

Finally an Equal Pay Bill We Can Support

On April 19, HB1243 was introduced. It is sponsored by Representatives Brian Sims and Tina Davis with 25 additional co-sponsors. Of all the equal pay bills introduced so far, it offers the most robust remedies to Pennsylvania law and covers all but one item on the AAUW Equal Pay Road Map for Pennsylvania. It covers all employees including public, private, and small business employers with no exceptions for those covered by the federal Fair Labor Standards Act. It protects employees from intentional and unintentional discrimination and does not allow employers to request salary history or retaliate against employees who discuss their wages.

It also offers employers protection, clarifying employer defenses by spelling out bona fide reasons for pay disparities. Employer defenses must be job-related, a business necessity, and not based on a sex-based differential, and they do not apply if there is an alternative employment practice available. HB1243 also establishes strong legal procedures and remedies. Employers are liable for compensatory and punitive damages if they are sued, plus it authorizes reinstatement, promotion or other equitable relief. With appropriate protections employers will have an incentive to pay an equal wage to begin with in order to avoid litigation.

HB1243 also says employers must compensate men and women equally for jobs that are comparable (Comparable Worth) in that they require substantially similar skill, effort, and responsibility and are performed under similar working conditions. It does not increase fines to employers, which is not a major issue. There are other bills that raise fines, but are not as comprehensive as the Sims/Davis bill. HB1243 was referred to the House Labor and Industry Committee where all the current House equal pay bills are as well as the Faux Equal Pay bill (SB241) passed by the Senate in February. The next meeting of the Labor and Industry Committee is a May 9 public hearing on an unemployment bill. Calls to House members should focus on support for HB1243.

You can find a detailed look at all of the Pennsylvania equal pay bills on the state web site <http://aauw-pa.aauw.net/equal-pay-advocacy>. A quick comparison of the bills is being sent along with this issue of Highlights. **Don't forget Moms Equal Pay Day is May 23!**

Year in Review July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017

What an incredible year for Public Policy in Pennsylvania! Thanks to your dedication and the efforts of your members, there were 115 public policy activities or events! The [summary](#) document shows branch totals and other statistics. The detail report lists all activities/events reported. Use this to get ideas for your branch. If, after you review the [detail document](#), you realize an activity or event for your branch is missing, email Ann Pehle (aauwpapp2@gmail.com) and the list will be updated. Please share this report with your branch members—it may inspire them. Congratulations on a wonderful year of advocacy!

It's All About the Bill - concurrent session delivered at the state convention last month.

Topics covered:

- Pennsylvania Legislative Process
Beryl Kuhr, Harrisburg, covered the basics of the legislative process for the Pennsylvania House of Representatives as well as the process for amending the state constitution (important to understand for redistricting reform).
- Grassroots Advocacy Tips and Techniques

Elizabeth Holden, AAUW Grassroots Advocacy Manager, shared insights for how to influence legislation. Wonderful to learn from an expert.

- Current Pennsylvania Legislation
Ann Pehle, Public Policy Co-Chair, provided an overview of our coalition partners and status of the legislation AAUW-PA is tracking.
- New Tools
Barbara Price, Public Policy Co-Chair, introduced Lobby Corps. Ann Pehle introduced Advocacy in a Box. See separate sections in this Highlights for more information. The presentation and handouts are at <http://aauw-pa.aauw.net/its-all-about-the-bill-2/>

Lobby Corps <http://aauw-pa.aauw.net/lobby-corp/>

- The goal is to increase and strengthen AAUW's voice in Pennsylvania
- Be a consistent presence—more than an email or phone call stating a position on legislation
- Building relationships and having meaningful dialogue are keys to influencing legislators
 - Presentation of the issue; not just a position on current legislation
 - Ability to answer questions in real time
 - Gain an understanding of their point of view
 - Uncover areas of mutual interest
- Develop relationships with local office staff
 - Make it easier for them to present issues to their Representative or Senator
- Your strength of position emanates from being a constituent and a member of a larger organization with grassroots advocacy expertise

Responsibilities

- Sign up to become a Two-minute-activist; AAUW's action alert network
- Respond to action alerts that come from AAUW and AAUW-PA
- Add phone numbers to your cell phone for quick calling
 - state Representative and state Senator
 - Senators Casey and Toomey
 - U.S. Congressional Representative
- Know the committee assignments
- Participate on Lobby Corps conference calls
- Complete Summary of Visit form after each visit
- Schedule meetings with your state Senator and state Representative, when they are in the district.
 - Initial visit
 - Schedule meeting to introduce self and AAUW Pennsylvania
 - Meet aides (they will be your new best friends)
 - Share AAUW Public Policy Program and AAUW Pennsylvania public policy postcard
 - Offer to be a resource for these issues
 - Subsequent visits
 - We will send topics and materials
 - Your own issues
- Ongoing
 - Email national or local stories from magazines, newspapers or AAUW that bear on a current issue
 - Send a thank you note or call their office to offer thanks when they vote for our issues

Ready to sign up? Send to Barbara Price (aaupapp1@gmail.com):

Name
Address
Phone number
Email address
State House district and/or Representative name
State Senate district and/or Senator name
U.S. Congressional District and/or Congressman name

Your branch members may not be in the same districts. So, find a member to become the Lobby Corps liaison for each state House and Senate and U.S. Congressional district represented in your branch.

Advocacy in a Box

Our goal is to make it easy for BPPCs and branch members to be grassroots advocates. Advocacy in a Box is one-stop-advocacy. On a single webpage, for a single public policy issue, you will get the background and resources and AAUW-PA position and (most importantly) suggestions for individual and branch advocacy. [Equal Pay](#) and [Redistricting Reform](#) are completed. Check them out and let us know what you think. Title IX and Cyber/Charter schools will be completed in May and June.

When working on Advocacy in a Box issues, make sure you always reference the website before taking action or planning. This is where you will find the most current information, resources and calls to action. Share these pages with your branch members. Who knows, there may be someone quietly waiting for something to do on an issue she is passionate about.

Redistricting Reform aka Gerrymandering

Article 1, Section 2 of the Pennsylvania constitution says,

All power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority and instituted for their peace, safety and happiness. For the advancement of these ends they have at all times an inalienable and indefeasible right to alter, reform or abolish their government in such manner as they may think proper.

AAUW-PA continues its support for redistricting reform in Pennsylvania as an endorsing organization for Fair Districts PA, <https://www.fairdistrictspa.com/> and in collaboration with the Committee of Seventy on a new project called Draw the Lines.

We now have two bills SB22 and HB722 to ensure that State Legislative and Congressional districts are drawn in a fair and impartial manner by establishing the Independent Redistricting Commission tasked to draw boundary lines that will not be beholden to incumbent politicians or political parties. Both bills have bi-partisan support and sponsorship. A press conference and rally day in Harrisburg is planned for May 9. You can visit the local office of your legislator that day to ask them to support either bill. Lots of information is available in Advocacy in a Box on our state web site [Redistricting-reform](#).

In March 2017, AAUW Pennsylvania became an endorser of [Draw the Lines PA](#), a nonpartisan initiative that aims to engage Pennsylvania's voters in a competition to educate citizens about the redistricting process in the state. This is a project of [The Committee of Seventy](#), an independent and nonpartisan advocate for better government in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania. Plans, tools and resources for Draw the Lines PA are still developing. Look for more information later this year.

Questions? Contact Barbara Price, aauwpapp1@gmail.com or Ann Pehle, aauwpapp2@gmail.com.