

# Maryland NOW



## 2024 Annual Meeting

Saturday June 1 | 9:30 am—4:00 pm

Unitarian Universalist Church

333 Dubois Road | Annapolis, Maryland 21401

and virtually via Zoom Meeting Software

Maryland Chapter, National Organization for Women

P.O. Box 7716

Silver Spring, Maryland 20907

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## Thank You to Maryland NOW's Vendors

These Maryland businesses help us in our communications and visibility work. Letterforms has done outstanding graphics work for us over the years, creating ads, mailings, and posters. House of Printing handles our printing and mailing projects. Red Hangar Films coordinated the video and audio recordings for our hybrid conference.

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## **Thanking those assisting with our conference**

### **Our Video/Audio technicians for the day**

Meghan Clayton, Event Coordinator, and Maya Elby, Event Technician  
Caitlyn Mason, Producer

### **Child Care**

Jimease Young, Kiddie Academy of Annapolis

### **Graphics**

Jeannette Feldner—Jeannette has done considerable work on this program book, but her business, Letterforms, also sets up all our mailings, posters, and other printing.

### **Chapters**

Maryland NOW's chapters have all played a role in helping to make this conference happen! Many thanks to all!

Anne Arundel County

Carroll County

Montgomery County

### **Today's Bylaws**

Susanne Royer—Sue assisted with presenting our bylaws revisions to the conference for votes. She will lead the meeting with Maryland NOW members to adopt these bylaws revisions.

And, Jannina Ortiz, Administrative Assistant, Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis and their staff.

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Congratulations to the Maryland National  
Organization for Women on their 2024  
conference and for all the work they do  
defending our democracy with women  
leading the way!

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MARYLAND



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## OUR MISSION

To lead diverse community partners toward the common purpose of reducing the occurrence and impact of intimate partner violence.

## OUR VISION

That one day Maryland will be a state where families and relationships thrive on mutual trust and respect and where there is no place for violence.





The MNADV promotes awareness and prevention of domestic violence by

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info@mnadv.org

 **Address**  
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Annapolis, MD 21401

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MONTGOMERY  
COUNTY, MARYLAND

WOMEN'S  
DEMOCRATIC CLUB

*Congratulations to the  
Maryland Equal Rights Action Network  
on the passage of the*

**MD Resolution Affirming the Federal ERA!**

WDC proudly works to educate all voters on issues of importance to Democrats,  
with a special focus on women and their families.

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Reproductive  
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Through education, advocacy, and community engagement, we strive to dismantle barriers, promote access, and uphold the dignity and agency of all Marylanders. By fostering new voices and leadership, we work tirelessly to protect and strengthen reproductive freedoms, ensuring a future where everyone can exercise full control over their reproductive choices. We invite you to join us!

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● [info@reproductivejusticemaryland.org](mailto:info@reproductivejusticemaryland.org)



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**Community is at the heart of Planned Parenthood of Maryland's health care.** We are committed to improving the lives of all Marylanders - including those in rural communities.

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Donate to our **Abortion Access Fund**, which helps keep abortion accessible for patients throughout Maryland.



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\*COMING JULY 2024: PROCEDURAL ABORTION!

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(301) 708-6101  
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17204 McMullen Hwy SW, Greenbelt, MD 21502  
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**Support our life-saving work! Scan here.**





**Eastern Shore Democrats**

**Proudly supports Maryland NOW  
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To learn more about Eastern Shore Democrats!  
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Paid for by Eastern Shore Democrats PAC  
By Authority: Ashley Harris, Treasurer

*Fight for the things that you care  
about, but do it in a way that  
will lead others to join you.*

Justice Ruth Seder Olshberg



*North Carolina NOW thanks  
Maryland NOW for their continued  
commitment to NOW's core values  
and their invaluable leadership.*

WE HAVE A NEW HOME AT MARIAN HOUSE/WOMAN'S INDUSTRIAL EXCHANGE  
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WOMEN'S  
HERITAGE  
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Visit exhibits on our website:

- Maryland Women's Hall of Fame
- Valiant Women: The Fight for Suffrage
- Our Unsung Heroines
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To schedule a tour or event contact Diana Bailey:  
[mwhcdiana@gmail.com](mailto:mwhcdiana@gmail.com)

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**SAVE THE DATE!**  
*Fall Agenda Conference &  
30th Anniversary Celebration*

**November 23, 2024**

**The Meeting House, Columbia**

Registration & sponsorship info coming late summer  
[www.mdlegagendaforwomen.org](http://www.mdlegagendaforwomen.org)



*95th Anniversary  
1929-2024*

**Business and Professional Women  
of Maryland**

Business and Professional  
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thanks Maryland NOW for  
supporting women's equality.



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**Maryland NOW**  
*a Successful*  
*Annual State Conference*

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**Maryland NOW** thanks its many members and friends over the past 50 years for their work and financial support in our work toward a better life for women and girls.



**MARYLAND**  
**NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN**

**Maryland NOW**  
P. O. Box 7716  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20907

*City lights, ocean nights, historical sites...  
Our story, Maryland's story, is the  
story of better choices and better results.*

**Maryland NOW welcomes  
NOW members and friends to  
2024 Maryland NOW Conference.**

[www.MarylandNOW.org](http://www.MarylandNOW.org)



# ERA NOW

Support the  
Equal Rights Amendment!

ERA  
NOW



# Sign4ERA.org

Sign the National [Sign4ERA.org](https://www.sign4era.org) Petition and send it to all of your family and friends across the country ... The Equal Rights Amendment, enshrining sex-based equality, is passed by Congress and fully ratified by the required 38 states. **Congress needs to hear from you NOW that you want to see the ERA certified and published by the end of 2024.** We are only 4-5 votes short. Tell Congress: Not One More Year!





## Maryland National Organization for Women

P.O. Box 7716 • Silver Spring, MD 20907

info@marylandnow.org • (410) 347-1455

[www.MarylandNOW.org](http://www.MarylandNOW.org)

June 1, 2024 | Maryland NOW 2024 State Conference | Annapolis, Maryland

Dear NOW Members and Friends from everywhere!

I'm very excited to extend a warm welcome to our members, visitors, and guests. This Conference is Maryland NOW's major business meeting of the year, and our members' opportunity to tell the State Council and Executive Committee about their ideas for Maryland NOW's future. Much of the work we've done during our 2023-2024 program year has been to prepare for what is turning out as promised – a year when everything is happening and where nothing seems logical or what we'd expect, and it's all very scary. This is our chance to reassure each other and stick together!

However, as news about our agenda and workshops – actually just that we were having an in-person NOW Conference! – started getting out, we began getting emails saying, “Hey, can we come up from North Carolina?” or even, “Can I come?” so of course we said, “Sure!” We had already decided to invite members of organizations cosponsoring today's program, so the more the merrier, right? So, whether you're here virtually or in-person, we're absolutely delighted you've chosen to join us today.

We had already planned to offer child care, and lunch, but we got a request for a hotel list as people wanted to stay over. Some women from North Carolina wanted to have a table for some literature they want to distribute. It was starting to feel less like a meeting and more like a conference! We have several states who have members joining us online. Several of our own members registered initially to attend via Zoom, then emailed us to see if they could come in person instead.

I'd like to think it's the workshops and panels we're having. I'm very excited at the way they've come together and about the talent presenting these important topics and issues. We had no idea what was involved in a hybrid conference but we got a great crew of 2 women with professional experience and so I stopped worrying about that! We're having program books and name tags.

But the truth is that this wonderful explosion of interest is really about the fact that we're NOW, we love collaborating with our sisters in person, and we have fun doing it! We're alive and well. We want to hear what other groups are working on. We need to stick together in the coming months – whether it's email, Zoom, or in-person. The fact that Maryland NOW could provide this opportunity for at least our District and friends to get together means everything to us.

So welcome! Let's enjoy today and plan for the future!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Barbara Hays'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Barbara Hays  
Maryland NOW President





**Maryland NOW Virtual State Conference**  
**Saturday, June 1, 2024 | 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

Unitarian-Universalist Church—Annapolis, Maryland  
via Zoom Virtual Meeting Software

**Proposed Conference Agenda**

9:00 – 9:30 Sign in

**Business Session I**

9:30 – 10:00 Morning Business Meeting

Welcome

Introduction of Elections Chair & Credentialing Report

Adoption of the Agenda

Adoption of Proposed Conference Rules

Approval of the 2023 State Conference Minutes

Credentialing Report

Election of Maryland NOW Officers

Report of Nominations/Elections Chair

Elections

**Morning Program**

10:00 – 11:30 Morning Panel Presentation –

**“Maryland’s Role in the Big Picture”**

Cate Gormley, Ellie Smeal, Linda Berg

11:30—11:45 Break

**Business Session I (cont’d)**

11:45—12:30 Consideration of Proposed Bylaws Revisions, Remaining Business

12:30 - 1:00 Lunch Break

**Afternoon Program**

1:00 - 2:30 Afternoon Panel Presentations

Workshop I— **“Abortion Messaging in Rural Maryland”**

Lauren Harton, Rachel Kashy, Ramsie Monk, Cresta Kowalski

Workshop II— **“The ERA in Defense of Democracy”**

Ariana Kelly, Stephanie McGencey, Camila Reynolds-Dominguez, Mary Ann Gorman

2:30—2:45 Break

**Business Session II**

2:45—4:00 Afternoon Business Meeting

Officer & Task Force/Committee Reports—Discussion

2024-2025 Discussion and Planning

4:00 Adjournment

*Thanks for attending our Annual State Conference!*



# Proposed Rules

## Maryland NOW 2024 State Conference

### June 1, 2024

*All rules as passed by the body will apply equally to on-line and in-person participants.*

#### Registration and Credentialing

- On-line conference registration will be open to all NOW members, guests, and visitors. All persons must register for the conference in order to participate, either in person or virtually. Only persons who are members of Maryland NOW with memberships that pre-date 60 days will be credentialed to vote in state elections and on official business. Any member may vote on procedural motions.
- Registration will be open through an on-line link to a Google Form posted by Maryland NOW. All persons wishing to join the conference, either on-line or in-person must register. A link to the conference using Zoom meeting software will be sent to all registrants. All registrants will receive a link to the conference program materials; however, on-site participants will also receive a copy of materials when they arrive. All links to materials will be given to members through mailings and email messages. Materials will be posted on the Maryland NOW website ([www.marylandnow.org](http://www.marylandnow.org)) and updated as new information about the conference program becomes available.
- Those registrants whose memberships in Maryland NOW predate 60 days (joined on or before April 2) prior to the conference will be considered credentialed and eligible to vote.
- Each conference registrant will be notified by email prior to the conference whether they are eligible to vote at the meeting and for the election of state officers.
  - A Maryland NOW member shall be defined as any person whose current dues have been paid to any entity of NOW. If the person's dues have been received by a MD NOW chapter or by our state organization's treasurer but their name is not listed on National NOW's membership database, we hold that they are eligible to vote **in our state**.
  - Members whose dues have not been received as noted above sixty (60) days prior to the conference may register and/or join the on-line or in-person meeting, but may not vote on elections or official matters.
  - A guest shall be defined as a person who is a NOW member, but not a member of Maryland NOW.
  - A visitor shall be defined as a person who is not a member of NOW.

#### Maryland NOW Online Conference Business Sessions

##### Motions and debate

- To be ruled in order, motions or resolutions at this conference may not involve the or-

ganization's finances or call for committing Maryland NOW's financial resources to a particular issue, project, or goal. No motions involving official policy or changes in official policy will be in order. The chair may only entertain and call for votes on procedural motions involving accepting reports, moving the agenda, ending debate, or calling to order or adjourning sessions of the meeting. On any matter on which a member may wish further consideration, a request can be made that the issue be brought before the Maryland NOW State Council at their first meeting following the online conference for discussion.

- The agenda shall reflect times allotted for each part of the agenda, and if necessary, the chair may appoint a timekeeper and may indicate a specific period of time for each speaker to address the body.
- Any NOW member may speak having been recognized by the chair. Guests and visitors may participate after being recognized, and will be identified as a guest or visitor.
- Participants agree to respect the times noted on the agenda. Persons recognized to speak are recognized to address the item under consideration, and no person may speak a second time until everyone has had an opportunity to speak.
  - Speakers must give their name and city or chapter affiliation. In debate, remarks must be germane to the question or pending motion, and members cannot question another's motives or attack another member personally.
  - Using the virtual meeting software, Maryland NOW may record the meeting.

### **Elections for State Office**

- The Nominating Committee Chair will report in Business Session I on names they have received prior to the conference for state office. The Chair will open the session to nominations made by members, and anyone nominated or self-nominated must have their membership verified.
- If there are no additional nominations from among the participants, the Chair can declare nominations to be closed and either ask for a decision by unanimous consent to elect the officers who have been nominated, or ask that a system be set up through SurveyMonkey, Google Forms, or MailChimp for members to vote within the following 24 hours to decide on a position for which more than one person has been nominated.
- As stipulated in Maryland NOW's bylaws, elected officers take responsibility for their positions upon announcement of the election results. Any official transfers of records, including signatories on bank accounts, must occur within two weeks of the conference.

## **Voting**

- During any business meeting segment of the conference, members may vote on procedural motions, resolutions, or bylaws by utilizing features of the software allowing them to indicate a “raised” hand, or by similarly indicating approval by raising their hand.
- A person serving as Credentials Chair will verify the membership for each person who has registered for the conference, and will notify any registrants of any problems with their membership record prior to the conference.
- In the election of state officers, when the Nominating Committee announces that no further nominations appear to be forthcoming, she/he will make a motion that nominations be closed, which will be considered and voted on by the body. At that time, no one not previously registered and in attendance at the meeting can register, have their membership credentialed, and log into the online meeting for the purposes of being able to participate in voting for candidates for state office. Following the end of that business session, someone not previously registered for the conference may register, be credentialed, and participate in discussion and votes of the body in the meeting.
- In the case of a contested election for any state office, voting will be conducted electronically by any process decided upon by the State Executive Committee using software such as SurveyMonkey, Google Forms, or MailChimp. The body will agree on the length of time voting will be open and how soon members must receive the link to their ballot. The Elections Chair or other members deemed necessary by the President shall receive the results of the vote and will announce the results to the State Council by email.

## **Balloting Procedures**

- In the event we have more than one member seeking an Executive Committee position, we will set up a system with Google Forms. Using that program, the Elections Chair will send electronic ballots to all registered members who are eligible to vote using the email they have provided in their registration for the conference. Their votes will be recorded by Google Forms (the Elections Chair will be the only person to have access to this Form and results) into a spreadsheet and the Elections Chair will tally the results and notify conference attendees as soon as possible.

## **Authority**

- The conference shall be governed by the National NOW Bylaws, official policies of the National Organization for Women, the Bylaws of Maryland NOW, the latest edition of Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised, and these conference rules.





**Maryland National Organization for Women**

P.O. Box 7716 • Silver Spring, MD 20907

info@marylandnow.org • (410) 347-1455

[www.MarylandNOW.org](http://www.MarylandNOW.org)

**With apologies from the Executive Committee**

Every year, the members assembled at our state conference have the role of approving the minutes from the previous year. Last year, we were not able to record the sessions. We all have notes and are in need of a little time to make the minutes of that 2023 meeting as close to accurate as they can be.

We will ask the State Council to review the minutes from that conference and will have two years of minutes to approve next year.

We appreciate your patience.





## 2024 Proposed Revisions to the Maryland NOW Bylaws

Maryland NOW State Conference, June 1, 2024

*The Maryland NOW bylaws have not been substantially revised since they were written in 1973. We've used the "band-aid" approach for many decades, going in from time to time and changing things that seemed to not be working, but knowing all along that serious work needed to be done on the whole document.*

*All that said, the women who wrote these bylaws initially created a very sound structure which didn't need much serious revision. For many of the changes, we have just added language to address changes that have taken place in our culture today. We also had to address changes that have taken place in National NOW's structure. Communication among council members and state leaders outside of state council meetings 50 years ago mostly involved postage stamps. Our electronic image in our website, electronic newsletters, and actions announced in email alerts are all very critical today and not something that anyone even envisioned in the 1970s.*

*The state council has held discussion sessions, incorporating many suggestions and ideas into the document you will see and vote on in June.*

*Below is a summary of the changes we are proposing. However, the document presenting both deletions and additions now involves eight pages. We decided to send everyone this summary, and to post the entire bylaws document on our website. We also want to offer to anyone who would like to review a paper copy of the document to call or email us and we will get it to you right away. We are additionally prepared to answer any questions you might have in a personal phone call or Zoom meeting.*

*We will vote on the document at the state's annual conference on June 1 during our morning business session; this particular agenda item and discussion will be chaired by a parliamentarian.*

Article I. **Name.** This clarifies that we are not incorporated.

Article II & Article IV. **Purpose and Diversity.** These two sections have been updated with language written by state council members.

Article III. **Membership.** Maryland NOW allows full participation in our decision-making for any member whose dues have been received by Maryland NOW, and/or paid to National NOW, regardless of whether their names have been added to the National NOW database.

Article V. **Structure.** This clarifies Maryland NOW's decision-making structure.

Article VI. **Meetings.** The meetings section was added about 3 years ago at the request of the organization that oversees Robert's Rules compliance. It specifically authorizes virtual meetings and says that decisions reached at virtual meetings are equally as valid as those reached at in-person meetings.

Article VII. **State Conference.** Secs A, B, and F remove language no longer relevant as per changes in the National NOW Bylaws regarding delegates to national conferences. Sec C moves the financial review language to the Treasurer's responsibilities section. (see Article IX. Officers>Sec F Treasurer>No. 5). Sec F is a sound business practice for membership organizations, but also complies with the provision that the State Council votes to approve any fiduciary action or changes to our budget in Article VIII.

Article VIII. **State Council.** Sec A clarifies the role of the state council and its relationship to decisions that might be reached by the State Conference in any implementation measures. Sec B clarifies that "member chapters" can include a convening chapter that may participate (vote) at State Council meetings once they have completed their convenor form, and that form has been approved by the National office. This signifies that they are starting to work toward completing requirements of the National office and Maryland NOW (that they have bylaws, an EIN number, bank account, etc.).

Sec D includes language about meetings (virtual meetings counting toward the required number which are to be held), No. 2 defines access to meetings by all members, but gives the Executive Committee the ability to go into Executive Session, meaning only council members can be present during that discussion. An example of this action would be during budget discussions or financial reports to the State Council. No. 6 repeats the requirement for virtual meetings and removes some confusing language about council voting, which is again written in No.7. Electronic communication has essentially eliminated that need, and provides resolution of this question.

**IX. State Officer Responsibilities.** These changes in the sections in this Article represent these positions as they have evolved over time and are carried out today. They include the need for us to maintain a public image, including in coordinating our electronic communication and social media. We have attempted to gather all the Treasurer's responsibilities into that officer's section, and Sec G gives the Executive Committee the flexibility to reassign various responsibilities based on individual ability to perform them. Language was added to the Action VP position that clarifies this position's work with the Legislative Committee/Task Force to tie action to legislative (and therefore issue) work. The Secretary-Records and Communication has responsibility for maintaining the state's membership and membership records, and keeping electronic records of our meetings. (This position was upgraded several years ago.) We removed the option of having co-presidents, which was tried but was not successful.

**Article X. Executive Committee.** This acknowledges that task force and committee chairs may be included in Executive Committee sessions when needed. It clarifies communication between the Executive Committee and the State Council as "reporting decisions and discussion" and also that records of meetings will be kept.

**Article XI. Task Forces and Committees.** Sec E language was added to clarify that, once established with leadership by the State President and approved by the State Council, the task force or committee itself can decide to disband or may become inactive (they are not removed when new officers are elected at the state conference). The state council can remove a Task Force or Committee chair for cause.

**Article XIII. Finances.** This article defines the Budget Committee and creates a timeline for the passage of Maryland NOW's Budget. In budget matters and in work to increase income, this committee works with the Treasurer. Sec D adds some responsibilities for involvement in our fundraising and for the Finance Committee to be involved in financial management and fundraising,

**Article XIV. Grievance Committee.** Old language of choosing by lot among people who claimed to be "disinterested parties" didn't always result in a fair arbitration of a disagreement. Proposed language in Sec B is a version of how many grievance committees function, giving parties to a grievance an actual representative on the committee. Also, language was added to clarify publicizing decisions of the Grievance Committee following their work.

**Article XV. Amendment of the Bylaws.** Sec A Existing language was confusing, and has been changed to two options for amendment: the Bylaws Committee and chapters. Sec B changes that regardless of origin bylaw amendments have to be turned into the Executive Committee and the Bylaws Committee for review 60 days prior to the state conference. This was changed from 45 days because of the time and work involved in creating the state conference mailing and including a proposed change, printing and mailing.

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Note: Following the conference, the approved language of all proposed revisions in a complete document of our Maryland NOW Bylaws will be posted on Maryland NOW's website.

See pages 49-62 for a complete text of the existing bylaws with all proposed revisions.

# Today's Presentations

## Maryland's Role in the Big Picture

The 2024 General Election Cycle is one in which we stand to make some gains, hold our own, or lose just about everything. The Supreme Court as a separate branch of government cannot withstand anymore Trump appointments. The U.S. Senate is in grave danger of being lost to a Republican majority, and the U.S. House could flip our way, or become even worse. If Trump wins, we have lost abortion rights to a federal ban that will make everything we've worked for irrelevant. We already have an idea of where we stand to lose seats as well as where we can focus on picking up seats in the US House and Senate. We keep seeing polling that shows Trump actually ahead of Biden in polling, but who is being polled? Aside from what we can do here in Maryland to hold our own, what can we do in states around the country? If we have money to invest in other races, what are the best ones we should support?

Our panelists for this conversation have decades of experience to help us understand what is going on and what will be good bell-weather to watch as the calendar rolls toward November. Cate Gormley, VP at Lake Research Partners, Ellie Smeal at the Feminist Majority, and Linda Berg in her over 30 years at NOW are just the people to tell us what we need to know.

## Abortion Messaging in Rural Maryland

The Maryland Right to Reproductive Freedom Amendment on the ballot in November in our state will amend the Maryland Constitution to include "the ability to make and effectuate decisions to prevent, continue or end one's own pregnancy." This ballot question will undoubtedly be approved in the more populated areas of our state, but in rural areas in Western Maryland and on the Eastern Shore we face a tougher sell.

GOTV efforts in these areas must address a different messaging strategy than would be used in the more populated areas of the state along the I-95 corridor, or our "Blue Bubble." As Ashley All, architect of the Kansas for Constitutional Freedom campaign in 2022 stated, "You have to be willing to communicate with people who have different opinions than you do." We need voters who agree with us on abortion, but perhaps on little else. And, Larry Hogan will probably do very well in these areas.

Framing this message might be easier if we knew first-hand what challenges clinics in rural areas face, and what we could learn about better messaging just knowing more about those parts of our state. Maryland has only one abortion care facility in Mountain Maryland and one on the Eastern Shore. We will hear from clinic staff from both Easton and Cumberland - Lauren Harton, Certified Nurse Midwife at the Planned Parenthood of Maryland Clinic on the Eastern Shore; Cresta Kowalski, President of the Mountain Maryland Alliance for Reproductive Freedom; Rachel Kasky, Chief Nurse Executive at the Women's Health Center of Maryland in Allegany County, Maryland; Ramsie Monk, Development Director for the Women's Health Center of Maryland in Allegany County, Maryland.

## The ERA in Defense of Democracy

Virginia became the 38th and final state needed to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) on January 15, 2020. To be officially a part of U.S. law and the U.S. Constitution, the National Archivist must certify that the amendment is valid. They have yet to certify the amendment, citing as a reason the 1979 deadline for ratification imposed by Congress. The time is NOW to move this issue across the finish line.

Maryland NOW created an ERA Task Force in early 2023 dedicating resources to get the fully-ratified federal

ERA published in the U.S. Constitution. The ERA in Defense of Democracy workshop will address simple and immediate actions people can take as individuals and at an organizational level to join the national grassroots effort to see the ERA certified and published as the 28th Amendment **this year**. Our panel of Maryland ERA leaders will outline efforts being made across Maryland to advance the ERA, specifically by the legislature and LGBTQ+ communities and communities of color. They will provide insight as to how individuals can join the campaign and how voters can elect representatives who prioritize constitutional equality, while holding their elected representatives accountable. Additionally, they will guide us on ways to engage diverse communities and sustain engagement after the ERA is published.

Panelists will include Ariana Kelly, Executive Director of the Maryland Commission for Women; Stephanie McGencey, Founder and President of the Women's Equity Center and Action Network; Camila Reynolds-Dominguez, Chief of Staff to Maryland State Delegate Kris Fair; and Mary Ann Gorman, Maryland NOW ERA Task Force Chair and Moderator.

## Our Panelists

### "Maryland's Role in the Big Picture"

**Cate Gormley**, Vice President at Lake Research Partners

**Ellie Smeal**, President of the Feminist Majority Foundation and former NOW President

**Linda Berg**, Former Political and PAC Director for National NOW

### "Abortion Messaging in Rural Maryland"

**Lauren Harton**, Certified Nurse Midwife at the Planned Parenthood of Maryland Clinic on the Eastern Shore

**Cresta Kowalski**, President of the Mountain Maryland Alliance for Reproductive Freedom

**Rachel Kasky**, Chief Nurse Executive at the Women's Health Center of Maryland in Allegany County, Maryland

**Ramsie Monk**, Development Director for the Women's Health Center of Maryland in Allegany County, Maryland

### "The ERA in Defense of Democracy"

**Ariana Kelly**, Executive Director of the Maryland Commission for Women  
**Stephanie McGencey**, Founder and President of the Women's Equity Center and Action Network

**Camila Reynolds-Dominguez**, Chief of Staff to Maryland State Delegate Kris Fair  
**Mary Ann Gorman**, Maryland NOW ERA Task Force Chair

#### Ariana Kelly



Ariana Kelly is the Executive Director of the Maryland Commission for Women. She served over 14 years in the Maryland General Assembly, sponsoring legislation that strengthened reproductive rights, economic security, wage transparency, and parental leave. After being a lead sponsor of the ERA Resolution, she left the Maryland Senate in May 2024 to take the helm of the Maryland Commission for Women. The Commission identified the ERA Resolution as a priority bill for the 2024 legislative session. Prior to her elected service, Kelly served as a National Campaign Director for Moms Rising, as Executive Director of NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland, and as Executive Producer of the PBS women's news program, "To the Contrary."

#### Camila Reynolds-Dominguez

Camila Reynolds-Dominguez is currently serving as Chief of Staff to Maryland State Delegate Kris Fair. Prior to her current position, she was the Policy Advocate at Free-State Justice, where she helped secure passage of several landmark bills that protect Maryland's LGBTQIA+ community. She graduated cum laude from Cornell University and has a law degree from the University of Maryland, where she earned an environmental law concentration. She is a founding member of the Maryland Equal Rights Action Network and co-authored a resolution affirming Maryland's commitment to





the federal Equal Rights Amendment, recently signed by the Governor of Maryland, Wes Moore.

## Cate Gormley

Cate Gormley is a Vice President at Lake Research Partners, a national public opinion research firm. Cate’s research portfolio includes a variety of progressive issues: reproductive health and freedom,, gender identity and gendered representation, workplace policies, gender-based violence, health, and more. Cate has conducted qualitative and quantitative research to aid narrative development on numerous interrelated issues such as structural racism, gender and racial equality, and transgender justice. She is an expert on different cohorts of women voters, and she brings a dedication to women’s issues to her work. Cate lives in Silver Spring and is the proud mother of two spirited young girls.



## Cresta Kowalski

Cresta Kowalski is a grassroots organizer in Western Maryland, working to forward the voices of women in rural Mountain Maryland since 2014. She is a co-founder of the Mountain Maryland Alliance for Reproductive Freedom, an advocacy group founded in 2022 focusing on reproductive healthcare and reproductive justice in Mountain Maryland. By day, she is a union worker for teachers in Maryland. She graduated from Towson University School and has a Masters from West Virginia University; she is currently pursuing a PhD in Education. Cresta is a native of Allegany County, and she and her family have lived in Mountain Maryland for the past 17 years. Along with reproductive rights, LGBTQ+ rights and justice are important to her advocacy work.



## Eillie Smeal

Eleanor Smeal is Co-Founder and President of the Feminist Majority Foundation, publisher of “Ms.,” and former president of NOW. For over five decades, she has played a leading role in both national and state campaigns to win women’s rights legislation and in a number of landmark state and federal court cases. One of the architects of the modern drive for women’s equality, Smeal is known as a political analyst, strategist, and grassroots organizer. She was the first to identify the “gender gap” — the difference in the way women and men vote — and popularized its usage in election and polling analyses to enhance women’s voting clout. In 2015, she was inducted into the National Women’s Hall of Fame.



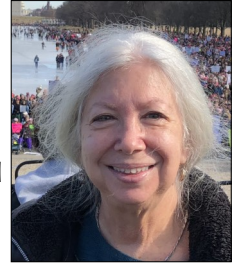
## Lauren Harton



Lauren Harton is a Certified Nurse Midwife working at Planned Parenthood of Maryland on the Eastern Shore since 2009. She graduated from Yale University School of Nursing and has published two editions of her book "The Efficient Midwife". Lauren and her family have lived on the Eastern Shore for decades in Kent, Caroline, and Talbot County. She has been a strong advocate for reproductive rights her entire life.

## Linda Berg

Linda Berg received NOW's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2020 for more than 30 years of serving as the National Political Director of NOW. After retirement, in 2020, she served on the NOW PAC through 2023, and is currently on NOW's Advisory Board. In 2020, she was a founding member of an independent expenditure PAC, Vote for Equality, dedicated to turning out young women voters in key federal and state races and she continues to serve on its board and as its treasurer. This year her efforts will concentrate on turning out college aged women in key presidential battleground states with the goal of keeping the presidency and the Senate in Democratic control and flipping the house.



## Mary Ann Gorman

Mary Ann is Chair of the Maryland Chapter – National Organization for Women Equal Rights Amendment Task Force, steering committee member at Maryland Equal Rights Action Network and team member of the National Sign4ERA Petition (if you haven't already signed it, please do so at [www.sign4ERA.org](http://www.sign4ERA.org)). Her resolve to see the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) published as the 28<sup>th</sup> Amendment was sparked by the 2020 Supreme Court Dobbs decision overturning Roe v. Wade. She believes the only way to ensure permanent protections for gender equality is to enshrine them in the Constitution. Before becoming an ERA activist, Mary Ann was an education consultant working with universities and advocacy groups to improve education outcomes for students with disabilities. She lives in Stevensville with her husband Jeff. She enjoys visiting her daughters in Brooklyn and Washington, DC; taking walks with friends; and exploring new



places with Jeff.

## Rachel Kashy

Rachel Kashy is a Family Nurse Practitioner by education and training, working in the field of sexual and reproductive health, and currently serves as the Chief Nurse Executive and healthcare provider at the Women's Health Center of Maryland in Allegany County, Maryland. Rachel holds a Bachelor of Science degree in both psychology and nursing from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia. Prior to her graduate studies, she worked as an emergency nurse for 5 years at trauma centers, community hospitals, and a free-standing emergency department in both Richmond and New Orleans. She graduated from Loyola University New Orleans Master of Science in Nursing program in May 2020 and began her nurse practitioner career at Tulane University, working on a phase II clinical trial investigating a COVID-19 vaccine. She is a proud and active member of both her state and national professional organizations and a fierce advocate for reproductive justice.



## Ramsie Monk

Ambitious. Passionate. Energetic. These three words best describe Ramsie Monk, the Development Director for Women's Health Center of West Virginia and Maryland. She is a proud alumna of West Virginia Wesleyan College. In the Spring of 2020, Ramsie joined Women's Health Center of West Virginia, and together with WHC's executive director, Katie Quinonez. Ramsie was instrumental in founding the Women's Health Center of Maryland. She has been leading the development efforts at WHC, raising hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations from individuals and grant funding to help promote the services that the center

offers. This new reproductive health clinic in Mountain Maryland opened its doors in September 2023 in direct response to the Supreme Court's overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022 and the subsequent abortion bans enacted by anti-abortion legislators in West Virginia. Combining her passion with a sense of purpose, Ramsie is dedicated to providing life-saving reproductive health care to the people in her community who need it the most. She strongly believes that everyone has the right to choose if, when, and how they start their families.

## **Stephanie McGencey**

Dr. Stephanie McGencey is a strategic and thoughtful leader with over 26 years of progressive experience working in organizations to advance holistic, evidence-based, and strategic approaches to public policy analysis, program implementation, and executive leadership. She brings knowledge of nonprofit management, governance, and fundraising combined with research and expertise on youth development, mental health, juvenile/criminal justice, substance abuse prevention, public health, early care and education, and coalition building. Currently leading the Women's Equity Center and Action Network (WE CAN), Dr. McGencey is facilitating the active leadership of African American, Latino American, Asian American, and Native American women to achieve policy and practice environments responsive to their needs. She is a proud graduate of San Francisco State University, the University of Michigan, and Walden University.





# Conference Business Meeting Information

## Officer Reports 2023-2024 Term

### President's Report

This has been a year of trying to prepare for what we've known all along was coming with the 2024 election cycle. I believe for myself, having worked in grassroots organizing for many decades, it is incredibly discouraging to observe how voters are making their voting decisions. Put another way, how it could even be a question to any person in the U.S. today as to who to support for President? Put mildly, Donald Trump doesn't represent any form of progress for us as a country as opposed to Joe Biden. How did we get here?



Here in Maryland, we just have to deal with this on the news. In many ways, we've been very lucky that we haven't had to deal with a legislature working overtime to pass every Draconian law they could possibly envision. So the fact that our state legislature is discussing the ERA and other state legislatures are discussing 6-week abortion bans makes it seem absurd that we would have any work as a feminist organization here in our state.

For the past several years, along with an outstanding Executive Committee and State Council, we have worked to add depth and structure to Maryland NOW. Watching for interest and issue concerns in areas around the state (the Moms for Liberty are establishing themselves in several counties in Maryland, for example), we are always looking to support members and new activists where Maryland NOW has had chapters in past years. More and more people are finding our website and joining Maryland NOW, and in addition to working locally are interested in state task forces and committees.

Last summer, National NOW put on an in-person national conference that was held over in Northern Virginia. We used the opportunity to clean out some NOW products we had accumulated over the years, and our "product line" brought many people to our table to enjoy some of the old slogans and what we used to call "tasteful NOW jewelry." The goal was to make it possible for us to move into a smaller storage unit, but by selling these products very cheaply we were able to help lots of small chapters around the country get bags of buttons and stickers they could use in their own outreach. This same storage unit has been home to files from NOW leaders cleaning out their attics and closets and we were able to move several collections of records to our Maryland NOW Archives in College Park at the University of Maryland.

For both the sales work at the National Conference and the work we did fundraising to send activists from Maryland to Seneca Falls, NY to the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ERA that was held in mid-July, we purchased Square point-of-sale software enabling us to accept credit card payments and donations and we recently finished work fine tuning our member join and donate pages on our website.

In our ongoing goal of having more connections in Western Maryland and the Eastern Shore, I attended an event that the Eastern Shore Democratic Party held last November and was able to connect with people from several counties there. We have been making connections in Western Maryland as well, particularly to learn more about the clinic in Cumberland and how we can support their work. We are very excited about our new chapter in Carroll County and the connections we're making in Baltimore County to begin work to have a chapter there as well.

We were not asked to play any role in the endorsements that National NOW's PAC made in the state prior to the Maryland Primary, and since our PAC is a state PAC we weren't able to actively support any federal candidates. We were able to get an endorsement for John Olszewski in District 2 from the National NOW PAC, and he won the Democratic primary there. I worked with several state presidents who also found the

PAC's process frustrating – I really couldn't see asking Jamie Raskin to fill out a questionnaire and sit for an interview when he has been endorsed by not only the Maryland NOW PAC when he was in Annapolis, but the National NOW PAC for three terms prior to this year – and we are exploring ways to get that process cleared up so NOW policy is followed.

Maryland NOW prepared and published to mail to our members a candidate listing for the open Congressional seats and the open U.S. Senate seat in our state prior to the primary – and we were able to list the qualifications of candidates with whom we had worked and supported so they didn't get lost in the very crowded races around the state.

The fact that so many of our members don't list an email address continues to pose a rather expensive challenge when it comes to staying in touch. We included a reply/interest card in our mailing about the Maryland NOW state conference and hope to identify more members who want to become active.

Lastly, I would like to again thank the Executive Committee members who have served this past year, many under difficult circumstances. I have high hopes for this next year and know we can rise to whatever challenges the November elections bring.

Barbara Hays  
President

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## Executive Vice-President's Report

For many years, I have been a representative for Maryland NOW with other organizations and coalitions. In that position, I serve on the board of the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW), and the board of Progressive Maryland.

MLAW meets monthly, virtually; has a reception during the legislative session, which has also been virtual the last few years due to construction in Annapolis on the legislative buildings; and a Fall Conference. For more information about MLAW's work please visit their website at [mdlegagendaforwomen.org](http://mdlegagendaforwomen.org). One of the bills on this year's agenda was regarding non-fatal strangulation for which I wrote testimony.



As a member of the board of Progressive Maryland, we meet several times a year to discuss legislation for the session, and to vote on candidates to endorse during election cycles. There is also an annual membership meeting which I attended this year, followed by an action – we marched through the streets of Annapolis to the Chamber of Commerce to oppose unfair labor practices.

As Maryland NOW's representative with PM, I also serve on a Task Force to address criminal justice issues. This last year I worked with the Returning Citizens Task Force. Our main objective is the lack of services for women. Seven counties in Maryland have reentry centers for men, but there are none for women. Legislation was passed in 2020 to build a center for women which Larry Hogan vetoed. His veto was overridden in the 2021 session, but money to build it wasn't requested until this year. \$2 million was secured but proponents say it's a drop in the bucket in comparison to the multi-year funding required for the facility's completion. A bill was introduced this year to establish a commission on services for women but it did not pass the Senate. I wrote to 4 Senators on the committee to request their support.

Marylanders for Reproductive Choice (MRC) worked to get the bill passed to put bodily autonomy in our state constitution which passed and is on the ballot this year.

As part of Maryland NOW's ERA Task Force, I worked with the Chair, Mary Ann Gorman, to get the Attorney

General to render an opinion that the ERA had met all Constitutional requirements to be the 28<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution. He declined, but his office, along with Delegate Peñza Melnyk, who we had asked to make the request to the AG, suggested we get the legislature to pass a resolution to state the opinion. At NOW's National Conference last year, Mary Ann, Julie Ransel and I sat down and made a list of other organizations we could ask to sign on with us to request a legislator to introduce the resolution. We then divided the list and we all contacted these organizations to sign on. We created a group called Maryland Equal Rights Action Network (MERAN) to encompass the groups that agreed and I was part of the steering committee along with Mary Ann and two other women. You can read about our work in the ERA Task Force report.

I missed the MLAW Fall Conference last year because a grandson had the audacity to get married that day. I attended the Women's Legislative Briefing in January, held annually, to highlight legislation being introduced for the session to support women and their families. The Women's Caucus of the Legislature held an ERA rally which I attended as well as the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence's annual service to honor those killed in DV situations.

Last but not least, I worked with the rest of the board of Maryland NOW to pass a budget, edit work on several mailings, and whatever I could do to help Maryland NOW function.

Sandy Bell  
Executive Vice-President

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## Treasurer's Report

I keep our financial records using the Quicken bookkeeping program as well as spreadsheets and a paper checkbook. This allows extensive cross-checking to assure that all transactions are entered properly. I have distributed financial reports at council meetings this past year. Our budgets have been significantly impacted by the pandemic, which has limited our activities and outreach for the past three years. Nonetheless, we are still financially stable, thanks to the bequest we received several years ago. Shortly after I took office in 2020 I found a good high-yield savings account to hold much of our funds, and that has contributed additional income as the yield has been steadily increasing.



Given the inconsistencies with which we have been receiving our dues rebates as well as the apparent lack of membership recruitment by our national office, we have been doing our own membership renewal and new-join solicitations, combining those using postal mail with other necessary mailings for economy.

We are in the process of preparing our Form 990 501(c)(4) tax return for 2023 for MD NOW. We are working with a professional accounting firm to make sure that our return adheres to the current tax law, and presents Maryland NOW's financial activities in such a way as to attract both donors and new members who can see how we put our resources to use to advance our goals. We expect to file our completed return by early summer.

Jerry Blum  
Treasurer

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## Financial Report to the 2024 Maryland NOW State Conference

	Budgeted 2023 (12 months)	Actual 2023 (12 months)
<b>Income</b>		
Dues Rebates	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 4,125.41
Interest and Investment Income	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 6,024.15
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$ -	\$ 365.77
Income from Membership Dues	\$ 300.00	\$ 135.00
General Contributions	\$ 500.00	\$ -
Fundraising	\$ 150.00	\$ 419.00
ERA Seneca Falls donations	\$ -	\$ 2,506.89
MD NOW PAC reimbursement	\$ -	\$ 150.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 7,950.00</b>	<b>\$ 13,726.22</b>

<b>Expenses</b>		
Membership	\$ 5,300.00	\$ 1,334.06
Chapters	\$ 3,100.00	\$ 769.07
State	\$ 4,177.00	\$ 4,654.85
Officers' Expenses	\$ 3,200.00	\$ 1,106.80
Communications	\$ 5,059.00	\$ 5,982.50
Conferences	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 2,664.27
Action/Legislative Outreach	\$ 6,431.89	\$ 4,973.37
Grants and Contributions to Coalition Partners	\$ 3,350.00	\$ 3,300.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 35,617.89</b>	<b>\$ 24,784.92</b>

	Budgeted 2024 (12 months)	Actual to 5/15/24 (5.5 months)
<b>Income</b>		
Dues Rebates	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 3,360.01
Interest and Investment Income	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 2,008.47
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$ -	\$ 296.00
Income from Membership Dues	\$ 100.00	\$ 65.00
General Contributions	\$ 200.00	\$ -
Fundraising	\$ -	\$ 495.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 9,300.00</b>	<b>\$ 6,224.48</b>
May 15th is the 135th day of 2024	(135/366) * \$9,300.00	equals \$2295.91

<b>Expenses</b>		
Membership	\$ 4,150.00	\$ 3,780.83
Chapters	\$ 2,100.00	\$ -
State	\$ 2,977.00	\$ 1,467.84
Officers' Expenses	\$ 3,200.00	\$ 295.72
Communications	\$ 12,499.00	\$ 2,941.30
Conferences	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 425.00
Action/Legislative Outreach	\$ 3,525.00	\$ 1,176.11
Grants and Contributions to Coalition Partners	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 925.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 37,451.00</b>	<b>\$ 11,011.80</b>
May 15th is the 135th day of 2024	(135/366) * 37,451.00	equals \$13,813.90



## Task Force and Committee Reports

### ERA Task Force Report—2023-2024

The mission of the Maryland NOW ERA Task Force is to increase awareness of the United States Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) among Marylanders; organize Marylanders to take action to promote recognition and validation of the ERA as the 28<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution; and take action to support protection, implementation, and enforcement of the Maryland state ERA (MD ERA).

The Maryland NOW ERA Task Force was established in January 2023; members meet the first Wednesday of each month. A list of task force deliverables members are working to achieve can be found on the Maryland NOW website at [marylandnow.org/era/](https://marylandnow.org/era/).

The task force is actively engaged in efforts with the ERA Coalition and the National Sign4ERA Petition team to boost signatures on the [Sign4ERA Petition](#). This petition is playing a key role in growing support among US members of Congress to pass the resolutions necessary to see the ERA published in the U.S. Constitution **this year!** If you have not yet signed, please do so ... and ask three friends to sign ... and ask them to ask three friends to sign ... and so on.

This has been a big year for the Maryland NOW ERA Task Force. We reached out to dozens of Maryland-based organizations to sign on to a letter to Maryland legislators requesting they introduce a resolution in the 2024 Maryland General Assembly affirming the federal ERA has met all requirements for a constitutional amendment. Thirty-seven organizations joined us in this effort resulting in introduction and passage of Maryland Senate Joint Resolution 1, which was signed by Governor Moore last month.

As a result of the work on the Maryland resolution, we were instrumental in forming the Maryland Equal Rights Action Network (MERAN), which Maryland NOW subsequently joined. MERAN's mission is to coordinate advocacy efforts across the state, mobilizing Marylanders in pursuit of equality, justice, and intersectional policy change at the state and federal levels; it's immediate focus is on the final publication of the Equal Rights Amendment as the 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.



Over the past year, the task force Education Outreach Team produced and uploaded to the Maryland NOW website a set of resources for legislators, media organizations, and the general public on the history and status of the ERA, why it is needed now more than ever, and responses to opponents concerns about the ERA. In addition, task force members gave ERA presentations to over a dozen Maryland-based organizations in 2024.

In April 2024, the task force partnered with AAUW Maryland and VoteEquality to bring the VoteEquality “Ruthless Vote Getter” van to the Eastern Shore for a two-week tour to inform Marylanders about the ERA, encourage them to vote for candidates that support equality, and provide resources for people to register to vote.

Thanks to everyone who helped spread the word about the Equal Rights Amendment! Anyone interested in joining the task force should contact Mary Ann Gorman ([era@marylandnow.org](mailto:era@marylandnow.org)).

Mary Ann Gorman  
ERA Task Force Coordinator

## **Reproductive Justice Task Force Report 2023-2024**

Maryland NOW is working to establish an organized response to the proposed amendment to the state’s constitution's Declaration of Rights:

*That every person, as a central component of an individual's rights to liberty and equality, has the fundamental right to reproductive freedom, including but not limited to the ability to make and effectuate decisions to prevent, continue, or end one's own pregnancy. The state may not, directly or indirectly, deny, burden, or abridge the right unless justified by a compelling state interest achieved by the least restrictive means.<sup>1</sup>*

This language will appear on the ballot as a “legislatively referred constitutional amendment.” We are seeking a “yes” vote.

The Maryland Catholic Conference is framing a campaign as one to “Protect Women’s Health Vote No” and that a NO vote is a vote for women and justice. The messages on their website are much the same as language faced by voters in Kansas two years ago, except that In order to support abortion access, voters had to vote “no.”

Our efforts on this will be to join the women in Mountain Maryland who are working to pass the amendment on the November 5 ballot. However, we also plan to help our volunteers working there to understand that messaging on this amendment has to reflect Mountain Maryland language and thinking, and can’t be what activists would use in the central part of our state along the I-95 corridor.

We will plan meetings with the Mountain Maryland Alliance for Reproductive Freedom to coordinate GOTV work they are doing and encourage our members to join in ongoing work there.



Other work we are planning is action outreach to younger feminists, not only for work on the ballot amendment, but in ongoing work helping to assist clinics around the state in more rural areas.

Please contact us about becoming more involved in reproductive justice work!

Phebe Wood—RJ@marylandnow.org

<sup>1</sup>We recommend the material presented on the Ballotpedia website “The Maryland Right to Reproductive Freedom website.

## Archives Committee Report 2023-2024

In the mid-1990s Maryland NOW began discussing the need to explore getting files of past leaders into some kind of safe storage facility. We were losing too much of our history as people moved, passed away with relatives unintentionally throwing out boxes of carefully stored files, or just discarded thinking they weren’t needed and or no one had room to store them.

A Maryland NOW member headed up some research to see what would be involved in putting these boxes of historical papers into an archive facility. Mary-Elise Haug, an experienced librarian, helped us navigate through choosing a facility and, about 20 years ago, we signed “Deed of Gift” with University of Maryland, College Park, Hornbake Library, Special Collections and University Archives.

While we have made deposits to our collection there, we received a wonderful gift about two years ago in the form of the papers of an early Maryland NOW activist and leader, Dolly Packard. Dolly became active in the women’s movement even prior to her involvement with the Southern Prince George’s Chapter, and—lucky us—saved an enormous collection of papers, newsletters and memorabilia.

The wonderful bonus of Dolly’s papers was that so much of the history of those early years was contained in chapter newsletters, which many chapters mailed to other chapter—often many states away. She also subscribed to many early feminist publications. One substantial collection was over 10 years of issues of “Off Our Backs” which the library was thrilled to receive. We were particularly excited that the library agreed to keep Dolly’s papers together and make it a “named” collection.

Our updates about work on this project put us in touch with other activists seeking to clean out their attics, closets and basements, and so our deposit of boxes last summer included contributions from other leaders in addition to Dolly’s papers. We were also able to mail newsletters and other records to the National NOW archives at the Schlesinger from NOW chapters around the country.

Dolly also left several boxes of photos, unfortunately mostly unidentified. Our contact at the University asked us to consider contributing to their video collections by making a video recordings of members going through the photos, identifying people and recalling stories about the events in the pictures.

We’ve had to hit “pause” for some months in 2024, but hope to get work on this very important project resumed next year.

If you know of any members who were involved in the 1970s and 1980s, please have them contact us: MarylandNOW@marylandnow.org. We would be more than



The loading dock at Hornbake Library with Maryland NOW’s latest contributions ready to take inside. L: Joni Jones Floyd, Curator, Maryland and Historical Collections, and Barbara Hays, President of Maryland NOW.



happy to help them with their donations in any way we can. Many thanks to Linda Kesselring, Jessica Morgan, and the Maryland Women's History Center who helped us with Dolly's papers. Thanks also to Jerry Blum, Sandy Bell, and Linda Fihelly who helped sort other Maryland NOW files and memorabilia for the archives and for sale at the 2023 National NOW conference.

Barbara Hays  
Archives Committee

## **Bylaws Committee Report 2023-2024**

This past year, Jerry Blum and I worked through the entire bylaws document and identified where we needed changes and revisions. Using the colored fonts helped identify what we had changed – what needed to be deleted and what needed to be added.

We held three discussion sessions with the state council, inviting anyone who wanted to learn what we had done to attend. We divided the document into three sections – the document in the middle was the officers' job descriptions; everything prior to that was simply state council and state conference structure and following that was just information about implementation provisions for committees and how the bylaws would be changed in the future.

We also decided to move the entire document as one motion and ask for any comments on any part – then vote on the document in one motion. The bylaws changes have been available on the website for several months and have been discussed by our very best wordsmiths!

Thanks needs to go to Maria Smith and Phebe Wood who worked on our Diversity statement, and to Mary Ann Gorman who worked on our statement of purpose. For the latter, we just decided to use a statement we had been including in our printed literature for some years. It's very concise and seems to lend itself for use in identifying our organizational goals.

The old bylaws referenced a policy manual, which we used to have and maintain three or four decades ago, but which we stopped working with when it became really difficult to find a person to serve as Secretary. Our next step may actually be to spend a year keeping track of what appears to need further work, but on things that are not really things that should be in bylaws. Some things remain as constants – we're fairly certain that we used to insist on having child care at our conferences, but that stopped being needed. However, as we now are working to bring in younger members, having child care is again important.

We welcome more involvement from members who enjoy working with organizational structure and policy. Now is an excellent time to think about how we want to put into writing various polices that we are learning we need now, in a different time in our history. Please get in touch with us if you'd like to be involved.

Barbara Hays and Jerry Blum  
Committee Co-Chairs

## **Communications Committee Report—2023-2024**

Maryland NOW came slightly late to the electronic communications and outreach party. The website was rebuilt in 2013 but was never updated. In 2020 we got funding to again update it and revisited the site. However, because it hadn't been kept up and traffic was near zero, we really just had to guess what changes and trends had taken place since 2013 and what we needed to update.

However, since that field is literally exploding with new ideas about how to best utilize this form of communication, we believe it's important to be constantly checking ourselves as we go forward to see what people respond to, how they find us, and how to help them remember Maryland NOW as a site they want



to re-visit once they find us.

So, funding electronic communications has become a major Maryland NOW budget line.

Additionally, we were driven by the need to bring younger women into the organization, so working through social media to attract different demographics also became part of the plan.

This past winter and spring, the Communications Team initiated work on a major project using various analytical tools to see where our traffic was coming from, among other things, and how we could do better.

Jeremy Potterfield, our staff member from King Cow, has just produced a wonderful analytics review using Google Analytics and statistics from MailChimp which we will use to frame outreach in the next few months as the General Election Cycle consumes everyone's attention. He has also redesigned our Join and Donate pages, making it easier for people to complete a range of financial transactions with us using credit cards.

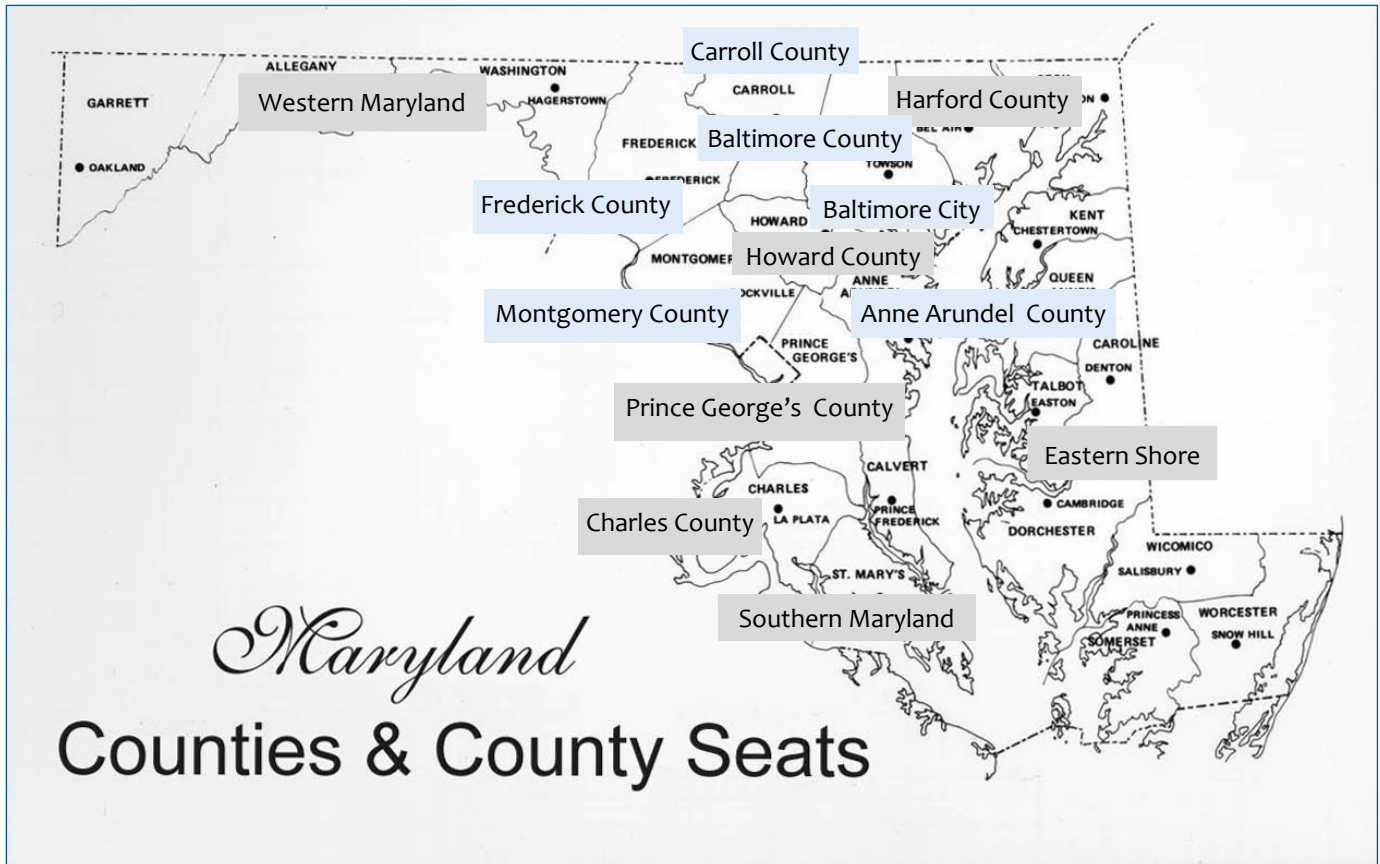
We had hired a person who was going to help us build a strong link between social media and our website (where people can join), but tragically, in February she contracted Shingles and had to leave her position with us. We are on the lookout for someone to replace her but haven't found anyone yet.

Thanks to everyone for feedback and ideas.

Barbara, David, Jeremy, Paige, and Minal



# Maryland NOW Chapters and Projected Development



Blue areas are ones in which we have identified leaders to help revive chapters or we have existing chapters with leadership. We are happily referring new interest to those leaders or helping new members and leaders to get involved. Gray areas are parts of the state where we do not currently have anyone offering to reorganize a chapter but hope that by the end of the year we will have people in place to start the reorganization process.

It is quite normal for chapters of NOW to experience years of strong activism followed by periods where it becomes difficult for them to find leaders and stay afloat. We recently found materials from a Maryland NOW conference in the mid-1980s in which 15 chapters filed reports. Today, membership is down, and chapters are struggling to find leaders. The pandemic and months of people choosing to stay home have contributed to this problem. But—for us, to grow and thrive is our paramount goal.

Over the past two years Maryland NOW has received requests to help start chapters in many of the less-densely populated areas of the state where we have either had chapters in the past or where we need to consolidate and rework structures so that chapters can function over a larger area than just one county.

Current events, including the reversal of Roe v. Wade, along with the just-held primary election in Maryland with a contested US Senate seat looming on the November ballot, have motivated members to consider getting involved. Equally important will be the ballot question of amending Maryland's state constitution to include protection to the right to abortion care which must pass state-wide. We do USPS mailings to our

membership as often as we can, and we include activist reply cards to help identify interest in chapter and state work.

Additionally we are actively working to reach out to members whose membership has lapsed to encourage them to renew and join in work on state and chapter projects.

If you would like to become more involved in local work, or in projects at the state level, please contact us at [membership@marylandnow.org](mailto:membership@marylandnow.org).

## Steps in Starting or Reviving a Chapter of Maryland NOW

Almost all areas in Maryland where we would like to organize groups, chapters will need to start at the beginning of the “convening” process to revive that chapter, even though chapters of NOW have existed there in the past. This part of the process is mostly done through the National NOW office, and requires identifying a leader, someone who will initially sign for the chapter in establishing financial accounts – a treasurer, and at least one other person. In Maryland, as in most areas of the US, NOW chapters’ names indicate a geographic location; in our state they are usually counties. These area names are approved by Maryland NOW’s executive committee and the National NOW office is informed of this name. The state president must sign their convening form.

Once this is done, the chapter can begin the work of organizing its group. In our state, they must have 10 members who will design and define the chapter’s structure, outlined in the chapter’s bylaws. These bylaws must be shared with the state and the National NOW office, and will be sent to the IRS with their application for an EIN, or taxpayer ID number, available to them under Maryland NOW’s and National NOW’s general exemption status. With their EIN number they can open a bank account, and after establishing a simple budget, are entitled to receive grant money from Maryland NOW to start their activities.

Representatives from the Maryland NOW chapters meet as the Maryland State Council to oversee the work of the state, and have two delegates representing them on that council. They will work on projects and events that promote the state’s chapters, the state, NOW, and feminism across the entire state. Their chapter has representation on the Maryland NOW PAC and in all state task forces and committees.

In the years of the COVID pandemic and in a state with the unfortunate geography that we have, we have begun actively exploring how to organize areas outside of the I-95 corridor in Western Maryland, Southern Maryland, and the Eastern Shore using electronic communication to meet and work as a chapter.

2024

# Maryland NOW Chapter Reports



## Montgomery County MD NOW 2023 – 2024 Chapter Report

### Current Leadership :

- Jeannette Feldner, chapter President
- Holly Joseph, chapter Treasurer
- Julie Wiater Ransel, Exec. Vice President as of September 2023
- Nancy Nyland, acting Secretary

### Key Highlights:

- **Chapter Meetings are Back!** Re-energized chapter in 2023 and since April of 2023 have had 10 monthly chapter meetings, 5 of which were hybrid (virtual and in person) at the Rockville Memorial Library and 4 virtual meetings. The chapter has also hosted two social events.
- **More Member Engagement:** MCMD NOW currently has 165 members and has new members participating in the monthly chapter meetings. Some have included member spotlights – providing a member with the opportunity to promote a feminist cause and/or update the chapter on their personal feminist activism.
- **New Marketing Collateral:** MCMD NOW created a marketing flier and a selfie frame (This is what a feminist looks like!) as a way to be prepared for promotion/membership drive opportunities and utilized these tools at the Women’s Legislative Briefing in January 2024.
- **Keeping Our Community Informed:** Montgomery County NOW continues to provide an electronic Feminist Calendar, which provides event updates for the community. The email list has 1,033 subscribers made up of both chapter members and non-members. The calendar continues to be an important source for the community to remain educated on feminist opportunities for involvement and provides this important promotion service free of charge.
- **Support for Maryland NOW ERA Task Force:** MCMD NOW leadership continues to be active members in the Maryland NOW ERA Task Force – providing supporting actions that include development of creative design, crafting language for education/outreach tools, providing online and in person ERA presentations, and reaching out to universities and organizations to seek partnership and promotion of the Equal Rights Amendment.

### Chronologic Timeline of Activities (2023 – 2024):

- During the spring/summer of 2023, the chapter developed a meeting schedule and assigned chapter roles regarding meeting administration. The chapter also elected an Executive VP and reviewed chapter finances.
- In November 2023, the chapter sent out a survey to members to identify the preferred areas of focus for the upcoming calendar year. Survey results identified that in 2024, members want to focus on state and federal elections, safeguarding abortion and promoting the publication of the ERA. The chapter has developed a 2024 calendar of events/actions that addresses these priorities.
- MCMD NOW continued as a co-sponsor for the MLAW Legislative Briefing in 2023 and hosted an in person holiday cocktail event in December 2023.
- MCMD NOW was on the planning committee and co-sponsor of the Women’s Legislative Briefing in January 2024 and participated with a dedicated table and very popular selfie station.
- In February of 2024, the chapter re-started our Reproductive Justice Task Force with a focus on supporting the education and promotion of the November ballot initiative for amending the Maryland constitution to permanently legalize abortion and safeguard abortion providers/patients/supporters. The task force is partnering with Planned Parenthood and 4 other organizations to ensure the ballot initiative passes.

### Spring of 2024 has been very busy for the MCMD NOW chapter:

- MCMD NOW partnered with Walt Whitman High School internship program and has added an intern to the chapter who helps in doing online research and creating women centric tools to support the chapter.
- On March 5th, President of Montgomery County NOW, Jeannette Feldner, spoke at the Montgomery County Council, where the Council, which is made up of 6 women Council Members, passed a proclamation that in Montgomery County, March 8th would be recognized as International Women’s Day.
- On March 8th, Montgomery County NOW members Jeannette Feldner, Julie Wiater Ransel and Susan Horst attended a meeting and brunch hosted by the six Montgomery County Councilwomen, recognizing and celebrating Women’s History Month and International Women’s Day. The topic of the meeting was Montgomery County Women Who Advocate for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and included brainstorming sessions on these issues.
- In March, MCMD NOW member Lorna Forde represented Montgomery County NOW at Walt Whitman High School as a speaker at their Social Justice Fair.
- In May of 2024, the chapter hosted an in-person network/social event that included socializing, light exercise, craft show and a coffee.

**National Organization for Women** MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND, CHAPTER

P.O. Box 2301, Rockville, MD 20847-2301 • (301) 368-1917 • info@mcmdnow.org • www.mcmdnow.org

## Anne Arundel County NOW

As home to the capital of the state of Maryland, it seems apt that Anne Arundel County NOW would be very involved in the legislative process.

Legislation plays a big role in our chapter's activities. We are looking forward to the 2025 session when we can again organize lobby nights for the state. We have a representative on the board of the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW). We regularly support and attend the Women's Legislative Briefing (WLB), as we did this past January, and we also have representation on the board of Progressive Maryland. Together with these organizations, we work to improve the lives of women and their families on many issues. (MLAW monitors legislation and shares information Maryland NOW and other groups need to get bills passed; we work with Progressive Maryland on criminal justice reform.



Other coalitions we work with and support are Marylanders for Reproductive Choice, Free State Justice (on issues affecting the LGBTQIA+ community), and Maryland NOW's ERA Task Force. This year we hope to play a role in work done in Annapolis on the ballot question to enshrine women's bodily autonomy in our state constitution. Working with the Maryland NOW ERA Task Force we worked to passed a resolution last session that stated the Maryland Assembly believed the Equal Rights amendment had met all Constitutional requirements to be the 28th Amendment to the US Constitution.

## New Chapters in Maryland NOW

In recent months we have begun work with a convening group in Carroll County who are working to reactivate the chapter there. A **Carroll County NOW** chapter existed here up through the 1980s, and a new group is working to build a new group. They have submitted a convenor form to the National NOW office, and begun getting their name out at community events. They feel that despite being in a very conservative county, there are residents there who want to support and advance more progressive views.

Activists in **Allegany County** have contacted us about starting a chapter there. We have also heard from interested activists on the **Eastern Shore** — in Easton, Kent County, and the Salisbury/Berlin area.

We believe that the Fall General Election Cycle will help us find many women who want to become more involved with Maryland NOW and we look forward to sharing those new chapter contacts soon!



## Parliamentary Procedures At-A-Glance

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	To Do This <sup>1</sup>	You Say This	May You Interrupt the Speaker	Must you Be Seconded?	Is the Motion Debatable	Is the Motion Amendable?	What Vote is Required?
2	Adjourn the meeting	"I move that we adjourn..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority vote required
3	Recess the meeting	"I move that we recess until..."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority vote required
4	Complain about noise, room temperature, etc	"Point of privilege."	Yes	No	No <sup>2</sup>	No	No vote required <sup>3</sup>
5	Suspend further consideration of something	"I move we table it."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority Vote required
6	End Debate	"I move the previous question."	No	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds vote required
7	Postpone Consideration of something	"I move we postpone this matter until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority vote required
8	Have something studied further	"I move we refer this matter to a committee."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority vote required
9	Amend a motion	"I move that her motion be amended by..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority vote required
10	Introduce business (a primary motion)	"I move that..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority vote required
11	Object to a procedure or to a personal affront	"Point of order."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote required. Chair decides.
12	Request Information	"Point of information."	If urgent, may interrupt speaker	No	No	No	No vote required.
13	Ask for a vote by actual count to verify a voice vote	"I call for a division of the house."	No <sup>2</sup>	No	No	No	No vote is required unless someone objects. <sup>3</sup>
14	Object to considering some undiplomatic or improper matter	"I object to consideration of this question."	Yes	No	No	No	Two-thirds vote required
15	Take up a matter previously disposed of	"I move we take from the table..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority required



## Parliamentary Procedures At-A-Glance

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
16	To Do This <sup>1</sup>	You Say This	May You Interrupt the Speaker	Must you Be Seconded?	Is the Motion Debatable	Is the Motion Amendable?	What Vote is Required?
17	Reconsider something already disposed of	"I move we now (or later) reconsider our action relative to..."	Yes	Yes	Debatable if original motion is debateable	No	Majority required
18	Consider something out of its scheduled order	I move we suspend the rules and consider..."	No	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds vote required
19	Vote of a ruling of the chair	"I appeal the chair's decision."	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority required
20							
21							
22							
23							
24	<sup>1</sup> The motions or points above are listed in established order of precedence. When any one of them is pending you may not introduce another that is listed below it But you may introduce another that is listed above it.						
25							
26	<sup>2</sup> In this case, any resulting motion is debatable.						
27							
28	<sup>3</sup> Chair decides.						
29							
30	This information was originally compiled by the Houston Chronicle						

# MARYLAND NOW BYLAWS

## (as amended May 21, 2022)

### **ARTICLE I. Name**

The name of this organization shall be the National Organization for Women, Inc., Maryland; hereinafter referred to as Maryland NOW.

### **ARTICLE II. Purpose**

This organization shall take action within the State of Maryland as a whole to further the purposes and policies of the National Organization for Women, through the coordination of chapter efforts and statewide functions and actions.

### **ARTICLE III. Membership**

A member of Maryland NOW shall be any person whose current dues have been paid to National NOW and whose current state dues have been received by the Treasurer of Maryland NOW.

### **ARTICLE IV. Diversity**

Maryland NOW and its member chapters shall work together in every way possible to achieve diversity throughout the organization, including both representation of diversity in our leadership and in our membership, in our outreach and coalition work, and to work in the communities of our state to end discrimination of all kinds.

No policy or action of Maryland NOW shall have the intent or effect of discriminating against any member because of race or ethnicity, economic status, sexual orientation, physical ability or age.

### **ARTICLE V. Structure**

The structure of Maryland NOW shall be:

- A. The State Conference
- B. The State Council
- C. The Executive Committee
- D. State Task Force Chairs and Committees

### **ARTICLE VI. State Conference**

Sec. A. The purpose of the State Conference shall be to elect officers, establish policy, adopt program priorities, elect at-large delegates to the National NOW Conference, and transact such other business as may come before the members.

Sec. B. The State Conference shall be held annually and at least 33 days prior to the National Conference.

Sec. C. The Council shall determine the date, place, and agenda of the conference, and shall give at least four (4) weeks' notice thereof. The agenda must include the results of the financial review outlined in Article VIII. Section 6. Treasurer's Duties.

Sec. D. Persons who have been members of Maryland NOW for 60 days and who are duly registered and in attendance may participate in all conference activities and vote. No NOW

member shall be required to pay a fee in order to participate in the business of the conference and no distinction of any kind shall be drawn between those able to pay fees and those unable to pay fees.

Sec. E. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of at least 60% of members who are registered and in attendance, including two state officers; in addition, one-third of all Maryland NOW chapters shall be represented.

Sec. F. At-large members of NOW residing in Maryland shall elect delegates and alternates to the National Conference at the State Conference in accordance to the ratio that applies to the member chapters as stated in the National Bylaws.

Sec. G. Each member chapter will submit to the Maryland State Conference an annual written status report.

## **Article VII. State Council**

Sec. A. The State Council shall manage the affairs and control the funds and property of the organization, and may adopt necessary rules and regulations to be included and updated in the Maryland NOW Policy Manual, all being subject to the instructions or decisions of the State Conference, provided that actions taken by the Council shall not be in opposition to, nor in modification of the purpose or policy of the National or State organization. The Council shall take such other action as is necessary to implement the purpose of the organization.

### **Sec. B. Member Chapters**

1. A member chapter is a chartered chapter of the National Organization for Women within the State of Maryland or
2. A convening group of the National Organization for Women within the State of Maryland that has applied for a provisional charter.

### **Sec. C. Council Membership**

1. Each member chapter shall be entitled to two (2) voting delegates as members of the Council.
2. A State Council delegate must be a member in good standing of a Maryland NOW chapter who has been selected from that chapter. A chapter delegate has the responsibility of presenting chapter views to the State Council and of communicating Council decisions to her/his chapter.
3. State officers and the State Task Forces and Committee Chairs shall be voting members of the State Council but shall not represent their chapters.

### **Sec. D. Council Meetings**

1. Regular meetings of the Council shall be held at least six times per year. Notification shall be sent to Council members at least twenty-one (21) days in advance. A proposed agenda will be pre-circulated at least three (3) days prior to the meeting.
2. Special meetings of the Council may be called by the State President(s) or at least four (4) Council members representing at least two (2) member chapters with notification to all Council members.
3. Meetings of the council shall be open to any member of the National Organization for

4. All votes taken shall be decided by the Council members present and voting.
5. A quorum shall consist of at least 30% of the Council members, representing at least 30% of member chapters; in addition, two (2) state officers not representing their member chapters shall be required for a state council meeting to take place.
6. Meetings by conference call may constitute a meeting, with the same requirements of notice and pre-circulation of the agenda applying. Upon majority agreement of council members at a meeting, a motion or resolution may be voted upon by email at a future date. Members present at the council meeting who have not registered a vote within twenty-four (24) hours of the posting of a motion or resolution will be contacted by phone or mail to determine their vote.
7. State Council shall whenever possible schedule voting on substantive matters as to allow discussion at chapter level and the receipt of instructions from their chapter by delegates.

### **Article VIII. Meetings**

1. Maryland NOW meetings, including committee, task force, state council, and the state conference, may be held in person, by electronic means, or by a hybrid of those two, so long as the meetings provide, at a minimum, conditions or opportunity for simultaneous oral communication among all participating members equivalent to those of meetings held in one room.
2. Any meeting of Maryland NOW, whether virtual or in person, shall follow the same requirements for holding that kind of meeting involving notice and membership requirements, as are listed elsewhere in these bylaws.
3. If a secret ballot is to be taken for voting on any matter, resolution or candidate for office, the Executive Committee will determine the most secure way to conduct that vote.

### **Article IX. Officers**

#### **Sec. A. State Officers are:**

1. State President(s): one person may serve, or two persons may serve as co-presidents.
2. Vice President—Executive
3. Vice President—Action
4. Secretary
5. Treasurer

#### **Sec. B. State President(s) shall:**

1. Serve as primary spokesperson(s) for Maryland NOW.
2. Serve as liaison with the Middle Atlantic Regional Organization and with the National Organization for Women regarding Maryland NOW activities.
3. Develop the agenda and preside at the State Conference.
4. Develop and present the agenda and conduct the State Council meetings.
5. Appoint, subject to Council approval, State Task Force and Committee Chairs who shall coordinate statewide task forces and committee efforts.
6. Develop, with the State Council, State functions and actions.
7. Serve as Chair of the Maryland NOW Political Action Committee.

Sec. C. Vice President—Executive shall:

1. Coordinate the administrative functions of Maryland NOW, and serve as liaison to the Committees.
2. Coordinate publicity for State functions and actions.
3. Preside at the State Conference, State Council, and Executive Committee meetings in the absence of the President; assume the position of President in the event of a vacancy in that position.
4. Serve as chair of the Maryland NOW Political Action Committee when designated by the State President(s).

Sec. D. Vice President—Action shall:

1. Coordinate statewide action programs, including State and National legislative efforts.
2. Serve as liaison with the chapters, the State Task Forces, and other resource persons.
3. Serve as Chair of the Maryland NOW Political Action Committee when designated by the State President(s).

Sec. E. Secretary—Records and Communication shall:

1. Coordinate recordings of Maryland NOW Council and Conference meetings for distribution and/or online storage, and maintain chapter and state leadership records with National NOW.
2. Maintain files of any correspondence and records of meetings generated on behalf of the organization, the council, and the Executive Committee in online storage.
3. Post information, action alerts, and notices on social media platforms designated by Maryland NOW to make the organization more visible to the general public.
4. Maintain membership recruitment and retention programs, as well as communication with new members and individuals interested in Maryland NOW, follow up with any membership problems, and help place interested individuals in various chapters, committees and task forces.
5. Work with a member of the Executive Committee to send electronic mail notices to various Maryland NOW mailing lists regarding legislation, action, or news posts as well as to write content for Maryland NOW's website.
6. Serve as the Chair of the Maryland NOW Political Action Committee when designated by the State President(s).

Sec. F. Treasurer shall:

1. Receive all funds of Maryland NOW and deposit them in such banks and accounts as are approved by the Council. Two (2) Maryland NOW officers will be co-signers on all Maryland NOW accounts. No account may be closed without an affirmative vote of the council.
2. Disperse funds in accordance with the approved budget.
3. Submit tax forms to appropriate State and Federal governments as required by law, to be reviewed by the Executive Committee.
4. Make regular financial reports to the Council and a financial statement to the

4. Make regular financial reports to the Council and a financial statement to the State Conference.
5. Submit the books and accounts for financial review at the Council meeting prior to the State Conference. This review must include the ability of Council members to examine bank statements for all Maryland NOW accounts as well as reports submitted by the Treasurer during the preceding year. The Treasurer shall distribute the results of the Financial Review to the chapters at the state conference.
6. Coordinate the development of an annual budget and submit it to the Council for adoption.
7. Act as liaison with chapter treasurers to collect dues and transact other business as required.
8. Collect dues from and maintain and make available to the Council membership lists of non-chapter National NOW members who have joined Maryland NOW.
9. Serve as Treasurer of the Maryland NOW Political Action Committee.

Sec. G. Officers may delegate prescribed duties to Maryland NOW members as necessary, but may not delegate the responsibility for the performance of such duties.

#### **ARTICLE X. Executive Committee**

Sec. A. The Executive Committee shall be the elected Maryland NOW officers.

Sec. B. This committee shall meet as necessary between State Council meetings.

Sec. C. This committee will be accountable to the State Council for its actions and decisions.

#### **ARTICLE XI. State Task Forces and Committees**

Sec. A. Task Forces shall be formed to plan and direct the work necessary to realize the goals of Maryland NOW in specific issue areas. Committees shall be formed to carry out ongoing administrative functions.

Sec. B. Task Forces and Committees shall be established by, selected by, and responsible to the State Council. One of the established committees must be a Budget Committee. The number of Task Forces and Committees in existence at any given time shall not exceed a total of ten (10).

Sec. C. Task Force and Committee chairs shall be Maryland NOW members and shall be appointed by the State President(s) subject to Council approval by majority vote. Task Forces and Committees shall be composed of the Chair and other Maryland NOW members in good standing.

Sec. D. Task Forces and Committees shall:

1. Coordinate the efforts to achieve Task Force and Committee goals, including implementation at the chapter level.
2. Submit to the State Council an annual plan and budget proposal consistent with their goals and objectives; in addition, all action proposals must be submitted for approval.
3. Present a status report at each State Council meeting and an annual report at the State Conference.



Sec. E. Task Force and Committee Chairs shall maintain their title and the responsibility and privileges thereof until another Chair is appointed and approved by the State Council or until the Task Force or Committee is declared inactive.

## **ARTICLE XII. Eligibility, Elections, and Terms of Office**

Sec. A. To be eligible for office, a candidate must have been a member of Maryland NOW or a minimum of one (1) year. To serve as president or treasurer, a candidate must have attended at least three (3) state council meetings.

Sec. B. No more than two (2) officers shall be from the same chapter. In the event that more than two persons from one chapter are nominated for separate offices, the elections of officers shall take place in the following order: President, Vice President—Executive, Vice President—Action, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Sec. C. Officers of Maryland NOW shall be elected at each annual State Conference and shall serve from the conclusion of the annual State Conference at which they were elected until the conclusion of the next succeeding conference. All officers, at the end of their term, must turn over all files they were given upon taking the office they have held as well as all files and property pertaining to their activities during their term, at the State Conference or at the meeting at which a new officer is elected.

Sec. D. In the event of a vacancy in an office other than the Presidency, the office shall be filled by the State Council.

## **ARTICLE XIII. Finances**

Sec. A. The fiscal year shall be from January 1st to December 31st.

Sec. B. The amount of dues of each member, including at-large members, shall be set by a two-thirds vote of the State Council members present and voting.

Sec. C. The Budget Committee shall prepare a proposed annual budget for the fiscal year, and distribute it to the State Council members at least thirty (30) days after the State Conference, and within sixty (60) days of the beginning of the fiscal year, giving thirty (30) days notice before the State Council meeting at which it is to be adopted. Review and revisions of the budget may occur at any State Council meeting.

## **ARTICLE XIV. Grievance Committee**

Sec. A. It shall be the responsibility of the State Council to resolve member and chapter grievances brought to its attention, only after all other grievance remedies at the local levels have been exhausted.

Sec. B. The State Council shall appoint, by lot, three of its disinterested members who shall arbitrate the grievance pursuant to applicable disciplinary procedures provided by the parliamentary authority designated by these bylaws and who shall recommend appropriate action for the State Council for approval.

## **Article XV. Amendment of the Bylaws**

Sec. A. Bylaws changes may be proposed by

1. The State Bylaws Committee,



2. the boards of three (3) Maryland NOW member chapters, or
3. forty (40) Maryland NOW members, whose signatures must be dated, from at least four (4) members chapters.

Sec. B. When method 2) or 3) is used, proposals must be submitted in writing to the State Bylaws Chair at least 45 days prior to the State Conference.

Sec. C. Proposed bylaws changes shall be submitted by the Bylaws Committee to the membership in writing at least thirty (30) days before the State Conference.

Sec. D. These bylaws may be amended at a Maryland NOW State Conference by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting.

#### **Article XVI. Rules of Order**

Any operating procedures of Maryland NOW not covered by these bylaws or in the Maryland NOW Policy Manual are governed by Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, where applicable.



## Maryland NOW Proposed Bylaws Changes 2024 to be considered Saturday, June 1, 2024

### Article I. Name

The name of the organization shall be the Maryland Chapter, National Organization for Women, ~~Inc., Maryland;~~ hereinafter referred to as Maryland NOW.

### Article II. Purpose

The organization shall take action within the State of Maryland to further the purposes and policies of the National Organization for Women, through the coordination of chapter efforts, **the work of task forces and committees**, and statewide functions and actions.

**Maryland NOW works to eliminate discrimination and harassment in the workplace, schools, the justice system, and all other sectors of society; secure abortion, birth control and other reproductive rights for all women; end all forms of violence against women, eradicate racism, sexism and homophobia; and promote equality and justice in our society.**

### Article III. Membership

**A member of Maryland NOW shall be any person** ~~whose current dues have been paid to National NOW and~~ whose dues have been received by the Treasurer of Maryland NOW, **or whose name has come to Maryland NOW through National NOW recruiting or notification.**

### Article IV. Diversity

~~Maryland NOW and its member chapters shall work together in every way possible to achieve diversity throughout the organization, including both representation of diversity in our leadership and in our membership, in our outreach and coalition work, and to work in the communities of our state to end discrimination of all kinds.~~

~~No policy or action of Maryland NOW shall have the intent or effect of discriminating against any member because of race or ethnicity, economic status, sexual orientation, physical ability or age.~~

**Maryland NOW and its member chapters are committed to fostering, cultivating, and preserving a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI), access, and belonging for all people. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, gender identity, socio-economic status, ethnicity, citizenship, race, age, sexual orientation, religion, marital status, or ability status.**

**Maryland NOW will work toward becoming a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization both in membership and leadership. As an organization, Maryland NOW believes that practicing diversity and inclusion is fundamental toward achieving our goals.**

**In service of these goals, we commit to the following actions:**

- 1. We will advance equity through concerted policy and advocacy efforts on the state and local level. We will support our local chapters in prioritizing inclusion in our work and partnerships.**
- 2. We will actively seek out and listen to voices from underserved or marginalized populations within our community.**
- 3. We will ensure that our community partners uphold DEI values that are in alignment with ours.**

### Article V. Structure

The structure of Maryland NOW shall be:

1. The **annual** State Conference
2. The State Council
3. The Executive Committee/**Maryland NOW state officers**
4. State Task Force **and Committee** Chairs

#### Article VI. Meetings

1. Maryland NOW meetings, including committee, task force, state council, and the state conference, may be held in person, by electronic means, or by a hybrid of those two, so long as the meetings provide, at a minimum, conditions of opportunity for simultaneous oral communication among all participating members equivalent to those of meetings held in one room.
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3. If a secret ballot is to be taken for voting on any matter, resolution or candidate for office, the Executive Committee will determine the most secure way to conduct that vote.

#### Article VII. State Conference

Sec. A. The purpose of the State Conference shall be to elect officers, establish policy, adopt program priorities, ~~elect at large delegates to the National NOW Conference,~~ and transact such other business as may come before the members.

Sec. B. The State Conference shall be held annually. ~~and at least 33 days prior to the National Conference.~~

Sec. C. **The Executive Committee and** the State Council shall determine the date, place, and agenda of the conference and shall give at least four (4) weeks' notice thereof. ~~The agenda must include the results of the financial review outlined in Article VIII. Section 6. Treasurer's Duties.~~

Sec. D. Persons who have been members of Maryland NOW for 60 days and who are duly registered and in attendance may participate in all conference activities and vote. No NOW member shall be required to pay a fee in order to participate in the business of the conference and no distinction of any kind shall be drawn between those able to pay fees and those unable to pay fees.

Sec. E. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of at least sixty percent (60%) of members who are registered and in attendance, including two state officers; in addition, one-third of all Maryland NOW chapters shall be represented.

~~Sec. F. At large members of NOW residing in Maryland shall elect delegates and alternates to the National Conference at the State Conference in accordance to the ratio that applies to the member chapters as stated in the National Bylaws.~~

**Sec. F. No resolutions mandating the expenditure of Maryland NOW funds can be considered by the members at the Conference. Recommendations can be made for the State Council to consider such motions.**

Sec. G. Each member chapter will submit to the Maryland State Conference an annual written status report.

#### Article VIII. State Council

Sec. A. The State Council shall manage the **month-to-month** affairs and **control oversee** the funds and property of the organization, and may adopt necessary rules and regulations **toward that end.** ~~to be included and updated in the Marland NOW Policy Manual all being subject to the instructions or decisions of the State Conference, provided that actions taken by the Council shall not be in opposition to, nor in modification of the purpose or policy of the National or State organization.~~ **All actions of the State Council will be subject to the instructions or decisions of the State Conference, and shall not be in opposition to, nor in modification of the purpose or policy of the National or State organization. The Council shall take such other action as is necessary to implement the purpose of the organization.**

Sec. B. Member chapters

A member chapter is

1. a chartered chapter of the National Organization for Women within the State of Maryland or
2. a convening group of the National Organization for Women within the State of Maryland that ~~has applied for a provisional charter~~ **is working to complete an application for a provisional charter with the National Chapter and State Development office of the National Action Center.**

### Sec. C. Council membership

1. Each member chapter shall be entitled to two (2) voting delegates as members of this Council.
2. A State Council delegate must be a member in good standing of a Maryland NOW member chapter who has been selected from that chapter. A chapter delegate has the responsibility of presenting chapter views to the State Council and of communicating Council decisions to her/his chapter. Convening chapters will have one vote at council meetings for a period of one year from the date of their convening status with the organization.
3. State officers and the State Task Force and Committee Chairs shall be voting members of the State Council but shall not represent their chapters.

### Sec. D. Council meetings

1. Regular meetings of the Council shall be held at least six times per year **and can be a combination of in-person and virtual meetings as decided by the Executive Committee and the Council, the goal being to have the best representation possible by member chapters.** Notification shall be sent to Council members at least twenty-one (21) days in advance. A proposed agenda will be pre-circulated at least three (3) days prior to the meeting.
2. Special meetings of the Council may be called by the State President~~(s)~~ or at least four (4) Council members representing at least two (2) member chapters with notification to Council members.
3. Meetings of the council shall be open to any member of the National Organization for Women, unless the Council votes to go into Executive Session **during some portion of that meeting. Additionally, attendance may be limited to members of Maryland NOW, or specifically the State Council members if agreed upon by the Executive Committee and/or the State Council.**
4. All votes taken shall be decided by the Council members present and voting.
5. A quorum shall consist of at least 30% of the Council members **representing member chapters and at-large members so designated**; in addition, two (2) state officers not representing their member chapters shall be required for a state council meeting to take place.
6. Meetings held **virtually by conference call** will constitute an official meeting, with the same requirements of notice and pre-circulation of the agenda applying. ~~Upon majority agreement of council members not present at a meeting, a motion or resolution may be voted upon by email at a future date. Members present at the council meeting who have not registered a vote within twenty four hours of the posting of a motion or resolution will be contacted by phone or mail to determine their vote.~~
7. ~~The State Council shall, whenever possible, schedule voting on substantive matters as to allow discussion at the chapter level. and the receipt of instructions from their chapter by delegates. Final votes on any postponed matters must take place within 72 hours of the meeting at which the question was proposed.~~

## Article IX. Officers

### Sec. A. State Officers are:

1. ~~State President(s); one person may serve, or two persons may serve as co-Presidents.~~
2. Vice President – Executive
3. Vice President – Action
4. Secretary – Records and Communications
5. Treasurer

### Sec. B. ~~State President(s)~~ The responsibilities of the President shall include but not be limited to:

1. **Serve as primary spokesperson(s) for Maryland NOW.**
2. Serve as liaison with the ~~Middle Atlantic Regional Organization~~ **regional district in which the state has been placed, and with the National Organization for Women and with groups of chapters and states working on specific concerns, and with the National officers, board and staff** regarding Maryland NOW activities.
3. Develop ~~the agenda and preside at the State Conference. (4) Develop and present the agenda and conduct State Council meetings.~~ **proposed agendas for the state conference and state council meetings, and conduct those meetings.**
4. **The State President or a member of the Executive Committee shall be an ex-officio member of all task forces and committees, and shall ensure that they function at all times in the best interests of Maryland NOW.**
5. Appoint, subject to Council approval, State Task Force and Committee Chairs who shall coordinate statewide task force and committee efforts.
6. Develop, with the State Council, State functions and ~~actions~~ **events that promote the best interests and presentation of**

our issues for the organization.

1. **Work with the Communications Committee to ensure that electronic media, email and other visibility with our members, coalition partners and the general public presents the best possible image of Maryland NOW.**
2. Serve as Chair of the Maryland NOW Political Action Committee.

Sec. C. **The responsibilities of the Vice President – Executive shall include but not be limited to:**

1. Coordinate the administrative functions of Maryland NOW, and serve as liaison to the Committees.
2. Coordinate publicity for State functions and ~~actions~~ **events. Work with the state president to develop and maintain Maryland NOW's image and brand.**
3. Preside at the State Conference, State Council, and Executive Committee meetings in the absence of the President; assume the position of President in the event of a vacancy in that position.
4. Serve as chair of the Maryland NOW Political Action Committee when designated by the State President ~~(s)~~.

Sec. D. **The responsibilities of the Vice President – Action shall include but not be limited to:**

1. Coordinate statewide action programs, including State and National legislative efforts, **and action events held in the state and regionally to promote NOW issues. Coordinate work with the Communications Committee to prepare materials promoting our issues and action goals.**
2. Serve as liaison with the chapters, the State Task Forces, and other resource persons.
3. Serve as Chair of the Maryland NOW Political Action Committee when designated by the State President ~~(s)~~.

Sec. E. **The responsibilities of the Secretary – Records and Communication shall include but not be limited to:**

1. Coordinate recordings of Maryland NOW Council and Conference meetings for distribution and/or online storage, and maintain chapter and state leadership records with National NOW.
2. Maintain files of any correspondence generated on behalf of the organization, the council, and the Executive Committee in online storage.
3. Post information, action alerts, and notices on social media platforms designated by Maryland NOW to make the organization more visible to the general public.
4. Maintain membership recruitment and retention programs, as well as communication with new members and individuals interested in Maryland NOW, follow up with any membership problems, and help place interested individuals in various chapters, committees, and task forces.
5. **Make membership lists available to chapters, convening chapters, and event coordinators in accordance with zip codes areas.**
6. Work with a member of the Executive Committee to send electronic mail notices to various Maryland NOW mailing lists regarding legislation, action, or news posts as well as to write content for Maryland NOW's website.
7. Service as the Chair of the Maryland NOW Political Action Committee when designated by the State President ~~(s)~~.

Sec. F. **The responsibilities of the Treasurer shall include but not be limited to:**

1. Receive all funds of Maryland NOW and deposit them in such banks and accounts **as best meet our cash and investment needs.** ~~as are approved by the Council.~~ Two (2) Maryland NOW officers will be co-signers on all Maryland NOW accounts. No account may be closed without an affirmative vote of the council.
2. Disperse funds in accordance with the approved budget.
3. Submit tax forms to appropriate State and Federal ~~governments~~ **agencies** as required by law, to be reviewed by the Executive Committee **prior to filing.**
4. Make regular financial reports to the Council and a financial statement to the State Conference.
5. Submit the books and accounts for financial review at the Council meeting prior to the State Conference. This review must include the ability of Council members to examine bank statements for all Maryland NOW accounts as well as reports submitted by the Treasurer during the preceding year. The Treasurer shall distribute ~~the results of the financial review~~ **a broad financial overview to the chapters** at the annual state conference.
6. Coordinate **with the Finance and/or Budget Committee** the development of an annual budget and submit it to the Council for adoption.
7. ~~Act as liaison with chapter treasurers to collect dues and transact other business as required.~~
8. ~~Collect dues from and maintain and make available to the Council, membership lists of non-chapter National NOW members who have joined Maryland NOW.~~
7. Serve as Treasurer of the Maryland NOW Political Action Committee.

Sec. G. Officers may delegate prescribed duties to Maryland NOW members as necessary, but may not delegate the

responsibility for the performance of such duties.

#### **Article X. Executive Committee**

1. The Executive Committee shall be the elected Maryland NOW officers. **Task Force and Committee Chairs may be included for input on decisions and discussion as needed.**
2. This committee shall meet as necessary between State Council Meetings.
3. This committee will ~~be accountable~~ **report decisions and discussions** to the state council. **An officer of Maryland NOW will take notes and keep records of Executive Committee meetings.**

#### **ARTICLE XI. State Task Forces and Committees**

Sec. A. Task Forces shall be formed to plan and direct the work necessary to realize the goals of Maryland NOW in specific issue areas. Committees shall be formed to carry out ongoing administrative functions.

Sec. B. Task Forces and Committees shall be established by, selected by, and responsible to the State Council. ~~One of the established Committees must be a Budget Committee.~~ The number of Task Forces and Committees in existence at any given time shall not exceed a total of ten (10).

Sec. C. Task Force and Committee Chairs shall be Maryland NOW members and shall be appointed by the State President ~~(s)~~ subject to Council approval. ~~by majority vote.~~ Task Forces and Committees shall be composed of the **Task Force or Committee Chair** and other Maryland NOW members in good standing. **Task Force or Committee Chairs may be removed by the State Council for cause.**

Sec. D. Task Forces and Committees shall:

1. Coordinate the efforts to achieve Task Force and Committee goals, including implementation at the chapter level.
2. Submit to the State Council an annual plan and budget proposal consistent with their goals and objectives; in addition, all action proposals must be submitted for approval.
3. Present a status report at each State Council meeting and an annual report at the State Conference.

Sec. E. Task Force and Committee Chairs shall maintain their title and the responsibility and privileges thereof ~~until another Chair is appointed and approved by the State Council or until the Task Force or Committee is declared inactive until~~ **such a time that the Task Force or Committee decides to disband or becomes inactive.**

#### **ARTICLE XII. Eligibility, Elections, and Terms of Office**

Sec. A. To be eligible for office, a candidate must have been a member of Maryland NOW for a minimum of one (1) year. To serve as president or treasurer, a candidate must have attended at least three (3) state council meetings **during a period that includes our state conference, a budget approval process, and a General Assembly Legislative Session.**

Sec. B. No more than two (2) officers shall be from the same chapter. In the event that more than two persons from one chapter are nominated for separate offices, the elections of officers shall take place in the following order: President, Vice President – Executive, Vice President – Action, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Sec. C. Officers of Maryland NOW shall be elected at each annual State Conference and shall serve from the conclusion of the annual State Conference at which they were elected until the conclusion of the next succeeding conference. All officers, at the end of their term of office, must turn over all files they were given upon taking the office they have held as well as all files and property pertaining to their activities during their term, at the State Conference or at the meeting at which a new officer is elected.

Sec. D. In the event of a vacancy in office other than the Presidency, the office shall be filled by **a vote of** the State Council.

#### **ARTICLE XIII. Finances**

Sec. A. The fiscal year shall be from January 1st to December 31st.

Sec. B. ~~The amount of dues of each member, including at-large members, shall be set by a two-thirds vote of the State Council members present and voting.~~ **Any changes in membership dues assessed by Maryland NOW must be approved by a vote of the State Council.**

Sec. C. The Budget Committee shall prepare a proposed annual budget for the fiscal year, and distribute it to the State



Council members sixty (60) days prior to the end of Maryland NOW's fiscal year, thus allowing thirty days for questions and discussions by the State Council, after which time a vote will be taken no later than fifteen (15) days prior to the end of Maryland NOW's fiscal year to approve the proposed budget. ~~at least thirty (30) days after the State Conference, and within sixty (60) days of the beginning of the fiscal year, giving thirty (30) days' notice before the State Council meeting at which it is to be adopted. Review and revision of the budget may occur at any State Council meeting-~~

**Sec. D. The Finance Committee will coordinate fundraising goals to supplement other financial resources used by Maryland NOW, earning income that both builds issue awareness and brings in additional income. They will assist the Treasurer as needed in making and monitoring investment decisions. The committee will work with the Executive Committee and Task Force Chairs on special project expenditures to build in fundraising components.**

#### **ARTICLE XIV. Grievance Committee**

Sec. A. It shall be the responsibility of the State Council to resolve member and chapter grievances brought to its attention, only after all other grievance remedies at the local levels have been exhausted.

~~Sec. B. The State Council shall appoint, by lot, three of its disinterested members who shall arbitrate the grievance pursuant to applicable disciplinary procedures provided by the parliamentary authority designated by these bylaws and who shall recommend appropriate action to the State Council for approval.~~

**Sec. B. The State Council shall be given by each party a person who will represent them in this resolution of conflict. Those two people shall choose a third person, and these three individuals will arbitrate the disagreement that has been brought to the council's attention.**

**Sec. C. Other than informing the Executive Committee and the parties involved, the decision of the Grievance Committee will not to be made public by the committee or the parties involved unless all agree.**

#### **ARTICLE XV. Amendment of Bylaws**

Sec. A. Bylaws changes may be proposed by

- ~~1. The State Bylaws Committee,~~
- ~~2. The Boards of three (3) Maryland NOW member chapters, or~~
- ~~3. Forty (40) Maryland NOW members, whose signatures must be dated, from at least four (4) member chapters.~~
- 1. the State Bylaws Committee, or**
- 2. representatives of three (3) Maryland NOW member chapters.**

~~Sec. B. When method 2) or 3) is used, proposals must be submitted in writing to the State Bylaws Chair at least 45 days prior to the State Conference.~~

**Sec. B. Proposals must be submitted in writing to the Maryland NOW Executive Committee and the Chair of the Bylaws Committee at least ~~45~~ sixty (60) days prior to the State Conference.**

Sec. C. Proposed bylaws changes shall be submitted by the Bylaws Committee to the membership in writing at least thirty (30) days before the State Conference.

Sec. D. These bylaws may be amended at a Maryland NOW State Conference by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting.

#### **ARTICLE XVI. Rules of Order**

Any operating procedures of Maryland NOW not covered by these bylaws or in the Maryland NOW Policy Manual are governed by **the most recent edition of** Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, where applicable.

## Notes

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