

This issue of Highlights is focused on the big political event in May and upcoming events.

GOTV - Get Out the Vote

May 17 primary election

In case you haven't heard, there is an election this year. Ok, maybe you have heard, at least about the races for Governor and US Senate. Every other television commercial in my viewing area is for one of the candidates for those offices. However, there are other offices up for election as well.

All of the representatives to the US House of Representatives are up for election as are all Representatives in the PA House and half of the PA Senate. These elections have been complicated by the results of the 2020 US census and redistricting. Pennsylvania lost a US House seat, dropping from 18 to 17 representatives.

There have also been a number of retirements and incumbents choosing to run for a higher office or not to run at all. There are lots of new people running for office that you may not recognize.

Pennsylvania's primary elections are closed, allowing only registered Democrats and Republicans to cast ballots. There are 1.3 million voters in Pennsylvania who aren't affiliated with either of the two major parties who can't vote in primaries for elected positions like governor or US Senator. Pennsylvania is one of only nine states with a closed

primary system that determines the two major party candidates who will run in November. In areas where voters heavily favor one party, they basically decide the final outcome. All the more reason to vote where there is a choice.

Important Dates

May 2 is the deadline [register to vote](#), if you are not already registered.

May 10 by 5 pm is the deadline [to apply](#) for a mail-in or absentee ballot.

You can find more information about candidates, as well as answers on their positions, at the League of Women Voters [Vote 411](#). You can register to vote there as well and/or verify your registration. The site also allows you to create a sample ballot which you can take to the polls.



Education

Student Loans

As reported by TICAS, The Institute for College Access and Success in their PA Student Debt Report in 2019-20, 64 percent of Pennsylvania college graduates had

student loan debt, placing the state third highest nationally on this measure.

The average debt load of a Pennsylvania college graduate in 2019-20 was \$39,375. Thirty-nine percent of Pennsylvania college graduates' student loan debt was nonfederal debt that is often costlier and carries fewer consumer protections than federal debt. The largest component of this nonfederal debt is private student loans—debt that students borrow from banks and private lenders. In Pennsylvania, 22 percent of college graduates had private student debt, with an average private debt load of \$42,361 among these borrowers. Find out more about student debt at

Exploring Tough Policy Issues through an AAUW Lens: The Student Debt Crisis

Tuesday, May 3, 2022, 4 p.m. ET

Join AAUW's Public Policy team as they and guest speakers explore the realities and possible misconceptions about student debt.

Women hold around two-thirds of the country's \$1.7 trillion of student debt, according to AAUW's report, *Deeper in Debt: Women and Student Loans*. Because of the gender pay gap, they have less income with which to repay their loans. Student debt erodes economic security and is particularly burdensome for women of color. Our panelists will discuss their research and efforts to help borrowers and halt abuses by the student loan industry.

Panelists include Katherine Welbeck, director of advocacy from the Student Borrower Protection Center, and Natalia Abrams, president and founder of the Student Debt Crisis Center. [Register Now](#)

From Education Voters PA

A recently released interactive map shows how much more funding school districts would receive from Governor Wolf's proposal this year to increase state education funding by \$1.75 billion in new education funding for public schools. Check your district at [Interactive Map](#).

Upcoming June Events

June 2-4 – AAUW PA Convention

Saturday's Keynote luncheon speaker is Julie Vogtman, Director of Job Quality & Senior Counsel for the National Women's Law Center (NWLC). She has written extensively about women and the economy and the factors contributing to racial and gender pay disparities, including as a co-author of NWLC's March 2022 report, *Resilient But Not Recovered: After Two Years of the COVID-19 Crisis, Women Are Still Struggling*. See schedule [here](#).

June 15 - The last in the series of AAUW Public Policy webinars **Exploring Tough Policy Issues through an AAUW Lens** will address Title IX and the transgender issue. The speakers are Amal Bass from the Women's Law Project who will talk about Gender Identity under Title IX and Tessa Juste, from GLSEN who will talk about Why Transgender Rights are Women's Rights.

June 23 - The 50th Anniversary of Title IX of The Education Amendments of 1972. Watch for more information from AAUW

Did You Know – A History Moment

In 1932 AAUW president was appointed U.S. delegate to the General Disarmament Conference in Geneva, Switzerland.

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