

NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

Date: January 25, 2019

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Commonwealth Republican Women's Club (CRWC) members including (L-R) Kimberly Pinter, Eileen Brackens (CRWC President), Suzanne Morrison, Laurie Kirby, and Linda Greenberg were very interested in hearing guest speakers from Alexandria's Commission for Women Liz Johnson (Commissioner) and Kendra Martello (Chair) as they presented highlights of the Commission's recent *Status of Women Report*.

GOP Women Host Commission for Women Speakers

ALEXANDRIA, VA –

Kendra Martello, Chair of Alexandria's Commission for Women, and Liz Johnson, Commissioner, were the guest speakers at the January meeting of the Commonwealth Republican Women's Club (CRWC). The speakers provided an overview and some interesting details of the Commission's recently-released *Status of Women Report*. The topic was quite popular and members continued to engage with the speakers long after the meeting ended.

CRWC's members praised the amount of data in the report as a jumping-off point for generating discussion around cause and effect, and were particularly interested in issues related to economic security.

They were interested to learn that today women own 31% of Alexandria businesses and that the median earnings for women in Alexandria is \$47,000, and almost twice that much for women who have earned a Master's degree. It seems that working hard to get a good education pays off.

Martello and Johnson discussed the scarcity of affordable and convenient childcare, which is a problem for most new parents. Members seemed to think that, while it is indeed a problem, it could be addressed by the private sector rather than the government.

Members also pointed out that that predictors of economic success are also known and those behaviors should be encouraged to all young people in school in order to empower them to take control of the direction of their lives and prevent the next generation of poverty. Some common-sense predictors of economic success include: postponing sexual activity and motherhood, obtaining a good education, avoiding illegal drugs, and valuing the strength of a two-parent family unit. The speakers acknowledged that the report was focused on women, rather than youth, and suggested that mentorships could be a way to spread that message.

The issue of affordable housing was discussed, with some members noting that when they themselves can't afford to move to a certain neighborhood, they find another one they can afford and don't expect a taxpayer subsidy to live in a place they can't afford. The speakers explained that there are many cases where several families (related or not) are living in one apartment. One CRWC member, a social worker, stressed the negative impact of new development when it comes from tearing down the older low-income housing buildings because it destroys neighborhoods and the social fabric of friendships and communities that have been built over decades. There was also member criticism of many of the new multi-family housing developments for their lack of green space and proximity of front doors to major highways.

Also during the meeting, the club (which recently gained nine new members) announced the formation of two new groups within CRWC: a Walking Club and a 'Potluck and Politics' Dinner Club. CRWC's conservative Book Club has been a great success, and the GOP women want to create more ways for members to socialize, have fun, talk issues, and reach out to the community.

CRWC is the Alexandria chapter of the National Federation of Republican Women (NFRW). It serves the more social aspects of local GOP life and includes men as associate members. More information is available at www.alexandriacrwc.org.

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