

# AAUW-NYS GOTV Counterpart Newsletter Get Out The Vote!



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## Tonight is the First Presidential Debate!

Tonight's debate is moderated by Jim Lehrer, Executive Editor of the PBS NewsHour; catch it on most channels at 9 pm ET. **The debate topic is Domestic Policy.**

### **AAUW urges you to Host a Presidential Debate Watch Party**

Debate watch parties are a great way to engage family, friends, and your community to discuss the issues and the candidates' stances on policies that are important to women and their families. **AAUW is once again an official voter education partner of the Commission on Presidential Debates and its DebateWatch program, which urges citizens like you to watch the televised presidential and vice presidential debates and talk about what they've learned.** The DebateWatch site includes **a complete guide to hosting a DebateWatch party** with details on what to do before, during, and after the debate as well as general discussion questions to use: <http://tinyurl.com/9ahukjs>.

Schedule debate watch parties in your community to encourage women to get involved in the political process! **Register your event as an AAUW DebateWatch party, so we can tally how many parties AAUW has held and how many voters we reached this debate season.** AAUW is sending It's My Vote stickers, tattoos, and pins to everyone who registers their party. <http://tinyurl.com/9ztbkkq>

Everyone will be **scoring tonight's debate** to see who won. Here are some ways you can play along at home...

### **AAUW Brings You Debate Bingo!**

<http://aaunational.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/myvotebingocards.pdf>

You can have some fun playing **Debate BINGO! with the MomsRising Team**. They have created a debate BINGO card to help you track whether the candidates are covering issues of greatest concern to women, moms, and families. Click in this link to tell them "I'm in!" for the virtual BINGO party and get our nifty Presidential BINGO card: <http://action.momsrising.org/go/2250?t=4&akid=3524.81773.0DfVb->

Or you can play **Debate Bingo with the Friends Committee on National Legislation**. FCNL is non-partisan; they don't take positions on which candidates should get elected to office, but they know that many of you are concerned that candidates discuss and offer solutions to critical public policy issues. <http://fcnl.org/action/elections/2012/>

Or, you can play the (ever popular) **2012 Presidential Debate Drinking Games!** Check out the rules at: <http://www.debatedrinking.com/>

Note: Hofstra University, an AAUW College/University Partner, is hosting the second presidential debate on October 16 (the debate Candy Crowley is moderating). AAUW members and branches in the Long Island area local to the school may want to attend the live debate! This debate format is Town Hall-style.

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## The VoteHER Toolkit

The AAUW Action Fund has released **the VoteHER Toolkit** – an essential guide to how candidates and elected officials stack up on issues important to women and to their families this election year. The VoteHER Toolkit includes three resources, all focused on AAUW priority issues:

1. The annually released **AAUW Action Fund Congressional Voting Record** explaining AAUW positions and votes taken by representatives and senators in the 112th Congress
2. **Voter guides** comparing candidates in the presidential and key Senate races
3. An analysis of the Obama administration's performance in its first term

Download your copies of the VoteHER Toolkit resources today, and share these voter education tools with your friends, family, and colleagues! Visit the AAUW Action Fund website for more resources, including **questions to ask candidates** at town hall meetings, **a template** for your branch to **create its own voter guides for local House races**, and **fact sheets on key issues in this election**.

<http://www.aauwaction.org/voteher-toolkit/>

**NOTE:** AAUW's Kimberly Fountain informs me that AAUW will be producing two **Congressional Voter Guides for NYS: NY-25 and NY-27**. I'll post the links when they are available if you are working to GOTV in those two districts.

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## The 3x3 Pledge

Have a **“3x3” conversation with millennial women** (ages 18-31) in your life: Our best chance to turn out women voters on November 6 is to do it “woman to woman,” through personal contacts. That’s why we’re all making the commitment to have “3x3”s: three conversations with three millennial women in our lives to ask them three questions:

1. Are you registered to vote?
2. Will you pledge to vote this year?
3. Will you call three millennial women in your life and ask them the same thing?

The millennial women you call could be anyone you know between the ages of 18 and 31: friends, family, friends of the family, neighbors, whomever! **We’ve even drafted a sample script if you want something to guide the conversation.** We can all make time for three phone calls, and that can make difference! Script: <http://tinyurl.com/8suusqf>

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## Young Voters:

### **Youth Engagement Falls; Registration Also Declines**

Young voters are significantly less engaged in this year’s election than at a comparable point in 2008 and now lag far behind older voters in interest in the campaign and intention to vote. The share of voters younger than 30 who are following campaign news very closely is roughly half what it was at this point four years ago (18%, down from 35%). Just 63% of young registered voters say they definitely plan to vote this year, down from 72% four years ago. Not only are young registered voters less engaged, but fewer young people are registered to vote. In all Pew Research Center polling conducted over the course of 2012, only half (50%) of adults under 30 say they are absolutely certain that they are registered. This compares with 61% in 2008 and 57% in 2004. Registration rates typically rise over the course of election years, but for youth voter registration to reach 2008 levels the figures will have to shift decidedly over the coming month. While most measures of voter engagement remain fairly high in 2012, overall interest and commitment to voting is down slightly when compared with the highly-charged 2008 election campaign. The share of registered voters who score high (three out of four) on a scale of four questions about interest in the campaign and intention to vote has slipped from 86% to 80% overall.

Voter registration rates have declined since 2008, especially among young people. In interviews conducted over the course of 2012 so far, 72% of adults 18 and older say they are absolutely certain they are registered to vote. This is lower than in 2008, when 79% were registered to vote and in 2004 (76% registered to vote). There also has been a nine-point decline in voter registration among those 30-to-49. Voter registration has slipped four points among those 50-to-64 but is virtually unchanged among those 65 and older.

Yet even when these seasonal factors are taken into account, young adults are starting this year with the lowest registration rate of the last five presidential elections. In polling conducted over the first six months of 2012, half (50%) of adults younger than 30 say they are certain that they are registered. This compares to a 57% registration rate in the

first half of 2008, which rose to 64% over the latter part of that year.  
<http://tinyurl.com/8heghn6>

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The Voters:

### **What Do We Know About Independent Voters?**

Presidential elections are all about **independent voters**. They're the ones who ultimately **decide elections and who candidates want to sway**. Although getting out a party's base is important, it often becomes secondary to the all-important swing vote. But who are these independent voters?

The number of independent voters has increased in recent years. According to a recent study by the Pew Research Center, **voters identifying themselves as independent now make up slightly more than a third of the voting public - a number comparable to self-identified Republicans and Democrats, whose numbers are 25 and 38 percent, respectively.**

Linda Killian, a scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and author of "[The Swing Vote: The Untapped Power of Independents](#)," ties the trend to a negative change in tone in politics occurring over the last couple of decades, and in particular, she credits Newt Gingrich for ushering in an era of hyperpartisanship.

In her book, **Killian breaks independent voters into four groups**. First are the NPR Republicans, who used to be known as **Rockefeller Republicans**, who are socially moderate and fiscally conservative and don't relate to today's Tea Party and religious right-dominated Republican Party. The second group are the **America-first Democrats**, formerly Reagan Democrats, who tend to be working- or lower-middle class. Although more socially conservative than NPR Republicans, they are concerned about trade issues after being impacted by outsourcing and offshoring. The **Facebook generation** are voters under 35, who decline to register with either major party in higher numbers than any other age group, even though the youth vote went for Obama in huge numbers in 2008. The final group is the **Starbucks moms and dads**, suburban parents concerned about the economy, jobs, education and national security.

<http://truth-out.org/news/item/11735-what-do-we-know-about-independent-voters>

### **An Interactive Map of Voter ID Requirements State by State:**

<http://tinyurl.com/9ldxc95>

### **Browser Plugin Helps People Balance Their Political News Reading Habits**

**As the U.S. presidential election approaches, many voters become voracious consumers of online political news.** A tool by a University of Washington researcher tracks whether all those articles really provide a balanced view of the debate -- and, if not, suggests some sites that offer opinions from the other side of



the political spectrum. Balancer (<http://balancestudy.org/balancer/>), a free plug-in for Google's Chrome browser, was developed this summer by Sean Munson, a new UW assistant professor of Human Centered Design and Engineering. The tool analyzes a person's online reading habits for a month and calculates the political bias in that behavior. It then suggests sites that represent a different point of view and continues to monitor reading behavior and offer feedback. If a reader's habits swing to one side of the spectrum, the tool will suggest top news sites on the other side.  
<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/09/120927152141.htm>

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## AAUW-NYS Branch GOTV Action!

Note: **The Final Day to Register New Voters in NYS is Oct. 10!**

The **Amsterdam-Gloversville-Johnston Branch** has been working with the new **AAUW Student Organization on the FMCC campus** for GOTV to Millennials. They participated in the Constitution Day event on Sept 17. Quizzes on the constitution, temp tattoos and patriotic cupcakes were given out to attract students to register to vote. There is a **Presidential Debate Watching Party** on Oct. 3 sponsored by the AAUW Student Organization. Two faculty members (including branch member and Student organization advisor - Anya Biel) will discuss the issues before the debate begins and answer questions during. Voter registration material will be on hand as well

The **Yates County Branch** Oct. 22 Program is "**Women and the Election**" (GOTV).

The **Rochester** and **Fairport** branches continue doing **voter registration**, signing up new voters at the Geva Theatre in connection with the play, "44 Presidents."

Ellen Wright of the **Cortland Branch** reports they have three **candidate forums** scheduled in partnership with LWV, SUNY Women's Studies, Zonta, YWCA, Agency on Aging, LGBT of Cortland, Office of Developmental Disabilities, Access to Independence, Women's Coalition of Cortland County, and Cortland County Chamber of Commerce. They are also holding **Debate Watching Parties, voter education forums, and continue to register voters. GOTV Cortland!**

The branches of **District 7 – St. Lawrence County and Jefferson County** – are working with **WPBS-TV** to broadcast the congressional debates in NY21 and the **Conversations with Candidates** via public access and public television in the district.

On Oct 17, the **Ithaca Branch** will co-host a **Discussion of Campaign Finance Reform** with the League of Women Voters. **Barbara Bartoletti, the Legislative Executive of the New York State LWV, is the speaker.**

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## Teaching the Election:

### **Free resources for teaching about the election**

These free election resources can help students learn about the democratic process. The 2012 presidential election is drawing near, and educators across the country are using campaign efforts as a chance to teach students about the democratic process, the major issues in the race, and how these issues might affect students now and in the future.

**BrainPOP:** <http://www.brainpop.com/spotlight/election/>

### **Eight Steps to the White House:**

<http://edition.cnn.com/2008/POLITICS/02/13/eight.steps.int.ed/index.html>

### **Ask a President:**

<http://edition.cnn.com/2008/POLITICS/03/20/presidents.questions/index.html>

**Fantasy Election:** <http://fantasyelection.mtv.com/>

**Election 2012 Collection:** <http://www.eschoolnews.compbs.org/election2012>

**Pearson:** <http://www.pearsonschool.com/index.cfm?locator=PS1s6j>

**Pinterest:** <http://pinterest.com/miglhe/presidential-election-resources/>

### **Play the Election:**

<http://education.randmcnally.com/digital-learning/play-the-election/>

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/96lredb>

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## Congressional Races to Watch

### **NY-19: Congressional candidate draws from family experiences in crafting platform**

<http://tinyurl.com/8zl85w9>

**NY-24: U.S. Rep. Richard Hanna, challenger Dan Lamb go toe-to-toe in Cortland forum (Cortland AAUW cosponsored this forum and it will be rebroadcast on Time Warner Cable several times prior to Election Day!)**

<http://tinyurl.com/9l3z7hq>

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## What's at Stake for Women (and their families) in 2012:

### Issue: Campaign Spending

#### **Citizens United Ruling Accounts for 78 Percent of Campaign Spending**

The landmark 2010 Supreme Court ruling that struck down longstanding prohibitions on corporate political spending now accounts for 78 percent of the \$465 million spent thus far during the 2012 election cycle, according to a study conducted by the non-profit and non-partisan Sunlight Foundation. About \$365 million of the \$465 million spent on campaigns this year can be directly traced to the High Court's decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, the study says, nearly double of what was spent in 2010 immediately following the ruling. According to the breakdown, Super PACs have spent about \$272 million and unions, nonprofit organizations, corporations and trade

associations have funneled about \$93 million into campaign coffers. The latter are groups the Supreme Court said can spend unlimited amounts of funds and do not have to disclose the identities of their donors to the Federal Election Commission because of their tax status. The study noted that a "deeper dive" into the data tracked by the Sunlight Foundation "shows that the latest uptick in outside spending is focused on congressional races: Even in presidential battleground states, almost all the spending by outside groups is focused on House and Senate candidates."

The study: <http://tinyurl.com/cr26txp>  
<http://tinyurl.com/cnw78b8>

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## Issue: Youth Unemployment

### **Hiring Managers Prefer Older Workers to Millennials**

Employers would rather hire workers over 50 than those under 30, according to a new survey. Hiring managers said "mature workers" were more reliable, more professional and had better writing skills, among other benefits. Younger workers were seen as having a less positive work ethic and being less skilled at time management. Overall, three times as many managers said they were likely to hire a worker age 50 or older as they were to hire a Millennial (aka Gen Y) employee. The Millennial generation includes those born from roughly 1982 through 2000, making the oldest members of this generation 30 years old. Only 2 percent of respondents described Millennial workers as reliable and only 5 percent think they are professional. Twenty-three percent said Millennials are good problem solvers, 22 percent said they're good listeners and 15 percent said they have a positive work ethic. Just 10 percent said Millennials are good leaders. Millennials were seen as having a few advantages on older workers, however. Hiring managers were more likely to describe them as creative (74 percent versus just 17 percent for older workers), good at networking and good with technology. Only 5 percent said Millennials need to develop stronger tech skills, while 72 percent think older workers do.

<http://blog.aarp.org/2012/09/26/hiring-managers-prefer-older-workers-to-millennials/>

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## Issue: Student Loans & Debt

### **A Record One-in-Five Households Now Owe Student Loan Debt**

About one out of five (19%) of the nation's households owed student debt in 2010, more than double the share two decades earlier and a significant rise from the 15% that owed such debt in 2007, just prior to the onset of the Great Recession, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of newly available government data. The Pew Research analysis also finds that a record 40% of all households headed by someone younger than age 35 owe such debt, by far the highest share among any age group. It also finds that, whether computed as a share of household income or assets, the relative burden of student loan debt is greatest for households in the bottom fifth of the income spectrum, even though members of such households are less likely than those in other groups to attend college in the first place.

<http://tinyurl.com/cyfs5kk>

### **Education debt continues to explode**

One category of consumer debt keeps rising in post-recession America: student loan debt. It's grown 275% in the last decade to \$905 billion, and it now outranks total consumer credit card debt, which has declined dramatically since 2009. Only home mortgages count for more total financial liability to American households than student debt, and an alarming 14.4% of student debt is past due.

<http://tinyurl.com/8jzi9xs>

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Issue: Contraception

### **Women Use Contraception for Economic Reasons, Guttmacher Study Concludes**

Most U.S. women use contraception because they would not be able to afford to take care of a child, according to a study by the Guttmacher Institute, UPI reports. Few studies in the U.S. ask women why they use contraception or about the benefits they receive from it, according to the study authors. The study found that 65% of women said they could not afford to provide for a child. Among women who already had children, nearly all said that caring for their existing children was an important reason to use contraception. Sixty-three percent of the women said contraception made them better able to take care of themselves and their families, while 51% said it allowed them to complete their education. Fifty-six percent of women said contraception helped them to support themselves financially, and 50% said it allowed them to obtain or keep a job.

<http://tinyurl.com/8do9xmp>

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Issue: Health Care

### **Companies Take New Approach to Worker Health Coverage**

Two large U.S. companies are making major changes in the way they provide health benefits to their workers. Sears Holdings Corp. and Darden Restaurants, owner of Red Lobster, will give employees a fixed sum of money and allow them to select their medical coverage and insurer from an online marketplace. The change isn't designed to make workers pay a higher share of health coverage costs, but is instead meant to give them more control over their health benefits, the companies said. "It's a fundamental change the employer is saying, 'Here's a pot of money, go shop,'" said Paul Fronstin, director of health research at the nonprofit Employee Benefit Research Institute. The concern for workers is that "the money may not be sufficient and it may not keep up with premium inflation," Fronstin noted. The new approach to worker health coverage will be closely watched by businesses around the country.

<http://consumer.healthday.com/Article.asp?AID=669053>

### **More insured, fewer via private healthcare**



Employment-based health coverage is the dominant source of U.S. health insurance, but it has been steadily shrinking since 2000, a non-partisan group says. Paul Fronstin of the Employee Benefit Research Institute in Washington said the analysis found the percentage of the non-elderly population age 65 and under with health insurance coverage increased to 82 percent in 2011 -- up about one-half a percentage point from 2010 -- notable because increases in health insurance coverage increased only three times since 1994. However, among the non-elderly population, employment-based coverage is trending down -- 58.4 percent had employment-based benefits in 2011, down from the peak of 69.3 percent in 2000 -- while government coverage trended up -- accounting for 22.5 percent of the non-elderly population, up from the low of 14.1 percent in 1999. "Enrollment in Medicaid -- the federal-state healthcare program for the poor and the poor in nursing homes -- and the State Children's Health Insurance Program increased to a combined 46.9 million in 2011, covering 17.6 percent of the non-elderly population, significantly above the 10.2 percent level of 1999," Fronstin said in a statement.

<http://tinyurl.com/8hpcw8h>

### **New Analysis of U.S. Presidential Candidates' Health Care Plans Estimates Uninsured by 2022**

The number of uninsured individuals is estimated to increase in every state and to 72 million nationwide -- with children and low- and middle-income Americans particularly hard hit -- under Governor Mitt Romney's plan to repeal the Affordable Care Act and replace it with block grants to states for Medicaid and new tax incentives, according to a new Commonwealth Fund report. While the details of Governor Romney's proposals have not been specified, a set of assumptions was made for the report based on similar proposals advanced in the past. The report finds that 17.9 million children under age 19 are estimated to be uninsured by 2022 under Romney's plan, compared with an estimated 6 million under President Barack Obama's plan to implement the Affordable Care Act. In addition, under Romney's plan, 17.7 million middle-income Americans -- those with incomes between about \$32,000 and \$58,000 a year for a family of four -- are estimated to be uninsured by 2022, or more than one-third of this income group. By comparison, 3.3 million middle-income families are estimated to be uninsured under the Affordable Care Act. Among families with incomes under \$32,000 a year for a family of four, 38.7 million people are estimated to be uninsured under Romney's plan and 17.2 million under the Affordable Care Act. The report is available at

<http://tinyurl.com/8d6zb67>.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/10/121002092837.htm>

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### Issue: Medicare

#### **Survey: Many doubt Medicare's future**

Most people who are not on Medicare doubt the program will supply good and affordable healthcare by the time they turn 65, according to a new survey. Of those polled who are not yet eligible for Medicare, 80 percent expressed partial to no

confidence that they will be able to afford healthcare while on Medicare without struggling financially. A similar 77 percent were unsure that Medicare will afford them a good choice of medical providers, and 75 percent doubted that the program will guarantee them the medical treatments they need. The survey comes as the program remains a major topic in the presidential race. Overall, Americans are split on that status of the country's healthcare system: 28 percent called it "good," 28 percent called it "fair" and 26 percent called it "poor." Another 17 percent said U.S. healthcare is "good" or "excellent." As with most surveys, EBRI found that Americans tend to be more satisfied with their own healthcare plans than with U.S. healthcare as a whole.

<http://tinyurl.com/9sh6k3z>

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### Issue: Pay Equity

An analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data shows that the gender-based wage gap affects women in nearly every corner of the country, according to a press statement by The National Partnership for Women and Families. In 97 percent of congressional districts, 423 out of 435 districts, the median yearly pay for women is less than the median yearly pay for men. This is the first-ever analysis of these data by congressional district. The findings span all 50 states and all 435 congressional districts.

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### Issue: Social Policies

#### **We Are the 96 Percent**

Nearly all Americans have used government social policies at some point in their lives. The beneficiaries include the rich and the poor, Democrats and Republicans. Almost everyone is both a maker and a taker. We have unique data from a 2008 national survey by the Cornell Survey Research Institute that asked Americans whether they had ever taken advantage of any of 21 social policies provided by the federal government, from student loans to Medicare. These policies do not include government activity that benefits everyone — national defense, the interstate highway system, food safety regulations — but only tangible benefits that accrue to specific households. The survey asked about people's policy usage throughout their lives, not just at a moment in time, and it included questions about social policies embedded in the tax code, which are usually overlooked.

What the data reveal is striking: nearly all Americans — 96 percent — have relied on the federal government to assist them. Young adults, who are not yet eligible for many policies, account for most of the remaining 4 percent. On average, people reported that they had used five social policies at some point in their lives. An individual typically had received two direct social benefits in the form of checks, goods or services paid for by government, like Social Security or unemployment insurance. Most had also benefited from three policies in which government's role was "submerged," meaning that it was channeled through the tax code or private organizations, like the home mortgage-interest deduction and the tax-free status of the employer contribution to employees'

health insurance. The design of these policies camouflages the fact that they are social benefits, too, just like the direct benefits that help Americans pay for housing, health care, retirement and college.

The use of government social policies cuts across partisan divides. Some policies were used more often by members of one party or the other. Republicans were more likely to have used the G.I. Bill and Social Security retirement and survivors' benefits, while more Democrats had taken advantage of Medicaid and unemployment insurance. Overall, 82 percent of Democrats and 64 percent of Republicans acknowledged receipt of at least one direct social benefit. More Republicans (92 percent) than Democrats (86 percent) had taken advantage of submerged policies. Once we take both types of policies into account, the seeming distinction between makers and takers vanishes: 97 percent of Republicans and 98 percent of Democrats report that they have used at least one government social policy.

The majority of individuals from households at every income level have used at least one direct social policy. Low-income people have used more of the direct policies than have the affluent: the average household with income under \$10,000 per year used four of them, compared to only one by the households at \$150,000 and above. But the proportions were reversed in the case of the submerged policies: wealthy families had typically used three of them, and the poor just one.

<http://campaignstops.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/09/24/we-are-the-96-percent/>

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### Spotlight on Federal Legislation:

The **Pregnant Workers Fairness Act** was introduced in the Senate on Sept. 19, according to a press statement by The National Partnership for Women and Families. The act promotes equality for pregnant workers by ensuring the same workplace protections for women with pregnancy-related limitations as the protections already in place for workers with similar temporary disabilities. It would also prevent employers from forcing pregnant women out of the workplace and help ensure that they provide reasonable accommodations to such women who want to continue working. The act is championed by Sens. Robert Casey, Pa., and Jeanne Shaheen, N.H., and is already supported by 108 legislators of the U.S. House of Representatives.

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### Spotlight on NYS Policies:

#### **Quietly, Gov. Cuomo Talked Campaign Finance Reform At State Capitol Meeting**

Gov. Cuomo met quietly in his State Capitol office last Tuesday with several groups to discuss campaign finance reform. "It was an opportunity to begin to share ideas and begin to plan a strategy to elevate the issue publicly in time for a possible special session later this year, as well as any possible action in 2013," said attendee Richard Dadey, executive director of Citizens Union. The group agreed that with the public being

bombarded with campaign ads and lit, the time is right to try to generate support for changes.

<http://tinyurl.com/8bbvas2>

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In the States:

### **Hassan Sole U.S. Woman Running for Governor**

Maggie Hassan's quest for the governorship of New Hampshire puts her under the magnifying lens for those tracking women in politics. She is the only woman running for governor this year and if she loses there won't be a single female Democratic governor left in the entire country.

Democratic governors Christine Gregoire of Washington and Bev Purdue of North Carolina are both retiring. Two others, Kathleen Sebelius and Janet Napolitano, were plucked from their posts in 2008 to serve as secretaries of Health and Human Services and Homeland Security, respectively, under President Barack Obama.

It's a numbers problem, said Jess McIntosh, spokesperson for the Washington-based EMILY's List, a political action committee that supports pro-choice female candidates.

It's a low tide year for governor races, with only 13 statehouses under contention. Only six of those races are open-seat contests with no incumbent; the contests that often give female candidates their entry point.

<http://tinyurl.com/8uqwogt>

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### **AAUW NYS Facebook:**

Remember to “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!

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Share your successes!