



April 2021 CWI Newsletter <https://womensclearinghouse.org>

Invitation to CWI Zoom Meeting, Tuesday, April 27, 2021 (12:00-1:30 PM ET)

“The First 100 Days of the Biden/Harris Administration: Accomplishments, Challenges and Issues”

Tuesday, April 27, 2021, 12:00-1:30 pm via Zoom

Registration Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEvdOivpiliE9LImRm0GXDs0VuPbbIJAzt8>

The Clearinghouse on Women’s Issues is delighted to offer an examination into the actions of the first months of the Biden/Harris Team. The foci will be on economics, civil rights, education and the transition requests for the priorities on women’s and family issues. Many of us worked hard to ensure that 2020 elections would bring about a change in the administration and the direction in which our country and our society were moving. Through pandemic and voting rights challenges, we persevered and, in fact, were able to bring a fresh perspective and reasoning to the highest level of US Government. We want to know what the administration is accountable for and what remains to be done. Accountability for all the projected changes promised is being demanded.



Shiwali Patel, Director of Justice for Student Survivors & Senior Counsel at the National Women’s Law Center will address the gains made on the recognition and elimination of sexual harassment and sexual assault. Following #MeTOO as well as the latest reports from the Governor’s office in New York, the threat of harassment or actual assault has raised the consciousness of many people and moved legislative action. But more is needed. Most recently, NWLC published [NWLC Leads Civil Rights Brief in Support of Students’ Rights to Be Free from Harassment and Unfair Discipline](#).



Ariane Hegewisch, Program Director of Employment and Earnings at IWPR and Scholar in Residence at American University, will discuss the economic progress in the first one hundred days. IWPR has done the research to expose the economic impact of covid on women and families, especially women of color and the steps needed to help women overcome the struggles of fair pay, job preparation and “glass ceilings.”. How it will affect gender equality has been discussed in the recent IWPR Report, [BUILD\(ING\) THE FUTURE: BOLD POLICIES FOR A GENDER-EQUITABLE RECOVERY](#)



Mindy Grimes-Festge, Secretary/Treasurer of the United Teachers of Dade, will discuss the educational needs of students, especially the impact of the forced virtual learning in the face of the pandemic and re-opening schools safely.

Finally, we are in the process of finding a speaker for the areas of women’s and human rights who can address the early work of the new administration, the executive orders and other planned legislation and women’s equality moves such as the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.

Summary of CWI Zoom Meeting, March 23, 2021
“Next Steps in Creating the Smithsonian American Women’s History Museum”
By Sheila Wickouski with help from many of the presenters

What better way to have celebrated Women’s History Month than to meet to discuss “Next Steps in Creating the Smithsonian’s American Women’s History Museum”? This was the topic of the Clearinghouse on Women's Issues (CWI) meeting which convened in March for Women's History Month.

There are many women’s museums across America. Most are either devoted to a specific area (women in the arts, space) or themed to specific topics like suffrage or the armed service. Some museums have designated galleries for women’s art or history, while some are homes of noted women that have been designated museums. Some are even virtual museums like the National Women’s History Museum (NWHM) founded in 1995.

The facts: Our nation’s history is incomplete as it often fails to tell the complete story of American women who are more than half the population. There is no comprehensive physical museum anywhere in the U.S. dedicated to the full story of American women’s history. Only 9 out of 100 statues in the U.S. Capitol’s National Statuary Hall depict women. Only 5% of the approximately 2,400 national monuments honor women. Women are underrepresented in the history textbooks students read in schools.

The year 2020, the 100th anniversary of women gaining the right to vote, was an ideal time to start rectifying the imbalance with the passage of Congressional legislation for the Smithsonian to proceed with the creation of the American Women’s History Museum. (Also included in the bill is creation of the National Museum of the American Latino).

The legislation was a long time in coming.

In the early 90s, a group of women and men got together to move the Portrait Monument from the basement of the U.S. Capitol into the Capitol Rotunda. The statue (fondly referred to as “the bathtub”) carved by Adelaide Johnson portrays Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott and Susan B. Anthony (left to right), all women who fought for suffrage.



That project spurred the organizers to found the National Women's History Museum (NWHM) as a group that would lobby for legislation to create a comprehensive women's history museum on the National Mall, as well as to create a website to capture women's history and make it widely accessible, as a physical museum did not exist. For the past 25 years, NWHM has continued to champion legislation, and focus upon and deliver women's history to audiences worldwide. NWHM also graciously provided the seed money to fund the work of the Congressional Commission.

In 2014, in a bill sponsored by Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney (D-NY) Congress created a bipartisan Congressional Commission to study the potential for the establishment of a U.S. museum of women's history, arguing that American women have always been marginalized in the narrative of United States history, especially at the Smithsonian. Unlike other Congressional Commissions which were federally funded to the tune of about \$3 million each, the Women's History Congressional Commission bill came without a single dollar of federal support. Therefore, the Women's History Commissioners relied upon generous seed money from NWHM plus in-kind donations worth millions of dollars provided by volunteer professionals and scholars, museum consulting companies, architectural firms, real estate developers, internet and web developers, printers, copywriters, film producers, photographers and many others from across the nation to produce a world class report.

The main findings of American Museum of Women's History Congressional Commission report presented to Congress and President Obama in 2016 (<http://AMWH.us>) were: The U.S. needs and deserves a comprehensive museum dedicated to women's history in Washington, D.C. The future Museum of Women's History should be part of the Smithsonian. The exhibits and collections should be inclusive and represent a diverse array of viewpoints and perspectives of women who have helped shape America. The museum deserves a prominent location on or very close to the National Mall.

In 2018, the Smithsonian, per the recommendations made by the Commission and with seed money raised by the Commissioners, officially launched the *Smithsonian American Women's History Initiative*—"Because of Her Story"—to document, research, collect and exhibit the stories of women who have helped shape America. The initiative has developed exhibitions, programs, educational material and digital content; funded nine curatorial positions dedicated to women's history across Smithsonian museums; and published a book, *Smithsonian American Women*.

Based on the Commission's recommendations, Representative Maloney introduced H.R. 19 in the 115th Congress and H.R. 1980 in the 116th Congress. The bipartisan Smithsonian Women's History Museum Act passed the House in 2019. The legislation was then included in the bipartisan and bicameral omnibus spending package at the end of 2020, which was signed into law on Dec. 27, 2020.

The two Senate sponsors of the women's history museum, Senator Susan Collins, a Maine Republican, and Senator Dianne Feinstein, a California Democrat, greeted the passage of the omnibus legislation.

"As our Women's Suffrage Centennial year draws to a close, I am delighted that Congress was able to work together in a bipartisan way to pass this legislation," said Senator Collins. "I look forward to the creation of a museum in our nation's capital that celebrates the invaluable contributions women have made to our nation."

"Women have been a central part of American history from our founding to the present day in every way, whether it's science, business, the arts or politics," said Senator Feinstein. "A permanent museum to celebrate those contributions and tell the stories of so many incredible women is long overdue."

Going beyond the why question about this museum, the next questions ahead are what, where, when and how it will be come to be.

The path from congressional approval to opening day is likely to be a long one.

It is off to a great start with the Congressional legislation and with the support of Secretary of the Smithsonian, Lonnie Bunch. Secretary Bunch is experienced in museum creation since he was the founding director of the Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture.

The challenges facing the museum after legislation is nonetheless considerable. The new museum will be a 50/50 funding project between government money and private donations. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has put forth an official initial estimate that a proposed 350,000 square foot museum would cost \$375 million to build. (For comparison, bill to create the African American museum passed in 2003 but the museum itself didn't open its doors until September 2016. The 400,000 square foot museum cost \$540 million and was funded through a similar 50/50 public-private partnership.)

CWI MEETING

Sue Klein and Connie Cordovilla, Co-Presidents, Clearinghouse on Women's Issues (CWI) convened this CWI March 23, 2021, Women's History Month noon meeting. A video of this meeting is available on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6G1ilj6GPs>.

CWI'S March meeting featured **Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney** (D-NY), key sponsor of the recently enacted Smithsonian American Women's History Museum Act, who outlined her role in the process, starting 23 years ago.

When in a walk around the Mall she had asked "Where are the women?" She noted that "slivers" of museums for specific women like Annie Oakley or the First Ladies, which failed to address the forgotten women, such as a Revolutionary War hero, Margaret Corbin.

As chair of the House Oversight Committee, Rep. Maloney spoke not only of the key accomplishments and next steps for funding and building the museum, but also on the issues of Equal Pay Gap.



Wendy Pangburn, Executive Director of the American Museum of Women's History Congressional Commission, (AMWHCC) gave insight into the Commission that helped guide the museum's creation. She also described the Smithsonian's American Women's History Initiative.



Holly Hotchner, President and CEO of the National Women's History Museum (NWHM) (photo on left) and **Susan Whiting**, Chair of the Board of NWHM, (photo on right) highlighted NWHM's historic role in getting legislation passed for a museum and in contributing some funding to the Congressional Commission. The privately funded and mostly virtual NWHM was incorporated in 1996.



Currently NWHM features virtual tours and more than 50 exhibits available on their [website](#) (which they are now remodeling). NWHM's current programming includes resources for educators and learners of all ages; events ranging from scholarly panel discussions and film screens to virtual field trips and exhibit walk throughs; and the collection and digitizing of journals from women all over the world during the year of Covid-19 as part of the Museum's [Women Writing History: A Coronavirus Journaling Project](#). NWHM will continue to shine a light on women's contributions to American history while the plans for the Smithsonian develop and will host physical exhibits and programming in Washington, D.C. beginning in 2022.

Julissa Marengo, Assistant Secretary Communications and External Affairs and Chief Marketing Officer for the Smithsonian, shared an early-stage update for the Smithsonian American Women's History Museum (AWHM) and the ongoing Smithsonian American Women's History Initiative. They have appointed Lisa Sasaki, Director of the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, as interim director and are starting the search for a Founding director of AWHM.



The Smithsonian Secretary is naming interim directors for each museum while two executive search firms are retained to help with the search for the founding directors. The site-selection process for each museum is to be completed in two years, by December 2022. Site selection requires an outside consulting firm or perhaps two separate firms. The deadline to pick the sites, as per the legislation, is two years from the date of passage. The final decision on the sites will be made by the Smithsonian Board of Regents, although the legislation for each museum names a few locations to be considered and expresses the intent of Congress that the sites be located on or near the National Mall.

While it has taken decades, the Smithsonian American Women's History Museum is on its way to show not only our country, but the world, that women are valued and appreciated for what they have done and to inspire men and women of all ages who come from around the world to visit the museums on the Mall.

In the meantime, the Smithsonian has a robust program of exhibitions, public events and research to tell the stories of both Latino Americans and women in the United States. These programs will continue to work across the Institution during the years the museums are being established.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Clearinghouse on Women's Issues Mar. 23, 2021 meeting is available for viewing on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6G1ilj6GPs>

Smithsonian Institution resources include: <https://womenshistory.si.edu>, Sign up for the Smithsonian Women's History Initiative newsletter: womenshistory@si.org. The full report of the 2016 American Museum of Women's History Congressional Commission can be found at amwh.us/report

Consolidated Appropriations Act 2021 contains Division T Smithsonian American Women's History Museum Act, December 21, 2020, pages 336-352

<https://rules.house.gov/sites/democrats.rules.house.gov/files/BILLS-116HR133SA-RCP-116-68.pdf>

Congresswoman Maloney's web site on womens-issues <https://maloney.house.gov/issues/womens-issues/national-womens-history-museum-0>

National Women's History Museum web site and newsletters available at www.womenshistory.org/about-us

The National Women's History Alliance web page: <https://nationalwomenshistoryalliance.org>

Information about international museums at <https://iawm.international/about-us/womens-museums/museums-list/>

Smithsonian Magazine: The Suffragist Statue Trapped in a Broom Closet for 75 Years,
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/suffragist-statue-trapped-broom-closet-75-years-180963274/>

Smithsonian American Women: Remarkable Objects and Stories of Strength, Ingenuity, and Vision from the National Collection Hardcover – 2019. Smithsonian Institution (Author), Victoria Pope (Editor), Christine Schrum (Editor), Jill Lepore (Foreword) (Slide of this book cover shown in video by Wendy Pangburn.)

DC Area and National Feminist Events and Resources

Please send your upcoming feminist events to post in CWI newsletters to president@womensclearinghouse.org. LIKE and FOLLOW us on CWI's Facebook www.facebook.com/womensclearinghouse and Twitter www.twitter.com/CWINews pages! Also SUBSCRIBE and LIKE our video sponsor & provider. <https://www.youtube.com/user/Hanburycross>. Paid-up CWI members will receive additional forwarded email messages on additional feminist meetings and activities.

CWI's newsletter is endowed in loving memory of our previous longtime editor, Roslyn Kaiser

Meeting summary by Sheila Wickouski and many of the Meeting Presenters

Newsletter edited by Sue Klein

CWI BOARD OF DIRECTORS, JULY 2018 – JUNE 2021

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Clearinghouse on Women’s Issues Membership Form

<https://womensclearinghouse.org/>

The CWI membership year is: **July 1-June 30**. Multi-year and Gift memberships are encouraged and discounted! Please fill in beginning and end years (e.g. 2020-2023 for a 3-yr membership). Members will receive CWI newsletters and meeting announcements as well as other feminist news and event notifications. Membership dues and contributions are tax-deductible to the extent provided by Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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One-year	\$25	\$40	\$15/yr.	\$20/yr.
Two-year	\$45	\$70	Gift Membership (insert information in individual or organization membership)	
Three-year	\$65	\$100		

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- Mail form & check to Connie Cordovilla, Membership Chair, CWI, 7439 Patterson Rd., Falls Church, VA 22043-1332; or
- Pay through PayPal, by selecting the desired membership option on our website’s membership page <https://womensclearinghouse.org/membership/> & please send this form by mail to the above address or email it to MembershipChair@womensclearinghouse.org; or
- Bring a check, payable to CWI, and this completed form to a CWI meeting. (Form Revised: 10/13/20)