

- 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
- Freedom from violence and fear of violence, including hate crimes, in homes, schools, workplaces, and communities
- Increased access to quality, affordable health care and family planning services, including expansion of patients’ rights
- 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

ADDITIONAL POLICY RESOURCES

Up to 10 copies of this brochure are available for free from AAUW at connect@aauw.org or 800.326.2289. For additional copies, contact ShopAAUW at 800.225.9998 or 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. If you prefer, write to the address or call the phone numbers below.

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.

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

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2013–15

PUBLIC POLICY PROGRAM

Adopted June 2013



2013-15

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 underrepresented populations, including women, in policy- and other decision-making positions. AAUW is committed to working in partnership 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 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 and bullying, 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 livable wage, quality affordable dependent care, paid family and medical leave, decent and affordable housing, quality affordable and accessible 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, freedom from violence, and choice in the determination of one's reproductive life. 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.

AAUW supports affirmative action to improve racial, ethnic, and gender diversity and affirms our commitment to passage and ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. We see an urgent need for meaningful campaign finance reform and nonpartisan voter education efforts that will promote equitable political participation and representation in appointed and elected office. AAUW values and is committed to the arts and humanities, which develop and enhance our pluralistic cultural heritage.

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

Biennial priorities for federal 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 and vigorous enforcement of Title IX and all other civil rights laws pertaining to education
- Increased support for and access to affordable higher education for women and disadvantaged populations