

Governor's Council on Women and Girls Full Council Meeting
MEETING MINUTES

In-Person: LOB, 300 Capitol Ave, Room 1E, Hartford, CT

Tuesday, October 15, 2024 @ 3:00pm

Available for viewing [HERE](#)

I. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Commissioner Hill-Lilly expressed pride in the committee, and the Lt. Governor welcomed CT State Treasurer, Erick Russell.

II. Presentation on Baby Bonds (CT Treasurer Erick Russell)

CT Baby Bonds is a first-in-the-nation initiative that invests money for every baby born in Connecticut whose birth is covered by HUSKY, the state's Medicaid program. For every child whose birth is covered there is automatically \$3,200 invested in a trust on that child's behalf and it grows over the life of that child. Between the ages of 18 and 30, the young person can make a claim for the funds to be used for buying a home in Connecticut, paying for post-secondary education/training, saving for retirement, or starting/investing in a Connecticut business. Parents of eligible children do not need to enroll or apply.

CT has a large wealth gap, and this program attempts to assist the estimated 15,000-16,000 children born into poverty each year in Connecticut. CT Baby Bonds will give young people a reason to stay in the state, promote homeownership and new business creation, and provide wealth-building resources to residents from every city and town. The program is currently alerting eligible families, working on community engagement, and integrating wraparound services. The program is also building an ambassador program with trusted community partners to share information about CT Baby Bonds with eligible families.

The Lt. Governor recommended connecting with local community health centers and guidance counselors at local high schools.

III. Presentation on FGM/C (Caitlin LeMay, U.S. End FGM/C Network)

Caitlin LeMay presented on female genital mutilation (FGM). The current estimates of women and girls that have had FGM/C performed on them or were at risk of FGM/C in the US are around 513,000 or more as of 2012, but this number is outdated and most likely underreported. CT is surrounded by higher risk areas including NY and NJ. By county, New Haven has the

highest percentage of women/girls living with FGM/C while Hartford has the highest percentage of women/girls at risk.

Connecticut is one of the remaining 9 states that do not have laws prohibiting FGM/C. There is a federal law that prohibits FGM/C. However, the federal cases around FGM/C have not been successful. State laws fill gaps left by federal laws. Comprehensive state legislation provides education and outreach on FGM/C to local communities and professionals likely to encounter cases and gives survivors the opportunity to stand up for themselves in a court of law. In Connecticut, 39 organizations have joined the Connecticut Coalition to End FGM/C. The Coalition has been working with survivors, organizations, advocates, and lawmakers to pass a holistic, comprehensive bill that prohibits FGM/C in Connecticut.

IV. Report from Council Leadership

- a. The Lt. Governor announced that the 2024 CoWaG Annual Report was being drafted
- b. A proposal was submitted to the Health and Safety subcommittee to make diapers more accessible to low to moderate income families

V. Announcements

- a. Upcoming Full Council Meetings
 - i. Tuesday, January 28th, 2025, at 3:00pm in the LOB 1E and Virtually
- b. Upcoming Subcommittee Meetings, all on TEAMS
 - i. Economic Opportunity and Workforce Equity Meeting: November 5th, 2024 at 3:00pm
 - ii. Education and STEAM Meeting: November 13th, 2024, at 3:00pm
 - iii. Health and Safety Meeting: December 2nd, 2024, at 10:00am
 - iv. Leadership Meeting: December 18th, 2024, at 3:00pm

VI. Adjournment

The Lt. Governor closed the meeting and thanked the presenters.