



MASSACHUSETTS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE HOUSE – BOSTON, MA 02133-1053

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 23, 2019

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HOUSE PASSES WESTBOROUGH REPRESENTATIVES LEGISLATION

Kane, Dykema & Gregoire Bill Creates a Women’s Rights History Trail in the Commonwealth

BOSTON – Meeting in a full formal session last week, the House of Representatives voted unanimously to pass legislation filed by Westborough’s House Delegation. House Bill 4076, filed by Representative Hannah Kane (R-Shrewsbury), Representative Carolyn Dykema (D-Holliston) and Representative Danielle Gregoire (D-Marlborough) directs the Secretary of Transportation and Executive Director of the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism to “develop and implement a Women’s Rights History Trail program” in the Commonwealth.

The Representatives, who together comprise the House’s only all-female, bipartisan delegation, filed the legislation at the beginning of the General Court’s 191st Session in recognition of the 100th Anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution and as a tribute to their late colleague, Representative Gailanne Cariddi of North Adams, who originally filed the legislation.

“I am proud and humbled to sponsor this legislation alongside my colleagues in the Westborough Delegation, Representative Carolyn Dykema and Representative Danielle Gregoire,” stated Representative Kane. “This legislation ensures that the many women from our Commonwealth who contributed to the fabric of our nation and democracy are recognized, and their accomplishments preserved in our state’s history so their legacies may educate and inspire future generations of young women and men alike.”

“This is a wonderful opportunity to recognize the many notable women who have influenced Massachusetts in important and lasting ways as we prepare for the 100th anniversary of women’s suffrage. I grateful for the strong support of the Speaker, Chair Michlewitz, Chair McMurtry, and all of my colleagues who have again shown

their support for supporting and encouraging women's voices and participation in our public square," said Representative Dykema. "The establishment of a trail will allow us to all hear and appreciate the powerful stories of strong women that will expand our understanding of history and shape our expectations for the future."

"I am thrilled with the House's swift passage of House Bill 4076," said Representative Gregoire. "It was a true honor working with my colleagues, Representatives Kane and Dykema, to continue the work of our late colleague, Representative Gail Cariddi, who sought to draw attention to the advancement of women throughout Massachusetts' history."

Passed at a time which coincides with yearlong celebrations marking the historic centennial anniversary of women being granted full voting rights, the trail shall serve as a means to "promote education and awareness of the struggle for women's rights in the Commonwealth." The Women's Rights History Trail will include properties and sites across the Commonwealth "that are historically and thematically associated with the struggle for women's rights and women's suffrage". Often viewed as being at the bedrock of our nation's history, the Bay State has been the home state of numerous notable and historic women and the Commonwealth has been the host of several historic moments in the women's suffrage movement.

To facilitate the identification of properties and sites linked to the women's rights and women's suffrage movements, the legislation establishes a 13-member task force to research, solicit public input, and offer recommendations for sites, properties and attractions to be included in the trail. The task force's recommendations shall consider sites which are geographically diverse and commemorate individuals of racial, ethnic, cultural and economic diversity as well.

In order to promote the trail program and bolster the Commonwealth's tourism industry, the Secretary and Executive Director shall produce and disseminate appropriate educational materials regarding the trail, such as handbooks, maps, exhibits and electronic information. The Executive Director shall also develop vacation itineraries based on the trail which shall identify surrounding attractions, restaurants, farms, lodging and other places of entertainment as may be part of the trail's historical theme.

Approved on a vote of 156-0, the legislation now heads to the Senate for further action.

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