



THE KEYSTONER

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

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



With so much happening in our country, it's difficult, at best, to stay on top of the breaking news. Many find the news so upsetting they temporarily step away to protect their own mental health.

Yesterday, I was reading a post from author Bob McKinnon on the topic of *smiling*. He notes the average child smiles more than 400 times a day, and the average adult thirty times. Women smile sixty times a day, and men only eight. Ouch!

We all need to find opportunities to smile. The news is grim but the impact of the work we do as members of AAUW is anything but. Indulge me for a minute and read about some of the ways your membership and donations helped women in 2024.

- AAUW is the oldest non-institutional major funder of graduate women's education, providing \$146 million in fellowships and grants to more than 14,000 women in 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Guam as well as in 152 countries worldwide since 1888.
- AAUW awarded \$6.2 million to 276 Fellows and Community organizations in 2024. We awarded 18 Community Action Grants supporting U.S. organizations advancing gender equity for women and girls locally.
- AAUW is actively involved with key United Nations (UN) events including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Summit and the 68th Commission on the Status of Women. AAUW also partners with Lehigh University in Pennsylvania to support two college youth representatives who are engaged with the UN.
- In 2024, some 500 women college students from 125+ institutions came together at the University of Maryland to prepare for future leadership roles. While NCCWSL will be overseen by NASPA (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators), AAUW will continue to be involved and supportive. This year, a number of our Pennsylvania branches will once again send students to NCCWSL.
- The Women's Economic Empowerment Initiative provided 6,157 women with the essential tools to succeed financially. AAUW's salary negotiation workshops led to an 18 percent increase in participants' confidence in their ability to negotiate.
- Members sent 47,000 impactful messages to elected officials via AAUW's Two-Minute Activist.
- AAUW's volunteer Lobby Corps visited more than 400 congressional offices to advocate on behalf of our membership.
- AAUW signed on to more than 100 coalition letters supporting issues affecting women and girls.

In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks an inclusive membership, workforce, leadership team, and board of directors. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, geographical location, national origin, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

That's a good bit of impact. Yet, only 17 percent of our members donate to National. It is not how much you donate; any amount is appreciated. In addition to the Greatest Needs Fund, you may have noted there are now two new options to donate: the Defend Higher Education Fund and the Public Policy Fund.

Your neighbors, friends, and coworkers may be looking for an opportunity to respond to many of the alarming steps being taken by the new administration regarding the government's legal commitment to ensuring women's educational opportunities and economic security. This is the time to reach out and tell our story. A good number of our branch presidents and public policy chairs have written letters to the editor and opinion pieces for Pennsylvania newspapers. This raises our visibility and lets people know what our organization stands for.

Frequently I am asked about the size of AAUW's membership. At the close of 2024 there were 41,000 total members, Fifty-three percent of the members belong to branches with 10-49 members and only 10 percent belong to branches with 100+ members. Pennsylvania has approximately 1,500 members and is the fifth largest state in membership, Clearly, our members' active participation and support matters!

See you at our June Summer Retreat!!

Cindy Hall (State College)
President, AAUW Pennsylvania

 The graphic features the AAUW Pennsylvania logo at the top, with the text "2025 Summer Retreat" below it. The main text reads "collective action FOR lasting change" in a stylized font. The background shows a city skyline at night with white human figures connected by glowing lines, and speech bubbles are scattered around.	<p>Join us on Saturday, June 28th Wyndham Garden State College</p> <p>Kick off the weekend with our Welcome Reception</p> <p>Friday, June 27th 6:30–8:00 PM at Wyndham</p>
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Register [HERE!](#)

MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM VICE PRESIDENT



Summer Retreat: *Collective Action for Lasting Change*

For the past several months I have been working with our incredible summer retreat facilitator to provide members with an innovative program for all attendees. Under the umbrella of our theme, “Collective Action for Lasting Change” this day of programming will provide us with the tools to grow and strengthen this wonderful organization we all love.

To find out more about the program and meet the presenter, visit <https://www.facebook.com/AAUWPennsylvania/videos/9747494268670447>.

The retreat will be held on Saturday, June 28 at the Wyndham Garden in State College. We hope this central location will help all branches to have members in attendance.

Our AAUW State College friends have offered to help with visits to Penn State venues and the State College area, or simply to provide advice for those who have not visited. Saturday will be a busy day, with the retreat program running from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. (continental breakfast and registration offered earlier). As a result, your best bet would be to enjoy the area on Friday. With that in mind, we will have a reception Friday at the Wyndham, 6:30 p.m.

The link to the registration and the hotel block is now open and can be found on our state website:

<https://aauw-pa.aauw.net>

The registration deadline is June 22, 2024. If you register by May 15, 2024 you will be entered into a drawing for a free registration.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone in June so take a minute to sign up!

Lori Woods (Indiana Co)
Program VP, AAUW Pennsylvania

PUBLIC POLICY UPDATES



Each of us is trying to find our way during this turbulent time. No matter where you stand on the partisan side of issues, AAUW priorities are facing unprecedented attacks. Higher Ed is seeing their funds frozen, and voting rights are being attacked. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - yes, we are writing it out now- are assaulted every day. Each day, we face new challenges. AAUW is taking important actions needed to elevate and protect our priorities. There are so many ways to engage, such as outreach to lawmakers, letters to the editor, attending trainings, and participating in rallies. Our members are our strength, and we are here to support your efforts to uphold our values. If you meet with your lawmakers, both state and federal, please use this [form](#) to report the meeting to the Public Policy Committee.



National Advocacy Work:

AAUW National is posting its work on the Policy Updates page that covers the breadth of the topics and efforts the public policy staff is taking, and is a must-see. Also, check out the webinars that National is organizing - [recordings found here](#)- to make a difference in the future of our AAUW priorities.

To view AAUW National's Actions: [AAUW Weighs In: Policy Updates – AAUW : Empowering Women Since 1881](#)

To take action yourself, visit AAUW Two-Minute Activist: [AAUW Action Network – AAUW : Empowering Women Since 1881](#)

Protest Guidelines: National will be releasing more formal guidance, but for now, the National Public Policy team recommends that we focus on positive messages such as "AAUW PA Supports Higher Education Freedom, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and the rights of all people to secure economic stability." Keeping the focus on our priorities and what we support is acceptable in a partisan world. They recommend that we avoid personal attacks and language that would be viewed as partisan. If you attend a rally, you can go as an individual without displaying your affiliation with AAUW, then you can do as you please. Just remember that AAUW is non-partisan and needs to be kept out of partisan displays of support or anger.

We will keep you posted on formal guidelines.

SAVE ACT:

The Safeguarding American Voters Eligibility Act was passed out of the US House of Representatives on April 11, 2025. This act will potentially disenfranchise millions of voters, especially women who changed their names upon marriage. No bills should be making it harder for citizens to exercise their right to vote. Contact our Senators to stop this harmful bill from moving forward.

AAUW Two-minute Activist: SAVE Act: <https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/>

Statement by the ERA Coalition: [SAVE Act Statement - Google Docs](#)

**STATE Update:**

PAY EQUITY: This legislative session, Pay Equity was quickly passed out of the House Labor and Industry Committee on March 25, 2025. We will continue to monitor the bill's activity and keep our membership posted on next steps. Read here for more information about HB 630. [House Bill 630 Information; 2025-2026 Regular Session - The Official Website of the Pennsylvania General Assembly](#) Please find the updated **The Fight for Pay Equity: A State Road Map for Pennsylvania: 2023 Pay Gap numbers - Google Docs**. Barb Price updated the document with our most recent data. Thank you, Barb!

Paid Leave Updates: On March 18, 2025, the Paid Leave Bill was passed by the Labor and Industry Committee and sent to the House floor. HB 200 Paid Leave: [House Bill 200 Information; 2025-2026 Regular Session - The Official Website of the Pennsylvania General Assembly](#)



The Family Care Coalition scheduled a rally in Harrisburg on May 6th, timed around Mother's Day. click here to register for the event and more information.

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=nZRNbBy5RUyarmbXZEMRDUB96ys_ApF_Eh7WZAVhiEPxUM1kxNEVZVE9ZODBLSExKTzBRS1oyRkMwVi4u.

Let's support this essential economic security priority for PA families.

Education Update: PA Department of Education has certified to the US Department of Education that all districts in Pennsylvania follow applicable federal and state laws that ensure our students and schools are protected. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are protected in PA. Read [the letter](#) sent to the USDOE. Kristina Moon, Esq. of the Education Law Center, noted that it is "an advocacy win" for PA that the Department sent this letter to the US Department of Education. With threats to cut federal funding to schools, Governor Shapiro has stated that he will continue to monitor the situation.

In state Education news: PA Schools Work is hosting its annual Advocacy Day on May 13th in Harrisburg. Please join advocates from around the state as we fight for adequate funding to meet the constitutional mandate ordered by the Commonwealth Court. See here for more details: [PA Schools Work – INVEST IN STUDENTS, SECURE OUR FUTURE](#)



Election Update: Primary season is upon us, and several important contests deserve your attention. Each school board will be electing new members, and please research your local candidates.

Judicial races are also on the ballot, and this story outlines the candidates for our top Judicial Seats - either as new judges or for retention votes. Please research and vote for the candidates that support our values. [Pa. primary election 2025: A complete guide to candidates for Commonwealth and Superior Courts](#)

Fair Districts Update: Bills have been introduced in the House ([HB31](#)) and the Senate ([SB131](#)) that will provide for a citizens' redistricting commission. It is important that PA citizens have control over the electoral process, and these bills will give a true voice in our redistricting process. Review [this document](#) for more details on the bills and important information from Fair Districts.



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

NOMINATING AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Thank you to all members who voted in the 2025 officer election. Your voice matters.

As you think about next year, please consider whether you or anyone in your branch might be well suited for a new branch or state board position. We are always looking for involved members to take on branch leadership roles or join the state board or the state nominating and elections committee.

Ann Pehle (Carlisle)
Deb Roney (Huntingdon)
Nominating and Election Committee Co-Chairs, AAUW Pennsylvania

BYLAWS COMMITTEE

Thank you to all branches who have updated or are updating their mandatory bylaws changes! If any branch is considering amending their bylaws, be sure to contact Deb Roney, state bylaws chair, at aauwpabylaws@gmail.com.

Deb Roney (Huntingdon)
Bylaws Chair, AAUW Pennsylvania

2026 REGIONAL CONFERENCE



★ Save the Date! AAUW
Atlantic Regional
Conference 2026 ★

JOIN US 

Mark your calendars! 📅 Join your AAUW colleagues and friends from 13 states at the Lancaster County Convention Center & Marriott Hotel in Lancaster, PA on September 25-27, 2026!

📍 Why Lancaster? Lancaster is one of America's oldest inland cities, rich in history and culture!

Explore:

- 🍴 Amazing restaurants & coffee shops
- 🛍️ Unique boutiques & Central Market
- 🍷 Wineries & breweries
- 🍁 Fall festivals happening throughout the city!

✈️ Getting There:

- 🚆 Amtrak station in Lancaster
- ✈️ Harrisburg International Airport (30 miles away)

More details on the conference and travel options coming soon! Stay tuned! 🔥

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY UPDATE

Student Impact Mini-Grants and NCCWSL

January until the end of April is THE busiest time for the AAUW Pennsylvania College/University Liaison. Not complaining because the work we do with **Student Impact Mini-Grants** and **NCCWSL** grants is VERY fulfilling and rewarding. Below is a summary of the results from each.

Student Impact Mini-Grants

Applications were open until February 15, 2025. Six applications were submitted for committee review. The four approved events are summarized below. This quote from a recipient report explains exactly why AAUW Pennsylvania sponsors \$500 Student Mini-Grants each year.

Your support empowers us to inspire girls to become successful and well-equipped young women by offering them resources, education, and networking opportunities—one event at a time.

Respect Head Covers; Stop Stereotyping--*Lamia Dawood, graduate student and AAUW student member at Indiana University Pennsylvania.*

Lamia Dawood, the moderator, opened with a presentation about the importance of inclusivity and acceptance at IUP. She explained that women wear head coverings for various reasons, and moving away from stereotypes is important.

Attendees were encouraged to share experiences concerning remarks they received about their looks that made them uncomfortable. The panel helped everyone to express themselves and to feel that they are not alone. There was laughter, empathy, and some tears remembering old stuff that they wished to forget. The moderator encouraged everyone to express themselves and not to feel judged and to never let a comment from anyone to make them change themselves. The moderator closed the event by confirming the resources that IUP offers students to seek help if they need to talk to someone or report an incident.

Respect Head Covers – Stop Stereotyping

THE EVENT

Join us for an important conversation on respect, acceptance, and inclusivity. Women wear head coverings for many reasons—whether religious, cultural, health-related, or personal. Let's work together to stop stereotyping and create a more inclusive environment for everyone.

ACCEPT

Head coverings are not just for specific races or religions. Many women wear them for different, personal reasons.

RESPECT

Treat it as a personal decision, avoid making assumptions or comments, refrain from unsolicited advice or questioning beliefs, and ensure interactions are respectful.

COMPASSION

Let's create a more compassionate environment that respects individual choices, fostering inclusivity among students, staff, and faculty at IUP.

EVENT DETAILS:

- Date: Thursday February 27
- Time: 01:00 PM – 2:00 PM
- Location: Elkin Hall Great Room

COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS:

- Office of International Education
- Counseling Center
- D2A2 Center
- Women Commission
- SGA

Refreshments, Snacks and Head Covers will be provided. All Are Welcome



Equal access to period products in Huntingdon Area School District schools--*Heather Small, undergraduate, AAUW student member at Juniata College and President of the AAUW Juniata College student organization.*

AAUW Juniata College wanted to provide period products for girls in the Huntingdon Area School District's elementary, middle, and high schools. Our purpose is to provide equal access for those who may not be able to afford their feminine products, a resource in case a girl experiences her first period at school, or security for those with irregular periods/don't know how to track their periods. With this, we hope to normalize period products and provide necessary supplies for women.

After contacting nurses in the five schools, on March 12 and 14, pads were delivered to elementary schools and both pads and tampons were delivered to middle and high schools. Every school principal and nurse were very happy to accept the donations.



Women in STEM Careers--*Monjeana Henderson, undergraduate, AAUW student member, and President of AAUW Penn State Greater Allegheny Student Organization.*

Encourage high school girls to pursue higher education and STEM careers with a visit to campus and an event featuring career awareness activities, a panel discussion with recent graduates sharing their journeys, lunch, and the ability to network with women faculty at Penn State Greater Allegheny.

On February 28th, 60 students and four chaperones from four high schools joined four students and nine faculty from Penn State Greater Allegheny for an inspiring event. Many high school students attended during school hours and left the event feeling inspired and more interested in pursuing higher education. The event successfully promoted STEM careers and higher education.

Honoring Women's History Month --*Colette Costlow, undergraduate, AAUW student member at Saint Francis University and AAUW Pennsylvania intern during her junior and senior years. And President of the Saint Francis University Literary Club.*

The Literary Club organized this March 20th event to recognize Women's History Month by honoring the female faculty at Saint Francis University. The event began with a reception in the lobby. Copies of *Invisible Women* by Caroline Criado Perez and fliers about how to get involved with AAUW were given to interested students. Sparkling cider was passed to all attendees for a "champagne toast" to our female panelists. Several female faculty members were invited to participate in a panel. Each panelist shared why Women's History Month is important to them, along with a woman who inspired them. The school newspaper, *The Troubadour*, printed the story about the Literary Club being awarded the AAUW Pennsylvania Student Impact Mini-Grant.

Many attendees and panelists approached Literary Club members to express their satisfaction with the event. Attendees gained insights and appreciation of the female faculty at the university. Colette wrote in the required summary report that the "positive aspect of planning this event was knowing that we were uplifting inspirational women at SFU."

National Conference for College Women Student Leaders

(NCCWSL—affectionately pronounced nick-whistle)

Colette Costlow, the AAUW Pennsylvania intern, organized the March 12th webinar -- **Everything You Need to Know about NCCWSL in One Hour**. Go [here](#) to watch the video. Colette moderated a panel of past AAUW Pennsylvania grant recipients to discuss why NCCWSL was important to them and how it impacted their personal and professional lives.

The panelists were:

- **Jasmine Bishnoi**, Ph.D. Candidate, English Literature and Criticism, Indiana University of Pennsylvania
- **Lamia Dawood**, Ph.D. Candidate, Administration and Leadership, Indiana University of Pennsylvania
- **Tra Bui**, Doctoral Candidate, Psychological and Brain Sciences, University of Nevada



AAUW Pennsylvania budgets grant money for four students to attend the NCCWSL conference. Five grant applications were received and reviewed by the selection committee. Thanks to a donation from AAUW Carlisle, we awarded a grant to all five applicants.

The recipients attending the May 28-30, 2025 NCCWSL are:

Sylvia Mukusa -- graduate student attending Indiana University Pennsylvania; AAUW Student Associate member

Fatemeh Rahbari – graduate student attending Pennsylvania State University Park; AAUW Student Associate member

Sarah Brownson – undergraduate student attending Pennsylvania State World Campus; AAUW Student Associate member and President of AAUW World Campus

Colette Costlow—undergraduate student attending St. Frances University; AAUW Student Associate member and AAUW Pennsylvania intern

Heather Small -- undergraduate student attending Juanita College; AAUW Student Associate member and President AAUW Juniata College Student Organization

It is an honor for AAUW Pennsylvania to support young women to attend NCCWSL because we know what a difference it makes in their lives and those around them. Thank you to all the branches that offer their own grants to young women.

Ann Pehle (she, her, hers)
AAUW Pennsylvania College/University Liaison
aauwcupa@gmail.com
[401-644-6488](tel:401-644-6488) (text or call)

AAUW-PA Western District Members' Meeting Invitation

You and your branch members are invited to attend the

Western District of AAUW-PA Get Together

Building our Statewide Relationships to Sharpen our Local Impact

Saturday, June 14, 2025, at 11 AM-3 PM

At Cooper-Siegel Library, 403 Fox Chapel Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15238

www.coopersiegelcommunitylibrary.org

The meeting will be held in the lower level at the back of the building.

Lunch will be provided

Hosted by Fox Chapel Area and North Hills Pittsburgh Branches

RSVP to Cheryl Towers by JUNE 2 at cheryl@towersmaguire.com

Spend time with fellow AAUW members from Western PA branches and the state board. Let's come together to strengthen our work and reaffirm our mission.

Learn about recent developments at the state and national levels and share your input as we prepare for the 2025-2026 AAUW year.



In attendance from AAUW Pennsylvania:

Cindy Hall, President

Lori Woods, Program Vice President

Karem Wellin, Membership Vice President

Ann Echols, Finance Officer

Any questions, contact:

Nancy Weinstein nanw819@aol.com

Deborah Rosenfelder rosenfelderd@verizon.net

Cheryl Towers cheryl@towersmaguire.com

IN MEMORIAM

AAUW Lansdale remembers Margrett Beckett, a stalwart for our branch from the 1960s to 1990s, who passed away on February 28. Margrett was very active in the community and was a long-time member of AAUW, the only organization mentioned by name in her [obituary](#). A Celebration of Life for Margrett and her husband Tom was held in April.

NEWS FROM THE BRANCHES

AAUW North Hills Pittsburgh

AAUW PA Public Policy Call to Action Regarding Pay Inequity

At the branch January 5, 2025 board meeting an active discussion on how to engage, educate and advocate for equal pay for equal work led to the branch forming an Equal Pay Committee. The committee led by Peggy Schmiedecke includes Debbie Rosenfelder, Francie Cech, Sylvia Lynn and Annahid Samiljan. We started by identifying our focused activities:

- Held Zoom Training Session led by Peggy; on how to hold a meeting with an elected official, identify the legislators, identify PA Bills, updating Representative on AAUW The Not So Simple Truth About the Gender Pay Gap, and Equal Pay Day Calendar 2025, build the agenda for the meeting – Peggy, Franci, Debbie
- Francie contacted District 30 Representative, Dr. Arvind Venkat, scheduled the meeting and firmed up that we would discuss HB 630 Improved Equal Pay, HB 926 Violence Prevention in Health Facilities, HB200 Family & Medical Leave, HB274 Unemployment Compensation Eligibility related to Domestic Violence.




Representative Venkat met with Francie Cech, Peggy Schmiedecke and Sylvia Lynn.

- Equal Pay Day Program – March 25, 2025 Women Financial Empowerment Presentation. Presenter: Annahid Samiljan, financial advisor with Equitable and a member of AAUW North Hills Pittsburgh Branch focused on a discussion to empower women in every stage of life. Women have unique financial needs. Peggy presented an AAUW Equal Pay Day presentation discussing Our Mission, Our Values, Our Focus, Equal Pay Day 2025 Calendar and a call to action to become a AAUW Two-Minute Activist. and explore AAUW Empowering Women through Innovative Programs.

AAUW State College

An Invitation to AAUW Pennsylvania Branch Members: May 17-20 AAUW State College Used Book Sale

Book lovers and AAUW lovers unite! After nearly ten months of sorting, pricing, and packing books donated by generous community book donors, the AAUW State College Used Book Sale is around the corner! It will be held at the **Penn State Snider Ag Arena** (catty corner from Beaver Stadium, 800 E. Park Avenue, State College) **May 17-20th**. The sale runs 9 am-8 pm on Sat-Sun-Mon, and 9 am-7 pm on Tue. Monday is Half-Price Day and Tuesday is Bag Day (fill your own grocery store bag for \$10). Roughly 150,000 books, individually priced and sorted into 30+ categories, will be for sale. *Proceeds fund local scholarships and programs that help advance equity for women and girls.* **Learn more about the sale: bit.ly/AAUWBookSale**




USED BOOK SALE
Penn State Snider Ag Arena

Sat., May 17
through
Tue., May 20

Sat-Sun-Mon: 9 am-8 pm;
Tue: 9 am-7 pm

bit.ly/BookSaleFacebookEvent
www.aauwstatecollege.org



AAUW York

The York Branch presented the Gateway to Equity Award to the Confronting Racism Coalition (CRC). The coalition greatly appreciated receiving this award. They told us that it meant so much to them given all the challenges that they and our communities are facing.

Our members were impressed that so many CRC members attended the meeting and were touched about how grateful CRC was.



UPCOMING BRANCH ANNIVERSARIES

Easton—June 22, 1926

Murrysville Area—July 15, 1972

ADDRESS CHANGES

E-News Subscribers: Send email address changes and additions to the President 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!)

The next issue of the *Keystoner* will be published in September-have a great summer!

AAUW PA STATE BOARD

Cindy Hall (State College) - President
Lori Woods (Indiana Co) - Program Vice President
Karen Wellin (Valley Forge) - Membership Vice President
Ann Echols (State College) - Finance Officer
Charlotte Ridge (Huntingdon)- Secretary
Rebecca Gardner (Harrisburg) - Marketing & Communications Vice President
Patricia Byerly (Pittsburgh) - Administrative Director
Sally Kalin (State College) - AAUW Funds Chair
Deb Roney (Huntingdon) - Bylaws Chair
Sandra Miller (Bethlehem) - Public Policy Chair
Ajla Glavasevic Laussegger (National) - Diversity & Inclusion Chair
Debe Mack (Johnstown) - Social Media Coordinator
Colette Costlow (St. Francis University) - College Intern

Off-Board Positions

Barbara Zaborowski - Archives Chair, Website Coordinator
Ann Pehle (Carlisle) - Nominating & Elections Committee Chair

For contact information please visit: <https://aauw-pa.aauw.net/about/board/>