

- Increased support for and access to affordable higher education for women and disadvantaged populations
- Increased support for programs that break through barriers for women and girls in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields

**To achieve economic self-sufficiency for all women, AAUW advocates**

- Pay equity and fairness in compensation
- Equitable access and advancement in employment, including vigorous enforcement of employment anti-discrimination statutes
- Greater availability of and access to a high standard of benefits and policies that promote work-life balance
- Programs that provide women with education, training, and support for success in the workforce, including nontraditional occupations and women's entrepreneurship
- Strengthening programs, including welfare and career and technical education, to improve postsecondary education access, career development, and earning potential
- Strengthening retirement benefits and programs, including pension improvements and protecting Social Security from privatization

**To guarantee equality, individual rights, and social justice for a diverse society, AAUW advocates**

- Vigorous enforcement of and full access to civil and constitutional rights, including voting rights
- Choice in the determination of one's reproductive life
- Increased access to quality, affordable health care and family planning services, including expansion of patients' rights
- Freedom from violence and fear of violence, including hate crimes, in homes, schools, workplaces, and communities
- Support for U.N. programs that address human rights and women's and girls' concerns
- Freedom in the definition of family and a guarantee of civil rights in all family structures
- Passage and ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment

**ADDITIONAL POLICY RESOURCES**

Up to 10 copies of this brochure are available for free from AAUW at [connect@aauw.org](mailto:connect@aauw.org) or 800.326.2289. For additional copies, contact ShopAAUW at 800.225.9998 or [www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org).

The AAUW Action Network helps anyone with an interest and an e-mail address to take action to affect the outcome of important policy issues. Action Network links directly to AAUW's Two-Minute Activist, where you can read a brief summary of a current issue and then click to send a letter to Congress. To subscribe, visit [www.aauw.org/actionnetwork](http://www.aauw.org/actionnetwork). If you prefer, write to the addresses or call the phone numbers below to contact your elected officials.

*Washington Update* is AAUW's free, members-only weekly e-bulletin. It offers an insider's view on the legislative process, the latest policy news, resources for advocates, programming ideas, and updates from the Public Policy and Government Relations Department. AAUW members are encouraged to subscribe by e-mailing [VoterEd@aauw.org](mailto:VoterEd@aauw.org).

**IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION**

**The President of the United States**

The White House  
Washington, DC 20500      [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)

**The Honorable [name]**

U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510      [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)

**The Honorable [name]**

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515      [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)

**White House comments:**      202.456.1111

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**2015-17  
PUBLIC POLICY PROGRAM**

Adopted June 2015



# 2015-17

## AAUW PUBLIC POLICY PROGRAM

**THE PUBLIC POLICY PROGRAM** underscores AAUW's mission of advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research and speaks to women's needs, aspirations, and concerns across the life span. The work of AAUW builds upon more than 130 years of responsible public participation, and the following principles provide a basis for AAUW members' actions at the local, state, national, and international levels. Implicit in each of our principles is support for government agencies administering programs, including adequate appropriations, effective and accountable administration, and provision for citizen participation. We advocate public discussion to ensure enlightened decisions on these principles. We work to increase the number of women and other underrepresented populations in policy- and other decision-making positions. AAUW is committed to working in collaboration with diverse allies and coalitions to break through educational and economic barriers for women and girls.

### PUBLIC POLICY PRINCIPLES FOR ACTION

Basic to all of AAUW's public policy efforts is the understanding that true equity requires a balance between the rights of the individual and the needs of the community. AAUW opposes all forms of discrimination and supports constitutional protection for the civil rights of all individuals.

AAUW believes that high-quality public education is the foundation of a democratic society and the key to economic prosperity and gender equality. We advocate equitable climates free of harassment, bullying, and sexual assault. We support academic freedom, civic education, protection from censorship, bias-free education, and responsible funding for all levels of education, including early childhood education and programs for students with disabilities. We advocate increased access to

higher education, especially for women in poverty. We promote equitable efforts to close the persistent achievement gap that disproportionately affects low-income children and students from minority communities.

AAUW promotes the economic, social, and physical well-being of all persons. Essential to that well-being are an economy that provides equitable employment opportunities; reduction of poverty; a living wage; quality affordable dependent care; paid family and medical leave; safe, livable, and affordable housing; quality affordable and accessible health care including reproductive health care; and a clean and healthful environment. We support a Social Security system that provides inflation-protected, guaranteed lifetime benefits with a progressive benefit formula, spousal and widow benefits, and disability and survivor benefits. We oppose any efforts to undermine Medicare and Medicaid, including privatization and block grant proposals.

AAUW believes in the right to privacy and freedom from violence. We firmly believe in the separation of church and state. We support a fair, balanced, and independent judiciary. We support public budgets that balance individual rights and responsibility to the community. We see an urgent need for meaningful campaign finance reform, open and fair elections, and nonpartisan voter education efforts that will promote equitable political participation and representation in appointed and elected office.

AAUW supports affirmative action to improve racial, ethnic, gender, and cultural diversity and inclusion. This includes creating a culture of involvement, respect, and connection, where the richness of ideas, backgrounds, and perspectives is fully appreciated and utilized.

AAUW believes that global interdependence requires national and international policies against human traffick-

ing and that promote peace, justice, human rights, sustainable development, and mutual security for all people. We support the civil and human rights of all immigrants, including a fair and just path to legal status. We support a strengthened United Nations and its affiliated agencies. We advocate implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action from the 4th World Conference on Women and subsequent declarations. We affirm our active participation in the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women and our commitment to ratification of the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). We support international family planning programs that are consistent with AAUW policy.

### BIENNIAL ACTION PRIORITIES

National priorities inform state and local action. Biennial priorities for national action are chosen according to the criteria of viability, critical need, strong member support, and potential for distinctive AAUW contribution or leadership. No order of importance is implied.

#### **To support a strong system of public education that promotes gender fairness, equity, and diversity, AAUW advocates**

- Adequate and equitable funding for quality public education for all students
- Opposition to the use of public funds for nonpublic elementary and secondary education and to charter schools that do not adhere to the same civil rights and accountability standards as required of other public schools
- Protection of programs that meet the needs of girls and women in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education, including strong promotion of STEM education and comprehensive sex education
- Vigorous enforcement of Title IX and all other civil rights laws pertaining to education