

Economic Security



The new **pay gap** numbers are here, and Pennsylvania saw a one cent increase over last year. The gap is now 81 cents. Pennsylvania also moved from 24th in the country to 21st. Even more interesting is that NJ is 35th in the country. It is not often that we come out ahead of our neighboring state. Moving one cent closer to closing the pay gap is not sufficient. We still need to pass [SB721](#) and [HB850](#). The new chart showing the pay gap by congressional district is attached. Share it with your legislators. Thank them for co-sponsoring these bills or ask them to support the bills. Click on each bill to check for co-sponsors.

November 20, Latina Equal Pay Day is another opportunity to advocate for pay equity. It takes an additional 11 months for Latinas to make what white, non-Hispanic men made last year. The pay gap is 57% or \$22,724 a year less. If Latinas had equal pay, they could afford

- 30.6 additional months of child care

- 15,8 additional months of health insurance premiums
 - 1.6 additional years of tuition and fees at a four-year public university
- Call your legislators on November 20 and tell them it would be wonderful to honor Latinas Equal Pay Day by passing HB850 or SB721.

Raising the Minimum Wage

“The effect of increasing the minimum wage on employment is probably the most studied topic in labor economics, and the consensus of the literature is that moderate increases in the minimum wage has little or no negative effect on employment.” – 2014 letter to Congress from 600 PhD economists, including 8 Nobel Prize Winners.

Not only has every state surrounding Pennsylvania raised their minimum wage, but their minimums continue to be raised each year because the increases are incremental over the next four to five years until they reach the full amount. Thereafter, there will be cost of living increases, putting Pennsylvania further behind.

A report from the *Pennsylvania Budget & Policy Center* debunked five common myths often cited as reasons for keeping the current PA minimum at \$7.25.

Myth 1: The minimum wage was never meant to be a living wage. It is primarily for younger people starting out.

Research estimates 90% of minimum wage workers are adults working full time as their major source of income. Adult women comprise 60%. Minimum wage was established to ensure that jobs pay enough to support families.

Myth 2: Raising the wage just increases the price of goods across the board.

It may lead to small increases but does not lead to any substantial cost increases. Labor is only one source of expense to employers, while higher wages reduce worker turnover and training as it leads to higher morale and more stable productivity.

Myth 3: Raising the minimum wage will hurt people already making \$12-\$18.

When minimum wage goes up, wages of workers making more than the new minimum also increase providing greater spending power to a greater number of people.

Myth 4: Raising the minimum wage will destroy small businesses.

It actually establishes a more level playing field because large businesses must comply with the same rules. Workers having more to spend usually do so in their own neighborhoods thereby supporting small, local business.

Myth 5: Raising the minimum wage will lead to job loss.

Research shows there is only modest and short-lived reduction in jobs. Some of the job loss numbers are the result of workers not having to work two and three jobs anymore. Research analyzing data back to 1979 found little or no impact on job loss. States that have increased minimum wage have thriving businesses.

AAUW PA supports two bills designed to increase minimum wage in Pennsylvania. These bills, HB1215 and SB12 are asking for minimum wage to be raised to \$12 in 2020 and increasing to \$15 by 2025.

Factsheets are available on who would be affected by raising the minimum wage by [Counties](#) and [Senate and state House Districts](#). Look up your county and your legislator. Great pieces to leave behind when you visit your legislators.

Family Care Act

At some point in our lives we all become caregivers or are in need of care, whether it is a new baby, a sick relative, an aging parent, or you are sick or injured yourself. It is great if your employer offers paid leave or even long-term disability. However only 60 percent of working women have some access to paid sick days. One option may be taking time off without pay under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Unfortunately, FMLA does not cover 40 percent of workers. Very few people can afford to lose their income when faced with a medical crisis or a family member in need.

Rep Wendi Thomas (R-Bucks), a sponsor of the Family Care Act, HB 1739 said at the introduction of the bill “Most Americans cannot sustain their families for more than two-weeks without a paycheck. The Family Care Act is a simple, well-tested mechanism. Similar state insurance funds are already in place in New York and New Jersey, both states that border Pennsylvania and attract workers away from our state. To attract and keep workers, we need policies that help young families, yet do not place pressure on the state budget.”

The Family Care Act would establish a state-wide fund administered by the Department of Labor and Industry and would give workers the ability to invest small payroll deductions — about 50 cents for every \$100 — so they could take advantage of benefits at times of family health emergencies. No one should have to choose between caring for family or losing their job.

There are now 40 co-sponsors of the House bill, [HB1739](#) and 17 co-sponsors on the Senate bill, [SB580](#). Now is the time to move on paid leave! Sen. Dan Laughlin (R-Erie) explains why paid family leave is important in this [op ed](#).

Specific details about the Family Care Act can be found in this blog

<https://bcwac.org/2019/06/14/the-family-care-act-the-right-thing-to-do/>

Information from AAUW on paid leave and a printable Quick Facts on Paid Leave , May 2019 can be found at

<https://www.aauw.org/what-we-do/public-policy/aauw-issues/aauw-issues-paid-leave/>

Education – From Education Voters PA

Ever wonder why school property taxes in PA continue to rise? A new report from the Education Law Center, "[Still Shortchanging Students with Disabilities: State Underfunding of Special Education Continues.](#)" provides part of the answer.

This report found that between 2008 and 2018, Pennsylvania increased state special education funding by \$95 million. Yet during that time, total special education costs to local school districts increased by \$1.7 billion.

The report states:

Local school districts continue to face difficult choices between raising additional revenue to meet funding gaps, spreading limited resources across a range of programs, and/or reducing needed services and supports for students with disabilities. Families continue to experience local tax increases and service cuts. These challenges are compounded because a lack of state investment in basic education funding has eroded the resources available to all students, which increases the incremental investment required to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

This report also has a nifty resource that shows how much special education costs have increased vs. how much state funding has increased in each school district in PA.

[Click HERE to find the chart with district-level information.](#)

As we look forward to advocating for the state funding our children need in the 2020-2021 state budget, this report will be an invaluable tool. It highlights the necessity of a substantial increase in state funding for special education that will both help school districts meet the needs of students with disabilities and benefit public school students and taxpayers throughout the state.

Redistricting – From our friends at Fair Districts

[A new statewide poll](#) of registered voters' attitudes released October 9 shows why 67% of Pennsylvania voters support an independent commission to draw legislative district lines. This includes majorities of Democrats (66%), independents (78%) and Republicans (63%). This poll sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania and Fair Districts PA was designed and administered by the Center for Opinion Research at Franklin & Marshall College.

The poll confirms recent surveys showing overwhelming support for an independent commission. What's new: an in-depth look at reasons for that support.

A strong majority of voters agreed that the current system

- Allows party leaders to put party leaders ahead of voters' interest (72%)
- Creates polarization and gridlock (70%)
- Allows officials to choose their own voters (65%)
- Gives voters less choice on Election Day (61%)
- Prevents voters from holding their representatives accountable (61%)

Also new is a more detailed look at how strongly these beliefs are shared across all regions of the state. Majorities in every region responded in favor of an independent commission, with 71% in support in Central Pennsylvania, 70% in Allegheny County,

69% in Philadelphia and 65% in the Northeast.

One more key takeaway: a majority of voters consider this as an election issue in their vote for legislators: 59% of respondents said they were more likely or very likely to support legislators who vote for an independent, citizens redistricting commission.

GOTV

Election day is **November 5**. Be sure to vote. Check with your neighbors and fellow branch members to see if they need a ride to the polls. These off-year elections have a significant impact on your lives. See the attached flyer Your Voice Your Vote on how the offices affect you. To see who is on your ballot and where they stand go to <https://www.vote411.org/>.

Begin planning your GOTV activities for next year. It is not only a presidential election year, it is the 100th anniversary of 19th amendment granting women the right to vote. We will also be focusing on it at the AAUW-PA State Convention, April 24-26. Find more information at the national and state web sites.

<https://www.womensvote100.org/>
<https://womenvote.dced.pa.gov/>

Of course, you can always run for office yourself. The Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics at Chatham University offers Ready to Run Campaign Training each year in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

Ready to Run™ Pennsylvania provides non-partisan political training to encourage women to run for government leadership positions. The day-long program targets women considering or recently deciding to run for political office, providing training and mentoring by campaign professionals, political women, and officeholders.

Ready to Run Pittsburgh
Location: Chatham University,

Shadyside Campus

Pre-Conference: Friday, January 24, 2020
Women of Color in Pennsylvania Politics

Time: 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Saturday, January 25, 2020

Time: 8:30 am - 5:30 pm

Ready to Run Philadelphia
Location: Jefferson University,
East Falls Campus*
*Formerly Philadelphia University

Saturday, February 8, 2020

Time: 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

For more details and to register go to <https://www.chatham.edu/pcwp/education/readytorun/>

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

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and

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Public Policy Conference Call scheduled for November 19 from 7 to 8 pm. Further details will be emailed to you in November.

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