



Women's and Girls' Day at the Legislature 2024

**Girls Who Dream Become
Women With Vision:**
Giving Voice to the Next Generation

Proclamation

by Governor Jim Justice

Whereas, the West Virginia Women's Commission works to continue to fulfill its mission in extraordinary times in many ways, including by providing the annual Women's and Girls' Day at the Legislature as a virtual event; and

Whereas, this year's Women's and Girls' Day at the Legislature theme, "Bridging the Divide: Engage, Empower and Unite" honors the challenges of the current time while providing an educational perspective and encouragement to move forward; and

Whereas, Women's and Girls' Day at the Legislature is an opportunity for diverse and accomplished West Virginia women and men to share their individual experience on the road to empowerment with the public, while also providing an explanation of the legislative process and how to create strategic planning goals to lead our state now and in the future; and

Whereas, the partners, commissioners, and staff support the West Virginia Women's Commission's goal to elevate the power and potential of West Virginia women and girls to thrive and have economic, political, educational, and social equality to ensure their full participation in society and be recognized for their achievements.

Now, Therefore, Be it Resolved that I, Jim Justice, Governor of the Great State of West Virginia, do hereby proclaim *March 5, 2024* as:

Women's and Girls' Day at the Legislature

in the Mountain State and encourage all women and girls to learn about the diversity of people and their life experiences, get involved in local and state government, and work toward continuing to make a difference in the lives of future generations of West Virginians.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of West Virginia to be affixed.

Done at the Capitol, City of Charleston, State of West Virginia, this the Seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand Twenty-Four, and in the One Hundred Sixty-First year of the State.




Jim Justice
Governor

By the Governor:


Mac Warner
Secretary of State



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State Capitol Building, Room 9-R
Phone: (304)356-2023
Fax: (304)558-1201

February 3, 2024

On behalf of the West Virginia Women's Commission, we would like to express our gratitude to all of our students, teachers, exhibitors, and guests for joining us at this year's Women's and Girls' Day at the Legislature. It is our honor to stand alongside you in solidarity with other women and girls around the world who strive to be equal participants in all spheres of life and in all endeavors.

Your West Virginia Women's Commission is committed to elevating the power and potential of women and girls in West Virginia. Our vision is for all women and girls to prosper and to enjoy social, economic, and civic equality. As we stand together to face challenges head on, our 2024 theme: "Girls Who Dream Become Women With Vision: Giving Voice to the Next Generation", calls us to channel the energy and ideas of diverse women of varying backgrounds, beliefs, and unique characteristics to drive positive change in our communities, state, and world. Let the work that we do today, serve as an impactful beginning for future generations.

Coming together, learning together, and standing together demonstrates the values of peace and unity which are critical to advancing our mission. Your voice, your talent, and your ideas are an integral part of helping West Virginia flourish. The West Virginia Women's Commission greatly appreciates your presence and welcomes your participation in this meaningful event for years to come..

Sincerely,



Jill Upson
Executive Director



Kenyatta C. Grant
Chair



Women's and Girls' Day
at the Legislature
2024

Girls Who Dream Become
Women With Vision:
Giving Voice to the
Next Generation

8:30 - 9:00 am	Sign-In / Morning Snack
9:00 - 9:30 am	Welcome and Introductions Special Remarks from First Lady Cathy Justice
9:30 - 10:00 am	Capitol Tours (<i>Fun Facts Scavenger Hunt</i>) Exhibits
10:00 - 10:15 am	Group Photograph on House Floor
10:15 - 11:00 am	Meet with Legislators (<i>Continue Fun Facts Scavenger Hunt</i>)
11:00 am - 11:45 am	Lunch Group A - Dining in Great Hall Lunch Group B - Culture Center Museum Tour
11:45 am - 12:30 pm	Lunch Group B - Dining in Great Hall Lunch Group A - Culture Center Museum Tour
12:45 pm - 1:45 pm	Guest Performance - Dwedee Kobbah Trivia Game: Jill Upson Legislators Drop-In Guest Speaker - Nevaeh Harmon Keynote Speaker - Delegate Kayla Young
1:45 - 2:45 pm	Giving Voice to the Next Generation! Girl-Led Discussions
2:45 - 3:00 pm	Wrap Up and Close

Guest Performance



Dwedee Kobbah is a Charleston, WV native, and a 2022 graduate of Grambling State University where she earned her degree in Performing Arts. Dwedee is no stranger to the stage. Growing up a lot of her time was spent doing community theatre with the Charleston Light Opera Guild. She can be recognized in roles like Nicola-Kinky Boot (CLOG), Scarlet-Clue on Stage (The Alban Arts Center in Charleston, as well as Squeak-The Color Purple, and Marianne-Disaster! Performed at regional theatre's throughout the state of Louisiana. Dwedee has recently been titled Miss Black West Virginia USA 2024. Her platform F.Y.I, Feeding your Imagination, will be used to show how art and expression are a beautiful part of life, and are important factors when creating a loving community.

Guest Speaker



Neveah Harmon is Miss West Virginia USA 2023. Neveah is a Marshall University student studying biochemistry and aspiring to become a pediatric physician. She started competing in pageants in 2022 and developed the skills and confidence needed to inspire women and girls to dream bigger and lead without fear. Her mission is to teach our youth they can achieve every dream they set their mind to - no matter how far away it may seem. Neveah says by helping them with their strengths, and showing them it doesn't matter who they are, they are worthy of everything their heart desires.

Keynote Speaker



A native of Delegate District 56, **Delegate Kayla Young** was proud to sponsor several bills that passed in her first term and to work on many more that made it across the finish line. Her top priorities of expanding alternative energy solutions, improving the unemployment system, and making childcare more accessible for working families were all signed into law during her first term.

Kayla grew up surrounded by coal miners and teachers in her family, learning the value of a hard day's work and the importance of education for all. As the founder of several businesses and a non-profit organization herself, Kayla knows the importance of community and how small businesses help ours to thrive.

Kayla lives in South Charleston with her soon-to-be husband, Troy Rankin, their children Milo and Zella, and their foster-fail pup Delilah.

Education

George Washington High School; West Virginia University, Political Science, Communications, Public Relations

Affiliations

Charleston Restaurant Week; Rotary of South Charleston

Legislative Service

Elected to the House 2020

Legislative Visits

You may use the following information as a guide when visiting your legislators, but do not feel you need to follow it exactly.

Consider the following tips:

- Introduce yourself.
- Explain that you are there for in support of Women’s and Girls’ Day at the Legislature.
- Describe your topics of interest – such as a particular bill in the House or Senate, or subject areas like environmental issues, health and family well-being, education, employment, equal pay, and diversity concerns.
- Explain why it is important to support those types of issues.
- Close by thanking the legislator or staff member.

If you are unable to speak to a legislator or staff member in person, you can ask for an online meeting, schedule a phone call, or send an email or letter to your legislator and include statements like:

“Dear Legislator (Add their title and name):

I am contacting you to advocate on behalf of the following legislative bills and issues:

I would like you to vote for:

I would like you to vote against:

Sincerely,

(Add your name and contact information)”

If you plan to visit your legislator in person, please take photographs with your legislator and share on social media – tagging those in the photo, the legislator, and the West Virginia Women’s Commission.

Personal Civic Action Plan By _____

My current strengths, skills, knowledge _____

These are community issues that interest me most:

Short-Term (Present to 2 years)

Proposed Action What are things you want to do or see happen that you think could make a difference?	I need to contact... or ask for help from... Is there a person, agency or group you can volunteer with or that can help you learn more about your proposed actions?	My expected outcome is... As a result of taking this action, what would you like the outcome to be?
1. I want to		
2. I want to		
3. I want to		

Long-Term (2-5 years)

4. I want to		
5. I want to		
6. I want to		

NOTES:

Additional Resources

Tips for Legislative Visits

You are encouraged to voice your concerns and/or opinions about upcoming legislation by contacting your United States and West Virginia legislators via letters, emails, or online meetings.

Find Your US Senator

https://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm?State=WV

Find Your US Representative

<https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>

2024 Legislative Session

Download a WV legislature membership directory or 2024 session calendar, WV Senate and House District maps, and to see live sessions of the WV Legislature via streaming video and audio options.

<https://www.wvlegislature.gov/>

How a Bill Becomes a Law

http://www.wvlegislature.gov/Educational/Bill_Becomes_Law/Bill_Becomes_Law.cfm

Virtual Capitol Tours

Take a virtual tour of the WV State Capitol Building, the WV State Museum, and the WV Division of Archives and History by going to <https://wv.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/the-west-virginia-capitol-complex/>. Learn from a tour guide, museum director, and archivist what it is like to work in each setting.

Chronology of Women in the West Virginia Legislature

https://www.wvlegislature.gov/legisdocs/publications/info/Women_2022.pdf

Missing Chapters: West Virginia Women in History, Volume I, 1983 and Volume II, 1986.

A project of the West Virginia Women's Commission, the West Virginia Women's Foundation and the Humanities Foundation of West Virginia, a state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Volume I - <https://archive.org/details/missingchapterswoooounse/page/n3/mode/2up>

Volume II - <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED298012.pdf>

Additional Resources *continued*

WV Women's Commission Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/WVaWomen>

Additional Resources and Contact Information

If you have questions for the WV Women's Commission or would like to make a donation for this year's event or future events and activities, contact Jill Upson at **304-356-2023**, by email at **jill.s.upson@wv.gov**, or donate online directly to the WV Women's Commission at **<https://www.wvdhhr.org/wvwc/>**.

WV Women's Commission Participants

Rae Bates

Liason for Department of Human Services

Belinda Biafore

Fairmont – Commissioner

Betty Critch

Morgantown – Commissioner

Leah Glover

Charleston – Commissioner

Kenyatta Grant

Elkview – Chair & Commissioner

Katonya Hart

Charleston

Angelica Hightower

*Department of Human Services
Communication Specialist*

Candace Kraus

WV Attorney General's Office

Kameron Miller

Charleston – Commissioner

Rojen Morris

Administrative Assistant

Beth Redden

Daniels – Commissioner

Michelle Barnes Russell

Martinsburg – Commissione

Callie Saunders

WV Division of Labor

Sierra Sovine

Dunbar – Commissioner

Angela Sundstrom

WV Higher Education Policy Commission

Jill Upson

Executive Director

Vacant

WV Department of Education

Tia Welch

WV Human Rights Commission

Samantha Willis

Ravenswood – Commissioner

Bobbi Wisniewski

*WV Department Administration
Division of Personnel*

Beth Wolfe

Scott Depot – Commissioner

In addition to our distinguished guests, we thank the following for their support and participation:

GFWC Woman's Club of Dunbar

Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs

James "Tiger" Morton Catastrophic

Illness Commission

Libera, Inc., www.liberawv.com

Rouse House Productions, Joyce Rouse

Suffragist Memorial Committee

University of Charleston

WV Coalition Against Domestic Violence

WV Department of Arts, Culture and History

WV Department of Commerce,

Office of Marketing and Communications

WV Department of Education

WV House of Delegates

WV Office of the Secretary of State

WV Senate

WV State University

West Virginia University

WV Humanities Council

WV NAACP

WV National Organization for Women, and

Kanawha Valley and Morgantown Chapters

WV Public Broadcasting

**STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

West Virginia Women's Commission

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Be. Empowered.