



Office on the Economic Status of Women

Quarterly Newsletter
August 2025 | Issue 4/282



Photo by Catherine Davis

GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR!

It's been just over two months since the horrific and tragic events that occurred on June 14 - the assassination of Speaker Emerita Melissa Hortman, her husband Mark, their dog Gilbert, and the attempted assassination of Senator John Hoffman and his wife, Yvette - and I'm still at a loss for words. My heart aches for all of those impacted, from her family to her staff, her colleagues to her constituents, public servants and Minnesotans - I am grieving with you.

I'm including a powerful message from my colleague, Sonja Simpson, Director of Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility and Language Services at the Legislative Coordinating Commission that I found to be helpful as we grapple with what the next steps are after tragedy.

It was an active legislative session this spring, with a one day special session to finalize the budget. I was tracking over 380 bills this session, many of which were passed into law and these details will be included in the Legislative Summary which we will publish in the coming weeks.

Speaking of "we," I am happy to announce that Katelyn Alpiner Geddes has rejoined the OESW as a Research and Communications Analyst. Kate worked with me last summer as an intern and finished up her Master's in Human Rights at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs this spring. Welcome back, Kate!

Best,

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR OF DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Dear Reader,

If you're like me these days, you may find yourself closely following trending news and wrestling with what is fact and what is fiction. As the nonpartisan Director of Diversity and Inclusion, I am often navigating through the information to examine the deeper layers of what we're seeing—and what we're not. My focus remains centered on diversity and inclusion as I consider meaningful ways to support our legislature in understanding and addressing these complex issues.

I believe in a culture that allows room for growth—not one that “cancels.” People make mistakes. No one is perfect. Each of us carries a personal history that informs how we show up in the world. Admittedly, even with this belief, I am challenged.



I seek to learn what motivates people, what role generational differences play, and how patterns and behaviors emerge. Sometimes, I gain clarity. Other times, my perspective shifts—or I remain confused. And yes, like anyone, I experience frustration or anger at times. But I return to the understanding that none of us are without flaws, and that we're all on a continual journey of examining and understanding our biases—one that lasts our entire lives.

Allow me to offer a metaphor. My husband and I are big Marvel fans. If you're familiar with the X-Men series, you might recognize the character Magneto. For those less familiar, Magneto has the power to attract metal—something that's nearly everywhere. He wears a helmet to block Professor X's ability to influence his thoughts, protecting his mind from outside control. Magneto, shaped by deep childhood trauma and possibly some scientific manipulation, isn't portrayed as a hero. But his complexity makes him compelling. His helmet—much like our biases—can both shield and restrict. And when that helmet comes off, he becomes vulnerable to influence, losing some control over his critical thinking. In essence, what Magneto attracts, he becomes.

This metaphor speaks to the internal “reset” many of us may be facing—examining values that were inherited, learned through love, loss, work, and experience. Perhaps we can take a moment to ask ourselves: where are our biases coming from? Like Magneto, we all encounter forces that restrict, shape, or support us. Are there ways we each can pursue open thought, mutual respect, and understanding.

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR OF DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Considering the tragic events of June 14, it is nature to want answers and you may feel drawn to a particular narrative—perhaps one filled with anger or certainty. I encourage you to pause and ask: Have I paused to understand my own biases? The pain many of us feel is not about issues or beliefs—it is about people and those that we have worked with, and grown to care about through the years.

So, what can we do? Start by seeing people as they are—with all their layers and humanity. Practice discernment. And move forward with care, empathy, compassion, and love for humanity. When discussing issues, consider setting aside judgments or preconceived notions and instead focusing on the substance of the idea or proposal. Put another way that may resonate with you, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. famously said, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

With compassion and empathy,



To learn more about diversity and inclusion at the Legislative Coordinating Commission, visit their website at

www.lcc.mn.gov/diversity-and-inclusion/

CHILDCARE: 2025 UPDATE

Childcare costs are one of the greatest problems facing Minnesota families in 2025. Since 2024, **Minnesota has surpassed California in infant-care costs¹** and become the **3rd most expensive state for infant care in the entire United States²**, behind only Massachusetts and Washington DC. Within the Midwest, Minnesota is a stark outlier. Wisconsin and Illinois place 17th and 20th respectively, while Iowa doesn't even make it into the top 20.³

In 38 states in the US, infant childcare is more expensive than in-state college tuition.

Minnesota is one of them.⁴ It costs more to put an infant through a year of childcare than it does to put a college freshman through the upcoming year at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities campus, paying in-state tuition.

	TUITION	vs	CHILDCARE
2024	\$15,148 ⁵	+	\$20,165 ⁷
2025	\$18,626 ⁶	+	\$22,569 ⁸

1-4 [Economic Policy Institute](#)

5 [OESW Childcare Factsheet 2024](#)

6 [University of Minnesota, Office of Admissions](#)

7 [ChildCare Aware Minnesota](#)

8 [Economic Policy Institute](#)

HOME CHILDCARE SURVEY



Jade Michaelson at Jade's Family Childcare in Morris.
Photo by Leila Navidi for the Star Tribune

The **OESW**, in collaboration with the **Ombuds for Family Child Care Providers** (OFCCP), has been working with the **Management Analysis and Development** (MAD) team at the **Minnesota Management and Budget** (MMB) office to develop a survey for recently closed family childcare providers to better understand what unique factors are influencing these closures, such as licensing costs, availability of training, administrative loads, and much more.

We'll be able to compare these results to a **2020 survey by MMB** to see how things have changed in the last five years.

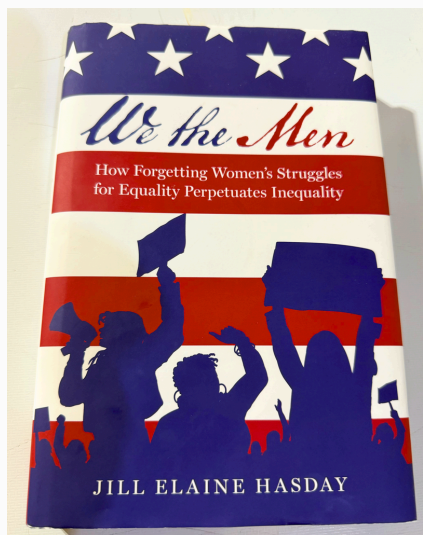
In the future, we're looking into developing a survey

that would continue to collect new data on these closures going forward. Once analyzed, these findings will be shared with the public on our website, and with both the House and Senate to help inform future legislation.

Learn more about the work of the Office of the Ombuds for Family Child Care Providers at their website: <https://mn.gov/ombuds-family-child-care-providers/>



RECOMMENDED READING



Distinguished McKnight University Professor and Centennial Professor in Law at the University of Minnesota, **Jill Hasday**'s book ***We the Men*** inspired us to take a closer look at how Minnesota commemorates notable historical women in this issue.

Professor Hasday's book takes a historical perspective on how failing to commemorate, memorialize, and remember the women who came before us, and their fight for equality, affects modern-day struggles for equal rights and opportunities.

Learn more about Professor Hasday's work at her website: jillhasday.com

HOW DO WE COMMEMORATE WOMEN?

In her new book, *We The Men*, **Jill Hasday**, a Professor of Law at the University of Minnesota, explores the way a lack of physical, commemorative reminders of women's accomplishments can have a negative impact our overall understanding of women's fight for equality. Her work inspired us to take a look at how we remember, or sometimes forget, women's accomplishments here in Minnesota.



Monuments are difficult to define, but non-profit Monument Lab settled on "*a statement of power or presence in public*," when assembling their National Monument Audit, a massive database of over 48,000 monuments across the United States. Minnesota has a wealth of incredible monuments and memorials to historical figures that have changed the course of our state's history. But according to Monument Lab's data, not a single one of them represents a woman.

Several monuments have been added across Minnesota since the audit's publication in 2021, such as the statue of labor organizer and activist **Nellie Stone Johnson**, the first statue a Black woman in any state Capitol in the United States, the bust of **Suni Lee** that stood proudly next to Lake Phalen up until it was stolen three weeks ago, or the bust of Minneapolis' first woman and Black person to be mayor, **Sharon Sayles Belton**. It's possible that the other commemorations of women throughout the state did not make it onto the database because they do not fit that definition of a statement of power or presence in public.

It may be because Minnesota shares a problem with much of the country, as highlighted by Monument Lab in their report, where **"feminized bodies often appear in the sanctioned monument landscape as fictional, mythological, and allegorical figures,"** such as the Mary Tyler Moore statue in downtown Minneapolis, which depicts her as her character, Mary Richards. Or, the unnamed pioneer woman at the State Fairgrounds, or the Minerva statue inside the Minneapolis Public Library. This pattern is replicated on a national scale, as they report that **there are 10x as many monuments depicting mermaids in the US than there are depicting Congresswomen, of which there are only two.**



Photo by Dana Ferguson for MPR News

There are also several new monuments and commemorations for women being designed across the state; the library construction grant named after former State Representative Mary C. Murphy, and a statue of Amelia Witherstine in Rochester, the first woman to hold elected office in Olmstead County. However, even if we include these exciting new additions, and the mythological likes of Minerva, the fictional Paul Bunyan's wife, and the Minnesota's Women Suffrage Memorial in our estimates, all of which did not meet Monument Lab's definition, that still would mean that less than **2% of monuments in Minnesota depict women**, fictional or otherwise. Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney once said that *"Women stand on historical quicksand. With each step we take forward, the steps behind us disappear."* So, what can we do to ensure we stay out of the quicksand?

STATE FAIR SPOTLIGHT

In-between your bites of cheese curds and fried pickles, keep an eye out for these women-owned small businesses at the State Fair this year!

Auntie M's Gluten Free

Que Viet Concession

Sweet Martha's Cookie Jar

West Indies Soul Food

Always Northern Jewelry

The Glitter Glamper

GoodThings

Hagen and Oats

Kelly's Candles

Linh T Vo Art

Namaste Brows & Boutique

Nikkolette's Macarons

Northern Pine Co.

Origami by Kannika

SPORTS CHAMPS

These past few months marked several incredible victories for our women's sports teams. **The Minnesota Frost** took home their *second* **Walter Cup** in May, the **Gophers Women's Basketball** team won the **2025 WBIT Championship** in April, and the **Gophers Dance** team took Gold in pom and Silver in jazz at the **ICU World Championships** a few weeks later. Congratulations to our champions!



Renée Jones Schneider for the Star Tribune.

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