



THE KEYSTONER

Advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



At our July AAUW PA retreat, I had the opportunity to meet with many volunteer colleagues from across the state. So many felt elated to be together to reconnect and be inspired for the year ahead. The enthusiasm in the room was contagious.

State legislator Donna Bullock (Philadelphia) welcomed us into her life as she recounted stories about her experiences as a Pennsylvania political leader. CEO Gloria Blackwell spent time with us over dinner Friday and led our Town Hall Saturday. How fortunate to have our CEO join us! Barbara Price and Sandra Miller overviewed public policy initiatives and responded to many questions on what we can expect in the next year from the PA House and Senate relative to our priorities. Nineteen branch members as well as three awesome students shared their experiences, research, and mission-based events with us. What a great opportunity to learn from each other!

With so many energetic members coming together, we all are thinking about what we can do to attract new branch and state leaders. How do we bottle the enthusiasm we felt in Gettysburg and share it with others?

The challenge is greater than how to inspire volunteerism. Roughly three-quarter of Americans do volunteer work. But here's the rub, far less do so in structured organizations like AAUW. Moreover, an even smaller number step into leadership positions. As your branch plans for 2023-2024, keep in mind most volunteers in the U.S. are 35-44 years old.¹ Women and men in this age group are likely to be working as well as have families. They juggle responsibilities daily. How can we make it both easy and rewarding to volunteer with AAUW? How can we make leadership opportunities in our branches and state less daunting?

"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they have the heart."

Elizabeth Andrew

Looking forward to spending 2023-2024 with you!

Cindy Hall (State College)
President, AAUW Pennsylvania

¹ Source: Teamstage, Volunteering Statistics for 2023: how Charitable Are We?

MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM VICE PRESIDENT



The Summer Retreat was reinvigorating, and we are glad that so many of you could attend! They told me that Gettysburg in July would be hot, and it

certainly was, but we managed to escape the torrential downpour forecasted for Saturday! Speaking personally, it was great to meet many of you face-to-face for the first time, to hear State Rep. Bullock speak so honestly about the challenges of creating policy in a divided legislature, and to gain new insights from Gloria

Blackwell of what National does for young women – the NCCWSL Conference is tremendous! The breakout sessions were also very informative as I learned about important branch initiatives and advocacy efforts across the state as well as the about the inspiring research of our student representatives. Let us continue to build upon this momentum as we look ahead!



Thank you for completing the retreat survey. Be rest assured that we are taking your feedback into account as we plan the 2024 State Conference. At this point, we'd like you to make a note on your calendar that the conference will be held at the **Best Western Premier: The Central Hotel and Conference Center in Harrisburg on April 5th-7th**. We expect to have some dynamic speakers! As you know, much is going on nationally – lobbying efforts to pass and ratify the Equal Rights Amendment, the fight for bodily autonomy, and for relief against crushing student loan debt – and specifically within our state – efforts to raise the minimum wage, pass the Family Care Act, and create welcoming and inclusive schools. Please read *The Keystone* for regular updates on our 2024 Conference theme and program. As always, we welcome your ideas and input. If you work with student affiliate chapters and/or your branch awards scholarships to students, consider inviting them to the conference!

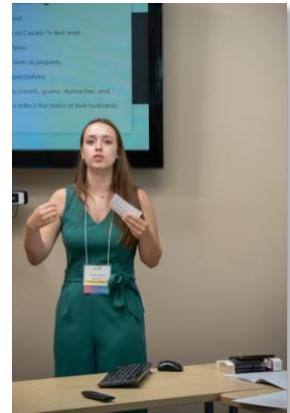
Lori Woods (Indiana Co)
Program VP, AAUW Pennsylvania

Save the Date!
2024 AAUW PA Conference
April 5-7, 2024
Harrisburg, PA

2023 SUMMER RETREAT IMAGES

Thanks to all who attended the retreat! Below are some photos from the day. For additional images, please visit the AAUW PA Flickr account at:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/195791802@N07/albums/72177720311042803>.



A special thanks to Gini Woy of Woy Photo (woyphoto.com) for providing photography services for the day!

PUBLIC POLICY UPDATES



Retreat 2023 in Gettysburg allowed for excellent discussion of AAUW Public Policy Priorities and we were honored to have Barb Price summarize the work she has been doing on the national level for past years. We are proud of her work for all of us!



AAUW Public Policy Priorities

AAUW has always been political but has never been partisan. We have a long herstory of creating social change through public policy efforts like endorsing legislation. Political work can be characterized by shared values, and working toward a common goal that is best for the community. AAUW takes political stands and influences public debate on critical issues based on the values in the member-adopted Public Policy Priorities. <https://www.aauw.org/resources/policy/aauw-public-policy-priorities/>

Looking at the **118th Congress**, the reality is that Congress is divided with different parties in the majority in the House and Senate. This can make getting to a consensus difficult. However, AAUW will not sit back and wait. We will continue to work on legislation that affects women and girls. The legislation AAUW will be tracking over the next year and a half includes:

- The Family Act – addresses paid leave
- The Healthy Families Act – addresses sick leave
- Legislation to address college affordability and student debt
- The Gender Equity in Education Act
- The Equality Act addressing LGBTQ+ discrimination
- Equal Rights Amendment – AAUW is focused on getting legislators to sign the discharge petition on House Joint Resolution 25 (H.J. Res. 25). This would allow a vote on the resolution to remove the ratification deadline and affirm the Equal Rights Amendment as the 28th Amendment to the Constitution. We contacted the two Pennsylvania Legislators to ensure that all of PA's representatives who cosponsored the resolution were on the discharge petition.

AAUW PA has its own public policy priorities which are due to be reviewed and updated next year. <https://aauw-pa.aauw.net/policy/priorities/>

Like the federal congress, The PA legislature is also divided. While progress has been made in passing some bills in the House, we will need to push to get them passed in the Senate.

As a result of our priorities, AAUW PA actively supports the following legislation

- Pay Equity – HB 98 (Bullock) and SB 421 (Santasiero)
- Living Wage – HB 1032 passed the House 6/29/23 Sen Dan Laughlin has the same bill

- Efforts to address School Funding and HB 1422 Cyber Charter reform passed the house July 7.
- Paid Leave – HB 181 (D. Miller) Senators Maria Collette (D-12) and Devlin J. Robinson (R-37) have issued a Co-sponsorship Memoranda to re-introduce the “The Family Care Act,” bi-partisan legislation that would establish a statewide family and medical leave insurance program. They are asking their fellow senators to join them in sponsoring this important legislation to help hard-working Pennsylvanians take care of their families as unexpected and protracted illness can strike anyone at any time. Ask your state senator to sign on as a co-sponsor. Here is the link to the memorandum:

<https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/Legis/CSM/showMemoPublic.cfm?chamber=S&SPick=20230&cosponId=41222>

Budget Update:

On August 3, Governor Shapiro signed the Commonwealth’s budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1st- yes it was late. We are happy that the budget was signed but many of the components of the budget (\$1 billion) cannot be completed with enabling legislation. On August 30, the Senate is scheduled to return to address a narrow set of issues that could lead to a release of much-needed funding for hospitals, schools, and communities. Since this action is after the submission date for the Keystone, the Public Policy chairs will receive updates as the process moves into the fall. [Pa. Gov Shapiro signs \\$45.5B budget but lawmakers have more work to do – Pennsylvania Capital-Star \(penncapital-star.com\)](#)

Important Election Information:

This fall’s election is important with statewide judicial elections that could shape the Supreme Court and crucial school board elections. Here are important dates from the LWVPA website that will assist us on preparing for these upcoming key steps for the November election:

General Election:

October 23, 2023: Last day to REGISTER TO VOTE in the November election

October 31, 2023: Last day to apply for a mail-in or civilian absentee ballot (ALL registered voters in Pennsylvania can apply for a mail-in ballot)

November 7, 2023: GENERAL ELECTION DAY

November 7, 2023: Last day for County Boards of Elections to receive voted mail-in and civilian absentee ballots (**must be received by 8:00 P.M. on election day - postmarks are not enough.**)

November 14, 2023: Last day for County Boards of Elections to receive voted military and overseas mail-in and civilian absentee ballots (**must be submitted for delivery no later than 11:59 P.M. on November 6th**)

GENERAL Election: polls are open from 7 A.M. to 8 P.M. on November 7, 2023.

Education Updates:

This fall, the [Basic Education Funding Commission](#) is meeting throughout the state to discuss the need for adequately and equitably funding our school districts. With the Commonwealth Court decision declaring our funding system unconstitutional, it is essential that this Commission address our funding needs. Here are the dates that you might be able to witness the Commission in action:

The current schedule is:

- September 12 in Allentown
- September 13 in Harrisburg
- September 14 in Philadelphia
- September 21 in Lancaster
- September 28 in Hanover
- October 5 in Hazleton
- October 11 in Pittsburgh
- October 12 in Lemont Furnace
- November 2 in Enola
- November 9 in Bedford

Hearing details and agendas will be announced closer to the dates. The public can submit comments to be entered into the record via the Contact Us section of the commission's website: www.basiceducationfundingcommission.com.

We are witnessing increasing attacks on school districts from book bans to policy restricting the rights of LGBTQ+ children. We look to have programs in the fall to address these topics as well as any suggestions members may have to meet their needs for engaging in public policy priorities. Please share with us your suggestions at aauwapp3@gmail.com. This email will be better utilized this fall for member input and communications.

Sandra Miller (Easton/Bethlehem)
Public Policy Chair, AAUW Pennsylvania

THANK YOU AAUW PA RETREAT ATTENDEES!



According to AAUW CEO Gloria Blackwell, a featured speaker at the AAUW-PA retreat, only 1.9 percent of overall charitable giving goes to organizations dedicated to women and girls. In support of AAUW's mission to promote equity for women and girls, retreat attendees made contributions totaling \$1,055 for AAUW. The breakdown is as follows: \$470 to AAUW National, \$585 to AAUW PA.

Grants, Fellowships and Endowments

AAUW just awarded a record \$6.3 million dollars in grants and fellowships to 285 recipients, for a total of \$135 million since the program's inception in 1888.

AAUW holds millions of dollars in endowments which were created by branches and members, predominately in the last century. This Spring I learned that some Pennsylvania branches were unaware of endowments that they or their members founded, and how the monies generated by these endowments were used to advance the education and research agendas of women. In some

cases, their endowments were used to support programs of community groups that empower women and girls.

Below are directions for how to access endowment information on AAUW's website. Branches might be surprised to learn that their endowments are funding students in their own backyards—a rich resource for programs.

Please note that the information only goes back to 2004-5.

How to Search for Individuals Who Have Received AAUW Grants from a Branch or Personal Endowment (*The York (PA) Branch is used as an example*)

1. Click on this URL: <https://www.aauw.org/resources/programs/fellowships-grants/directory-of-recipients-sponsors/>
2. Click on *Search the Directory* in the red box at the bottom of the page.
3. In the left column, click on *Search for Sponsors*.
4. Under *Fund No/Name*, type in York and browse until you find the Branch.
5. Another option to choose a state, in this case Pennsylvania. This is a way of seeing ALL endowments established by Pennsylvania branches and members. Select a sponsor (you might find some surprises).
6. On the lower left, click on *Search for Recipients*.
7. Retrieve a list of the 19 women who have received funding from the York endowment, dating back to 2004-5. If you wish, go directly to: https://www.aauw.org/fellowships_directory/#fnd1737
8. Click on the women's names to learn more about them and their research. They are impressive!

Sally Kalin (State College)
Funds Chair, AAUW Pennsylvania

THERE IS STILL WORK TO BE DONE



In our current environment, the battle for progress as it relates to diversity, inclusion, equity, and belonging (“DEIB”) is in the forefront of government, politics, media, educational systems, communities, corporations, and spaces where decision-making and impact occur. The importance of DEIB was prevalent at AAUW-PA’s Summer Retreat, where a variety of individuals and groups across the Commonwealth presented on branch activities and external speakers reiterated the work still needing to be done.



DEIB engagement across state branches varies greatly. There are many branches with Diversity Officer, committees, and programming, but the focus on DEIB varies in maturity for each branch. It is imperative branches make a commitment to DEIB by taking the first step to model the very progress AAUW is seeking to influence. If your branch does not already have a Diversity Officer or has not taken any steps to create a committee or be engaged in the community or programming,

please contact Ajla Laussegger at aauwpadiversity@gmail.com. For more information, please check the AAUW-PA Website, under “Diversity Equity Inclusion & Belonging.”

Ajla Laussegger (National Member)
Diversity Chair, AAUW Pennsylvania

AAUW PA MEMBERSHIP – “LOOKING FORWARD”



“The future is now.” This phrase, spoken by Gloria Blackwell at our summer retreat, rang through the room and into our hearts and minds. Yes, AAUW has been an advocate and leader for gender equity for more than 140 years, but still today “women’s rights are being attacked.” AAUW is needed more now than ever. So, to continue our mission to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy, we must prepare for the future and be sustainable. This may mean that we will face a new organizational reality, and we will need to embrace change. The need is great because “the future is now.”

It's no secret that membership has gone down in the last 20 years. But we have so much to celebrate -- \$6.3 million awarded this year in fellowships and grants to 285 recipients, NCCWSL (National Conference for College Women Student Leaders) met this year with great success, and our Work Smart and Stem-ed programs are funded and working. Our future is in the hands of these young women whom we impact now!

Our state members are ready to get to work. I was so uplifted by all the women that I met at the retreat who wanted to share and learn more about the membership recruitment activities going on at their branches. Shape the Future campaigns, recruiting students and college partners, and having programs that attract new members were all tools that seemed to be commonly used. Our AAUW PA Strategic Plan has as one of its goals to increase membership with an emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Gloria Blackwell also said that our sustainability will be through a DEI lens. I encourage you to look around your community and think about how to attract members in an inclusive way.

We need to spread the word about all the positive activities that AAUW does at the national, state, and branch level. Let's use technology. The Strategic Plan has set a goal of developing virtual branches to recruit new members who are not inclined or able to join physical branches. We also want to utilize more social media to highlight branch programming and achievements with a goal of increasing membership. Toot your horn! Ask new people to join your branch and get members involved in our mission. It's always best to match the needs of a potential new member with what we can offer, and this can be at either the national, state, or branch level.

As Cindy Hall, AAUW PA President, stated in her Welcome to the AAUW PA Summer Retreat, we need to “leave today reenergized and ready to continue to move the AAUW equity vision forward long into the future.” The future is now.

Karen Wellin (Valley Forge)
Membership Vice President, AAUW Pennsylvania

MISSION-BASED PROGRAMMING

AAUW Fox Chapel presents “The Banning of Books: A Panel Discussion”

On Tuesday October 10, 2023 at 10:00 AM at Cooper-Siegel Community Library, 403 Fox Chapel Road, Pittsburgh, PA, speakers Paul Kohberger, Jill McConnell, and Fran Bogos will lead a panel discussion.

Recent years have seen a record-breaking number of attempts to ban books, according to the American Library Association. In some cases, this effort has turned school districts and libraries into battlegrounds. Book censorship will be the focus of a panel discussion sponsored by the American Association of University Women (AAUW), Fox Chapel Area Affiliate, on October 10 at Cooper-Siegel Community Library. The program, free and open to the public, begins at 10:00 AM.

Book censorship in the U.S. has been around since 1637, when Thomas Morton’s *New English Canaan* was banned by the Puritan government. It’s in illustrious company: The *Bible*, works by William Shakespeare and Mark Twain, Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, and novels by Walt Whitman, Margaret Atwood, Ernest Hemingway, George Orwell, Dan Brown, and even J. K. Rowling have all made “the list”. Books with religious themes are frequent targets of book censors, as is material on sexuality and race; “obscenity” is often cited as a primary reason to declare a text illegal.

School boards are among the most likely groups to initiate book challenges, usually at the request of parents. Political and religious groups often weigh in as well, and occasionally library patrons.

Our panel of three library and book specialists will address the controversy surrounding book censorship and kickoff the discussion: Paul Kohberger is a retired University of Pittsburgh librarian and a current board member of the Allegheny County Library Association; Jill McConnell has been the Executive Director of Cooper-Siegel Community Library since 2014; and Fran Bogos is a retired reading specialist in the North Allegheny School District, teaching at the junior and senior high school levels. Their comments will be followed by questions from the audience, presented to the panelists in written form.

NEWS FROM THE BRANCHES

AAUW State College

At their July 2023 meeting the AAUW State College Executive Committee elected to award \$5,000 to AAUW Pennsylvania for the 2023-2024 FY. AAUW PA provides important support and resources to AAUW branches around the state, including information-sharing and networking through retreats and meetings, relevant webinars pertaining to public policy issues, and funds NCCWSL scholarships.

While the vast majority of dollars that AAUW State College awards stay in Centre County, our combined contributions to AAUW PA and AAUW National for the current year total \$20,000.

BRANCH ANNIVERSARIES

Lower Bucks (10/20/1953), 70 years

WEBSITE SUBMISSIONS

Please send news for the AAUW PA website to aauwpaad@gmail.com

ADDRESS CHANGES

E-News Subscribers:

Send email address changes and additions to aauwpa.president@gmail.com or the branch officer who manages your branch email list.

SUBMITTING INFORMATION TO THE KEYSTONER

We're always looking for news from AAUW branches! The best submissions will be between 100-250 words and include a photo (well-focused and at high resolution, please!)

Deadline for submissions is:

November 2023 Issue: October 27

Send to the Keystoner editor at aauwpa.keystoner@gmail.com
Please put "For the Keystoner" in the Subject line!

SOCIAL MEDIA DIRECTORY

If your branch has social media accounts such as Facebook and/or Instagram we would like to collect and publish this information so branches can follow each other. Please send information to the Keystoner editor at aauwpa.keystoner@gmail.com
Please put "Social Media" in the Subject line!

AAUW PA STATE BOARD

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