

AAUW-NYS Public Policy Counterpart Newsletter

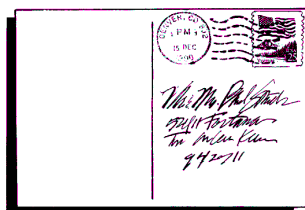
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Post Card Advocacy: I write in support of _____.



Here's a quick way to engage your members and friends on public policy issues. Take a stack of pre-paid postcards along with a variety of pre-addressed labels to branch events. You can choose to write to your state or federal elected officials about any number of hot button public policy issues.

Use a One Billion Rising event, International Women's Day, March as Women's History Month events, Pay Equity Day or other opportunities where branch members are together.

Education funding, the Women's Equality Agenda, the Violence Against Women Act, or anything else that is an important issue for you. You chose the topic(s) and the official(s) to drop a quick note to. AAUW will supply postcards and pen ~ you supply your passion and a quick note!

Issue: Violence

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

Violence Against Women Act

The US Senate Expected To Takes Final Vote Expected This Week on the Violence Against Women Act

The VAWA reauthorization up for a vote is essentially the same bipartisan bill that the Senate passed in April 2012 to improve VAWA programs and ensure all victims get the services they need. Because the House didn't pass this version of VAWA before the end of 2012, the process needed to start over in the 113th Congress. There are over 60 co-sponsors for the bill, ensuring its passage in the Senate.

We will have to work hard to ensure passage in the House!

Here a good OpEd on the subject from Buffalo that outlines the local problems and what passing VAWA would mean.

Congress' inaction leaves violence on women unremedied

Lifeline to local programs knotted up in wrangling <http://tinyurl.com/amche5b>

VAWA Postcards Ideas:

The purpose behind the postcards is to give those in Congress evidence that passing VAWA is widely supported across all regions of NYS state, so even though we have some NYS co-signers of the VAWA legislation in place, we need to help them with cover and with reasons to support it they can take to their colleagues in debate.

The messages should be short and personal - have everyone tell a short story about why this means something to them. Could be a family member or a friend trapped in a bad relationship; an incident from the local police blotter; the statistics from the state or country about how often a woman is targeted; domestic abuse stats from your state, county or town; what programs will be cut because of lack of funding, etc.

We want these postcards to all be a slightly different twist on the same theme - why VAWA is needed and needed now.

Looking for supporting facts to send to Congress? Here are two PDF fact sheets you can supply along with the post cards:

- ♦ [http://www.ncadv.org/files/DomesticViolenceFactSheet\(National\).pdf](http://www.ncadv.org/files/DomesticViolenceFactSheet(National).pdf)
- ♦ <http://www.safehorizon.org/index/what-we-do-2/domestic-violence--abuse-53/domestic-violence-the-facts-195.html>

Gun Violence

This is a topic that is close our hearts as women and as responsible citizens. The Sandy Hook massacre last December has energized a new call to examine the culture of gun violence in this country and our collective response to it.

One Million Moms for Gun Control <http://onemillionmomsforguncontrol.org/>

#1MM4GC Twitter Name

One Millions Moms has been a social media phenomenon. Started with a Facebook page, this group has chapters all over the country and they've marched in dozens of cities and DC already.

Mothers Are Taking Leadership on Gun Control

<http://womensenews.org/story/momagenda/130115/mothers-are-taking-leadership-gun-control>

Their current campaign: One Million Moms for Gun Control is asking you to **send a Valentine to each of your Congressional representatives this Valentine's Day.** Tell your representatives that you are a mom, you vote, and you support common-sense gun laws NOW. One Million Moms for Gun Control will hand deliver your Valentines to the Hill on Valentine's Day.

Keep NY SAFE Day

- ♦ WHEN: Tuesday, **February 12, 9:00 AM**
- ♦ WHO: 1MM4GC New York State Chapters
WHERE: State Capitol Building, Albany, NY

[Click here for details](#)

One Million Moms for Gun Control's New York state chapters will be convening in Albany on Feb. 12th for Keep NY SAFE Day, a lobbying event and press conference to show our support for New York's leadership on common-sense gun regulation.

Members of One Million Moms for Gun Control from throughout the state will spend the day meeting with legislators to applaud them for their courage in passing common-sense gun regulation in response to the epidemic of gun violence that plagues our nation. We also invite other like-minded organizations to join us as we show a united front.

Please note: This day will coincide with a **Gun Rights Lobby Day.** We want to make sure the NRA's perspective isn't the only one heard on Feb. 12th.

If you can not attend in person, remember you can always support any effort with a **Virtual Lobby Day** – e-mail your legislators to tell them how you feel about any issue when there is a physical lobby day going on.

Has Your Branch Addressed This Issue?

Selena Barron, **Westchester AAUW Branch** Public Policy Chair, writes:

We extend an open invitation to all AAUW NY branches to join us in requesting all media sources to daily print the names, ages and hometowns of all victims who die as a result of gun violence. We hope the publicity will result in keeping a spotlight on these needless deaths and will influence Congress in finding solutions for gun violence.

In 2010, there were: 9,594 lives lost to gun violence and there were 412,366 stolen years. <http://tinyurl.com/a2g5xag>

One Billion Rising: February 14 <http://onebillionrising.org/>

This week, Eve Ensler's exciting project, **One Billion Rising**, will culminate in 48 hours of striking, dancing and rising. The project is a movement to raise global awareness and combat violence against women. 197 countries will be taking part in this event. Watch **A Video Message from Eve Ensler** at <http://tinyurl.com/ablywjt>.

There are dozens of One Billion Rising events scheduled around New York State. Find one and join in! http://www.onebillionrising.org/page/event/search_simple

Issue: Public Education in New York State

In 2012 – AAUW-NYS passed a resolution to **Reaffirm support for fair and adequate funding for public education in NYS**

http://www.aauw-nys.org/pp_res_history.htm#2012

Here's a half-hour video about the **2013 Governor's Education Budget** done by the **St. Lawrence County Branch**. It is a discussion with **116th District Assemblywoman Addie Russell** who talks candidly about the many public schools in New York in danger of falling off the fiscal cliff. The discussion is not specific to school in one part of the state – **over 60% of schools suffered funding cuts last year with more cuts on tap for this next budget year.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wU2hk6hS4M>

Educate NY Now.org <http://educatenynow.org/>

AAUW-NYS is endorsing this initiative.



NYS IS FACING AN EDUCATIONAL CRISIS

- ♦ Class sizes have grown, school buildings have been closed, and schools have cut advance placement courses, tutoring, career and technical education, arts, music, sports, foreign languages, kindergarten, pre-kindergarten, high school electives and more.
- ♦ More than 30,000 educators have been cut from our schools
- ♦ We need an approach to school finance which does not overburden local property taxpayers, is fair and equitable, and provides the opportunity for all students to receive a quality education

EDUCATE NY NOW! unifies parents, students, educators, administrators, unions, school board members, community organizations, civil rights groups, education advocates and others statewide around a broad-based campaign to demand that our state government fulfills New York's constitutional obligation to provide all students with a quality education.

Educate NY Now urges concerned citizens to use their **Call in Tuesdays Talking Points**. Every Tuesday, call your Senators and Assembly Members and tell them that they are our last hope! The result of the Governor's education budget proposal this year is that it is essentially the same amount of money that was budgeted last year. Before we go through a repeat of the cuts we made last year, lets rattle some cages by doing some old fashioned phone work!

- ♦ Funding in the Governor's Budget for schools is too little, and will result in more classroom cuts.
- ♦ Last year the state increased school funding by 4% and schools cut more than 5,000 teachers. This year's increase is similar, and will have the same result. (30,000 teachers were lost in the 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years).
- ♦ Unless the Legislature acts to restore more money to our schools, this will be the fourth consecutive year that our schools will have to make devastating classroom cuts

LEGISLATORS: WE ARE COUNTING ON YOU PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO STOP THE CUTS TO OUR SCHOOLS!

- ♦ **New York State Assembly: 518-455-4100**
- ♦ **New York State Senate: 518-455-2800**
- ♦ **New York State Governor: 518-474-8390**

Alliance for Quality Education

<http://www.aqeny.org>

AQE is another state-wide organization working to ensure equitable state finding for education. The Governor's 2013 Budget is out. It is now up to the legislature to stand up for students and allocate the necessary funding to keep their promise of funding a "sound basic education" for every student in New York.



You can watch AQE's the State of Our Schools video, "**Will you fund our schools?**"

<http://www.aqeny.org/will-you-fund-our-schools/>

You can use this AQE site to **send a letter to your legislators** asking them, "Will you fund our schools?"

http://salsa.democracyinaction.org/o/425/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=12282

The NYS Women's Equality Agenda

Here's a quick update on the WEA. AAUW-NYS is now an official member of the WEA Coalition, a powerful group of over 330 organizations around the state who are working

hard to make sure the 10 points of the Women's Equity Agenda get passed through the legislature and signed into law in 2013.

The following AAUW-NYS Branches are also coalition members:

- ♦ **AAUW-Buffalo, Inc.**
- ♦ **AAUW-Empire State Virtual Branch**
- ♦ **AAUW Greater Rochester Branch**
- ♦ **AAUW-Jamestown**
- ♦ **AAUW-St. Lawrence County**
- ♦ **AAUW-Westchester**

If your branch wants to be a WEA coalition member (and I encourage you to do so), get the approval of your Branch board and e-mail me for the form to sign on.

Want to know more? Here's a half-hour video about **The 10-Point NYS Women's Equality Agenda** done by the **St. Lawrence County Branch**. At a time when many state legislatures and governors are moving backwards on equality for women, New York is taking an aggressive and proactive leadership role on women's issues. **116th District Assemblywoman Addie Russell**, the Chair of the Assembly's Task Force on Women's Issues, discusses the Agenda with AAUW-NYS Public Policy Director Donna Seymour and Martha Stahl, VP of External Affairs for Planned Parenthood of the North Country New York. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-R127FtdoU>

International Women's Day: March 8 – Don't forget to celebrate!



Perhaps a potluck dinner where guests bring a dish with an international flair? Share your ideas (and pictures of your event) on Facebook. Choose a theme, invite a speaker. Celebrate the strength and diversity of our sisters across the globe. And bring your postcards so you can advocate with your elected representatives on women's issues.

Let's make sure every branch is planning something to celebrate to focus attention on the issues of women here at home and around the world! Make sure you register your event at <http://www.internationalwomensday.com/> so others can find you!

Gloria Steinem: "The story of women's struggle for equality belongs to no single feminist nor to any one organization but to the collective efforts of all who care about human rights"

AAUW Helps You Prepare for Equal Pay Day: April 9

It is never too early to start preparing for **Equal Pay Day**, scheduled for **April 9, 2013**. Equal Pay Day is the symbolic day where women's earnings "catch up" to men's earnings from the year before. It takes almost three extra months each year, thanks to the wage gap.

This year's Equal Pay Day will be especially important, as 2013 marks the 50th anniversary of the **Equal Pay Act** (originally passed in 1963). As usual, AAUW will host special events and distribute resources to help celebrate the progress made and promote what still needs to be done to ensure women receive equal pay for equal work.

Equal Pay is a key component of the **NYS Women's Equality Agenda**, so the entire WEA Coalition will be working on this and the other 9 points.

AAUW invites you to download the updated **AAUW Pay Equity Resource Kit** for background information, ideas for action, and step-by-step instructions for planning three specific types of events! <http://tinyurl.com/csmm66t>

Think about holding a **Cocktails and Convos for Pay Equity Day**. It is a great way to engage lots of women on these issues! Turn it into a fun fund raiser!



Download the **Program in a Box** that gives all the detail on how to hold one from AAUW!

http://www.aauw.org/member_center/programs/upload/cocktails_and_convos.pdf

\$tart \$mart Workshops

Did you read this story in the New York Times? The **Empire State Virtual Branch** held a **\$tart \$mart workshop at the College of Mount St. Vincent** in the Bronx that dealt with the many issues of the gender pay gap — and offered ways for women to negotiate about salary.

How to Attack the Gender Wage Gap? Speak Up

<http://tinyurl.com/bposfj9>

AAUW NYS Public Policy Action Priorities

Every two years AAUW-NYS revisits its AAUW NYS Public Policy Action Priorities. This year, I engaged the help of a group of Public Policy Branch Chairs around the state to help update the Action Priorities for 2013-15. These proposed Action Priorities will be voted on by the delegates for approval at Convention in Lake Placid.

These proposed Action Priorities for 2013-15 reflect the breadth of the work we are doing as a state and what many branches are working on. And with the Women's Equality Agenda opportunity ahead of us, our action priorities need to be in line with what needs doing.

Proposed: 2013 - 2015 AAUW NYS Public Policy Action Priorities

Biennial priorities for action are chosen according to the criteria of viability, critical need, strong member support, and potential for distinctive AAUW contribution. These AAUW NYS Public Policy Action Priorities do not preclude members or branches from acting on any other issues that do not conflict in any way with federal or state AAUW public policy priorities and principles.

1. To support a strong system of public education in New York State that promotes gender fairness, equity and diversity, AAUW New York State advocates:
 - ◆ Adequate and equitable funding for quality public education for all students
 - ◆ Vigorous enforcement of Title IX
 - ◆ Protection of programs that meet the needs of girls in elementary and secondary education; encouraging access to non-traditional fields like STEM
 - ◆ Opposition to the use of public funds for non-public elementary and secondary education, charter schools, and the establishment of parent trigger laws to convert public schools to charters
 - ◆ Responsible funding for all levels of education, including early childhood education
2. To achieve economic self-sufficiency for all women, AAUW New York State advocates:
 - ◆ Fairness in compensation, including pay equity and pension benefits for women, and opposition to efforts to weaken Social Security, Medicare and other social safety net programs women rely on
 - ◆ Equitable access and advancement in employment
 - ◆ Vigorous enforcement of employment anti-discrimination statutes
 - ◆ Access to affordable, quality, comprehensive health care; including choice in reproductive health care for all women
 - ◆ Programs that provide women with education, training, and support for success in the workforce and improve women's earning potential, including women's entrepreneurship.
 - ◆ Greater availability of and access to quality, affordable dependent care, including elder care
 - ◆ Strengthening paid sick and family leave laws and statutes
3. To protect access to the ballot of all voters, AAUW New York State advocates
 - ◆ Ensuring and expanding access to the ballot for all voters, including the establishment of early voting
 - ◆ Opposition to restricting access through onerous voter identification procedures
 - ◆ Fair and non-partisan redistricting
4. To achieve freedom from violence and fear of violence in homes, schools, workplaces, and communities, AAUW New York State advocates:
 - ◆ Violence prevention programs that include addressing bullying and harassment behaviors that lead to violence in schools, colleges and work places
 - ◆ Strengthening programs and laws that address domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking in schools and on college campuses

- ♦ Vigorous enforcement of existing Domestic Violence statutes and expansion of laws to protect victims
- ♦ Enforce and strengthen existing human trafficking prevention statutes, increase criminal penalties, and support survivors of trafficking

5. Ratification of CEDAW – the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women - by the U.S. Senate (passed by the United Nations in 1979).

To be ratified by the delegates at the 2013 AAUW-NYS Convention in Lake Placid.

Become a Public Policy Expert

In addition to AAUW's fabulous **Washington Update**, which you should all be signed up for, there are other interesting public policy summaries available, based on your interests. Here are a couple to take a look at:

POPVOX

POPVOX bridges the gap between the input the public wants to provide and the information Members of Congress want and need to receive. Designed by people who understand Congress, POPVOX is different from other political sites. It is not a discussion forum. It is a place for action.

Weekly Bill Roundup – include a bar graph of numbers the pro and con letters for the issues highlighted via the POVOX letters to Congress tool.

<https://popvox.wufoo.com/forms/z7x3x5/>

About Just Foreign Policy

Just Foreign Policy is an independent and non-partisan membership organization dedicated to reforming U.S. foreign policy by mobilizing and organizing the broad majority of Americans who want a foreign policy based on diplomacy, law and cooperation. They send out a weekly alert with information about how you can take action on timely issues surrounding U.S. foreign policy.

<http://www.justforeignpolicy.org>

AAUW NYS Facebook:

You do not have to be on Facebook to look at the state page. But if you are, please “like” our state Facebook page and stay up to date with all the breaking news.

<http://www.facebook.com/AAUW.NYS> Share things from our page to yours and help us build our social network for change!

Share your successes!