

**Indiana Commission for Women  
Hoosier INsight  
Lafayette Listening Session Report  
Tippecanoe County Library  
Wednesday, April 6, 2011  
5:00-7:00 pm**

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## Overview

The Indiana Commission for Women (ICW) held a public listening session on Wednesday, April 6, 2011, at the Tippecanoe County Public Library. The time of the session was 5:00pm – 7:00pm in order to better accommodate individuals work schedules. The session started a few minutes late to allow for people who were coming from work and other prior commitments.

As a group, the participants identified twenty-one (21) issues facing women in Indiana. By consensus, the group voted and determined that the top three issues facing women that should be addressed first were: Comprehensive sex education (medically accurate, access to family planning services); early education of children (equality, self-esteem, citizenship, civics); health care quality and affordability. An in-depth discussion of these top three priorities was completed in small groups. Each group was asked to answer specific questions regarding their issue and to start developing a plan of action for addressing the issue in Indiana. The results of the discussions are detailed later in this report.

## Participants

The Lafayette listening session was sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Greater Lafayette (LWV). They provided support in helping to publicize the session and get information out into the community as well as providing refreshments for the participants. The session was promoted in a variety of ways. The LWV sent it out to their members and also contacted many groups and individuals in the community. A press release for the session was also sent out and resulted in being picked up by multiple local news outlets. It was sent out on the ICW listserv; previous Torchbearer's and ICW Advisory Board Members were also invited.

ICW utilized EventBrite to register participants. Only three (3) participants took advantage of the online service; however a total of fifteen (15) women and one (1) man attended the listening session.

## Issues Identified

The participants of the listening session identified issues they believed were barriers to women's full participation in society. These issues were then voted on to determine the top three issues facing women in Indiana. Each participant was given three (3) votes that she could use to help prioritize the issues. The numbers next to the issue represent the number of votes that issue received from the participants.

- Single Mothers (1)
- Quality and Affordability in Health Care (6)***
- Sexual Assault / Gender Based Violence (4)
- Child Care Quality and Affordability
- Employment (1)
- Transportation
- Affordable Housing
- Lack of female role models
- Environmental Degradation
- Dating Violence
- Retraining (skills-Based) for women

Support for women in incarceration and transportation (Causal Issues and incarceration prevention)  
Support for aging women e.g. health, socialization, etc. (2)  
More good activities for teens (2)  
**Early education of children on equality, self-esteem, citizenship, civics (8)**  
Promoting more women in leadership roles (5)  
Pay equity (3)  
Promoting non-traditional gender roles (1)  
Educator training on issues e.g. sexual assault, body image (Long-term programs)  
**Comprehensive sex education, e.g. medically accurate, access to family planning services (11)**  
Objectification of women by media and society

## Top Issues & Discussion

The top three issues that were identified by the participants were:

1. Comprehensive sex education (medically accurate, access to family planning services)
2. Early education of children (equality, self-esteem, citizenship, civics)
3. Health care quality and affordability.

Once these issues were identified, the participants broke up into small groups of 5-6 people to further discuss the components of each issue. Participants were asked to consider a series of questions regarding these issues in order to start developing a plan of action for how we should work to overcome these challenges in Indiana. The questions were divided into five categories and are listed below.

Frame It

1. What are the critical components of this issue?
2. What should be addressed first?

What's in Place Now?

3. Are there any existing programs in place to help solve this issue?
4. Are there any agencies or organizations who currently deal with this issue?

Who should be involved?

5. Who are the people/organizations that should be involved in this issue?
6. Who should be responsible for strategizing ideas and implementing solutions for this issue?

Community/State Actions

7. How can the community work on solving this issue?
8. Is this an issue that should be addressed statewide? How?

Next Steps

9. What resources are needed to work on this issue?
10. What are the next steps that should be taken to address this issue?

## **Issue #1: Quality and Affordability in Health Care**

Access to quality and affordable health care was one of the top priorities for the participants of this listening session. There were six (6) votes for this issue. The discussion of this topic is below.

### *Frame It*

The participants identified the following main components of this issue:

- Cost of health care is prohibitive
- inadequate incentive for doctors to treat Medicare patients and no-insurance patients

### *What's in place now?*

The participants identified the following programs/organizations that currently exist that provide some form of health care services.

- Riggs Community Health Center (needs more resources)
- Urgent Care facilities (Expensive)
- Meijer Pharmacy (provides free antibiotics)
- Women's cancer program
- Planned Parenthood
- Monon Health Clinic (treats low income women)
- Health fairs
- Emergency Rooms

### *Who should be involved?*

The participants identified the following organizations/groups that should be involved to help to improve access to quality and affordable health care.

- Health Care providers
- Insurance providers
- Ivy tech and Purdue nursing/health programs
- legislators
- small businesses / big businesses
- Women's groups

### *Community / State Action*

The participants determined that the following actions should be taken in order to help address the issues surrounding quality and affordability in health care.

- Awareness campaign
- Overhaul insurance companies
- more funding for community healthcare facilities
- put more money into prevention

### *Next steps*

The participants determined that the next steps that need to be taken in order to begin making progress on this issue are:

- Need to quantify the problem
- What are the healthcare needs
- Prioritize the needs

## **Issue #2: Early education of children on equality, self-esteem, citizenship, civics**

After much discussion, the group decided to look at the more general issue of early education for children as a top priority during this listening session. There were eight (8) votes for this issue. The discussion of this topic is below.

### *Frame it:*

The participants identified the following main components of this issue:

- Awareness of the importance of children's development by parents, leaders, and the community
- Funding for mandatory kindergarten
- Promotion of preschool opportunities for disadvantaged populations

### *What's in place now?*

The participants identified the following programs/organizations currently exist that are addressing this issue.

- Private pre-schools & daycare (quality varies)
- Head Start
- Kindergarten – not mandatory in Indiana
- Public “pilot” program in Chicago
- Summer & After-school (not geared to pre-school)
- Scouting

### *Who should be involved?*

The participants identified the following organizations/groups that should be involved to help to improve this issue are:

- Parents
- Educators
- Legislators
- Researchers
- Community organizations
- Community leaders
- Media
- Children as examples of success
- Youth mentors

### *Community / State Action*

The participants determined that the following actions should be taken in order to help address the components of this issue:

- Compile information on preschool needs and current services in our communities
- Push for mandatory full-day kindergarten as soon as possible

### *Next steps*

The participants determined that the next steps that need to be taken in order to begin making progress on this issue are:

- Educate community
- Create a broad-based coalition to advocate and educate for mandatory full-day kindergarten and pre-school opportunities

### **Issue #3: Comprehensive sex education**

Comprehensive sex education was one of the top priorities for the participants of this listening session. Participants cast eleven (11) votes for this issue, making it the top-prioritized issue. The discussion of this topic is below.

#### *Frame it:*

The participants identified the following main components of this issue:

- Social issues and pressures on sex
- Feeling comfortable with sex
- Misleading and false information
- Who will teach it? Where/when? (there needs to be consistency in the curriculum)
- What exactly will be taught?

#### *What's in place now?*

The participants identified the following programs/organizations currently exist that are addressing this issue.

- Individual school boards (abstinence-only programs not enough)
- Planned parenthood
- YMCA Youth with Vision (YWV)
- Purdue Health services
- Ivy Tech
- Community Centers
- OWL – Our Whole Lives
- Religious Institutions

#### *Who should be involved?*

The participants identified the following organizations/groups that should be involved to help to improve this issue are:

- State legislators
- Health department
- Superintendents
- Parents
- Health providers (doctors)
- Educators
- Correctional facilities/jails
- Governor and mayors
- Libraries
- Youth service providers
- Coaches

#### *Community / State Action*

The participants determined that the following actions should be taken in order to help address the components of this issue:

- Comprehensive statewide sex education bill
- Medically accurate, age appropriate and complete bill
- Publicize cost to society (media campaign)
- Role parents play (educate parents)

### *Next steps*

The participants determined that the next steps that need to be taken in order to begin making progress on this issue are:

- Cradle to grave sex education
- Pushing local legislators to action
- Donate to existing programs that provide comprehensive study
- Educate yourself!

## **Conclusions**

There are many barriers that create challenges to women in Indiana. The Hoosier INsight: Women's Issues Listening Sessions project is the first step in starting conversations to help to address the challenges that women still face in our state. The results of all of the sessions held around the state will contribute to a report that will help to identify the top 3-5 issues that present major barriers to women in Indiana. These discussions are the beginning of a process to help move women in Indiana forward by engaging Indiana residents in public deliberation.

The Hoosier INsight project will help ICW continue to voice the needs, concerns, challenges, and viewpoints of women in Indiana. By better understanding the specific needs and desires of women, the commission will be able to better identify the ways in which they can help to remove barriers that hinder their participation in all areas of society.

A statewide event will occur once the results of the listening sessions, as well as the supplemental online women's issue survey, are compiled. ICW will facilitate a statewide debriefing effort that will guide key community partners and stakeholder to synthesize the results into a shared statewide action plan. It will be ICW's opportunity to inform the community on the primary issues affecting women regionally and statewide that were identified during the listening sessions; to expand coalitions and build capacity to work across networks and to improve outreach efforts on multiple issues.

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### **\* Summary Report Disclaimer**

This summary report was prepared as an account of key issues, challenges, and suggested solutions described during a public discussion sponsored by the Indiana Commission for Women (ICW) and supported by local partnering organizations in conjunction with its *Hoosier INsight: Women's Issues Listening Sessions* initiative. The compilation of this summary report is provided as a courtesy and should not be considered in any way as an endorsement or promotion by the Indiana Commission for Women, by the State of Indiana or by ICW's partners and supporters. Opinions expressed are strictly those of session participants and not necessarily those of the Indiana Commission for Women, of the State of Indiana or of its partners and supporters. Recommendations from this meeting, together with inputs received from other sources, may inform the creation of a final report and potential plan of action to address the issues and challenges discussed as well as potential future ICW initiatives, programs and services. Furthermore, ICW may use information obtained from this meeting and from the results of this initiative to offer suggestions to other agencies, organizations or entities better suited to address particular issues and/or challenges uncovered during this initiative in order to facilitate maximum cooperation and collaboration between ICW and other entities. The Indiana Commission for Women and those associated with the agency do not assume any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of any comment made or of any third party's use or results of such use of any information contained in this summary report.