



JUNE 2026 | ISSUE 32

Public Policy News

A monthly dispatch from the AAUW California Public Policy Team

PP NEWS SUMMER HIATUS

Next issue: September 2026

Public Policy News will be on summer hiatus, with the next issue arriving in September. But that doesn't mean the Public Policy Team will be slowing down. We will continue advancing AAUW California's Legislative Agenda and will keep you informed about key opportunities to contact your legislators as bills work their way through the legislative process. You should also watch for information about new voter guides and get out the vote materials in August.

Please follow us on [Resistbot](#) so that you will be notified when new petitions are available to sign.

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA UPDATE

Setbacks and opportunities

During the week of May 11, the Assembly and Senate held appropriations hearings to review bills on the suspense files - those bills that would cost the state at least \$50,000 in the Senate and \$150,000 in the Assembly. Lawmakers largely halted new spending programs, with both chambers killing roughly a quarter of the bills under consideration.

Fourteen of the bills on AAUW California's Legislative Agenda, including Watch bills, were held on suspense and are now dead. However, we do have some good news: all three of our A priority bills - AB 1845 (Krell), AB 1766 (Krell) and AB 1876 (Addis) - have passed out of the Assembly and are now in the Senate.

Also, because several of our priority bills were eliminated, we have taken the opportunity to move a few other bills onto our Legislative Agenda. These include AB 2540 (Stefani) which requires community colleges with student health centers to provide access to medication abortion services, and SB 934 (Wiener) which allows individuals harmed by conversion therapy to have sufficient time to pursue legal action.

Be sure to keep your eye on [the bill tracker](#) during our summer PP News break for the most current information.

Upcoming Events

Mark Your Calendars!

- School Board Monitors & Observers Training from the Public School Defenders Hub - Thursday June 11, 2026 6:30-8:30pm PT. Register [HERE](#).

Coming This Fall...

- AAUW California Webinar: Missy Maceyko will speak about the Heritage Foundation's latest 2026 report - "Saving America by Saving the Family: A Foundation for the Next 250 Years," which doubles down on attempts to roll back rights for women and the LGBTQ+ community through regulating marriage, divorce, kinship, college access, social welfare, and child rearing.

BRANCH PUBLIC POLICY CHAIRS' MEETING



LAST MEETING OF THE YEAR!

PEER GROUP MEETING
Friday June 5, 2026
at 1:30pm Pacific
[ZOOM LINK HERE](#)

Click [HERE](#) for meeting information.



A new Peer Group Meeting schedule will be released in September.

If you miss a Peer Group Meeting, Recordings and Slide Decks can be found [HERE](#) under Public Policy

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



WHERE IS THAT?

Key links to your public policy resources:

- [Google Workspace](#)
- Contact us at publicpolicy@aauw-ca.org.
- Tell us about your branch public policy events by filling out this [form](#).

FOLLOW US ON [RESISTBOT HERE.](#)



Three Steps to Take Action in June

Focus: Stand up for the LGBTQ+ Community during Pride Month



Taking action is as easy as 1-2-3! Each month we provide you with a short list of targeted action-items focused on a topic-area that we care about. This month our focus is on LGBTQ+ ADVOCACY. If you want more options for action, please visit the [AAUW California public policy website](#) or stop by our peer group meetings.

Take Action: Stand up for the LGBTQ+ Community during Pride Month

1

STEP 1: Self-Focused: Education



- Read about [Chiles v. Salazar](#), decided on March 31, 2026, in which the United States Supreme Court struck down a Colorado law banning conversion therapy for minors in an 8-1 ruling, holding that the law violated therapists' First Amendment free speech rights.
- Learn about the [harmful effects of conversion therapy](#) on young people.
- Learn how [California laws provide protections](#) for the transgender community in the face of federal attacks.
- Listen to the inspiring episode of This American Life, "Two Is One, One is None," which explores how one family responds with courage and resilience to the Trump administration's ban on trans people serving in the military. Find the episode [HERE](#).

STEP 2: Other-Focused: Education & Connection



- Share with 3-5 friends and family members what you learned about [Chiles v. Salazar](#), the harms of conversion therapy, and/or California protections for the transgender community.
- Share with 3-5 friends the inspiring [episode](#) of This American Life, "Two Is One, One Is None!"

STEP 3: Politically-Focused



- Sign [our Resistbot petition](#) asking Assemblymembers to support SB 934, a bill that [responds to the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Chiles v. Salazar](#). SB 934 will allow survivors of conversion therapy to sue licensed therapists and organizations for damages, even years after the harm occurred.
- Sign [our Resistbot petition](#) asking State Senators to support AB 1876, the AAUW California A-priority bill which has just passed out of the Assembly. AB 1876 will prohibit health insurance plans and providers from denying coverage or benefits based on sex, including sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy-related conditions, and sex characteristics such as intersex traits.
- To take action at the federal level, call your U.S. House Representative and ask them to oppose [H.R. 2616](#) and [H.R. 2617](#), two bills that [target treatment of LGBTQ+ students in public elementary and secondary schools](#). Phone script: "Hi, my name is [NAME] and I'm a constituent from [CITY]. I'm calling to urge Rep. [REPRESENTATIVE NAME] to oppose H.R. 2616, the PROTECT Kids Act, and H.R. 2617, the Say No to Indoctrination Act. These bills will endanger vulnerable LGBTQ+ students and unfairly punish schools and parents for protecting these students' privacy and safety. Thank you for your time and consideration." (IF LEAVING VOICEMAIL: Leave your full street address to ensure your call is tallied.) Find your Rep's phone number here: [Representatives | house.gov](#)

2

CLICK [HERE](#) TO ACCESS AAUW CALIFORNIA RESISTBOT

Honoring Pride Through Protecting Fundamental Rights in California

By Ogie Strogatz, Committee Member, and Missy Maceyko, Co-chair,
AAUW California Public Policy Committee



“AAUW advocates freedom in definition of self and family, including protection from discrimination and a guarantee of civil rights for all family structures, and vigorous enforcement of and full access to civil and constitutional rights.” ([AAUW: Where We Stand: LGBTQ+ Rights](#))

Although advocacy is neverending work, and while it may seem like we are moving in the wrong direction at the federal level, we are fortunate to live in a state that leads by example in the breadth and depth of its fight for LGBTQ+ rights—which are in alignment with AAUW’s positions. California has continued to aggressively defend LGBTQ+ rights by passing shield laws, expanding healthcare access, protecting privacy, and enshrining fundamental protections in the state constitution. By pushing back against federal rollbacks, California has actively combatted discrimination, creating new legal safeguards, more proactive state agencies, and increasingly inclusive public education mandates.

For a shot of inspiration in what may sometimes seem like a sea of negative reporting on civil rights protections, this article offers some highlights that can give us all hope.

California voters cemented marriage equality by passing [Proposition 3](#) in 2024, enshrining the fundamental right to marry for same-sex couples directly in the California Constitution.

The state affirmed its status as a "Transgender State of Refuge" by passing privacy and shield laws (including [CA Senate Bill 450](#); [CA Senate Bill 590](#); and [The Transgender Privacy Act, CA Senate Bill 59](#), which protect sensitive medical, reproductive, and prescription data from out-of-state prosecution. In addition, the [California Department of Justice's Health Equity Unit](#) actively investigates and pursues civil rights violations against LGBTQ+ healthcare consumers, ensuring equitable and gender-affirming care.

[CA Assembly Bill 1078](#) prohibits school districts from banning instructional materials or library books solely because they include the contributions, roles, or perspectives of diverse groups, including racial minorities and LGBTQ+ individuals.

[California Assembly Bill 727](#) requires that student ID cards issued by public middle and high schools, and public colleges/universities include a 24/7 hotline for the Trevor Project.

California has a number of laws and regulations that protect transgender, gender diverse, and intersex individuals in various settings, including employment (California prohibits discrimination and harassment in the workplace. Cal. Gov't Code § 12940(a); Cal. Code Regs. Title 2 § 11034(e)(2), (h), (i)(4)) and housing (California prohibits discrimination in housing. This includes emergency shelter settings. Cal. Gov't Code § 12955).

The [Commission on State of Hate](#) works proactively to analyze and address hate crimes and hate incidents while developing statewide media campaigns to discourage discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

The mission of the [California Civil Rights Department \(CRD\)](#) is to protect the people of California from unlawful discrimination in employment, housing, businesses, and state-funded programs, and from bias-motivated violence and human trafficking.



Honoring Pride Through Protecting Fundamental Rights in California, cont'd.



Notwithstanding California's staunch support of LGBTQ+ rights, the onslaught of hostile action at the federal level persists, particularly targeting the transgender community. Some of these policies, including [the Trump administration's ban on trans people in the military](#), have devastating real-world impacts on trans people and their families, as noted in a recent podcast episode, [This American Life; 887: "Two Is One, One Is None!"](#), which delicately chronicles the wrenching chaos, anxiety, and fear experienced by accomplished, principled military professionals simply for being who they are.

Federal-level threats to transgender people in California primarily center on executive actions and legal challenges from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). These federal actions aim to penalize California's sanctuary laws and force state institutions into compliance with national policies.

- **Title IX and Athletics:** The DOJ filed a lawsuit against the California Department of Education and the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF), asserting that California's policies, which allow transgender girls to compete on girls' sports teams based on their gender identity, violate Title IX and the U.S. Constitution. The administration has also launched federal investigations into various TK-12 districts, the California Community College Athletic Association, and individual California high schools over their transgender athlete policies.
- **Healthcare and Medicaid Restrictions:** Federal budget and policy pushes seek to ban gender-affirming care for transgender youth. The federal government has threatened to cut off Medicare and Medicaid funding to hospitals and healthcare networks that continue to provide this care to minors. Federal authorities have also issued aggressive subpoenas demanding individual patient records from California healthcare providers that perform gender-affirming services.
- **Education and Parental Rights:** The U.S. Department of Education has threatened to withhold billions in federal funding for schools in response to California's law that bars school boards from passing "forced outing" policies (which require teachers to notify parents if a child identifies as transgender). ([Assembly Bill 1955](#) was supported by AAUW California and signed into law in 2024. The U.S. Supreme Court temporarily blocked AB 1955 and the case is now under review at the appellate level.)

However, here, too California has continued to respond vigorously to federal attacks on the rights of the transgender community:

- **State Refusal and Countersuits:** California's Department of Education and Attorney General Rob Bonta have strongly rejected the federal demands regarding Title IX and parental rights. Attorney General Bonta has filed pre-enforcement lawsuits against the federal government to block the enforcement of executive orders targeting gender-affirming care and trans athletes, arguing they are unlawful and unconstitutional.
- **Transgender Shield Laws:** California continues to bolster its "sanctuary state" protections. State legislation, including the landmark [Senate Bill 497 \("Legally Protected Health Care Activity", signed in 2025\)](#), which requires out-of-state and federal entities to obtain warrants before accessing California's sensitive healthcare databases. The laws protect doctors, patients, and families from out-of-state prosecution and subpoenas relating to gender-affirming care.
- **Healthcare Coverage:** AAUW California has prioritized [Assembly Bill 1876 \("Health Care Coverage: Non-discrimination"\)](#) among its top 3 priority bills in the current legislative session in Sacramento. The bill explicitly prohibits a health plan or a health insurance provider from denying coverage, benefits, or limiting healthcare services to a person based on their race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. AB 1876 has been approved by the Assembly and moves to the Senate for review and approval.
- **Conversion Therapy:** AAUW California has identified [Senate Bill 934 \("Sexual orientation or gender identity change efforts: actions for recovery of damages: statute of limitations"\)](#) among its priorities in the current session. SB 934 allows survivors of conversion therapy to seek civil remedies and justice through malpractice lawsuits for the harm that was done to them, even years after the fake therapy occurred. SB 934 has been approved by the Senate and moves to the Assembly for review and approval.

Honoring Pride Through Protecting Fundamental Rights in California, cont'd.



Attacks on transgender people are not isolated. They are part of a broader effort to roll back protections and opportunities for everyone who is marginalized because of gender. As Californians and AAUW members, we must remain vigilant and unwavering in defending the rights, dignity and safety of the LGBTQ+ community, both for the community itself, and to protect the fundamental principles of equality, bodily autonomy, inclusion, and opportunity, principles that feminists have fought to secure for all gender-marginalized people for more than half a century.

As the fight for civil rights continues, we can and should draw inspiration from the courage, resilience, joy, and pride of the LGBTQ+ community.

For opportunities to learn more and take action to support the LGBTQ+ community, generally, and the transgender community, specifically, please see “Three Steps to Take Action in June.”

Help Protect Against Conversion Therapy

A Newly Critical Ask in California Given March Supreme Court Decision

Conversion therapy is the use of talk therapy, or other emotional or physical methods, to “cure” or “repair” a person’s attraction to others, based on their gender, or their gender identity and expression. Conversion therapy has long targeted members of the LGBTQ+ community.

The American Psychological Association, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, the American Counseling Association, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the American School Counselor Association, the National Association of Social Workers, and every other mainstream mental health and medical organization in the United States have determined that efforts to use conversion therapy in an attempt to change an individual’s sexual orientation or gender identity are harmful and ineffective.

However, in March, the Supreme Court of the United States (Chiles v. Salazar) determined that some state laws that impose professional standards and regulations on talk therapy banning conversion therapy are problematic, equating to a form of viewpoint discrimination that violates the rights of any therapist who wishes to engage in conversion therapy with their patients. This decision will challenge existing state-level and professional bans of conversion therapy for licensed counselors, at the very least demanding that the laws are reworded.

Preventing medical professionals from engaging in conversion therapy is critical for protecting the well-being of LGBTQ+ community members, with a specific emphasis on protecting young people. Medical and mental health experts have rejected conversion therapy practices for decades not only because they do not work, but also because they are discriminatory and dangerous, a practice that can lead to severe emotional and psychological harm, depression, anxiety, drug use, and suicide.

As such, in California, the passage of SB 934 (2026) is desperately needed to reinscribe state-level protections. This bill defines “sexual orientation or gender identity change efforts” as “any practices of a licensed mental health provider that seek to direct a patient toward a predetermined sexual orientation or gender identity outcome, regardless of the direction of the intended change.” Using this definition would make SB 934 allowable based on Chiles v. Salazar, while still restricting the practice of conversion therapy. Restrictions would be imposed through financial incentives, where former patients who were subject to conversion therapy at the hands of licensed mental health providers and their employees could recover damages suffered as a result.

Given the need for these critical protections at this moment, **we respectfully ask for you all to sign the resistbot petition below--and/or use this language to reach out to your California Assemblymembers!**



TELL STATE LEGISLATURES (CALIF. ONLY)

Protect the LGBTQ+ Community from Conversion Therapy in CA by Passing SB 934

TEXT SIGN PBWOUX TO 50409