



## **PUBLIC POLICY HIGHLIGHTS OCTOBER 2022**

Welcome to the October edition of the AAUW PA Highlights. This brief update is meant to supplement *the Keystoner* and the email updates that are provided to our members focusing on Public Policy – our goal for providing mission-focused programming and support to the advocates of AAUW PA. Each edition will try to provide information and resources about topics that align with AAUW PA's priorities.

### **Election Resources:**

With the election coming up, here are some dates to ensure that we are all ready for this important civic duty! There continues to be some confusion regarding the requirement of dating on our mail-in ballots. The recent Supreme Court ruling does not negate undated votes received prior to the deadline based on the recent determination of the PA Commonwealth Court. However, everyone should make sure to complete the ballot as instructed and sign and DATE their ballot. It must be received by November 8, 2022, by 8 pm either at your local election office or voting location.

Election Day: November 8<sup>th</sup> Don't forget to remind your friends and family to vote!!

Last Day to Register to vote: October 24th

Last Day to request mail in ballot: November 1<sup>st</sup>. (Be sure to sign and date your ballot!)

Visit [Ballot Request Application \(pa.gov\)](#) for more information

Information on Candidates: There are several resources to help you find out your candidate's stance on important topics:

Vote Smart: [The Voter's Self Defense System - Vote Smart](#)

PennLive: [2022 General Election Voters Guide - PennLive.com](#)

411Vote: [Pennsylvania Voting Information \(vote411.org\)](#)

Ballotpedia: [Pennsylvania elections, 2022 - Ballotpedia](#)

**AAUW West Chester-Chester County is hosting a webinar on Thursday, October 20, 2022 on election security. Here is the information and link to register.** [Forum\\_Poster PA Election Security - Google Docs](#)

**FIX HARRISBURG**: There are obstacles in PA that hinder our priorities from reaching the General Assembly membership. Fix Harrisburg is working to address the rules that determine the movement of legislation through our House and Senate. More to come after the election when this issue will become essential for advocates to support but for now, see the updated website: [FixHarrisburg | Reform the Rules | Pennsylvania | #Fix Harrisburg](#)

## Pay Equity

Provided by Barb Price

The latest data from the U.S. Census Bureau for 2021 shows that year-round, full time working women took home 83.7% of the pay than men did which is not statistically different from 2020. A more comprehensive calculation including part-time and seasonal workers found that women were paid 77% of men's wages last year.

AAUW, along with other equity organizations, has chosen to use the new calculation that assesses all workers. It provides a better picture of the wage gap as millions of women were forced out of the workforce due to layoffs and increased caregiving demands during Covid.

Of course, the pay gap continues to be worse for women of color. Using the analysis that includes all wage earners, AAUW found that Black women were compensated a mere 64% of what white, non-Hispanic men were paid in 2021. For Latinas, the gap was even worse at 54%.

However, there is some good news for Pennsylvania. Salaries have increased here. Because of Covid we did not get 2020 pay gap numbers for the state. Thus, we are comparing the pay gap numbers for 2021 to those from 2019. The median earnings for men in Pennsylvania increased from \$55,221 to \$62,096 an increase of \$6,875 or 12%. Women's median earnings increased from \$43,791 to \$50,272, an increase of \$6,481 or 15%. This means women made 81% of men's wages, ranking PA 24<sup>th</sup> among all states and the District of Columbia. This is an improvement from 2019 when Pennsylvania's ratio was 79%, ranking us 32<sup>nd</sup> out of all the states and DC.

We do not have new data comparing each of our congressional districts, but it may be available later in the year. The pay gap for all Black women workers in Pennsylvania is \$14,037 or 77% of men's wages, better than the national numbers. Some of this can be explained by looking at the wage

gap for Black women in Philadelphia. It is smaller than the state average but is due to suppressed wages overall.

Judith Levine of the Public Policy Lab at Temple University explained, “Philadelphia’s workforce is younger, less educated, more Black and Hispanic, and more concentrated in lower-paying jobs than the surrounding suburbs, meaning the city is at once poorer and more equal.”

We have two more Equal Pay Days coming up this year. Native Women’s Equal Pay Day is November 30. Native women are paid 50 cents for every dollar paid to white men. Latina’s Equal Pay Day is December 8. Latinas are paid 49 cents for every dollar paid to white men. Watch for an update of The Simple Truth based on the recently released data. Find more information about the pay gap at <https://www.aauw.org/issues/equity/pay-gap/>.

## **Women’s Health**

### ***Reproductive Rights***

Provided by Sandra Miller

The Dobbs decision reaches far beyond the abortion issue as we heard during our webinar on August 24<sup>th</sup>. (Read the summary and review the recording at <https://aauw-pa.aauw.net/aauw-aauw-pa-webinars/>.) There are coalitions forming to address the possible constitutional amendment contained in SB 106 –note that this number will change in the next session. In order for the constitutional amendment to make it to the ballot, it must be passed a successive session with the exact same language. We will keep you posted on the progress of these coalitions and how AAUW members can get involved. In the meantime, here are some resources for you:

AAUW National: [Where We Stand: Reproductive Rights – AAUW : Empowering Women Since 1881](#)

[LVW: State Advocacy Strategy Abortion Rights and Access.pdf \(lww.org\)](#)

Planned Parenthood: [Where is Abortion Illegal? | Abortion Limits by State \(plannedparenthoodaction.org\)](#)

### ***Incarcerated Women's Rights:***

The Dignity of Incarcerated Women(HB 1419) provides for better health care and rights for our PA incarcerated women. AAUW-PA will be one of the organizations that has signed on to a letter that is requesting a Democratic member of the Senate to assume responsibility for the introduction and ultimate passage of the bill so it can reach the Governor's desk this year. We are proud to partner with organizations that support the rights of women. [HB1419 DFIW Letter Draft for Senators.docx - Google Docs](#)

## **Education Issues**

Provided by Ann Pehle

The intended outcome of the restructured AAUW Pennsylvania Public Policy structure is to provide a more thorough focus on AAUW issues in Pennsylvania and increase the number of members involved with public policy issues. I am the Education Issues Specialist because I continue to have an interest in the complicated terrain of K-12 Education issues in Pennsylvania. I am not an expert, but an enthusiastic observer. Therefore, I am looking for other enthusiasts and persons with education expertise to join the AAUW Pennsylvania Education Committee. If interested, please contact Ann Pehle ([apehle@outlook.com](mailto:apehle@outlook.com) or call/text 401-644-6488).

This being an election year, there is a lull in activity right now. After the annual budget battle for public school funding which occurs in April to the final signing of a state budget on or around June 30<sup>th</sup>, we are not anticipating much happening in Harrisburg until the new General Assembly begins January 1. It is important to explore the November 8 candidates for federal and state and local positions through the lens of AAUW issues to understand which candidates align with the issues most important to women and girls.

Below are the Education issues we are watching. The proposed actions for you, your Public Policy committee and branch members all center on learning about the state issues and then specifically what is happening in your school districts. That information will guide your work for the remainder of 2022 and prepare you for 2023 action.

We primarily work with [PA Schools Work](#), [Education Voters PA](#), [The Public Interest Law Center](#), and [Education Law Center](#) to gain awareness and understanding on these complex issues. Explore the websites for background and action ideas. Sign up for emails from these organizations to be informed directly from our resource partners. These Talking Points provide a quick overview <https://paschoolswork.org/resources/talking-points/> and are a great introduction to issues.

### **What is happening in your local school district/s?**

Spend time researching and understanding what is happening in your backyard regarding the following issues. Become knowledgeable about what is happening in your school boards by attending meetings, reading local news articles, talking with parents. Learn what legislation your Pennsylvania Representative and Senator are sponsoring and promoting. This being election season, understand the perspective of all the candidates on these issues. We won't be effective in the General Assembly without a thorough understanding of the issues and their impact on our local schools.

- State funding for Public Education K-12
  - The historic case challenging the constitutional validity of Pennsylvania's current funding process is now in the hands of the Commonwealth Court Judge and we await her ruling. To learn about the case and see how state funding impacts your school districts, explore <https://pubintlaw.org/cases-and-projects/school-funding-lawsuit/>.
- Don't Say Gay bills, anti-LGBTQ legislation, Book Bans, and Curriculum interference
  - These issues are front and center in legislation AND locally in your school boards. School boards often operate under the radar because of insufficient scrutiny or news coverage. The Central Bucks School District exploded into national news. AAUW Doylestown members are now

attending school board meetings and advocating locally. Start exploring these issues at

<https://edvoterspa.org/2022/10/new-poll-finds-74-of-parents-feel-that-politicians-are-using-kids-in-school-as-political-pawns/> and

<https://edvoterspa.org/2022/10/can-they-really-do-that-know-your-rights-about-school-board-policies-and-more/>

- Get prepared to take action and advocate during school board elections in 2023. The primary is May and election in November.
- Charter Reform and Vouchers
  - Persistent important topics that can't be ignored. Learn the background and proposed improvements at [https://edvoterspa.org/charter\\_schools/](https://edvoterspa.org/charter_schools/).

There are a lot of moving parts to Education issues. It is simultaneously exciting and infuriating. Please encourage branch members to join the AAUW Pennsylvania Education Committee and I appreciate your support in keeping your members informed on the issues.

## FEDERAL RESOURCES

Student Debt Relief: With the Biden administration proposing more debt relief for students, these resources detail the proposals. [Welcome | Federal Student Aid](#) and [Changes to President Biden's Student Debt Relief Plan \(krc-pbpc.org\)](#)

ERA: LWV of PA has an opportunity for you to reach out to our Senators to endorse the vote of the Equal Rights Amendment that needs Senate approval to get to the President's desk. [Support the Equal Rights Amendment Today — League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania \(palwv.org\)](#)

## **BRANCH PUBLIC POLICY NEWSLETTER LINKS!**

**From our West Chester-Chester County Branch:** [22-10-LAPP Bulletin Crime Governor.docx - Google Docs](#), [22-10-LAPP Bulletin Economy Governor.docx - Google Docs](#), [22-10-LAPP Bulletin Reproductive Rights Governor.docx - Google Docs](#), [22-10-LAPP Bulletin Election Integrity Governor.docx - Google Docs](#), [22-10-LAPP Bulletin Taxes Governor.docx - Google Docs](#)

**From our Carlisle Branch:** [Keystoner article - Nov. 2022.docx - Google Docs](#)

**From our Lower Bucks Branch:** [Lower Bucks Voter Registration.docx - Google Docs](#)

This document should be an opportunity for branches to share their BPP work with all of us. Please share and I look forward to hearing about all your efforts.

Thank you to all the BBPCs out there doing the hard work during this busy time of year. Let us know how we can help! Also, I want to thank the branches that I have asked to visit their branches and I look forward to continuing to work with you all!

Sandra Miller, [smiller2043@gmail.com](mailto:smiller2043@gmail.com) [aauwpapp3@gmail.com](mailto:aauwpapp3@gmail.com)

610.248.4282