

MAY 2024

PUBLIC POLICY-DIVERSITY, EQUITY and INCLUSION

AAUW-CA has authored **AB 2843** “Health Care Coverage for Rape and Sexual Assault Survivors” and it is before our state legislature. It falls under two of our Public Policy Priorities. Remember the colorful card of four Public Policies that Susan Wilson and I shared back at our rainy January branch meeting? Here is a link to those four priorities, just in case you missed them: [Public Policy Priority](#)

AB 2843 would eliminate cost-sharing, including deductibles, from being imposed on any rape survivor seeking medical care following a rape. (See the Lobby Days Talking Points and Bill Text for more details.)

To see the full 2024 AAUW-CA Legislative Agenda, go to our [Bill Tracking Report](#). This report will continue to be updated as the bills move through the legislative process so you will always be able to see the latest status.

[Sign Up to Get CA Legislative Action Alerts Soon](#)

This spring the state Public Policy Committee will be launching a social media education and action-centered program focused on priority legislation. Sign up for Legislative Action Alerts [HERE!](#) Share the sign-up link with anyone you think may be interested . . . AAUW members and non-members are welcome.

April 2024

PUBLIC POLICY-DIVERSITY, EQUITY and INCLUSION

Economic Security

Lobby Days April 2-3, involving 161 AAUW-CA members, is going on as you read this issue of our Branch Newsletter. These member volunteers are lobbying our state law makers at the capitol or online for our top public policy priorities affecting all women in California. Go to aauw-ca/publicpolicy for a peek at this updated section of our state website to find out more about their lobbying efforts. While there, check out what other branches are doing regarding AAUW-CA public policy.

One of our Public Policy Priorities is Economic Security for all Women. March 12th was National Equal Pay Day. Equal Pay Day draws attention to the gender pay gap between men and women. On average, a woman would need to work an additional 72 days into the new year to offset the gender pay gap. Nationwide women earn on average 84 cents for every dollar earned by white, nonhispanic men. Black women working full-time earn 69 cents and Latinas earn 57 cents for every dollar earned by men.

Why does this gender pay gap continue? The reasons are complex. Some causes are:

- Old stereotypes such as gender and racial discrimination
- The lack of policies that support family caregiving

- The high costs of childcare
- The lack of wage transparency

Recently, on the anniversary of the signing by President Obama of the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, the White House announced that current or past pay can no longer be used to determine salaries for new Federal Employees. Currently the Pay Check Fairness Act has been introduced in both houses of Congress. Once this act is passed into law, increased economic security would be extended to all employees. Use your Two-Minute Activist tool at <https://www.aauw.org/act/twominute-activist/> to easily support the Pay Check Fairness Act.

MARCH 2024

PUBLIC POLICY-DIVERSITY, EQUITY and INCLUSION

Book Banning and Why It Affects All of Us

Books, texts and supplemental reading materials that support our state mandated public school curriculum are the bones of our public schools.

As most of us are products and teachers of those same schools and colleges and universities, we know the importance of basic information for our future leaders and voters, our children. Books and the public education they support are the foundation of our future democracy.

So, now I'll climb down from my soapbox and share some facts:

- 26 states have banned over 1100 books from their public and school libraries, a 33% increase since 2020 according to Kathi Harper, AAUW-CA's School Board Project Chair.
- Much of the push for bans is supported by political agendas, PACs and their money. Groups such as "Moms for Liberty" have chapters in every state and claim to support parents' rights, but seem to be much more about getting schools to align with their personal religious and political views and to elect school board candidates that support hurtful, diminishing policy.
- Book Banning is a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion issue as well as a Public Policy issue for us as AAUW members.
- Most of the banning demands are counter to our Public Policy Priority of Equal Access to Quality Public Education for All Students, including: Access to diverse staff and curriculum that represents historically accurate information.
- As the majority of the books banned have LGBTQ characters, issues and racial-minority themes, banning also runs counter to another AAUW-CA Public Policy Priority: Social and Racial Justice for All Members of Society.
- Is book banning happening at our Redding Library or in the Shasta Public Libraries? I asked Jessie Spragge, our new Assistant Library Director this recently. The good news is "No." Parents occasionally bring a book from the children's section to her and ask if it should be there. She says it is the librarian's responsibility to place books in the proper library collection, such as Teen, Adult or Children.

- The age ranges for these collections are determined by our local librarians. Their decisions are partly based on publisher designations, ALA (American Library Association) guidance and local norms. Determinations are often made based on the age of a book's characters as well as themes. A book questioned is often only mis-assigned. A questioned book can be moved to the adult section, but not removed from the library. Totally banning a book from all readers is a government decision, not a library decision.

What can we as an AAUW Branch and as individuals do to support our public schools and our library?

1. Respond to efforts to ban books by writing letters to editors and legislators.
2. Attend and share AAUW's Public Policies at school board meetings.
3. Encourage and endorse candidates for school boards who support our priorities and will stand against book banning.
4. Be aware that CA AB 1078 signed into law 9/2023 prevents public school districts from banning books and censoring approved curriculum.

FEBRUARY 2024

PUBLIC POLICY-DIVERSITY, EQUITY and INCLUSION

Thanks to all our members who braved the freezing rain to join the Public Policy and DEI discussion at our January Branch meeting.

As we recently celebrated the life of iconic civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., what better time to think of AAUW's own history with civil rights and particularly black women? Who were the early black women members of our organization? Who was the first?

To find out, read Alison M. Parker's book, *Unceasing Militant: The Life of Mary Church Terrell*. You can also join the AAUW-CA webinar to learn more:

LEARN ABOUT A WOMAN WHO CHANGED THE FACE OF AAUW! On Sunday, February 4th, AAUW California presented a webinar about Black activist Mary Church Terrell, her work for women's suffrage and racial equality, and her role in the integration of AAUW. A co-founder of the NAACP, Terrell became the first Black member of AAUW after winning an anti-discrimination lawsuit. We will hear from Dr. Alison Parker, author of *Unceasing Militant: The Life of Mary Church Terrell*, as she recounts stories and major successes in the life of this extraordinary woman.

Don't miss this unique opportunity to hear firsthand about this little known activist and her unusual history with AAUW. The webinar is available on YouTube at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OxXfA96hE1Y>

JANUARY 2024

OPPORTUNITIES THIS NEW YEAR 2024 BRINGS

OPPORTUNITY #1: Saturday, January 13th attend our Branch Meeting at the library for a lively discussion of our current Public Policy Priorities. What are they and how were they selected? What can you do to support these priorities? How do these priorities help further our branch, state and national purpose of advancing gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy? A brief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion chat will also be included. Take the PPP home with you from the meeting.

OPPORTUNITY #2: Become a 2 Minute Activist. What is this and how does it work? Go to national's website: aauw.org On the home page scroll down to the bottom to the blue box where it says "Sign Up for Timely Action Alerts." Just put your email in the box and then your zip code. Alerts will arrive in your email with a simple form to ask our representatives to support legislation that would make a difference in the lives of women and girls. We will demonstrate becoming a 2 Minute Activist at our Branch Meeting January 13th. It's easy. It's fast. It matters.

OPPORTUNITY #3: Join LOBBY DAYS April 2 & 3 at our state capitol or by zoom. Here are the details: An interest survey including a registration form will arrive in your inbox mid-January. Complete and return the form to be added to the communications list for the event. College students will be invited to join the event. Their participation will enable us to reach more legislative offices, and we hope that this introduction to our organization will inspire these advocacyminded young people who share our values to join AAUW.

The AAUW-CA Public Policy Committee will do the following to set up Lobby Days:

- January: they will evaluate new bills introduced in the state legislature which are aligned with our Public Policy Priorities:
- March: they will select 30-35 bills for our 2024 Legislative Agenda that best represent our priorities. They will also choose the top 3 bills to advocate for during Lobby Days.
- They will schedule meetings with the legislative offices and assemble teams of AAUW members and college students, matching them with Assembly and Senate districts.
- They will send us materials on the bills and post those on the state website in mid-March and then hold a mandatory training webinar on March 25, 2024.

Lobby Days is a wonderful opportunity to meet with our legislators and advocate for legislation to promote gender equity and improve the lives of California women and girls. A Redding Branch Lobby Team? Let's do it.

DECEMBER 2023

PUBLIC POLICY-DIVERSITY, EQUITY and INCLUSION HOLIDAY QUIZ

1. Can you name the women's issues selected for focus and action by AAUW and AAUW CA? How are these focus areas chosen? **ANSWER** at our January 13th Branch Meeting. Hint: See 5 below.
2. How can you join the action to help solve some of these issues? How can you become a "2 Minute Activist"? What is the Action Network and Lobby Day? **ANSWER** See answer above.
3. Was our CA Public Policy legislative lobbying team successful this recent bill cycle? **ANSWER: YES.** How many AAUW CA priority bills were recently signed into law? 19. Now that shows our AAUW CA

dues at work! Check out all the details of the new CA laws that support women in the November issue of Public Policy News.

4. How many women world leaders were awarded Nobel Prizes recently? **ANSWER:** 4. How many are Americans? 2. Katalin Kariko, Hungarian-American, won for her work in medicine. She helped develop the Covid vaccine saving millions of lives.
5. Who was the other American woman Nobel laureate? **ANSWER:** Claudia Goldin, 77, the first woman to win for her work in Economics without men as collaborators. Based on her AAUW aligned research. Dr. Goldin's Nobel-winning study focuses on causes of the gender wage gap, the evolution of women's participation in the job market over the past 200 years, and the implications for the future of the labor force. An AAUW Public Policy Priority is Economic Security for all women, including equity in the workplace, enforcement of work-place anti-discrimination laws; access to job training and quality, affordable childcare and paid sick leave and caregiving leave. These are the exact factors studied by Dr. Goldin to understand why U.S. women earn on average 80 cents for every dollar earned by a man, why men's wages are higher than women's in the same occupation, and why women are under-represented in the top jobs even though women are now more educated than men.
6. Are you culturally curious? What are 3 major holidays celebrated this December and when will they be celebrated? **ANSWER:** Hanukkah December 7-15, Christmas December 25, Kwanzaa December 26-Jan. 1. Learn more about Kwanzaa at the Kwanzaa table at our December 9th Branch Brunch.

NOVEMBER 2023

PUBLIC POLICY-DIVERSITY, EQUITY and INCLUSION

Did you know that the Public Policy Committee of AAUW CA not only tracks bills that enhance and ensure equity for women and girls and much more, but they also sponsor legislation? It is exciting to report that an AAUW CA co-sponsored bill, AB 1078, which deals with "preserving historically accurate and representative curricula for public schools in California" has been signed into law by the governor. You can track all the bills that AAUW CA supports here: [Bill Tracking](#)

Speaking of CA public schools... There is a movement across the country, as well as here in California, to install school board members who want to ban books, censor curricula, and establish policies that are harmful to LGBTQ+ and other minority students. The School Board Project (SBP) subcommittee has been formed to develop steps that branch members can take to help monitor and protect our schools. On September 21, the AAUW CA Public Policy School Board Project webinar presented this project. There is a toolkit which has resources, checklists, how to seek out candidates for school boards, how to support a campaign, how to evaluate a school board meeting and speak effectively at one. There were also hints on diffusing difficult situations and how to protect yourself. If you missed this webinar, you can access it here: <https://youtu.be/08hRjvBBkFI>

And if you have not yet responded to the SBP survey, which asks questions about YOUR school districts, take a moment and do so. You can find the survey [HERE](#). Finally, November 25 is the U.N. International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Violence against women is a global issue, a human rights violation, a consequence of discrimination and persisting inequalities between women and men. Prevention is possible and essential. Find out more here:

<http://www.un.org/en/events/endviolenceday/>

What you can do....

- Track CA bills that AAUW-CA is supporting.
- Take the School Board Survey and watch the SBP webinar.
- Support the elimination of violence against women.

Penny Harris Public Policy, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Chair

OCTOBER 2023

PUBLIC POLICY-DIVERSITY, EQUITY and INCLUSION

AAUW CALIFORNIA Expands Education Goal and Establishes New Project A Pause to Reflect in the Midst of National Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15th - October 15th).

Latina Equal Pay Day is October 5th and the day to remember that Latina women are paid on average 54 cents for every dollar paid to non-hispanic white men.

The good news is when women organize progress is made. Recently about 50 immigrant Hispanic women in New York City organized the first US women-led workers' hub through which they have created Liberty Cleaners, an educational-advocacy group where they learn about their rights for fair wages and safe working conditions as well as green cleaning procedures.

Closer to us, the mostly Latina immigrant garment workers in LA County experience "wage theft" and deplorable working conditions. Sixty per cent of all US fashion garment workers are in the LA area. Recently they organized and formed Remake, a women's rights group for ethical fashion and were able to get SB 62, The Garment Workers Protection Act, passed and signed into law by Gov. Newsom.

But what about our nation's Dreamers and DACA? The Dreamers are undocumented immigrants brought to the USA as young children who live here without legal status. In 2012 President Obama signed an executive order called the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program or DACA which is a two year renewable work permit with access to student loans and other programs. It is a temporary program which has been on a legal roller coaster for years and last month was declared illegal again. A case to determine its legality is expected to go to the US Supreme Court. Experts say a bill passed by congress is the legal way to give the Dreamers a pathway to citizenship. Roberto G. Gonzales, Harvard Professor of Education has written Lives in Limbo: Undocumented and Coming of Age in America in which he profiles young adults and the positive effects of DACA not only in the lives of the DACA youth, but in their families and their communities.

What can we do? Perhaps read Professor Gonzales' book, look into Remake's clothing industry vision or what the NYC Liberty Cleaners are up to, and support local Hispanic businesses. La Cabana anyone?

Penny Harris Public Policy, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Chair

SEPTEMBER 2023

PUBLIC POLICY-DIVERSITY, EQUITY and INCLUSION

AAUW CALIFORNIA Expands Education Goal and Establishes New Project

In a 2023 AAUW CA survey, members expressed concerns about book banning and K-12 school curricula that “denies access to historically accurate information”. In light of that survey and AAUW’s long standing goal of “Equal Access to Quality Public Education for All Students,” our state board has added the following point to that goal: “Access to diverse staff and curriculum that represents historically accurate information.”

To implement that enhanced goal, AAUW CA has established “The School Board Project.” To learn more about this project, join the virtual, on-line discussion September 21st at 7 pm. Kathi Harper, AAUW CA School Board Project Committee Chair will explain this project and how all AAUW CA members can help. Registration is now open and the link to register is below. In the meantime our branch is exploring ways to collaborate with our local Shasta County Schools Superintendent and the local League of Women Voters to support our local schools and ensure Equal Access to Quality Education for All Students. Stay tuned.

What you can do... September 21, 7:00 pm AAUW CA virtual discussion - new School Board Project. To register, go to Webinar: Book Banning and Curricula Censorship in California? AAUW California to the Rescue! - AAUW California (aauw-ca.org)

Penny Harris Public Policy, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Chair