train women; they lack confidence. They need skills and tools to be good candidates.
- 4- Mentor and support one another.
- 5- Demand quotas. Shift responsibility for this to local, state & national parties and labor organizations.

**Rachel Michelin**, Director of “California Lead” said 48% of Governor Brown’s appointees are women. The biggest barrier to women being elected is their fear of taking a risk and that is one of the most empowering experiences. To change public policy we need more women sitting in the seat of City Councils, Board of Supervisors, School Boards, State offices etc. Running influences other women to run.