



Arkansas House Newsletter

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Social & Economic Status on Arkansas Women Report Released

Representative Kathy Webb presented her study on Women's Social and Economic Status in Arkansas Thursday to the Joint City, County, and Local Affairs Committee. The study examined a variety of factors that affect women, including healthcare, education, human trafficking, and the economic status of women.

Results from the study reveal that there is still much work to be done to improve women's social and economic status in the state of Arkansas. In regards to education, the study did note that women's gains in education have outpaced those of men for the past 40 years; however, percentage of all adult women with a bachelor's degree or more is still not at the same rate as men. In addition, the study found that Arkansas has the 7th highest rate of poverty for women in the nation.

The study also issues a series of recommendations to improve the status of women throughout the state. These recommendations cover a wide range of topics, from providing scholarships to college-bound women graduates interested in pursuing a career in math and science to establishing a paid family leave for parents.

The study comes as a result of House Bill 1911, which was considered during the 2011 regular session by the Arkansas General Assembly. The bill, sponsored by Representative Kathy Webb and Senator Linda Chesterfield, called for the City, County, and Local Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives to "collect economic data from the political subdivisions across the state to determine women's economic status in Arkansas."

The bill was based on a 2002 Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) report, The Status of Women in the States. When this report was updated in 2009 it found that Arkansas ranked between 47th and 50th on most measures examined, including women's median annual earnings, percent of women living above

poverty, and the percent of women with four or more years of college.