



DECEMBER 2024 | ISSUE 16

Public Policy News

A monthly dispatch from the AAUW California Public Policy Team

SELF CARE IS A POLITICAL ACT

Looking Forward to the New Year

We would like to take this moment to wish you a happy holiday season and to extend our deepest gratitude for your hard work, passion and commitment to advance gender equity and improve the lives of women and girls.

With the looming post-election threat of an uptick in policies and enforcement actions that run counter to our core values, including the promise to advance Project 2025, many of you may be feeling a range of emotions including exhaustion, anxiety, fear, and despair. Please take time during this holiday season to practice self-care--as Audre Lorde teaches us, this is, indeed, a political act. Unplug if you have to, spend time with your loved ones, and recharge so that we can continue to work together to advance and protect the communities that we care about.

When you feel ready to take action, we are here to support. We will have opportunities on the ground, including via Lobby Days and the School Board Project. We will have opportunities within our organization, including through solidifying and expanding our Public Policy Priorities. And we will continue to build new opportunities, including through partnering with organizations and individuals that share our priorities. We are gathering resources, projects, and outlets that will streamline our collective efforts.

With this in mind, we wish you all the best. Warm wishes for a peaceful holiday and a resolute New Year.

In Solidarity,
Missy & Amy

VIRTUAL EVENTS

AAUW Priorities Post-Election

Join These Upcoming Virtual Meetings!

"AAUW Priorities in Light of the Election Results" featuring Meghan Kissell, AAUW Senior Director of Policy and Member Advocacy. The meeting is hosted by AAUW Silicon Valley and will be held on **Wednesday, December 4, 2024 4:00-5:00pm Pacific**. You can register [HERE](#).

"2024 Revisions to Title IX: How they Impact AAUW Values and Public Policy Priorities" by Kathi Harper, member of the Public Policy Committee and chair of the School Board Project. The meeting will be held on **Thursday January 9, 2025 at 3:00-4:00pm Pacific**. Register [HERE](#).

BRANCH PUBLIC POLICY CHAIRS' MEETING

NEXT MEETING

Thursday December 5, 2024 at 3:00pm Pacific



ZOOM LINK [HERE](#)

Click [HERE](#) for meeting information.



Unless they fall on a holiday, bimonthly Peer Group Meetings will be held on the first Thursday at 3:00pm Pacific in Dec, Feb, Apr, Jun

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

WHERE IS THAT?



Key links to your public policy resources:

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

Lobby Days 2025 - Save the Date!

By Rhonda Skipper, Member AAUW California Public Policy Committee

Get ready to advance legislation that makes a difference! This spring the AAUW California 2025 Lobby Days event will be held over two days: an in-person meeting day at the State Capitol on Tuesday, April 8 and a virtual meeting day over Zoom on Wednesday, April 9, 2025. We encourage all AAUW California members to participate in this opportunity for advocacy that is essential to achieve our legislative priorities!

Starting in January, the Public Policy Committee will evaluate new bills introduced in the state legislature which are aligned with our Public Policy Priorities. In mid March, the committee will meet to select 30-35 bills to make up AAUW California's 2025 Legislative Agenda, including the top three bills that we will advance during Lobby Days. Training materials on these three bills will be posted on the state website by March 26, 2025, and a mandatory training webinar will be held on March 31, 2025 at 7:00pm.

A registration form will arrive in your inbox in early January 2025. Please be sure to complete and return the form so that you get necessary updates about Lobby Days, including your team and meeting details.

After you register, you will be assembled into teams of 3 or 4 AAUW members and matched with Assembly and Senate districts. For in-person meetings, each team will be scheduled to meet with at least 3 legislative offices while for Zoom meetings, each team will be scheduled to meet with 1 to 3 legislative offices. Regardless of whether you are in-person or online, each meeting will last for 15 to 30 minutes.

Because legislators have many commitments during the busy legislative season, most Lobby Days meetings will be held with legislative staffers and it is not always possible to schedule AAUW members with their own legislators. However, be assured that these meetings are always impactful: because teams will be representing AAUW California as a bill sponsor and/or supporter, legislative offices will consider these meetings to be as important as constituent meetings.

Lobby Days 2025 is scheduled to take place just before the legislature adjourns on April 10th for Spring Recess. AAUW members are encouraged to participate in-person on April 8, 2025, and directly advocate at the State Capitol as these in-person meetings are the most effective way to advance our priority legislation. Even though we know that being in-person is impactful, AAUW California is not able to pay for your travel to Lobby Day in Sacramento. For those who are not able to come to the Capitol, there will be an opportunity to meet with legislative offices virtually via Zoom on April 9, 2025.

We understand that travel incurs a cost, and we appreciate you considering the in-person option. If you can afford to take a road trip, consider carpooling with your fellow members, and if driving a long distance, sharing accommodations to make in-person Lobby Day a more budget friendly event.

In addition to our members, this year some of your Lobby Days teams will include college students who have been invited to join in via a college outreach pilot project. Through this project, we will be distributing Lobby Days event flyers to several colleges and universities from November to February. Increased college student participation will enable us to reach more legislative offices; however, most importantly, we hope that this introduction to AAUW will inspire advocacy-minded young people who share our values to join AAUW.

Lobby Days is a wonderful opportunity to meet with legislative offices and advance bills to promote gender equity and improve the lives of women and girls. We hope that you will join us in this important activity to promote our values.

If you have participated in Lobby Days in the past, we would love to hear your feedback on what worked and what didn't. Please send your comments to publicpolicy@aauw-ca.org.

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

ARE GENDER-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS PROBLEMATIC?

Not for AAUW, but the current legal and political climate has made universities wary to offer them.

By Missy Maceyko, Co-Chair AAUW California Public Policy Committee

Title IX of the Higher Education Act of 1972 bans sex-based discrimination in educational institutions that receive federal funding. An outgrowth of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which offers workplace protections on the basis of 'sex,' Title IX was created to address historical marginalization on the basis of sex/gender in education. In sum, Title IX was created to provide women with equal access and success in educational institutions, to redress the historical marginalization of women in educational settings relative to men.

The definition of what counts as sex-based discrimination has necessarily expanded over the years, eventually coming to protect everyday Americans from things like pregnancy discrimination and gender-stereotype discrimination (e.g. not getting a promotion because you are not performing in a way that aligns with the gender you are perceived to be). In 2024, the Biden Administration extended a 2020 Supreme Court decision about LGBTQ+ workplace discrimination to Title IX, providing protections to the LGBTQ+ community by acknowledging that LGBTQ+ discrimination is often the result of animus derived from gender stereotyping.

The spirit of Title IX is to protect those who have been historically marginalized on the basis of sex/gender. However, as part of the larger pushback against social justice and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), we have seen a sharp uptick in watchdog efforts and legal action around educational programs and scholarships focusing on fostering gender (and racial) equity. **Those bringing these lawsuits suggest that programs and scholarships that are explicitly for women violate Title IX** because they discriminate against men. For instance, between 2016 and 2022, Mark Perry, an emeritus professor at the University of Michigan's Flint campus and a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, filed 410 Title IX complaints against universities that offer programs or awards for women, but not men.

Lawsuits like those brought by Mark Perry **lean in to the concept of equality**, the idea that fairness is giving everyone the exact same things. This is opposed to **leaning into the concept of equity**, where fairness is reaching equilibrium by giving some individuals and groups different protections and support to make sure that everyone has what they need to succeed. If one student scrapes their knee and you give everyone a bandaid, this is equality. If one student scrapes their knee and you give only that student a bandaid, this is equity. Leaning into equality work does not make sense when equity should be the target to redress an historical and/or current harm.

However, **given the threats of legal action to DEI programs, and given the ongoing legal wrangling over rules and guidance about gender equity and gender equality under Title IX, many educational institutions are unsure about the legality of their gender equity programs and initiatives.** Furthermore, the threat of legal action has had a chilling effect as institutions with shrinking budgets fear the cost and burden of ongoing legal challenges based on gender equality and equity efforts.

Scholarships that seek to target protected groups to overcome historical forms of marginalization have become a target in the larger attack against DEI, Title VII, and Title IX. If a college or university is wary of listing your AAUW scholarship, this might be why. AAUW does not receive federal funding under Title IX, so can offer gender-specific scholarships and programs without this same fear.

MISSY MACEYKO

She/Her/Hers

Branch: Long Beach

Membership in AAUW: 7 years

Member of AAUW California

State Public Policy Committee: 7 years

What do you find most important about Public Policy and Public Policy work?

“Public policy work is important for advancing, regulating, and institutionalizing more equitable practices. It is important to advance specific pieces of legislation through advocacy. It is equally important to educate others about the ways in which policy impacts their everyday lives while also offering them ways that they can impact meaningful change.”



NANCY P. MAJOR

She/Her/Hers

Branch: Marin

Membership in AAUW: 27+ years

Member of AAUW California

State Public Policy Committee: 2 years

What do you find most important about Public Policy and Public Policy work?

“Furtherance of AAUW Mission”



SUE MILLER

She/Her/Hers

Branch: Roseville-South Placer

Membership in AAUW: 51 years

Member of AAUW California

State Public Policy Committee: 14 years

What do you find most important about Public Policy and Public Policy work?

“It can change women’s lives for the better!”



CLAIRE NOONAN

She/Her/Hers

Branch: Silicon Valley

Membership in AAUW: 46 years

**Member of AAUW California
State Public Policy Committee:** 11 years

What do you find most important about Public Policy and Public Policy work?

“Determining legislation to support”



LAURINDA OCHOA

She/Her/Hers

Branch: Danville-Alamo-Walnut Creek

Membership in AAUW: 1 year

**Member of AAUW California
State Public Policy Committee:** 1 year

What do you find most important about Public Policy and Public Policy work?

“It's increasingly important to work to protect the future for all women, including my daughters and young granddaughters. Our social and political rights, our economic security, our access to equal, quality education, and our opportunities to contribute fully to society seem to be under attack. Our rights as women are not guaranteed. AAUW Public policy work is important to me as an opportunity to work together as a team to protect our futures and the



RHIANNON SHIRES

She/Her/Hers

Branch: Danville-Alamo-Walnut Creek

Membership in AAUW: recently joined

**Member of AAUW California
State Public Policy Committee:** first year

What do you find most important about Public Policy and Public Policy work?

“To ensure our Democracy and Freedom of Speech is preserved. To address issues related to Reproductive Rights, Gun Control, DEI, Equity of Pay for Woman, and LGBTQ+ rights.”



RHONDA SKIPPER

She/Her/Hers

Branch: Lodi

Membership in AAUW: 2 years

**Member of AAUW California
State Public Policy Committee:** first year

What do you find most important about Public Policy and Public Policy work?

“Addressing current and important issues in a direct manner with like minded individuals”



OGIE STROGATZ

She/Her/Hers

Branch: Danville-Alamo-Walnut Creek

Membership in AAUW: 3 years

**Member of AAUW California
State Public Policy Committee:** first year

What do you find most important about Public Policy and Public Policy work?

“I welcome the opportunity to be a vigorous advocate for AAUW CA's Public Policy Priorities. Public Policy work offers a terrific opportunity to be a force for good with wide-ranging impact -- at local, state, and federal levels.”



SEENA TRIGAS

She/Her/Hers

Branch: Carlsbad-Oceanside-Vista

Membership in AAUW: 13 years

**Member of AAUW California
State Public Policy Committee:** first year

What do you find most important about Public Policy and Public Policy work?

“Carrying forward our mission statements by taking action when they are threatened.”

