

AAUW-NYS Public Policy Counterpart Newsletter



Vol. 2
Issue No. 2

September 27, 2013

Donna Seymour, AAUW-NYS Public Policy Vice President, 2013-15
315-265-6985 seymour6985@verizon.net

Here are some important new Public Policy resources for you!

The 2013-2014 **Branch Public Policy Chair** manual is hot off the press. Please save a copy of the manual on your computer and print it for your reference if that is helpful to you. <http://www.aauw.org/resource/branch-public-policy-chair-manual/>

On the “**7 Leader Essentials for Public Policy Chairs**” webpage, you'll see several additional resources that can help you in your role. <http://www.aauw.org/resource/top-tips-for-public-policy-chairs/>

Here are some of highlights, but check out the full list when you have a chance.

- ♦ **Your Every Question Answered: Advocacy How-To Resources**
<http://www.aauw.org/resource/advocacy-how-tos-guides/>
 - ♦ **The 2013-2015 AAUW Public Policy Program**
<http://www.aauw.org/resource/principles-and-priorities/>
 - ♦ **AAUW Action Network and Two-Minute Activist tool** (sign up today if you're not already subscribed to the e-mail list!) <http://www.aauw.org/what-we-do/public-policy/two-minute-activist/>
 - ♦ **AAUW Branch Event Report-Back Form** (so you can share your successes with AAUW national staff and receive recognition!)
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1LN7Kle_Pd44DftoRPMzQZ4pgHvoQQEwN7coRrhNHwHo/viewform
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Voter Education: NYS Ballot Issue – Casino Gambling

Here are some resources for you to educate yourselves and your members about this important Ballot item on Nov. 5:

Questioning the tax distribution and social costs of casinos

A group known as the **Coalition Against Gambling** in NY is out with a study looking at what they view as the lopsided disbursements of tax revenue that casino gambling would generate and the social costs, such as those involved in treating gambling addicts that would come with legalized gambling.

<http://blog.timesunion.com/capitol/archives/195462/questioning-the-tax-distribution-and-social-costs-of-casinos/>

Cuomo Will Promote Passage of Casino Referendum

Cuomo, who urged the legislature to approve a plan to build four gambling resorts upstate, and possibly more in New York City in a few years, says he will be promoting a yes vote on the referendum in the coming weeks.

<http://wxxinews.org/post/cuomo-will-promote-passage-casino-referendum>

Groups pop up to push casinos

<http://www.crainsnewyork.com/article/20130920/BLOGS04/130929989>

Voter Education: NYS Ballot Issue – Raising Judge’s Retirement Age to 80

NY voters could push top judges' retirement to 80

New York voters will decide Nov. 5 whether to let the judges on the state's highest court keep handing down rulings and making case law until they turn 80 years old. The seven Court of Appeals judges, appointed to 14-year terms, now must retire the year they turn 70.

<http://www.uticaod.com/latestnews/x914328810/NY-voters-could-push-top-judges-retirement-to-80>

Voter Apathy Could Doom Later Retirement For NY Judges

Grumbling from some in the judiciary and some lawmakers about a referendum to raise the retirement age for many New York state judges, including those on the state's top court, doesn't scare supporters nearly as much as the possibility that uninformed voters will ignore it on Election Day, leaving it vulnerable to defeat.

<http://www.law360.com/articles/472933/voter-apathy-could-doom-later-retirement-for-ny-judges>

Mandatory retirement age for judges may increase

This November's general election ballot will include a question on whether to update an 1869 provision of the state Constitution. If the ballot question is passed by the voters, the mandatory retirement age for Court of Appeals Judges and Supreme Court Justices will increase from age 70 to age 80. The New York State Academy of Trial Lawyers is the first statewide bar association to announce its support of the referendum question's passage.

<http://www.wnypapers.com/news/article/current/2013/08/29/112337/mandatory-retirement-age-for-judges-may-increase>

Meet the AAUW State Organizer: Kimberly Hayes Pollard

AAUW developed this state organizer pilot program as a way to create a better connection between the branches, states, and national- and to ensure that we have access to the full arsenal of resources national has to offer. Kim is working in Region 1

(Maine, New Hampshire, and New York). She has already been a great help to me for Public Policy, so I know the other state VPs and Directors will want to make good use of her talents, enthusiasm and energy. Expect to hear from her and see her at branch, district and state events in the next few months! Kim's e-mail: pollardk@aauw.org.

Kim says, "I have immersed myself in everything AAUW over the last several weeks, and I am still finding new advocacy tools, public policy resources, or reports that I hadn't seen before- there is some great information here! So I am here as a resource to help you (as members) accomplish your goals.

"That includes everything from recruiting and retaining new members, to developing public policy issues and programs, to building coalition partners, to expanding C/U Partnerships and encouraging greater student involvement in our policy work, to creating a social media presence, and increasing AAUW visibility in the state. Obviously, each branch has different priorities and needs, and the members know better than anyone what they need to be successful.

"Another service AAUW provides is training and tutorials, in the form of webinars, PowerPoint presentations, tools kits and guides, and in-person presentations. We can tailor these trainings for your members, or prospective members, to cover topics such as Leadership Development, How to Use Social Media, How to Recruit New Members, How to Make the Ask, Fundraising Ideas, etc."

Kim has more than 10 years of experience with national nonprofits and political campaigns. She has worked tirelessly to advocate for K-12 education, military service members and veterans, and issues impacting low-income families. Most recently, she managed neighborhood teams and voter registration events in the 2012 presidential election in Fairfax County, VA, and developed community outreach initiatives for a nonprofit serving wounded warriors and their families.

Fall 2013 Candidate Forums

Did you know there are seven women mayors in New York State in cities over 30,000? Six of them are up for re-election on Nov. 5. (Thank you to AAUW State Organizer Kim Pollard for this research!)

- ◆ Stephanie Miner, Syracuse, NY
- ◆ Rose Sotak, Union, NY
- ◆ Mary Joyce D'Aurizio, Irondequoit, NY
- ◆ Sheila M. Meegan, West Seneca, NY
- ◆ Joan A. Maybury, Mount Pleasant, NY
- ◆ Linda D. Puglisi, Cortlandt, NY
- ◆ Sandy Leonard, Monroe, NY

If you are hosting a Candidate Forum this fall for local officials, be sure to ask the candidate their positions on women's issues! Here is some suggested wording and some sample questions you may want to use:

The economic status of _____'s women is a direct reflection of the health of our local and state economy. With the current economic challenges, high cost of living and increasing numbers of single women heads-of households, wage equity and workplace fairness are more important than ever. Many of these questions focus on the Women's Equality Agenda proposed in NYS in January that has yet to be voted and signed into law in Albany.

1. What procedures will you put in place to identify and address wage inequity which predominately affects women and people of color and the overwhelming poverty rate for senior women?
2. A majority of women are employed in gender-segregated occupations which are traditionally underpaid and undervalued. Under your leadership, how could this community identify and address the issue of equal pay for work of comparable value?
3. The struggle that working women face in balancing the needs of family and work could be lessened by "Family Friendly" policies. In that 50% of working women are single heads of households, it is especially important for business to be responsive to the needs of female employees. As Mayor, how would you impact some/all of these work/life balance issues?
4. Sexual harassment and violence against women are increasing problems which keep women from succeeding in their jobs. As Mayor, how will you help to assure workplace safety?
5. Part-time workers have fewer benefits than full-time workers. With the numbers of part-time workers continuing to rise, benefits are more essential than ever for family economic security. How can you improve the job quality for part-time workers?

My thanks to **Beverly Cooper Neufeld**, Director of the Equal Pay Coalition, for sharing this resource with us! <http://www.equalpaynewyork.org/>

Branch Kudos to:

Congratulations to the **Elmira-Corning Branch** for their successful voter registration event at Elmira College on Sept. 21. They worked in partnership with the League of Women Voters.

The **Jamestown Branch** got great PR with their **Crossing The Line: Jamestown Panel Discusses Sexual Harassment Among Students**

<http://www.post-journal.com/page/content.detail/id/628158/Crossing-The-Line.html>

Women's Equality Agenda Update

You haven't heard much about the Women's Equality Agenda lately, but the Steering Committee has resumed meeting weekly by phone and occasionally in person. Although the Assembly and Senate did take action on separate bills and formats, they have not taken action together to bring their versions of the WEA bills together. In a bi-cameral legislature, one house can not act alone and achieve real results.

And while the bills are still "live" in each house (until Dec. 31), the members must agree to come back to Albany and work together to pass the same language before anything can be sent to the Governor for signing.

So, the WEA Coalition continues to work and is creating a plan of action for this fall. We are also looking to the future and plan for 2014 for a more comprehensive lists of bills that would move the agenda of women and their families forward. Stay tuned and watch <http://nywomensequality.org/> and <https://www.facebook.com/NYWomensEquality> for updates!

Public Policy Calendar – some dates to keep in mind!

These would make great **Letters to the Editor** and/or local **OpEds** to bring visibility to AAUW and our Public Policy issues.

October 2013

- Domestic Violence Awareness Month
- National Bullying Prevention Month
- October 1: State-based health insurance exchanges open for enrollment
- October 7: First day of the 2013-2014 U.S. Supreme Court term
- October 11: Voter Registration Deadlines for the general election
- October 11: U.N. International Day of the Girl Child
- October 21: Campus Action Projects applications due

November 2013

- November 5: Election Day
- November 11: Veterans Day
- November 20: U.N. Universal Children's Day
- November 25: International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

December 2013

- December 1: World AIDS Day
- December 10: Human Rights Day
- December 10: Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) first introduced in U.S. Senate in 1923

- December 13: Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) first introduced in U.S. House in 1923
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AAUW-NYS Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AAUW.NYS>

Bookmark this page and visit it daily. There is a ton of useful and interesting information that gets posted daily. I can't possibly pass on everything by e-mail, so I use the AAUW-NYS Facebook page as a way to convey information. Many branches are starting to use Facebook as a way to connect to members and communities; please connect to AAUW-NYS the same way!

What is Salsa? Not a condiment, but a great new AAUW tool!

Salsa is the new advocacy tool that AAUW is using, and it is being provided to each of the States as well. It allows us to an event page for you in the database and share it with people in your area. (Think District Conferences or special branch events!)

We can also use it, for example, to send an online petition or send an Action Alert to the supporters in your district, encouraging them to contact their members of Congress. Salsa was just rolled out recently, so we are still learning how to use it. But it is a tool that will enable us to better help you - so let us know how we can be of assistance.

We've already used it to create a list of the most frequent users of Action Alert by county. Sad to say, the bulk of the most committed folks who contact Congress via AAUW are not AAUW-NYS members! That is something we need to work on.

Issue Updates:

Social Security & Retirement Issues:

- ♦ **Carry on working** - Nearly one in eight workers think they will never be able to afford to retire fully, according to HSBC's latest report, The Future of Retirement: Life after work? Among those already retired, many have less money than they expected, and some feel they were too hasty in giving up work. <https://www.hsbc.com/news-and-insight/2013/carry-on-working>
- ♦ **U.S. disability rolls swell in a rough economy** http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/us-disability-rolls-swell-in-a-rough-economy/2013/09/20/a791915c-1575-11e3-804b-d3a1a3a18f2c_story.html
- ♦ **Social Security makes \$1.3 billion in overpayments** - The Social Security Administration has paid an estimated \$1.3 billion in disability insurance payments to thousands of people who weren't eligible for the benefits, a government watchdog report finds. <http://money.cnn.com/2013/09/13/pf/social-security-overpayment/index.html>

Social Justice Issues:

- ♦ **Initiative Promotes Civil Rights History With Free Documentaries** - A new initiative from the National Endowment for the Humanities will provide schools and communities with free access to documentaries that trace the history of the civil rights movement, from the first seeds of change that sprouted in the 1820s to the 1967 Supreme Court decision that overturned the ban on interracial marriage.
http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/curriculum/2013/09/initiative_promotes_civil_righ.html
- ♦ **Colorado Regents Bar Political and Gender Identity Bias** - The University of Colorado's Board of Regents voted to add political affiliation and gender identity to the categories on which the university system bars discrimination.
- ♦ **Human Trafficking: Stubborn Cycle of Runaways Becoming Prostitutes** - The Justice Department has estimated that about 450,000 children run away from home every year and that one-third of teenagers on the street will be approached by a pimp within 48 hours of leaving home.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/16/nyregion/stubborn-cycle-of-runaways-becoming-prostitutes.html>
- ♦ **Human Trafficking: Documents offer revealing glimpse into human smuggling networks that pass through Akwesasne: A frozen river, a basement, a motel and the taxi ride into the hands of US authorities**
<http://aptn.ca/pages/news/2013/09/19/a-frozen-river-a-basement-a-motel-and-the-taxi-ride-into-the-hands-of-us-authorities/>

Education Issues:

- ♦ **More Student Debt, Less Payback - Especially for Women** - Every state except North Dakota and Wyoming spends less on student aid than it did five years ago. <http://truth-out.org/news/item/18787-more-student-debt-less-payback-especially-for-women>
- ♦ **New Tool Makes Student Loan Forgiveness Easier for Public Servants** - Did you know that one of the types of loan forgiveness applies specifically to those in public service careers? In this case, public service means working for a government organization or agency, a nonprofit organization (specifically a 501(c)(3), tax-exempt organization), or many other types of nonprofits such as public schools, public-interest law services, and public safety organizations.
<http://www.aauw.org/2013/09/05/student-loan-tool/>

Title IX Issues:

- ♦ **U.S. Sets Negotiations Over Campus Safety Rules for January** - The Obama administration plans to convene a panel in January to write new reporting

rules for campus safety, the Education Department announced in a notice in Thursday's Federal Register. The negotiated rulemaking committee will be tasked with writing regulations to carry out the changes Congress made to the Clery Act earlier this year when it passed a new version of the Violence Against Women Act. The legislation requires colleges to add dating violence and stalking to the types of crimes they must disclose when they occur on or near campus. Colleges also must strengthen procedures for notifying victims of their legal rights and create campus-wide policies for preventing sexual assault.

<http://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2013/09/19/us-sets-negotiations-over-campus-safety-rules-january>

- ♦ **National Campus Safety Clearinghouse** - The National Center for Campus Public Safety will be "a one-stop shop" for resources, advice, training and best practices on all the issues that campuses generally must grapple with alone: threat assessment, emergency management, and compliance with federal laws such as Title IX and the Clery Act, among other things.
<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/09/06/national-center-campus-public-safety-will-centralize-federal-institutional-resources>
- ♦ **George Washington Drops Statute of Limitations on Sex Assaults** - George Washington University removed from its sexual assault policy the two-year statute of limitations for filing formal complaints with the university, a spokeswoman confirmed Thursday. The GW Hatchet reported that student government leaders had protested the policy. Some universities enforce such statutes to encourage quicker reporting, but since the U.S. Education Department's Office for Civil Rights started cracking down on sexual assault issues in 2011, some colleges have opted to eliminate or extend theirs.
<http://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2013/09/23/george-washington-drops-statute-limitations-sex-assaults>
- ♦ **Sexual assault on campus: Yale tries to clarify 'consent'** - "They had the best of intentions ... but in trying to parse it out, they've done a disservice to students who might be reading this and wondering which scenario they fit in," says **Lisa Maatz**, vice president of government relations at the American Association of University Women in Washington.
<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Education/2013/0912/Sexual-assault-on-campus-Yale-tries-to-clarify-consent>

Women's Economic Equity Issues:

- ♦ **Dept. of Labor Extends Protections to Home Care Workers** - In a final rule released on Tuesday, the Department of Labor extended basic labor protections to nearly 2 million home care workers. Home care workers, who were previously not covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act, will now be eligible for minimum wage and overtime premium pay. This change will help advance economic security for home care workers across the country, many of whom are women. <http://social.dol.gov/blog/we-count-on-home-care-extending-protections-to-direct-care-workers/>

- ♦ **AAUW Releases State Rankings on Equal Pay Based on New Census Data** - AAUW released its latest analysis of the gender pay gap, which shows that the gap is narrowest in the District of Columbia, where women's median earnings are 90 percent of men's, and widest in Wyoming, where women earn just 64 percent of what men earn. Nationally, women working full time are paid, only 77 percent of what men are paid, just as they were a decade ago.
http://www.aauw.org/article/state-rankings-on-equal-pay/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+AAUWBlog+%28AAUW+Today%29
 - ♦ **15% OF AMERICANS LIVING IN POVERTY** - Years after the Great Recession ended, 46.5 million Americans are still living in poverty, according to a Census Bureau report. <http://money.cnn.com/2013/09/17/news/economy/poverty-income/index.html>
 - ♦ **USDA report shows 'food insecurity' on the rise in NY** - Anti-hunger advocates who say the recession never ended for many New Yorkers are pointing to data released this month in a U.S. Department of Agriculture report showing a 40 percent increase in food insecurity statewide over the last decade, including a 6 percent increase in the last few years. Households are food secure, according to USDA guidelines, when enough food for an "active, healthy life" is accessible at all times for every household member. Households are food insecure when "food intake of one or more household members was reduced" due to a lack of money or resources.
 - ♦ <http://www.legislativegazette.com/Articles-c-2013-09-16-85108.113122-USDA-report-shows-food-insecurity-on-the-rise-in-NY.html>
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Health Care Issues:

- ♦ **The Complete Guide To College Students & Healthcare Reform** - A good primer to help college students understand what healthcare reform is and what it means for them. <http://www.insurancequotes.org/2013/07/19/the-complete-guide-to-college-students-healthcare-reform/>
- ♦ **Anti-Quinn vote in New York City raises hopes for paid family leave in Albany** - "The governor has indicated he's very interested in family leave insurance," said Donna Dolan, chair of the New York State Paid Family Leave Coalition, last Friday. "He indicated it through his lieutenants that we have been talking to for the past year and a half."
<http://capitalnewyork.com/article/politics/2013/09/8533813/anti-quinn-vote-new-york-city-raises-hopes-paid-family-leave-albany>
- ♦ **Cuomo Says Washington Gridlock Won't Effect Obamacare in NY**
<http://wxixnews.org/post/cuomo-says-washington-gridlock-wont-effect-obamacare-ny>
- ♦ **Numerous Affordable Care Act preventive care services will be covered without co-pay.** Check out the list:
 - ♦ Adults <https://www.healthcare.gov/what-are-my-preventive-care-benefits/#part=1>

- ♦ Women: <https://www.healthcare.gov/what-are-my-preventive-care-benefits/#part=2>
 - ♦ Children: <https://www.healthcare.gov/what-are-my-preventive-care-benefits/#part=3>
 - ♦ **Have other questions about the Affordable Care Act?** Check out <https://www.healthcare.gov/>.
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Children's Issues:

- ♦ **Child-Care Rating Systems Earn Few Stars in Study** - A new study on child-care rating systems appears to bolster concerns among some in the early-learning field that the ratings generated by those systems are only tenuously connected to learning outcomes. <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2013/09/11/03qris.h33.html>
 - ♦ **Rates of Physical and Sexual Child Abuse Have Declined, but Not Child Neglect** — Each year, child protective services receive reports of child abuse and neglect involving six million children, and many more go unreported. The long-term human and fiscal consequences of child abuse and neglect are not relegated to the victims themselves -- they also impact their families, future relationships, and society. <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2013/09/11/03qris.h33.html>
 - ♦ **Children suffer from growing economic inequality among families since recession** - American families are becoming increasingly polarized along race, class and educational lines, according to a new report released Wednesday, a sign of growing economic inequality that was exacerbated by the Great Recession. http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/children-suffer-from-growing-economic-inequality-among-families-since-recession/2013/09/10/793423ae-1a4f-11e3-82ef-a059e54c49d0_story.html
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Violence Issues:

The AAUW member-adopted Biennial Action Priorities support “freedom from violence and fear of violence in homes, schools, workplaces, and communities.”

- ♦ **Obama Calls for 'Obsessive' Fight on Gun Laws** - President Barack Obama has called for a transformation in US gun laws at a memorial service for the Washington navy yard shooting victims, saying, "There's nothing inevitable about it." <http://readersupportednews.org/news-section2/318-66/19537-obama-calls-for-obsessive-fight-on-gun-laws>
- ♦ **Reframing the gun control debate: Is mental health the next focus?** - Three days after Aaron Alexis walked into the Washington Navy Yard and randomly shot and killed 12 people, a congressional push for tougher gun laws still seems unlikely to materialize like it did following the Newtown school massacre. But as more details emerge of Alexis' troubled past, lawmakers appear to be reframing the debate over gun violence, this time with emphasis on better

treatment for mental health. <http://www.cnn.com/2013/09/19/politics/guns-mental-health/index.html>

Veteran and Military Issues:

- ♦ **A Case Study in Awful: The Eight Worst Parts of the Recent Naval Academy Rape Hearing** - The Naval Academy rape hearing is so gut-wrenching because the woman for whom prosecutors are seeking justice was treated as much (or more) of a defendant as the three alleged rapists. <http://truth-out.org/opinion/item/18844-a-case-study-in-awful-the-eight-worst-parts-of-the-recent-naval-academy-rape-hearing>
 - ♦ **One-fifth of female veterans from Iraq, Afghanistan show signs of sexual trauma** - One in five women returning from overseas duty in Iraq and Afghanistan screened positive for military sexual trauma, according to Department of Veterans Affairs records that officials say may underestimate the true number. <http://www.publicintegrity.org/2013/09/05/13317/one-fifth-female-veterans-iraq-afghanistan-show-signs-sexual-trauma>
 - ♦ **Veterans Head Back to School** - Since the most recent GI Bill was enacted in 2008, more than 500,000 veterans and their families have used its benefits to pay for higher education. Women make up approximately 15 percent of the armed forces, and their role will only expand as they move into combat roles. <http://www.aauw.org/article/veterans-back-to-school/>
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International Issues:

- ♦ **What is a Global Citizen?** <http://www.globalcitizen.org/Content/Content.aspx?id=e7a1bf8c-f2b9-44bf-95f8-5f5ac4c21aec>
- ♦ **State Dept., U.N. Delegates Announce Initiatives Against Gender Violence** - The initiative -- called Safe from the Start -- will provide funding to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Committee of the Red Cross and other humanitarian agencies to launch safety programs and hire additional staff to protect women and girls. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/25/us-why-girls-education-idUSBRE98O13D20130925>
- ♦ **UN Women says there's 'backlash' against equality** - The new head of the U.N. agency promoting women's rights says there is "a definite backlash" against equality for women despite some significant progress, pointing to an upsurge in violence against women and the uphill fight to escape poverty and crack the glass ceiling. <http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2013/sep/12/un-women-says-theres-backlash-against-equality/>