Governor's Council on Women and Girls - Full Council Meeting
MEETING MINUTES
In-Person: LOB, 300 Capitol Ave, Room 1E, Hartford, CT
Tuesday January 27th, 2026 at 3:00pm
Video Available Here via YouTube:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SrO-zC4aoGA&t=15s

I.   Welcome & Opening Remarks

The Lt. Governor called the meeting to order at 3:04pm, welcomed new members, and gave opening remarks. She then introduced upcoming presentations on the Early Childhood Education Endowment by Interim Office of Early Childhood (OEC) Commissioner Elena Trueworthy, and a report on the gender and racial composition of boards and commissions by the Secretary of State's office.

II.   Presentation: 'Early Childhood Education Endowment, HB 5003, Bond Bill Update', Office of Early Childhood - Elena Trueworthy, Kristen Dudanowicz

The Early Childhood Education Endowment (SB1) focuses on improving affordability for families. The endowment was launched in July of 2025 and was seeded with $300 million. Future contributions come from the unappropriated budget surplus each year. This is a long-term strategy to strengthen and expand the child care system. Annual expenditures can use 12% of the endowment for fiscal years 2026 and 2027, and then 10% thereafter. They work diligently to ensure that the experiences children and families have within the programs are high-quality and positive.

Part of this legislation is ensuring free child care options for families within its state-funded child care system, Early Start Connecticut, which will go into place on July 1st, 2027. It's free for families making up to 100,000 per year, up to 7% of a family's income if they make over $100,000 per year. Part of this approach is about building upon local, state, and federal practices. This comprehensive approach is about supporting, growing, and increasing the quality of the workforce.

Part of the legislation through SB1 is the creation of the Early Childhood Education Endowment Advisory Board. The board advises the OEC as to how they propose to use the funds that are in the endowment, and is responsible for approving any annual reports that exist in the legislation. The Advisory Board is administered at the Office of the Treasurer and is tri-chaired by a member of the Senate, a member of the House, and the commissioner of OEC. Currently, these designees are Senator Ceci Maher, State Representative Kate Farrar, and Interim OEC Commissioner Elena Trueworthy.

The impact analysis (due in fiscal year 2032) is a significant report that OEC is tasked with putting together as the endowment rolls out year over year. The purpose of this report is to analyze how the endowment is affecting the entire early childhood education field, not just their state-funded system, and to then make recommendations for how they can continue to encompass the entire field in the work that the endowment is supporting.

Overview of Accomplishments from the past 6 months:

- Expanded the Early Start CT state subsidized childcare system by 1,039 new Early Start spaces.
  - All of those new providers are new, as in not currently state-funded programs, but new programs to the state funded system).
- Added 165 new Smart Start preschool spaces (11 classrooms).
  - Smart Start is OEC's partnership with the local school districts in opening preschool classrooms.
- Early Start Connecticut is funded based on a rate per space, which since October, has increased by 8%.
- Added $1,000,000 in scholarships for their early childhood educators.
- Added $10,000,000 in stabilization grants to ensure sustained capacity and access to child care for families.
- Held six listening sessions across the state.
- The Endowment Advisory Board held a formal public hearing on December 10th, 2025.
- Completed Phase 1 of the statewide healthcare subsidy survey.
  - The intent is to understand the needs of health insurance for our early childhood educators.
- $10,000,000 in next year's endowment budget, which is also in legislation to provide a subsidy pilot program.

Next Steps Include:

- Meeting of Local Governance Partners (local community tables) across 48 towns and cities, where all partners, parent leaders, and families come together to work around the needs of young children and families.
  - The OEC will be conducting a local needs assessment and releasing a toolkit accompanied with training, technical assistance, and local data sets.
- The CT Health Insurance Exchange will design a targeted health insurance subsidy program that will be implemented in FY27.
- Designing funding opportunities to renovate and build spaces for child care.

III.   Presentation: '2025 Report on Gender and Racial Composition of Connecticut State Boards, Commissions, Committees, & Councils', Secretary of the State's Office – Moriah Moriarty

The report tracks the gender and racial composition of appointed members, compares boards and commissions to CT Census data, and highlights where Connecticut is lacking in representation in the state board or committee. The goal of the report is to ensure that appointments reflect the state's population by January 1st, 2026. Ensuring representation matters because the people who serve on boards and commissions influence policies, funding, decisions, and regulations that touch nearly every aspect of life in Connecticut.

For the 2025 Report, 158 of the 196 qualifying boards and commissions responded to the survey. The survey used the same six main categories for reporting race and ethnicity information that the US Census Bureau implemented (White, Black and African American, Hispanic, American Indian and Alaskan Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander). The survey options for gender were male, female, non-binary, and prefer not to say.

The 2025 Report showed that there were more male appointees in than female appointees (46.2% vs 42.9%), while the male population is 49.8% in comparison to the 50.92% female population. There was a 1.6% increase in female appointees from the previous year. Almost 11% of responses did not report their gender identity, which may overestimate or underestimate the actual gender gap between appointees.

The 2025 Report showed that the racial and ethnic representation on our boards and commissions still falls short of reflecting the state's population. The most prominent disparity was for the Hispanic and Latino community, which make up over 19% of Connecticut's population, yet account for just under 4% of appointees. In comparison, White residents make up about 62% of the population and account for 66% of the appointees. Black residents (at 11% of the population) account for about 8.7% of appointees. Asian residents (at 5.3% of the population) make up about 3.4% of appointees. Roughly 14% of respondents declined to report their race or ethnicity, which could overstate or understate the representation of some groups.

Of the 688 female appointees in 2025, nearly 70% were White or Black or African American. Only about 4% of female appointees were Hispanic or Latina. Of the 742 male appointees, White men represented 78%, Black men represented about 6%, Latino men just under 5%, and Asian men accounted for about 3%. Although female appointments were slightly more racially diverse than male appointments, both genders followed the same overall trends with a strong over-representation of white appointees and consistently low representation for Hispanic and Latino members.

The Secretary of the State's Office introduced The Power of Civics learning platform last October to provide Connecticut residents with the civic education needed to become more engaged in their community and government. Their office is committed to ensuring every Connecticut resident has equal access to civic education, as a representative government requires participation.

IV. **Announcements**
   a. **Upcoming Full Council Meeting Dates:**
      i. April 14th, 2026, 3:00 pm at the Legislative Office Building Room 1E
      ii. July 14th, 2026, 3:00 pm at the Legislative Office Building Room1 E
      iii. October 20th, 2026, 3:00 pm at the Legislative Office Building Room 1E

V. **Adjournment**

The Lt. Governor ended the meeting at 4:04 pm.