



Office on the Economic Status of Women

Quarterly Newsletter
March 2025 | Issue 3/282



Blue skies above the Minnesota State Capitol with a snowy foreground. Photo by A.J. Olmscheid

GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR!

Hopefully by the time I publish this newsletter, all that snow on the capitol lawn is long gone. Don't get me wrong, I love winter and snow, but come March 1st, I only want to see it in photos not IRL (in real life). March not only means spring is (hopefully) here, but it's also Women's History Month! This year's theme is **"Moving Forward Together! Women Educating & Inspiring Generations."** See page two for a spotlight on the the first female professor at the University of Minnesota, Maria Sanford.

Back at the Capitol, business is in full swing after an unusual start to the session. In Minnesota, odd-numbered years mark the first year of the biennium and are often called budget years, as legislators must pass a balanced budget. So far, I'm tracking **239** bills.

Among those bills are several related to the topic of child care, many of which have already had a hearing. This is important because the first and second committee deadline is April 4, which means (most) bills must be passed by their respective committee to continue in the legislative process. The third deadline is one week later - Friday, April 11 at noon, at which time all bills must passed out of committee to be considered for final passage (to become law). That leaves legislators just over a month to complete their work before the last day of session - May 19th.

In the meantime, stay tuned for what will likely be an interesting last couple of weeks of session. Happy Women's History Month!

Best,
Heather J. Heyer

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH: SPOTLIGHT ON MARIA SANFORD



Professor Maria Louise Sanford in Minneapolis, 1918.

In the United States, we've been celebrating Women's History month for going on 38 years! This year's theme is "Moving Forward Together! Women Educating & Inspiring Generations." As a "double Gopher" (someone who attended the University of Minnesota twice), I immediately thought of Maria Sanford, Professor at the University of Minnesota.

Sanford was one of the first female professors in the United States, serving as a history professor at Swarthmore College from 1871 to 1879. In 1880, she became the first female professor in Minnesota as an assistant professor of English at the University of Minnesota. In her second year, she was promoted to full professor of rhetoric and elocution. While her career had some ups and downs, including an ultimately unsuccessful attempt at her dismissal by the regents in 1901, she became a beloved figure among the community. [1]

Sanford believed the purpose of education was to shape the manners and morals of its students. She championed a variety of causes over the years, ranging from education, wilderness conservation, child labor, healthcare, and women's rights. Charles Morison Jordan, the Minneapolis superintendent of schools praised her: "No other woman in Minnesota has done so much in the interest of the common schools of the state and is always so willing to give her time to and strength to the teachers...". [2]

After 29 years of teaching at the University of Minnesota, Sanford retired in 1909 at age seventy two. The University named the first women's dormitory, Sanford Hall, in her honor. Although she retired from teaching, she remained active in the public speaking circuit until her death in 1920.[3] Sanford's statue is one of two Minnesotans and among 11 statues of women at the National Statuary Hall Collection in Washington, D.C..[4]

[1] Schofield, Geraldine Bryan and Susan Margot Smith, "Maria Louise Sanford: Minnesota's Heroine." In *Women of Minnesota: Selected Biographical Essays*, edited by Barbara Stuhler and Gretchen Kreuter, 77-93. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1998.)

[2] Ibid

[3] Goetz, Kathryn. "Sanford, Maria (1836-1920)." MNopedia, Minnesota Historical Society. <http://www.mnopedia.org/person/sanford-maria-1836-1920>

[4] <https://cla.umn.edu/comm-studies/about/history-and-evolution-department>

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH FUN FACT

Did you know that Women's History Month is celebrated in March to align with International Women's Day (March 8)? Initially, Representative Barbara Mikulski (D-Maryland) considered proposing a "Women's History Week" in August to commemorate the passage of women's suffrage. However, Mikulski's former legislative aide, Susan Scanlan, pointed out that marching in the sweltering August heat would be unpleasant. As a result, they opted for March instead. It officially became Women's History Month in 1987 when Congress passed Public Law 100-9. To learn more, visit the National Women's History Museum website.



CHILDCARE

As I mentioned in the opening, the first year of a biennium (this year) is a budget year and legislators must pass a balanced budget before the end of session. The second year of a biennium is typically called the "policy" year. While we have seen a handful of bills related to child care introduced, the budget year paired with a gloomy budget forecast may impact what gets passed into law. Ann McCully, Executive Director at Child Care Aware of Minnesota, compiles a comprehensive child care bill tracker and posts a Legislative Update video each week - I highly recommend you check it out if you have more interest in this topic.

Monday, March 3rd was "Day Without Child Care," which received a lot of media coverage across the state. Kids Count on Us, a coalition of over 500 community-based child care centers in Minnesota, has a great recap of the media coverage from across the state on their website. In case you missed it, the OESW published this 2024 Child Care in Minnesota Fact Sheet. Finally, I wanted to call out one other wonderful resource from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development: Child Care Reports. These reports (available Statewide and specific to each region of the state), provide data and insights into the wide range of issues that are impacting the Child Care Crisis, including population trends, family arrangements and employment, industry trends and occupational employment and wage statistics, and workforce characteristics.



SPRING READING LIST

Tis the season where my reading list is comprised primarily of the bills introduced at the legislature (as of March 11, there have been **4,549 bills** introduced!). However, I'll be ready for something else when the session wraps; if you have book or podcast recommendations, send them my way!



FOLLOW US!



Visit our website at oesw.mn.gov

Still can't find what you're looking for?

Email us at oesw@lcc.mn.gov.

[Click here to manage your newsletter subscription.](#)