

## SPRING 2021 UPDATE

### LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends:

As we celebrate the brilliance of science and medicine and the light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, we are hopeful that California and our country are on a path of recovery and healing. CWLC hopes that you and yours have weathered the COVID storm and are basking in the glow of soon safely being able to see family and friends in the coming months.

With vaccines getting in people's arms, there is much to be thankful for – but there are many who are struggling. Those who were the most vulnerable prior to pandemic are likely to be suffering now, and

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CWLC Report:  
Breastfeeding Access  
in California  
School Districts

CWLC Co-Sponsors  
SB 435 "The Ending  
Online Sexual  
Trafficking and  
Exploitation Act"

the pandemic has created huge numbers of people who are barely able to make it – and many who are not.

Undoubtedly you have read how the pandemic has demonstrably impacted women and families. In fact, the COVID-19 recession is the first economic downturn in which more women have lost jobs than men and they have left the labor force by the hundreds of thousands: there are 2.4 million fewer women in the workforce today than there were in February 2020. A number of factors contributed to this exodus: When the pandemic started, many women who were working in service, retail, education and even health care jobs, were let go or furloughed; many more women have left due to responsibilities of raising a family, often because of a lack of child-care or they needed to be home to educate their children.

The number of women in the workforce has fallen to the level it was in the early 1990's. This is concerning because women have left their career and leadership tracks, reversing the great progress made through 2019, until it was halted by the pandemic.

Economically, this is particularly concerning, both for the financial stability of households but also for the overall recovery of our economy. The boom that ended in 2019 was driven by women's participation in the workforce. In addition, some have predicted that retail, restaurant and hotel jobs will not come back until 2024, so these predominately female workforce sectors are likely to be a long way from recovery.

Add to this the persistent level of hate and discrimination women endure, and we know women and girls are facing many obstacles.

But we will prevail.

CWLC's commitment to women and girls has become stronger and more impactful. We are grateful for your partnership as we navigate the waters ahead.

Speaker Series:  
"Persisting in the  
Struggle for Equality"  
Mar. 29, 2021

and

"The 28th  
Amendment: The Push  
for the ERA"  
Mar. 31, 2021

CWLC Co-Sponsors  
UCLA Housing  
Fellowship

Welcome Alicia  
Matricardi to the  
CWLC Board of  
Directors and Marily  
Lopez to the CWLC  
team

In good health,

*Betsy Butler*



## CWLC Speaker Series

Please join us for "Persisting in the Struggle for Equality" a discussion with Dolores Huerta, Lilly Ledbetter, and Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis on Monday, March 29 from 1:00-2:00 p.m. with Kathy Spillar of the Feminist Majority Foundation and Betsy Butler moderating the panel.

To RSVP, please visit our [website here](#).

## "ABCs of BREASTFEEDING" REPORT GRADES BREASTFEEDING ACCESS IN CALIFORNIA SCHOOL DISTRICTS

In February, CWLC released our analysis of the status of lactation accommodation policies in 414 California K-12 public school districts in 57 of the state's 58 counties. The 2021 "ABCs of Breastfeeding Report Card" grades school districts statewide on whether they have adopted policies to reflect state and federal laws regarding pregnancy and lactation accommodations for students and employees, and whether they have posted required information about Title IX on their website. To access the 2021 report card, click [here](#).

Despite laws requiring workplaces and schools to provide accommodations, many new mothers and breastfeeding parents are not aware of their rights and drop out of school or leave their jobs, in part because of barriers that limit breastfeeding goals.

and...

On March 31, please join us for a discussion about "The 28th Amendment: The Final Push for the ERA". This panel will feature Linda Coberly, Professor Julie Suk, and Kate Kelly on Wednesday, March 31, 2021 from 5:00-6:00 p.m. Kathy Spillar, of the Feminist Majority Foundation will moderate the event.

To RSVP, please visit our [website here.](#)

Compliance with state and federal laws is crucial to ensure students and employees know their rights and how to exercise them, allowing breastfeeding parents to care for their children, complete their education, or earn an income.

Title IX is a federal law that protects students and employees by prohibiting all forms of gender discrimination at schools, including preventing women who need to express milk. California law also requires most workplaces and schools provide reasonable breastfeeding accommodations. CWLC is a leading expert on Title IX enforcement in California, and we proudly advocate for women's legal rights at school and work.

When CWLC began this report card in 2019, the average grade was a C which indicated inadequate support for breastfeeding and parenting students and employees. CWLC helped school districts improve their access to this information, raising grades to an A or B in 84% of the districts.

Because breastfeeding has numerous health benefits for mothers and their children, our goal is to help every California school district provide the information necessary to ensure equal access to educational and employment opportunities for pregnant and parenting students and staff. We will continue to work with non-compliant school districts to raise their grades and meet the needs of women in California.

Visit [our website](#) to see how your school district fairs.

## CWLC CO-SPONSORS SB 435 "THE ENDING ONLINE SEXUAL TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION ACT"

CWLC is co-sponsoring the nation's first bill addressing online sexual exploitation and trafficking. SB 435, authored by Senator Dave Cortese, will give victims more civil action opportunities for damages

against any person or entity that makes, obtains, uploads, reuploads, or distributes in any form (including through electronic distribution), any non-consensual or sexually explicit content. National and California laws have not been updated to include the realities of the digital age and excludes civil claims where the material has already been distributed by anyone else at any time allowing the content to circulate further and beyond the victim's control. SB 435 gives victims avenues for recourse in situations where the victim was coerced, tricked, or forced into a sexual act, and where content that is sexual in nature is circulated in any way without permission. Those who offend minors will have larger fines and penalties.

To view the press conference announcing SB 435, click [here](#).

## CWLC CO-SPONSORS UCLA HOUSING FELLOWSHIP TO HELP ADDRESS HOUSING CRISIS DURING COVID-19

In the fall of 2020, CWLC co-sponsored a fellowship program developed by the UCLA School of Law to provide legal training to eight law school graduates in eviction defense and prevention efforts. Sparked by the COVID-19 pandemic and the panoply of legal issues tenants are facing, the fellows were placed at direct legal service organizations in Los Angeles for twelve weeks. The fellowship provided data about the types of clients served and the most common legal issues tenants faced, including fear of eviction for non-payment of rent during the pandemic in violation of the state, county and national eviction moratoria, as well as landlord harassment and self-help matters. Of the 332 clients the fellows assisted, 63% identified as female, 37% were Hispanic/Latinx, 19% were Black, 28% were disabled and 29% had minor children in the household. CWLC concluded

## PAST 2021 TRAINING TOPICS

### Gender Equity in Sports During Covid-19: A Review

This webinar discussed gender equity in sports under Title IX which requires equal opportunities, treatment, and benefits for female athletes in K-12 and collegiate school athletics programs. California's Fair Play in Community Sports Act is modeled on Title IX and requires local parks and recreation centers to identify and remedy gender discrimination in their sports programs. Although Title IX

the fellowship by convening a meeting with the fellows, UCLA law school staff and professors, social justice attorneys and policymakers to discuss the challenges brought forward by tenants and possible policy solutions.

CWLC continues to hold our free online legal housing clinics twice a month to assist tenants throughout Los Angeles who are addressing legal issues to stay housed. To attend an upcoming clinic, please click [here](#).

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AMICUS BRIEF

This month, CWLC, the Family Violence Appellate Project and pro bono counsel King & Spalding filed an amicus brief in the California Court of Appeal supporting survivors of domestic violence. Led by CWLC Board Member Laura Lively Babashoff at King & Spalding, the brief argues that the trial court's order awarding joint custody of the parties' children should be reversed to prevent the abusive parent from having access to the children. In California, trial courts often fail to properly apply a presumption codified in California law against giving joint custody to a parent who has committed domestic violence against the other parent. Courts are required to apply this rule rather than presuming joint custody is in the best interest of the child when domestic violence has been shown. The brief also shows that failing to apply this presumption correctly harms domestic violence survivors and their children.

## CWLC ACKNOWLEDGES EQUAL PAY DAYS IN 2021

Each year CWLC recognizes the importance of Equal Pay Days which raise awareness about pay inequity and the lifetime effects it has on the lives of women and their families. CWLC remains dedicated to advocating for gender pay equality and supporting the economic security of women and families.

was passed nearly five decades ago and the Fair Play Act almost two decades ago, participants in girls' sports throughout the state continue to face discrimination. The presentation also addressed some of the challenges caused by pausing girls' sports during the pandemic, and potential solutions to these obstacles.

The webinar is available to view [here](#) and offers one hour of MCLE credit.

## Raising The Grade for Breastfeeding Access in CA Schools: A Primer on the Rights of Pregnant and Parenting Students & Employees

This presentation discussed the results of CWLC's statewide breastfeeding report card and our work to ensure every California school district has policies in place that provide equal educational and employment opportunities for their pregnant and parenting students and staff. It outlined the laws surrounding pregnant and parenting students and employees in schools, including leave, absences, accommodations, and lactation spaces. We also shared some of the challenges we faced in working with districts to

The Equal Pay Act was passed in 1963 and the first Equal Pay Day was observed in 1996 by the National Committee on Pay Equity, a coalition of women's and civil rights organizations, labor unions, professional associations and individuals working to eliminate sex and race based wage discrimination and to achieve pay equity.

Equal Pay Days symbolize how far into the new year women must work to earn as much as men earned in the previous year.

This year's Equal Pay Days are:

**Asian American and Pacific Islander Women's Equal Pay Day**

March 9th

**All Women's Equal Pay Day**

March 24th

**Mother's Equal Pay Day**

June 4th

**Black Women's Equal Pay Day**

August 3rd

**Native Women's Equal Pay Day**

September 8th

**International Equal Pay Day**

September 18th

**Latina Women's Equal Pay Day**

October 21st

comply and solutions that can be taken to ensure school districts maintain equal access and opportunity.

The webinar is available to view [here](#) and offers one hour of MCLE credit.

## WELCOME TO THE CWLC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Board of Directors, Alicia Matricardi**, works as General Counsel and Director of Real Estate for New Economics for Women, a national nonprofit economic development organization based in Los Angeles. The nonprofit performs real estate development and programs to advance economic mobility for low-income families, particularly female-led households. Alicia works as a community economic development leader for the organization through her work to build affordable housing, charter school, health clinics and other commercial spaces through new construction and acquisition/rehabilitation real estate development. As a California-licensed attorney, she also performs as General Counsel for the organization, advising on all nonprofit governance, fund development, contract, and real estate matters. She also leads her own law firm, Matricardi Law, which specializes in transactional real estate matters and business start-ups. Alicia owns and leads Carthay Group, a commercial brokerage and development company. Alicia is a Board Member of the Southwestern University School of Law Alumni Board and chairs their Diversity and Alumni Magazine Committees. Alicia received her law degree from Southwestern University School of Law and her undergraduate degree from UC Berkeley.

## WELCOME TO THE CWLC TEAM



### **Development Associate and Office Manager, Marily Lopez**

joins the California Women's Law Center after having served as the Database Coordinator for Ganna Walska Lotusland, a botanic garden in Santa Barbara, California. At Lotusland, she managed the organization's database and coordinated fundraising and membership efforts. Prior to that, Marily interned for A Different Point of View, a Santa Barbara nonprofit organization that engages and transforms the lives of underserved youth through aviation and mentorship. Inspired by their impact on young people's



lives, Marily became a member of their Board in 2019. Marily earned her Bachelor of Arts in Feminist Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

To support CWLC and our mission, please consider making a contribution.

Donate online at [www.cwlc.org](http://www.cwlc.org).

Thank you for your generosity and your commitment to women and girls.

## CWLC'S UPCOMING EVENTS

March 29, 2021

Speaker Series: "Persisting in the Struggle for Equality" with Dolores Huerta, Lilly Ledbetter, and Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis

March 31, 2021

Speaker Series: "The 28th Amendment: The Final Push for the ERA" with Linda Coberly, Professor Julie Suk, and Kate Kelly

[LEARN MORE](#)

### ABOUT THE CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S LAW CENTER

Since its founding in 1989, the California Women's Law Center (CWLC) has worked to eliminate the barriers that keep women and girls in poverty. The Mission of CWLC is to create a more just and equitable society by breaking down barriers and advancing the potential of women and girls through transformative litigation, policy advocacy and education. CWLC addresses issues pertaining to Title IX education and enforcement, domestic violence, sexual assault, equal pay, homelessness, women's health, and advocates for the unique needs of women veterans. For more information, visit [cwlc.org](http://cwlc.org).

#### Contact Us

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CWLC is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

Tax ID #95-4204490

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