



SEPTEMBER 2024 | ISSUE 13

# Public Policy News

A monthly dispatch from the AAUW California Public Policy Team

## A BUSY YEAR AHEAD

Welcome to Public Policy 2024-2025

Last Saturday, the AAUW California Public Policy Committee spent the day together at Committee Day to make plans for the coming year. We have many exciting things planned to support the public policy work of our AAUW members, including:

- GOTV and Voter Education
- Public Policy Priorities biennial update with input from membership
- School Board Project with continued work to promote school board candidates who will protect Public Education
- Lobby Days annual event in April to meet with legislators and advance key legislation
- Legislative Action Agenda with continued advocacy for California legislation to advance gender equity.

## GOTV WEBINAR - SEPT 23RD

Register now!

The Public Policy Committee will present a webinar entitled, "Getting Out the Vote (GOTV) in a Polarized World" on Monday September 23, 2024 at 7:00pm. The webinar will address Voter Registration, GOTV Logistics, Voter Education/Suppression, and Community Collaboration/ Having Difficult Conversations. **You can register for the webinar [HERE](#).**

## WHERE IS THAT?

Find All Things Public Policy

Key links to your public policy resources:

- [Google Workspace](#)
- [AAUW Policy Leaders Manual from National](#)
- [Branch liaisons](#)
- Contact us at [publicpolicy@aauw-ca.org](mailto:publicpolicy@aauw-ca.org)
- **Tell us about your branch public policy events** by filling out this [form](#).
- **Sign up for CA Legislative Action Alerts [HERE!](#)**

## 2024 KICKOFF FOR BRANCH PUBLIC POLICY CHAIRS

Thursday September 5, 2024 at 2:30pm Pacific

**NOTE DIFFERENT TIME AND ZOOM LINK!**

Click [HERE](#) for meeting information.

Bimonthly Peer Group Meetings will be held on the first Thursday at 3:00pm Pacific in Oct, Dec, Feb, Apr, Jun

**SIGN UP FOR ACTION ALERTS [HERE.](#)**

*click here!*

**[2024 Bill Tracker](#)**

# HEAD-TO-HEAD VOTER GUIDES

## Key Congressional Races

We have created Head-to-Head Voter Guides for key congressional races in California. These are races where an incumbent whose values are consistent with our public policy priorities is in danger of losing their seat, or where an incumbent whose values are not consistent with our priorities is being challenged by a candidate whose values align with ours.



The guides (linked below) reflect candidate positions on AAUW priority issues. Candidate positions were found from legislative records (if incumbent), public statements, campaign position statements, and independent news media for interviews and verified quotes.

- [District 13](#) - John Duarte (incumbent) vs Adam Gray
- [District 22](#) - David Valadao (incumbent) vs Rudy Salas
- [District 27](#) - Mike Garcia (incumbent) vs George Whitesides
- [District 41](#) - Ken Calvert (incumbent) vs Will Rollins
- [District 45](#) - Michelle Steel (incumbent) vs Derek Tran
- [District 47](#) - Scott Baugh vs Dave Min
- [District 49](#) - Mike Levin (incumbent) vs Matt Gunderson

**Branches in these districts: please share the voter guide for your district with your community and your networks.**

**If you are not in one of these districts**, and you would like to develop a Head-to-Head Voter Guide for a race that we have not covered, you may do so by using the template provided from AAUW California [HERE](#). National is developing a template which is not yet available; when it is done, you will be able to find it [HERE](#).

**IMPORTANT:** Per guidelines from AAUW National, voter guides that include the position of major party candidates on specific issues may only be published by 501(c)(4) branches. Please refer to AAUW's [Guidelines for Election Activities](#) for detailed information about election related activities that branches may and may not do, depending on their IRS designation of 501(c)(3) versus 501(c)(4).

## ADDITIONAL ELECTION RESOURCES

### From AAUW National

AAUW National has provided some excellent [Election Resources](#) including Voter Issue Guides, trainings, how-to's, and webinars. There are some informative webinars under the Resources tab including "How to Engage with Elected Officials" and "Title IX & Transgender Student Rights." There are also a number of recorded webinars related to voting under the "Trainings" tab, as well as registration links for **two upcoming webinars**:

- **Get #VoteReady: Last Minute National Voter Registration Day Planning (Sept 11)**
- **Issues in the Home Stretch and Voter Protection (Oct 16)**

National will hold a **Zoom call for AAUW leaders** "Staying Nonpartisan in an Election Year" on September 4th at 12:30pm Pacific. Register [HERE](#).

**Holding an event?** Request AAUW stickers, pins, signs and more [HERE](#)

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE CALIFORNIA STATE PUBLIC POLICY WEBSITE](#)

# CALIFORNIA LEG SESSION ENDS

Look out for Action Alerts!

August 31, 2024 was the final day for the Legislature to pass bills. The Governor will now have until September 30, 2024 to sign or veto the bills passed by the Legislature.

**GET READY! We plan to activate Actions Alerts to encourage the Governor to sign key bills including AB 2843 - Health Care Coverage for Rape and Sexual Assault Survivors.**

If you have not yet signed up for Action Alerts, you can do so [HERE](#). And thank you to all of you who have already signed up and have been reaching out to elected officials!



## SCHOOL BOARD PROJECT UPDATES

We want to hear from you!

### New Survey

It has been over a year since the Public Policy Committee launched the School Board Project (SBP) to stem the tide of school board members who want to ban books, censor curricula, and institute policies that are harmful to LGBTQ+ students. When the project was launched in June 2023, we surveyed members to determine the level of interest in participating in a campaign to counter these regressive actions.

**We now want to hear from you again**, to help us get a picture of what has been happening over the past year and to set goals for moving forward.

- **Branch Public Policy Chairs and Presidents: Please complete the survey [HERE](#) by September 15, 2024.**
- Other members are also welcome to complete the survey; we would love to hear from as many people as possible.

### Parent Brochure

- The SBP team has developed a parent brochure which may be handed out at school board meetings. The intent of the brochure is to counter the misleading information being spread by other entities.
- The brochure will be posted soon on the [SBP Toolkit](#). Print it as a two-sided copy and fold into a tri-fold.

### Candidate Endorsements:

- If a candidate approaches you for an endorsement or support, ask them to complete the Candidate [questionnaire](#) in the SBP toolkit.
- AAUW branches with **501(c)(4)** status **may** recruit and/or endorse candidates for **non-partisan elective offices such as school board members**, city council members, and county supervisors.
- AAUW branches with **501(c)(3)** status **may not** endorse candidates for any kind of elected office.
- For more information about the authority for candidate endorsements, go to **this [document](#)** in the SBP toolkit.

**THANK YOU for all of your hard work! We look forward to hearing from you.**

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE SCHOOL BOARD PROJECT TOOLKIT](#)

# Public Policy Priorities & the Election

Considering How Groups & Candidates Align with Our PPPs

**Highlight: Reproductive Rights**

AAUW, nationally and in California, has long made a commitment to ensuring that every person has the freedom to determine their own reproductive health. One of AAUW California's Public Policy Priorities (PPPs), which are voted on by our membership biennially, states that we seek to advance "social and racial justice for all members of society, including self-determination in reproductive health." While AAUW has long been active in the fight for reproductive rights, this fight has become newly pressing since 2022, when the Supreme Court, newly realigned under the Trump Administration, overturned Roe v. Wade (1973) via their decision in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization (2022). In the wake of Dobbs, 14 states have banned abortion completely, while others have made access all but impossible by criminalizing abortion early in pregnancy. In 2023, more than 171,000 people were subject to the emotional and financial cost of traveling beyond their home state to gain abortion access, an increase of 100% from data collected in 2019.

In a post-Dobbs world, pregnancy has also become more dangerous for many people, including those who need emergency care access, those with less comprehensive healthcare coverage, and those with more problematic pregnancies. Black women, and Indigenous women, who have historically higher maternal mortality rates, are particularly at risk given these developments, even as abortion bans disproportionately negatively impact people of color for a variety of reasons, overall. Problems of medical access to reproductive healthcare are further exacerbated by the decrease in medical school graduates applying for residency in states with abortion bans where providers of care are also criminalized. Collectively, this means that a countless number of people are now forced to carry a pregnancy to term against their will, even as many are also unable to access comprehensive reproductive healthcare, including abortions as emergency medical care, putting their lives, wellbeing, health, and future fertility in danger.

Dobbs has also emboldened legislators and activists who seek to further limit reproductive rights. This has already led to active attempts and stated desires to ban IVF and contraception through fetal personhood amendments; to resurrect the 1873 federal Comstock Act to challenge abortion medication, equipment, and access at the federal level; and to generally challenge federal laws protecting individual rights to privacy on which Roe was built, such as through increased tracking of menstruation and pregnancy outcomes, and even criminalization of miscarriage. A powerful anti-reproductive freedom movement also seeks to enshrine a 15-week abortion ban, federally.



In response, a bipartisan group of federal legislators have taken action to attempt to walk-back the worst impacts of Dobbs and prevent a federal abortion ban through proposing legislation, such as the Women's Health Protection Act and Reproductive Freedom for All Act, which would enshrine a right to abortion access into federal law. In a similar vein, the Biden-Harris Administration has thrown the weight of the federal government behind investigation and action to mitigate some of the negative post-Dobbs impacts, including pushing back against state-level bans for emergency abortion access and strengthening contraception access.

**If YOU want to take action now to urge your federal legislators to advance the Women's Health Protection Act, check out the Two Minute Activist from AAUW National [HERE](#). And vote for state and federal candidates that will advance this kind of legislation once in office!**

In the fall of 2022, in line with the PPP stating that we seek to advance "social and racial justice for all members of society, including self-determination in reproductive health," AAUW California joined with coalition partners to advance and pass Proposition 1, which amended the California Constitution to prohibit the state from "denying or interfering" with an individual's reproductive freedom. In line with our PPPs, in the 2023 and 2024 legislative cycles, AAUW California has continued to advance legislation that not only protects but expands on self-determination in reproductive health, including expanding contraception access and sex education for young people; creating healthier conditions for pregnancy, including championing pregnancy-related leave benefits and healthier conditions while incarcerated; seeking greater protections from increased surveillance of menstruation and pregnancy; and seeking protections for health care workers and doctors who offer reproductive healthcare in California, in part by protecting providers from the enforcement of laws enacted in other states.

**[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE CALIFORNIA STATE PUBLIC POLICY WEBSITE](#)**

## 2024 BALLOT PROPOSITIONS: SUPPORT AAUW CA PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES



By Amy Hom & Missy Maceyko, Co-Chairs, AAUW California Public Policy Committee

This November, California voters will decide the fate of 10 statewide ballot propositions. While we encourage members to support additional propositions that may capture the spirit of AAUW California's Public Policy Priorities (PPPs), four of the propositions on the ballot in 2024 deserve a YES vote from our members for their close alignment with our PPPs.

**Proposition 2**, Public Education Facilities Bond Measure (2024), proposes issuing \$10 billion in bonds to fund construction and modernization of California's public education facilities. \$8.5 billion would be allocated to K-12 schools and \$1.5 billion would support improvements at community colleges. Many school facilities are over 50 years old and require significant upgrades to meet current technological and education needs. Research shows that modernized school facilities correlate with better test scores, higher attendance, and improved teacher retention rates. The last time districts received state funding for infrastructure improvements was in 2016, when Prop 51 authorized \$9 billion in bonds. That money has now run out, and Prop 2 would help fund school projects totaling \$3.5 billion that has been approved and is awaiting funding.

**AAUW California supports "Adequate and equitable funding at all educational levels, including pre-school and post-secondary", and we support a YES vote on Proposition 2.**

**Proposition 3**, Constitutional Right to Marriage, would amend the California Constitution to recognize the fundamental right to marry, and would remove the language banning same-sex marriage, passed by voters in 2008, from the state constitution. In practice, the ban has been nullified since a Supreme Court ruling in 2013 which allowed same-sex marriages to resume in California. Proposition 3 will enshrine the fundamental right to marry and protect against any potential future changes to federal marriage protections.

**AAUW California supports "Guarantee of civil and constitutional rights for all, including all forms of gender identity and expression, and all family structures", and we support a YES vote on Proposition 3.**

**Proposition 4**, Parks, Environment, Energy, and Water Bond Measure, would allocate the state to issue \$10 billion in bonds to fund various environmental, energy, and water projects. While there are a range of projects that ballot measure would fund that would benefit all Californians who are confronted with the impacts of sea-level rise, extreme heat, wildfire dangers, and air/water pollution, proposition 4 would also require that 40% of the bond revenue be used to fund activities that benefit communities with lower incomes or that are affected by environmental changes or disasters. Also, as AAUW California's Public Policy Committee has pointed out in the past, addressing climate issues and advancing gender equity is directly related to environmental sustainability, and vice versa.

**AAUW California supports "Social and racial justice for all members of society, including equal access to quality affordable healthcare, housing and a healthy environment," and we support a YES vote on Proposition 4.**

**Proposition 32**, Raises Minimum Wage, would raise California's current minimum wage of \$16 per hour. Employers with 26 or more employees would pay \$18 per hour beginning in 2025. Employers with 25 or fewer employees would pay \$17 per hour in 2025 and \$18 per hour in 2026. California has a high cost of living and our current \$16 minimum wage is well below the estimated living wage needed to support a household's basic needs. Women and communities of color bear the burden of low-wage jobs. The California Civil Rights Department (CRD) released data showing that in 2021, roughly half of all Latino, Black, and Native American workers earned \$32,329 or less - \$10,000 less than the state's per capita income. 54 percent of all workers in California earning \$32,239 or less were women.

A minimum wage of \$18 will reduce income inequality and improve the standard of living for millions of California workers, especially women and people of color.

**AAUW California supports "Economic Security for All Women", and we support a YES vote on Proposition 32.**

For guidance on additional ballot measures that are adjacent to, but not directly within, the scope of AAUW California's PPPs, please see this excellent guide provided by the League of Women Voters of California.

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS A TEXT-BASED COPY OF THE NL ARTICLE](#)

# AAUW FIVE-STAR PROGRAM

Earn National Recognition for Branch Work in Public Policy & Advocacy

Every year AAUW's Five-Star National Recognition Program rewards branches for aligning their work with the AAUW strategic plan and initiatives that foster the mission of advancing gender equity for women and girls. **Get recognition for the great things that you've been doing!**

## Criteria for Public Policy & Advocacy (Only 3 required for a star):

- Appoint a branch public policy chair for FY25
- Conduct an in-district meeting with your local member of Congress about a National AAUW policy priority
- Participate in a state lobby day
- Hold a program on a policy topic related to Education, Economic Security, or Civil Rights (this also counts towards a Programs Star)
- Conduct a voter registration or voter education event
- Encourage sign-ups for Two-Minute Activists at branch events and on social media

FY25 (July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025)



Resources:

[AAUW Action Network](#)

[How to hold a meeting with your elected officials](#)

[AAUW Action Fund](#)

For a full description of the AAUW Five-Star Program, including details for all the different areas besides Public Policy, benefits of earning stars, application process, Five-Star success stories, and FAQ, explore [HERE](#).

## MEET THE PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Updated Branch Liaisons!

Each AAUW California branch has a specific liaison on the Public Policy Committee. **To find your liaison [CLICK HERE](#).**



**You can get to know everyone a bit better by checking out their individual profiles [HERE](#).** We will also highlight them in upcoming editions of Public Policy News! The profiles are great: in addition to matching a face to the name, they provide more information about how members of the Public Policy Committee answered a very important question: **What do you find most important about public policy?**

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE CALIFORNIA STATE PUBLIC POLICY WEBSITE](#)