



Illinois Council on Women and Girls

2026 Mid-Year Report

July 6, 2026

To the residents of Illinois,

As we approach the mid-way point of 2026, the Illinois Council on Women and Girls (the “Council”) is pleased to reflect on the progress we have made thus far. This letter serves as a mid-year report per 20 ILCS 5130/30. There are two initiatives I want to highlight at this point: our first-in-the-nation menopause education bill and our Girls Lead program.

Over the past year, the Council’s Health and Healthcare subcommittee has been focused on perimenopause and menopause. Every woman experiences this phase of life, yet the research, expertise, and care are severely lacking. Most women experiencing symptoms in America—close to 75%—are currently not receiving treatment, causing unnecessary health risks and economic burdens. Women make up over 50% of Illinois’ population, yet there are only around 200 healthcare providers certified as menopause health professionals in Illinois, per the Menopause Society.¹ In addition, we know that Black and Hispanic women often experience more severe symptoms for longer. For example, Black women begin the menopausal transition on average 8.5 months earlier than white women. Black and Hispanic women experience some menopausal symptoms for 10 or more years, almost twice as long as white women. Despite this, Black and Hispanic women are 26% and 32% less likely to be prescribed hormone therapy for menopause symptoms compared to white women.

Throughout conversations with leaders in the field of menopause, healthcare practitioners, and women currently experiencing this stage of life, a common theme emerged: healthcare practitioners need more access to the latest research and evidence based best practices in this particular field of women’s healthcare.

Recognizing that healthcare professionals are already stretched thin, the Council worked with experts in the field to incentivize training in perimenopause and menopause, rather than add an additional mandate. Starting in 2023, all healthcare professionals have been required to take a one-hour implicit bias awareness training during every license renewal period. This led the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, in conjunction with the Council, to work with stakeholders to draft Senate Bill 3325. This bill, sponsored by Senator Adriane Johnson and Leader Camille Lilly, would

¹ The Menopause Society serves as the definitive resource for healthcare professionals who seek to become credentialed in menopause and midlife women’s health.

allow healthcare professionals to take a course on perimenopause and/or menopause to fulfill this already established implicit bias awareness training requirement.

We are proud to report that Senate Bill 3325 received strong bipartisan support. It passed unanimously in both the House and Senate. I look forward to the Governor signing this bill in the coming months.

Illinois is the first in the nation to incentivize perimenopause and menopause education. I am so incredibly proud that yet again, Illinois is proving that this is the best state for women to live and thrive.

Girls Lead, facilitated by our Leadership and Inclusion subcommittee, is a unique job shadow and mentorship program in its third year. Girls in grades 5-12 are paired with a senior leader in state government for one to three days (depending on age) to learn about the broad range of available career pathways. This year, we have 187 young women participating and 159 mentors.

The Council's work provides a beacon of hope for women who are often overlooked. Council members are determined and willing to put in extra hours to not only serve on this Council but ensure that progress is made for women and girls throughout Illinois.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Juliana Stratton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Juliana" being more prominent than the last name "Stratton".

Juliana Stratton

Lieutenant Governor
State of Illinois