



AAUW California Public Policy Peer Group Kickoff Meeting



September 4, 2025



Agenda

- Introductions - Meet the Public Policy Committee
- Introduction to Public Policy: Role of the Committee/Resources
 - Public Policy Committee Projects
- Update re 2025 Legislative Agenda
- Updates from National
- Q&A/Open Discussion



Look for these icons for immediate or upcoming action opportunities.



Meet the Public Policy Committee

Intro to Public Policy: Role of Committee & Resources

The work of AAUW California Public Policy at every level is guided by our mission statement: ***To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.***

Our work is also guided by the four pillars of our **Public Policy Priorities (PPPs)**:

- Economic Security for All Women
- Equal Access to Quality Education for All Students
- Social and Racial Justice for All Members of Society
- Increased Representation of Women in Leadership Roles

PPPs are amended and approved biennially through membership votes.

Intro to Public Policy (cont'd)

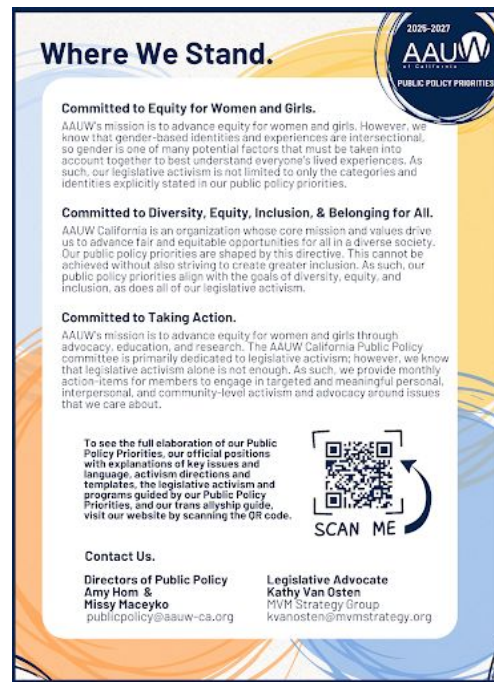
Updated Public Policy Priorities approved for 2025-27! New [Website](#) and Card:



2025-2027
AAUW
OF CALIFORNIA
PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

AAUW California's Public Policy Priorities, which are member-driven and approved, inform our legislative and other forms of activism. Consistent with our organizational value of achieving fair and equitable opportunities for all in our diverse society, and our mission to advance equity for women and girls specifically, we advocate for policies that promote, enhance, and ensure security, justice, access, and representation in four specific priority areas, as listed. As such, AAUW California advocates for policies that promote, enhance, and ensure the following.

- Economic Security for All Women**
 - Equity in the workplace
 - Enforcement of workplace anti-discrimination statutes
 - Security in retirement
 - Job training for career development
 - Work-life balance
- Equal Access to Quality Public Education for All Students**
 - Title IX enforcement for anti-discrimination
 - Adequate and equitable funding for public education
 - Diverse and historically accurate curricula
 - Diverse staff
 - Civics instruction in all CA high schools
 - Equitable access to STEM programs
 - Civics instruction
 - Funding to support strong infrastructure
 - Civil rights and accountability standards
- Social and Racial Justice for All Members of Society**
 - Self-determination in healthcare decisions
 - Equal access to affordable healthcare and housing
 - Equal access to gender affirming care
 - Freedom from violence
 - Civil and voting rights protections
 - Protections for historically marginalized groups
 - Efforts to resist anti-immigrant policies
 - United Nations human rights protections
- Increased Representation of Women in Leadership Roles**
 - Proportional appointment to publicly held boards
 - Leadership skills training
 - Programs that promote participation in public service careers



2025-2027
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PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES


Where We Stand.

Committed to Equity for Women and Girls.
AAUW's mission is to advance equity for women and girls. However, we know that gender-based identities and experiences are intersectional, so gender is one of many potential factors that must be taken into account together to best understand everyone's lived experiences. As such, our legislative activism is not limited to only the categories and identities explicitly stated in our public policy priorities.

Committed to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging for All.
AAUW California is an organization whose core mission and values drive us to advance fair and equitable opportunities for all in a diverse society. Our public policy priorities are shaped by this directive. This cannot be achieved without also striving to create greater inclusion. As such, our public policy priorities align with the goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion, as does all of our legislative activism.

Committed to Taking Action.
AAUW's mission is to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research. The AAUW California Public Policy committee is primarily dedicated to legislative activism; however, we know that legislative activism alone is not enough. As such, we provide monthly action-items for members to engage in targeted and meaningful personal, interpersonal, and community-level activism and advocacy around issues that we care about.

To see the full elaboration of our Public Policy Priorities, our official positions with explanations of key issues and language, activism directions and templates, the legislative activism and programs guided by our Public Policy Priorities, and our trans allyship guide, visit our website by scanning the QR code.



SCAN ME

Contact Us.

Directors of Public Policy Amy Hom & Missy Maceyko publicpolicy@aauw-ca.org	Legislative Advocate Kathy Van Osten MVM Strategy Group kvanosten@mvmstrategy.org
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Intro to Public Policy (cont'd)

Can We Protest AS AAUW? What Can We Do as Non-Partisan Organizations?



YES YOU CAN PROTEST.

As Part of Our Wider Public Policy Program, We can Engage in Legislative and Other forms of Activism around PPPs.

- The State PP Committee will continue to center action as key to what we do and the resources that we provide for all of the branches.
- AAUW California has explicitly taken the position that protest for democracy is non-partisan. Show up, protest, and proudly display your AAUW signs and t-shirts!
- Just like our work during election cycles, what we believe and our PPPs should be centered in any activism, rather than party politics.
- Ask Missy & Amy and/or see national's public demonstration guide [HERE](#).



Intro to Public Policy (cont'd)

What Else Can We Do At the Branch Level?

- Engage in the three monthly actions provided in PP News.

ACTION →

Take Action: Equity & Access in Public Education

1



STEP 1: Self-Focused: Education

- learn more about the important role that free and equitable access to public education has played in maintaining a functional democracy in the United States on p.4
- learn more about the AAUW CA PP School Board Project and how you can get involved by clicking [HERE](#) (and/or on the links at the bottom of this page)
- learn more about how some pressure to (re)fund education access has been impactful by reading the linked article and the update on p.3

2



STEP 2: Other-Focused: Education & Connection

- tell a few people (2-10) something about the important role that public education, in general, and school boards in particular play in maintaining a functional democracy
- tell a few people (2-10) something that THEY can do to ensure that school boards in California are contributing to, not detracting from, the norms of a pluralistic democracy

3



STEP 3: Politically-Focused: Outreach to Legislators

- Sign [THIS](#) Resistbot petition to push federal representatives to rethink their funding choices around federal public education. You can also call your federal representatives and use this petition as a script.
- Respond to our upcoming action alerts for AAUW California's "A" priority bill, CA AB 1098, which expands educational access and success for pregnant students

Intro to Public Policy (cont'd)

What Else Can We Do At the Branch Level?



- **Provide Information via Branch Newsletters:** include information provided by PP Comms via various channels, including what we put out each month in PP News.



- **Take Action Through Ongoing Projects:** in addition to protests, take action with your branch based on our asks for state legislative action needs and local manifestations of state projects (on next slides)



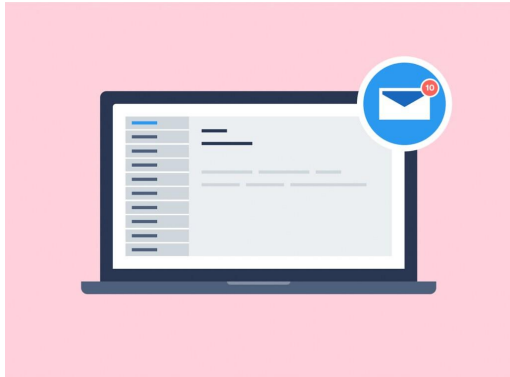
- **Organize Your Own Projects & Actions, Then Share:** if you are doing something great with action items, inviting impactful speakers, or creating new projects—share it with us and with other branches. **Click [HERE](#) to share.**



Intro to Public Policy (cont'd)

Where Can I Find Text-Based Articles for My Branch? Information About Peer Group Meetings? Updates on All of the Cool Things?

Most of this information is provided monthly in PP News, including via links in the newsletter. You can find PP News and other necessary **resources both on the AAUW California Website and via a virtual Google Workspace.**



Click [HERE](#) to access to PPC Google folder
Click [HERE](#) for Google folder index
Click [HERE](#) for AAUW CA PP website

You can find all of these links on the "where is that" section of each monthly PP News



Intro to Public Policy (cont'd)

Public Policy Communications: Uses different mediums to provide members and the wider public with both **education and targeted pathways for action**. We develop social media campaigns. We keep the Public Policy website updated with fresh content. We develop Public Policy Newsletter content and design and maintain upkeep on other assets like the Trans Allyship Guide.

- Leads: Missy, Erica
- Members: Rohan; Malena; Marisol

Where All Can You Find Updated Information?

- **AAUW CA PP Website**
- **Public Policy News** (monthly newsletter)
- **Google Workspace**
 - Text-Based Article Content, linked in PP News
- **AAUW CA PP on Bluesky.**
- **AAUW CA PP on Resistbot.**

Where All Can You Find Other Resources?

- **AAUW CA PP's TransAllyship guide**
- **AAUW CA PP's Take Action website**
- **AAUW CA PP's Past Webinars**
 - Upcoming webinars will be in PP News
 - Upcoming & Past webinars include events hosted by AAUW as well as from coalition and partner organizations



Upcoming Webinars and Events

- Saint Mary's College of California NEW (New Education for Women's) Leadership Institute on-day conference "Women's Leadership in the Current Political Moment"
 - Sept 4, 2025, 9:50am-5:30pm
- AAUW LACIC September program on Generative AI and its impact on education, health and mental health
 - Sept 14, 2025 2:00-4:00pm via Zoom link HERE.
- AAUW Washington Online Branch Program on Title IX
 - Sept 17, 2025 5:30-7:00pm via Zoom. Register HERE.
- The Challenges to Voting Rights Then and Now
 - Sept 18, 2025 1:00-2:30pm via Zoom. Register HERE.
- Public School Defenders Hub Monitors & Observers - Brown Act Specific Training
 - Sept 25, 2025 6:30-8:30pm. Register HERE
- AAUW California Webinar - Harnessing the Power of AI
 - Nov 1, 2025 10:00-11:30am. SAVE THE DATE - registration link coming soon.
- AAUW Silicon Valley Branch Program on Higher Education at Risk - And How You Can Help Protect It - featuring Meghan Kissell, AAUW Senior Director of Policy
 - Dec 3, 2025 4:00-5:00pm. SAVE THE DATE - registration link coming soon.

Other Ways to Get Involved: AAUW CA PP - Projects 25-26



Status/Project	Lead	General Goal(s)
Ongoing		
School Board Project SBP	Kathi Harper	<p>Committee Goals: Gather members to monitor CA school boards to assess the extent of issues of discrimination, book banning, and censorship in CA curricula; ensure compliance with CA laws. Recruit candidates.</p> <p>What You Can Do: You can learn more and get your branch involved.</p>
Legislative Agenda	Missy Maceyko & Amy Hom	<p>Committee Goals: Develop a comprehensive legislative action agenda for each annual legislative cycle.</p> <p>What You Can Do: You can help advance that agenda by responding to action alerts and following the bill tracker in PP News.</p>
GOTV	Claire Noonan	<p>Committee Goals: Develop educational campaigns, as needed, to assist branches with efforts to get out the vote and increase voter awareness.</p> <p>What You Can Do: You can watch for this info and share it out—and take any other steps that you think would be good to GOTV in an off-year election.</p>
Lobby Day	Amy Hom	<p>Committee Goals: Develop a successful Lobby Day event, including increasing member participation.</p> <p>What You Can Do: You can participate in Lobby Day—look for information starting in November.</p>
New		
Coalition Building	Nancy Brebeau Nancy Major	<p>Committee Goals: Work to build and maintain coalitions with organizations who share our goals, including those with whom we already partner.</p>
City Council Action and Monitoring Project CCAMP	Nancy Brebeau Ginny Hatfield	<p>Committee Goals: Lead a project modeled on the School Board Project, activating members to attend local city council (and county supervisor) meetings to advance expanded anti-discrimination protections, monitor compliance, and report on potential issues impacting PPPs.</p>
Women's Health Project	Claire Noonan	<p>Committee Goals: Statewide expansion of a women's health project brought to AAUW CA by a group of high school students with the OML branch—early stages of development—more soon!</p>

School Board Project SBP

The goal of project leads and subcommittee members is to gather members from all branches (and beyond) to monitor CA school boards to assess the extent of issues of discrimination, book banning, and censorship in CA curricula and to ensure compliance with CA laws. The project has gone through several phases, so the explicit focus and goals of the sub-committee may vary depending on the trajectory of the project per year.

Members: Laurinda, Ogie, Seena, Sue

Lead: Kathi



Branches and individuals throughout the state can get involved in many ways!

Click [HERE](#) for more public-facing SBP Information.



School Board Project SBP, cont'd

SBP History & Focus

- 2023: SBP ToolKit was developed for members including scripts for speaking up at SB meetings, and scripts for recruiting SB candidates
- 2024-25: SBP subcommittee has been collecting and assessing information from branches. There has been overwhelming interest and engagement in the project.
 - i. Positive feedback from school board members, appreciation for showing up
 - ii. Some branches developed coalitions with like-minded groups
- 2025-26 Goals
 - o Coalition building - internal: LIFT UP Schools - DAW Branch
 - o Coalition building - external: Public School Defenders Hub
 - o Monitoring School Boards for Compliance to CA laws
 - o Re-focus on Recruitment of School Board Members
 - o Member Education - Half Day Symposium (see next slide)

School Board Project SBP, cont'd

Half Day Symposium - targeting early 2026

- Keynote Speaker - Fed laws vs CA laws
- Panel - School Board Members, PTA, CA School Board Association
- Workshops
 - o Coalition building
 - o Recruiting for School Board Members

Why is SBP VERY RELEVANT for Everyone in this moment? Check Out PP News!

Every month from September until the Half Day Symposium, the School Board Project Subcommittee will publish an article in the Public Policy News about "Why Participation in the School Board Project is so Critical."

Show of hands - anyone who is not yet familiar with the SBP?

Please check out the website to learn all about it: [Special Projects Archives - AAUW California](#)

SBP Subcommittee Liaison Assignments (IBC/District)

How do you get your branch involved? Reach out to Kathi, as SBP lead, or your local liaison!

Sue

- Capital Counties (4)
- Lake Tahoe (1)
- Far North (1)
- North Valley (2)
- San Francisco-San Mateo (4)

Seena

- San Diego County (6)
- Orange County (4)
- Southeast (2)

Laurinda

- Contra Costa County (3)
- North Coast (3)
- Alameda (2)
- Santa Clara (3)

Kathi

- California Online (1)
- San Luis Obispo County (2)
- So San Joaquin (2)
- No San Joaquin (2)

Ogie

- L.A. (7)
- Ventura County (2)
- Santa Barbara County (1)
- Monterey Bay-Santa Cruz (2)

Legislative Action Agenda

The goal of this project and subcommittee, comprised of state public policy committee members is to develop a comprehensive legislative action agenda for each annual legislative cycle.

- Leads: Missy, Amy
- Members: All State PP Committee Members



Branches and individuals can get involved by responding to action alerts, delivered via Bluesky, Resistbot, and email.

Goal: Author new bill to preserve infrastructure and restore funding lost due to the federal defunding of the McNair Scholars Program (as needed), which supports low-income, first generation, and underrepresented students in pursuing graduate and professional studies.

- Part of meeting a larger goal of advancing what might be called “pro-DEIB” legislation at the state-level, in coordination with nationwide coalitions (e.g. Missy’s Willing Observers and Working Ideal)
- Discussions in process with Leg Advocate

Goal: Provide model policy language for local jurisdictions to strengthen anti-discrimination protections, potentially based on implementation of SB 1340

- Part of meeting a larger goal of advancing what might be called “pro-DEIB” legislation at the state-level, in coordination with nationwide coalitions (e.g. Missy’s Willing Observers and Working Ideal)
- Discussions in process with Leg Advocate

More on this coming soon from both the Leg Subcommittee and new project CCAMP re: monitoring!

Legislative Action Agenda, cont'd

Goal: Develop Legislative Action Agenda 2026

- Leg Advocate, Missy and Amy will review new bills, select ~50 bills related to our Mission and PPP - Jan-Feb
- Committee will analyze ~50 bills (~4 bills per member) - Feb
- Full Committee Meeting to review analyses, select ~30 bills for advocacy, and prioritize into A, B, C -Mar
- Advocate for the selected bills, with highest focus on A priority
- Leg Advocate lobbies legislators in Sacramento, PP Comms sends Action Alerts - April-September

Expected Outcome: Goal for 60% of our selected bills to become law. Measured by our Bill Tracking Report.

Current Status of our 2025 Legislative Agenda: Bill Tracking Report

The 3 "A" Priority Bills are out of appropriations and are **expected to reach the Governor's desk**

AB 1098: Pregnancy Protections for All Students

SB 418: Ensure Equal Access to Care for All

SB 771: Social Media Platforms Endangering Californians (AAUW CA Sponsored)



How do you get involved? Respond to Action Alerts!
Expect Action Alerts on BlueSky and Resistbot after September 9, 2025.

Get Out the Vote (GOTV) & Voter Education 2025

Project leads and subcommittee members at the state level develop educational campaigns to assist branches with efforts to increase voter awareness of AAUW-related issues. They also assist with planning, coordination, delivery of training events and social media campaigns.

- Leads: Claire, Donna
- Subcommittee Members: Nancy M.; Seena; Asha; Marisol

ACTION → **Get involved by following and reposting information provided via social media and other campaigns.**

This year, will focus on GOTV for special election and municipal elections, as needed.

- Focus on providing information about and emphasizing positive impacts of Prop 50.
 - No formal recommendation or endorsement.
- Non-partisan and information-centric.
- Focus on CA impacts, PPP goals, combating misinformation, and the importance of saving democracy for Californians
- Awaiting CA Board Approval to move forward on Prop 50 campaign-support from national and unanimous vote of PP Committee.

Press releases, social media materials, and more coming soon!



Lobby Day

State committee members work with chair(s) and Leg Advocate to recruit members from branches and match them with legislators to create a successful lobby day event—virtually and in-person in Sacramento. They develop a training webinar and materials to educate members on top bills. They collect feedback from teams and write a follow-up newsletter article.

- Leads: Amy
- Members: Ginny, Malena, Asha, Ogie, Seena

Branches and individuals can get involved by signing up for and participating in Lobby Day(s) each spring.



Look for more information about Lobby Day(s) beginning in November 2025!



New Projects and Goals

**Keep an eye on PP News, Bluesky, and Email for updates as our new projects develop.
We'll also provide updates at PP Peer Group Meetings.**

Coalition Building Initiative (New): Build coalitions with organizations who share our goals, including public policy leadership programs, Commission on the Status of Women, League of Women Voters, California Girls STEM Conference. Maintain relationship with existing coalitions - Stronger California, California Coalition for Reproductive Freedom, Public School Defenders Hub.

- Leads: Nancy B, Nancy M
- Members: Erica

City Council Action and Monitoring Project (CCAMP) (New): Modeled on the School Board Project, with the goal to encourage member participation in and monitoring of local city council meetings. Specific monitoring focus and potential integration with anti-discrimination policy forthcoming.

- Leads: Ginny, Nancy B
- Members: Missy, Asha, Marisol

Women's Health Project (still in early development, not yet ready for rollout):

- Lead: Claire
- Members: Asha, Marisol



Updates from AAUW National

Recent nationwide branch survey results show that folks are VERY interested in Public Policy, so national plans to do more to provide updates, policy briefings, advocacy trainings, and other action items. **Stay tuned—rollout planned for week of September 22.**

Federal Policy: H.R.1 BBB & Education Funding

- **H.R.1 BBB signed into law. However, there has been a lot of wrangling during the summer around education (de)funding.**
 - House appropriations committee wants to cut education budget by 15% in line with original proposals in BBB.
 - Senate rejected the budget on education funding and advanced its own budget proposal in July that maintains important programs like TRIO and full Pell grant funding.
- **National will be monitoring and responding to developments with Labor-HHS-Education bills in the house and senate.**

FY 2026 Appropriations

- **Senate:** advanced its Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS-Education) bill
 - Level funding to Department of Education
 - Level funding to Office for Civil Rights
- **House:** working on its Labor-HHS-Education bill
 - 15% cut to Department of Education
 - 33% cut to Office for Civil Rights

Updates from AAUW National, cont'd.

Federal Policy: Public Service Loan Forgiveness

PSLF = after 10 years of work you can have student loans forgiven if you work in certain nonprofits and/or educational settings (Higher Ed)

A few weeks ago, a memo came out about non-profit work which has led to a rule change...

- Now the Secretary of Education will determine if you can have this based on whether or not where you are working is engaged in "illegal activity." (normally this is up to IRS and there is a process)
 - How they are defining illegal activity: "supporting terrorism" (Gaza and immigration); "trafficking children" (providing gender affirming care); "illegal discrimination" (DEI, sex-based scholarships)
 - What is "unlawful" discrimination? Still being challenged by "Justice Department" interpretations vs. historical precedent
- This is both politicizing and undermining public service (1A challenges)

Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF)

- March 2025: "Restoring Public Service Loan Forgiveness" Executive Order
- June 2025: U.S. Dept. of Education convenes negotiated rulemaking
- July 2025: Dept. of Justice issues guidance on "unlawful discrimination"
- August 2025: Dept. of Education issues proposed rule on PSLF

AAUW

National will be releasing a comment guide, which we will share, but you are free to take action now by clicking [HERE](#). Please take action on this by September 17.



Updates from AAUW National, cont'd.

Federal Policy: H.R.1 BBB & Education Funding, cont'd.

- Also **look for national to be working on budget reconciliation and rulemaking around education funding and gender equity issues.**
 - A group of negotiators will be chosen and committees will work on definitions that are part of budget reconciliation, e.g. what are provisions? e.g. language around loan caps for grad/professional loans, but no definition of what counts as a “professional” program.
 - Proposed rules will come out for public comment in late fall/early spring—they will send out action alerts around this.

Budget Reconciliation → Rulemaking

- *One Big Beautiful Bill Act* (H.R. 1) signed into law
- U.S. Dept. of Education negotiated rulemaking on student loans:
 - Reimagining and Improving Student Education (RISE) Committee
 - Accountability in Higher Education and Access through Demand-driven Workforce Pell (AHEAD) Committee



Updates from AAUW National, cont'd.

Federal Policy: Agency Rulemaking

- The federal government is trying to change or challenge civil rights via new rulemaking processes in federal agencies.
- We need you all to engage in public comment to slow down the process and to provide evidence for potential legal challenges, should they arise later.
 - **Department of Energy** civil rights challenge in May-backdoor attack on education funding. BUT- **rules postponed b/c 700+ comments! Nice work!**
 - **Department of Veterans' Affairs** (public comment closed yesterday) on rule making abortion care a "non essential medical service" (and thus not covered by VA).
 - **Department of Labor**-we're working on templates for you now.



More upcoming! Stay tuned and take action! Follow AAUW CA PP on Bluesky and/or follow [AAUW National HERE](#) for two minute activist alerts.

Agency Rulemaking

- **U.S. Department of Energy**
 - Direct Final Rules rescinding protections against discrimination based on gender (Title IX), race (Title VI), disability, age
- **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – *comments close today!***
 - Proposed rule removing coverage of abortion care and counseling from veterans' medical benefits package
- **U.S. Department of Labor – *comments close 9/17***
 - Proposed rule rescinding regulations that implement anti-discrimination protections for federal contract workers & affirmative action



Q&A/Open Discussion

-sorry to anyone who got cut off at the end of the meeting—the AAUW leadership zoom shut down and would not restart. Thank you all for your time! -Missy



Next Public Policy Peer Group Meeting

NOTE: Meetings will be held every other month on Fridays at 1:30pm starting October.

Meeting dates Oct 10, Dec 5, Feb 6, Apr 3, Jun 5

Next meeting: Friday October 10th at 1:30pm

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87678507834>

Information about all meetings, including slides and recordings can always be found HERE.

