

January 4, 2024

The new year is an opportunity for both new and continuing resolutions, including our 2024 commitment to you. This year AAUW will:

- Continue fighting for all women to achieve economic self-sufficiency through pay equity and paid family leave policies.
- Advocate for a strengthened Title IX and a strong system of public education that promotes gender fairness, equity, and diversity.
- Pursue policies that advance full access to civil rights for a diverse society.

As a founding partner of the [ERA Coalition's National Strategy Task Force](#), AAUW will continue to call on Congress and the Administration to affirm the Equal Rights Amendment. Together, with your membership, support, and continued advocacy, we can advance policies that continue to break down educational and economic barriers for women.

In solidarity,
Meghan Kissell
Senior Director, Policy & Member Advocacy

Act – *A New Year's resolution: Be an informed voter*

This year promises to be eventful, with many of our key policy issues impacting gender equity being decided in Congress, in statehouses, and at the ballot box. Start this year off right by making your own commitment to be a well-informed and engaged activist and voter. Here are three ways to do it:

1. Invite three friends to [become a Two-Minute Activist!](#) Share this message to help AAUW build momentum for positive change in 2024.
2. Engage on the state level! Throughout the year, states and branches engage on key AAUW issues at play in their state legislatures. Elected officials work for you, the voters—so urge them to stand up for gender equity, reach out to [an AAUW branch near you](#), and see how you can get involved.
3. Make sure you are ready for elections this year, including upcoming state primaries and caucuses. Confirm your voter registration to ensure its accuracy. [Click here](#) to find out your state's primary and presidential election dates for 2024.

Learn – Occupational Segregation Continues

[New data released in December](#) from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2022 American Community Study (ACS) illustrates two distressing trends: 1) Higher education is not enough to solve the gender pay gap and 2) occupations dominated by men usually pay better than female-dominated fields, even when those jobs require the same level of education and skill. This new data is consistent with previous AAUW [research](#) documenting occupational segregation and its impact on women of color.

Despite women's educational gains over the past several decades, men with a bachelor's degree or higher continue to earn more than women with the same education in all fields. For example, in electrical engineering, women earn 85 percent of what men were paid (\$123,800 vs. \$105,200).

Additionally, the data demonstrates that degrees with a higher share (at least 60%) of women had relatively lower earnings than those with higher share of men. In 2022, women held 90 percent of elementary education degrees and were still paid 84 percent of what men were paid, working in the same field with the same education (\$54,070 vs. \$64,380).

AAUW is addressing many of the causes of these inequities, including fighting to expand paid leave, access to affordable childcare, and elder care. In addition, AAUW works directly to end occupational segregation through programs like [STEMed for Girls](#), our free online program to inform and inspire girls in grades 9-12 who are interested in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields. Our grants and fellowships, including [career development grants](#) and [selected professions fellowships](#), are also used, in part, to reduce the impact of caregiving responsibilities for women seeking degrees and make higher education and career opportunities more accessible to women.

Engage – Share the important work we're doing

- December 13 marked the 100th anniversary of the Equal Rights Amendment's (ERA) first introduction in the U.S. House of Representatives. As a founding partner of the ERA Coalition's National Strategy Task Force, AAUW marched alongside the ERA Coalition and partners in Washington, DC, to call on Congress to affirm the ERA and for President Biden to [instruct the Archivist](#) to publish the ERA as the 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Watch the [Task Force's video](#) featuring AAUW CEO Gloria L. Blackwell.
- Congress continued funding of federal programs through early 2024—Jan. 19 and Feb. 2—but the fiscal year 2024 appropriations process is still underway. AAUW [continues](#) to urge Congress to reject a year-long continuing resolution, which would

result in catastrophic cuts to federal programs that serve the public and strengthen our economy, and to finish the appropriations process through a bipartisan approach.

- January 28 marks the 15th anniversary of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. [Learn more](#) about Lilly's fight and our continued work on the Paycheck Fairness Act. Look for the 2024 Equal Pay Days (which highlight the impact of ongoing pay inequities) dates to be released in early January.
- Federal pay data collection is a critical tool for identifying pay discrimination and working to close pervasive gender and racial pay gaps in the United States. AAUW [joined](#) coalition partners in urging the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to swiftly reinstate EEO-1 pay data collection, which requires employers to report employees' pay information disaggregated by sex and race.
- When Congress temporarily expanded the Child Tax Credit (CTC) through December 2021 to include millions of families previously ineligible because the parents made *too little*, child poverty in the U.S. was reduced by almost half. Today, 19 million children are again excluded from the full benefit. AAUW [joined](#) over 350 organizations in urging Congress to prioritize expanding the CTC to strengthen families' economic security and assist with basic needs like housing, groceries, and care.
- Public Funds Public Schools—a national campaign founded by the Southern Poverty Law Center, Education Law Center, and Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP—has released an [interactive bill tracking tool](#) to monitor voucher and related legislation across 50 states and in Congress. Users are able to conduct searches by state, year, voucher type, eligibility criteria, and more. [Learn more](#) about AAUW's position on school vouchers.
- For decades, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) has published crucial studies that provide comprehensive insights about how students pay for college, progress through college to degree completion, and how they experience employment and loan repayment after graduation. AAUW has previously used this data to illustrate the [disproportionate impact](#) of debt-financed higher education on women. In December, AAUW joined the Institute for Higher Education Policy and nearly 50 other organizations in a [letter to ED](#) urging the continuation of these vitally important postsecondary sample studies, including the Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study (B&B). At a time when policymakers want more information about the return on investment for postsecondary education, we need to strengthen, not eliminate, tools that answer critical questions about graduates' experiences.
- In December 2023, ED released the new streamlined [2024-25 Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\) form](#), which will help 1.5 million more students be eligible to receive the maximum Pell Grant amount. However, experts have raised concerns about how the delayed timing for FAFSA could impact low-income students' college enrollment, since students may not have financial aid decisions prior to school's acceptance deadlines.