



## Eastern Mass Chapter Newsletter

*The Voice of Midlife and Older Women*

Vol. 1, No. 2: March-April 2006

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**Evelyn Murphy to Speak  
to OWL**

## **Women in the Middle**

**April 13, 2006**

**Healey Library  
University of Massachusetts Boston**

***Everyone invited! Free! See details below...***



**We invite you to forward this  
newsletter to anyone you  
think may be interested in  
Eastern Mass OWL.**

### *Did you know...*

In 2004, the median income for women age 55 to 64 was \$20,810; for women age 65 and over, it was \$12,080. The corresponding figures for men in these age groups were nearly twice as high-- \$39,212 and \$21,102, respectively.

From "older Women Workers, Ages 55 and Up," Women's Bureau, U.S. Dept. of Labor at [www.dol.gov/wb/factsheets/Qf-olderworkers55.htm](http://www.dol.gov/wb/factsheets/Qf-olderworkers55.htm)

### **From the Chair**

Let's talk about discrimination. Discrimination against people because of sex, race, age, or sexual orientation hurts not only the person being discriminated against but our society as well. We lose a sense of fairness, subject a group of people to risks of all kinds of disadvantages, and in the case of job discrimination, we lose the benefit of having the best person for a job. OWL members often experience discrimination and many encounter the impact of multiple layers of discrimination, for example being older, female, and black.

This spring we focus on two specific areas where we see discrimination; in the job market where older women are paid less, and in the annuity market where a woman must pay more for the same benefit as a man. At our spring event,

Evelyn Murphy will speak about her work on wage disparity, its impact on women, and what we can do about it. At a hearing at the state house on a bill to end the practice of selling sex-based annuities (an insurance product that pays a monthly benefit for the life of the owner), I testified on behalf of OWL to end the practice because it discriminates against women, offering them a lower benefit for the same price as a man. It is also bad public policy for the Commonwealth. In Massachusetts, 35% of women over age 75 who live alone are living on less than \$13,500. The annuity bill is a small step toward eliminating discrimination and letting women buy more protection for their later years.

We must give women better tools to protect themselves against poverty but at the same time we must recognize the enormity of the problem. Discrimination and poverty are problems an individual woman cannot solve on her own. They are problems we can solve working together, giving voice to our concerns, and joining with other organizations. I look forward to seeing you on April 13th.

Ellen A. Bruce, Chair  
Eastern Mass OWL

- **Women in the Middle**

An OWL event about urgent issues faced by midlife and older women

- Adequate pay
- Caregiving responsibilities
- Saving for retirement



Featuring  
**Evelyn F. Murphy**  
Author, *Getting Even: Why Women Don't Get Paid Like Men—and What to Do about It*

Thursday, April 13, 2006  
12:30 – 3:30 p.m.  
(registration and light refreshments from 12:30-1:00 p.m.)  
Healey Library, UMass Boston  
(11th floor, Faculty Lounge)  
No charge for admission | RSVP appreciated  
(617- 287-7305)

Evelyn F. Murphy is the former Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts, and current president

of the WAGE Project, a national organization to end wage discrimination against working women. She is resident scholar at the Women's Studies Research Center at Brandeis University. She has a Ph.D. in economics from Duke University. In 1990 she was a candidate for election as Massachusetts governor. Dr. Murphy has had extensive experience in government and business, including as a corporate director and executive vice president of Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Her book, *Getting Even: Why Women Don't Get Paid Like Men—and What to Do about It*, was published in 2005 by Simon & Schuster.

On April 13th she will address issues of pay inequity. Afterwards, separate breakout sessions will gather to get audience feedback on women's income and caregiving concerns. What do these issues imply for a women's political action agenda?

For more information and to RSVP, contact Rachel Puopolo at 617- 287-7305 or [rachel.puopolo@umb.edu](mailto:rachel.puopolo@umb.edu).

- **Legislative Update**

The Legislature's Combined Labor and Workforce Development Committee met on March 13, 2006 to consider "**An Act Establishing Paid Sick Days**" (**SB 1130/HB3788**) and decided to send it to be studied instead of passing on it favorably. The Committee did pass favorably on raising the minimum wage from \$6.75 to \$7.75 over a two year period.

The Legislature will convene in a Constitutional Convention at 1 p.m. on May 10, 2006. The **Health Care Amendment**, which will give Massachusetts citizens the right to affordable access to health and mental health care, will be up for a vote and needs the approval of 50 legislators to pass and advance the Amendment to the ballot in November. Be sure you make your voice heard for support for a YES vote by your legislators before May 10, 2006. We must continue to build the support we need for an overwhelming mandate for real reform in November.

The **Legislative Caucus on Older Citizens' Concerns** will meet on April 27th, 2006 at 10:30 a.m. at the State House in Room A-1. The topic for the Meeting will be "Foster Grandparents."

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The [Equal Choice bill, Senate No. 2273](#), with amendment, unanimously passed the Senate on March 22, 2006 and is now in the House. This bill would allow Medicaid (MassHealth) recipients choice in the setting where they receive long-term care, including at home. Communicate with your representatives to facilitate its passage out of the House. House members, along with their email addresses and phone numbers, are listed at [www.mass.gov/legis](http://www.mass.gov/legis) (under legislators, click on House).

April 25, 2006 is **Equal Pay Day**. The National Association of Commissions for Women and other organizations will join with the National Committee of Pay Equity to take part in a national day of action promoting fair pay. Pay equity continues to be one of the top issues of economic justice for women and minorities in the United States. Press conferences and meetings with public officials and policy makers will be held to push for stronger state and federal equal pay laws.

- **Eastern Mass Owl Calendar**

*Save these dates!*

**Thursday, April 13, 2006**

**Women in the Middle  
Featuring Evelyn Murphy  
Author, *Getting Even***

12:30 - 3:30 p.m.  
Healey Library, 11th floor  
University of Massachusetts Boston  
For more information: 617-287-7307

**Friday, May 12, 2006**

**Body and Soul: The Wellness Connection  
A free all-day women's community health fair!  
Sponsored by  
Dimock Community Health Center  
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

*And featuring noted singer **Della Reese!***  
OWL will have an information table at this event.

55 Dimock Street, Roxbury, MA 02119  
For information: 617-442-8800 x1207