

What's Next for AAUW?

In a December 5 webinar, Kim Churches updated members on AAUW's focus for the new year which is Election 2020: A Gender Agenda. AAUW does not endorse candidates, but will be watching for what candidate say about the issues AAUW will focus on in 2020. They are

- Equal Pay for Equal Work
- Investing in Education
- Reducing Student Debt
- Strengthening Social Security
- Implementing Paid Leave

She also mentioned the 2020 Convening Series (instead of a 2020 AAUW national convention) -- webinars January 28 and April 14. Watch for further information about these. AAUW also published our latest research in early December, *Limiting our Livelihoods: The Cumulative Impact of Sexual Harassment on Women's Careers*. You can access it at this link.

<https://www.aauw.org/research/limiting-our-livelihoods/>

Economic Security

Pay Equity

A new pay equity bill has been introduced, HB 2024. The prime sponsor is Representative Isaacson. It is included in the chart comparing all the bills. It does not cover any of the areas we want in a pay equity bill. It requires that an employer provide the pay range of a job and the factors considered in setting that range. While this would provide good information and transparency to job applicants, it only offers this information to the employee and

others with similar job titles or skills and of course does not cover all employees. AAUW-PA remains committed to passing [SB721](#) and [HB850](#) since they cover all employees and all the issues in AAUW's PA Road Map to pay Equity.

Equal Pay Day 2020 is March 31. Neither the PA House or Senate are in session that day. Therefore, we are not planning a rally at the state capitol this year. Instead we will focus on visiting them that day or sometime that week in their home offices. **Make your appointments now.** Everything you will need for your visit will be in the March issue of Highlights. We will be talking about the wage gap and how it is impacted by unfair hiring practices such as asking salary history or not permitting employees to discuss salary, not having paid leave, and the low minimum wage in PA. We will provide scripts for your visit and handouts to leave behind.

Raising the Minimum Wage

A compromise agreement to raise the minimum wage was reported to have been worked out behind closed doors between the governor and PA legislators in November. It proposed an increase in minimum wage to \$8.00 in July, 2020. This would increase incrementally until it reached \$9.50 in Jan. 2022. It is far below what the governor wanted, which was \$12 as of January 2020, rising to \$15 by 2025.

It has been reported that the governor and other groups like, We the People and Raise the Wage accepted the compromise without supporting it because it was the only way to get any kind of a raise for people making minimum wage. The governor was said to

have given up on raising the overtime threshold from \$23,660 to \$45,000.

The reason groups favoring a raise in minimum wage are not supporting the compromise measure is that it has no provision for cost of living adjustments, no elimination of preemption for local governments to set their own minimum wage, no end to the sub-minimum tipped wage, and is not a high enough increase for people to live in most areas of Pennsylvania. You can check the Living Wage Calculator to see what is needed in your area. (www.livingwage.mit.edu).

This compromise measure (SB79) passed the Senate, but the House went on recess for the holidays without taking a vote. This is being seen as breaking the agreement. We now hear the governor intends to go ahead with raising the overtime threshold. The question now, is how any legislation in favor of raising minimum wage will move forward.

Every state that borders Pennsylvania has increased their minimum wage and have included cost of living provisions. Going to only \$8.00 in July might give PA hourly wage workers a few more badly needed dollars but will insure they continue to fall behind their neighbors.

While AAUW-PA does not support the insufficient increase to \$8.00, we understand that too many workers need a long-overdue raise. The PA Budget and Policy Center, (<https://www.krc.pbpc.org>), reports that almost 20% of the PA workforce makes under \$12 per hour, with 90% being adults and 60% being women.

We encourage members to continue to contact their senators and representatives as well as the members of the House Labor & Industry Committee to ask that any legislation to raise the minimum wage include a built-in cost of living provision, an end to state preemption of local wage laws,

an end to the sub-minimum tipped wage, and stronger enforcement of wage violations as in HB1215 and SB12.

Jacqui Rogers
AAUW PA Public Policy Co-chair

Family Care Act

Not convinced there is a need for paid leave? Watch Katy Tur on her first day back from maternity leave as she recounts her experience and the need for paid leave. [Katy and paid leave](#).

Keep up to date on what is happening with [HB1739](#) and [SB580](#) by liking the Family Care Act on Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/familycareact>

The Family Care Act will be the focus of our February 18 conference call, at 7 pm. Dial in number 605-562-0400, access code 733 0961.

Education

Funding and Charter

We know that many AAUW members have a keen interest in public education matters. We need your help informing them of our activities. So, please share this information with your branch members.

AAUW Pennsylvania is a supporting organization for PA Schools Works, the coalition working on public school funding. They launched a monthly series of 30-minute webinars covering fundamental issues of public education funding. Very accessible (not wonky) and very informative. November focused on school funding advocacy. December's topic was Basic Education Funding. Watch the webinars, download the decks, sign-up to attend at <http://paschoolswork.org/resources/webinar/>. Easy way to learn more about this complex subject.

Speaking of complicated issues – Pennsylvania’ Charter School laws and regulations. AAUW Pennsylvania is joining a new coalition (yet to be name) founded by Susan Spicka, Executive Director Education Voters PA, to work on charter reform. Three AAUW Pennsylvania Education Committee members are on the coalition. Expect lots of opportunity for action in 2020. To begin getting familiar with the topic, read this Washington Post article.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2019/09/03/how-big-mess-is-pennsylvanias-charter-school-sector-this-big/>

You and any branch members are welcome to join the AAUW Pennsylvania Education Committee. Contact me for more information.

Ann Pehle

aauwpa.president@gmail.com

Redistricting – *From our friends at Fair Districts*

We have just six months to get supported bills through both House and Senate. What will matter in the weeks ahead:

- Continuing to grow
- Continuing to speak out
- Continuing with advocacy efforts

We know the months ahead will be challenging, but we can’t slow down now. Power never gives up without a fight. Here in Pennsylvania, many important reforms have been derailed, buried, side-stepped and delayed in ways that left advocates weary and confused. In fact, that seems to be the strategy: make reform so difficult voters give up in disgust.

That’s not going to happen. We have lots of committed volunteers across the state giving time, money and creative energy. And we have some wonderful legislators in both houses and both sides of the aisle offering help to move our bills forward.

GOTV

In commemoration of the centennial, the United States Postal Service has released the 19th Amendment: Women Vote stamp as part of their 2020 Forever Stamp Program. The stamp design is based on historic photos from the suffrage movement and features the suffrage colors of purple, white, and gold.



See last page for graphic you can use to inform people about the recent voting changes in PA.

Keep in Touch

Be sure to let us know about your branch public policy activities and events involving coalition building, economic security, education, equal pay, GoTV, visiting legislators, letters to the editor, redistricting reform, Start Smart/Work Smart, STEM, or Title IX.

Send event details (name and type of event, date held, outcomes) to

Jacqui aauwpapp2@gmail.com

and

Barbara aauwpapp1@gmail.com

As always, we are here to answer your questions and are only an email away.

Pennsylvania Election Reform

More Ways to Vote



No-excuse mail-in voting
New option to vote by mail
without providing an excuse



Permanent mail-in ballot list
Receive applications for mail-in or
absentee ballots for all elections

More Accessible Elections



More time to register
Deadline to register to vote is
now 15 days before an election



Extended voting period
Request a mail-in or absentee ballot
up to 50 days before an election



Extended deadline
Submit mail-in or absentee ballot
by 8 p.m. on Election Day

Effective for the Primary Election