

AAUW-NYS GOTV Counterpart Newsletter Get Out The Vote!



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August 24: Women's Equality Day Celebration

In Johnstown, NY the Elizabeth Cady Stanton Women's Consortium - of which the **Amsterdam-Gloversville-Johnstown AAUW Branch** is a member – is holding a **Women's Equality Day celebration** (a Friday evening at 6 pm) on Main St. Park and **Bandshell**. They will dress in costume, hold an ice cream social, and enjoy a concert by Bob and the Bobcats, which will include suffrage songs.

The perfect time and place to **hold a voter registration drive!** Can your branch organize something similar in your community? Ask the mayor or town supervisor to pass and read a proclamation in honor of WED.

September 25: National Voter Registration Day

In 2008, 6 million Americans didn't vote because they missed a registration deadline or didn't know how to register. In 2012, we want to make sure no one is left out. On September 25, 2012, volunteers, civic groups, and organizations from all over the country will "hit the streets" for National Voter Registration Day. This single day of coordinated field, technology and media efforts will create pervasive awareness of voter registration opportunities--allowing us to reach tens of thousands of voters or more who we could not reach otherwise.

<http://www.nationalvoterregistrationday.org/>

Quick Facts:

Currently, **only 6 states have female governors.**

Good news: the **Pregnant Workers Fairness Act** has reached 100 co-sponsors!

The National Partnership for Women & Families hand-delivered more than 46,000 petitions in support of **paid family leave** to Capitol Hill yesterday.

Our toxic political party system:

Republicans and Democrats in close races plan to skip parties' conventions

Loyalists, operatives and leaders of the two major political parties will convene in Tampa and Charlotte in the coming weeks for the biggest, most high-profile political events of the summer: the nominating conventions for their presidential candidates. But for **dozens of congressional candidates, both Republicans and Democrats, the smart political calculation is to stay away.** The common thread tying the convention-skippers together is that each is locked in a tight race, and some distance from their parties, their nominees and Congress may improve their chances of winning. But so far, more Democrats than Republicans are opting out of their convention. **With congressional approval ratings hovering in the teens, and neither party getting more than 50 percent approval in polls, some candidates are not eager to fully embrace their party affiliation.**

<http://tinyurl.com/7w5uoxs>

These would be the same NYS legislators who failed to move on raising the minimum wage and getting equal pay for equal work laws on the books this year.

At the very least, include a candidate forum question to any state legislators about his/her stand on a pay raise for themselves and economic justice for New Yorkers (pay equity, fair pay, minimum wage raise, paid family leave!)

State Legislators Quietly Working On Pay Raise

A quiet campaign in Albany is trying to break down resistance to a possible pay raise for legislators this year. **State senators and members of the Assembly are now paid \$79,500 a year in base pay.** Most make tens of thousands of dollars more in leadership stipends such as for heading a committee or helping manage the majority or minority conferences. Gov. Andrew Cuomo, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos insist no talks are under way to raise salaries after the November elections. But Assemblyman Dan Burling's farewell address to the chamber on the last day of session included a promise to return in December to vote on his colleagues' pay raise. It was met with powerful applause.

<http://tinyurl.com/7h3p364>

OpEd: Legislators' pay

New York state lawmakers would move from third in the nation to the highest-paid state legislators under terms of a widely reported plan to hike their salary to \$100,000 or more a year.

Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo and legislative leaders have avoided confirming any ongoing negotiations between them. But they have not ruled out the possibility of a lame-duck Legislature voting for the first pay hike in 13 years for senators and members of the Assembly, who now earn a base salary of \$79,500 annually.

Since lawmakers cannot vote themselves a pay raise during their two-year term in office, the Legislature would have to approve the hikes this year to receive them in 2013 or wait another two years before considering a salary hike.

Postponing the vote until after the election is meant to avoid a backlash at the polls that could hurt lawmakers running for election, particularly those in tight races. And it is less likely to be an issue in elections two years from now when the issue will be more distant and voters might have other matters on their minds.

It is bad timing to bring up a legislative pay raise during a recession that has led to cuts in the state work force and kept public employees' salaries from increasing. However, state leaders believe the modest improvement in Albany's performance in the past two years with on-time budgets and other major legislation passed on time may make the public more receptive to the idea. New Yorkers had no tolerance for a pay raise during years of legislative dysfunction that failed to produce on-time budgets year after year. Thirteen years without a raise has seen the salary eroded by inflation.

However, public acceptance will also hinge on specifics that have yet to be worked out, which is where Gov. Cuomo will play an important role.

Although the \$79,500 base salary is for a part-time job, it has become full-time with the base pay supplemented by "lulus" and \$175 per diem to help offset expenses for lawmakers maintaining two residences. Critics say per diem pay has been abused while lulus — cash bonuses or stipends some lawmakers receive for leadership functions — have become a way for legislative leaders to reward lawmakers for their loyalty.

One possible scenario under consideration, as reported by Frederic Dicker of the New York Post, would eliminate per diems in exchange for a \$100,000 yearly salary, which would cost taxpayers \$4.25 million a year. However, that would be reduced by about \$2 million if per diems were eliminated.

Another possibility is for Gov. Cuomo to push for the much-talked-about mandate relief for local governments.

If there is to be a deal, Gov. Cuomo will have to demand concessions from lawmakers.

<http://tinyurl.com/7dpa28w>

Connecting With Young Voters:

The next generation of activists is hard at work!

Eighth Grader Stops Seventeen from Photoshopping Girls in its Magazine

Eighth grader Julia Bluhm was tired of hearing her friends in ballet class complain about being fat, and knew that they were basing their self-conscious opinions on altered magazine images of themselves. So she started a petition asking Seventeen magazine to stop photoshopping the women in their pages. Julia asked for one unaltered image of a

“regular girl” in every issue. “For the sake of all the struggling girls all over America, who read Seventeen and think these fake images are what they should be, I’m stepping up,” Julia wrote. “I know how hurtful these photoshopped images can be. I’m a teenage girl, and I don’t like what I see. None of us do.” With the petition at more than 81,000 signatures, Seventeen responded — and went even further than what Julia had requested. The magazine committed to Julia and organizers at **SPARK a Movement** (<http://tinyurl.com/6ofvo3n>) to represent a range of women of all shapes and sizes in its magazine — every month, every model — without any photoshopping of their bodies (they will still be using photoshop to take wrinkles out of clothes and hide flyaway hairs). After over 84,000 people signed Julia’s petition and she and her fellow SPARK Summit activists hand-delivered the petitions to the executive editor of Seventeen, the magazine has made a commitment to not alter the body size or face shape of the girls and models in the magazine and to feature a diverse range of beauty in its pages. Another petition is being started by SPARK activists Emma and Carina, targeting Teen Vogue has a petition up asking Teen Vogue to follow suit. Sign on at <http://tinyurl.com/79pdrgt>. <http://tinyurl.com/6olry69>

Youth Group Calls for Action to Address Grim Unemployment Outlook

Fresh off a win to keep student-loan interest rates down, a youth-advocacy group would like to channel that energy into improving the job market. **Young Invincibles** released a sobering employment report Tuesday showing 16.5 percent of Americans ages 16 to 24 are without work. Unemployment is 30.2 percent for young African-Americans and 20.5 percent for Latino youths. And many more have given up looking for work, which the organization estimates means that fewer than half of young people hold any kind of job. The Washington-based nonprofit organization hopes that **No End in Sight? Young Invincibles Releases Report on Youth Jobs Gap** will mobilize young people to pressure policymakers for change. The report suggests it's unlikely the labor market will recover quickly on its own. The Young Invincibles specifically call for expanded investments in:

- **AmeriCorps** a full-time, team-based residential program for men and women ages 18-24;
- **Youth Opportunity Grants** from the U.S. Department of Labor;
- **YouthBuild**, a federal program for low-income young people to earn their GED or high school diploma while building affordable housing;
- **TANF Emergency Fund** created by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to assist states in expanding services during the recession; and
- **Conservation Corps**, which uses volunteers in every state to improve community and the environment.

Young Invincibles underscores the long-term negative impact of youth unemployment. "Permanently depressed youth employment is unacceptable," the report says. "It will scar not only Millennials, but each successive generation of young Americans. ... This problem is solvable; we have the tools to create jobs for young people that will get them back to

work and back on track for economic success." The report is part of the organization's Young American Dream Agenda that will be released later this summer.
<http://tinyurl.com/825arnm>

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

Issue: Education

Encourage your Congressperson to join this collation!

New Anti-Bullying Caucus Forms in U.S. House

Congressman Mike Honda launched a new **Anti-Bullying Caucus** (<http://tinyurl.com/7jdn9qt>). The effort quickly gained 46 members, including a few Republicans, including Florida's Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Illinois' Robert Dold. "This is a bipartisan and nonpartisan issue," Honda said during a press conference. That may be, but federal anti-bullying legislation efforts have stalled, in part because of also-stalled efforts to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the current No Child Left Behind law. Honda hopes to make the caucus a bicameral effort, and if necessary, craft new, bipartisan legislation if the **Student Non-Discrimination Act** and the **Safe Schools Improvement Act** continue to languish.

<http://tinyurl.com/d277byl>

How the Recession Changed School Funding

The recent recession scrambled the traditional balance in education funding, according to a report released yesterday by the U.S. Census Bureau. For the first time in 16 years, local governments picked up a higher share of the education bill than the states, while the federal government picked up more than 10 percent of the tab, according to the Census Bureau's annual Public Education Finances report. The report looks at data from the 2009-10 school year. State funding decreased by 6.5 percent from the previous year, according to the Census Bureau, the biggest decrease since the Census Bureau began publishing the report in 1977. That drop was accompanied by an unprecedented increase in federal funding, largely stimulus dollars, that in many cases propped up state spending. All told, education funding across the country increased by a half percent, while per-pupil funding increased by 1.1 percent. Local funding wasn't hurt as early by the recession says Michael Griffith, senior school finance analyst at the Economic Commission on the States, but it declined since the years included in the Census report as lagging lower property assessments translated into lower local property taxes. Declining state revenues increased the distance between the haves and the have-nots, Griffith says, because wealthier districts in many parts of the country were better able to make up for fewer state dollars.

<http://tinyurl.com/728e9d9>

Education Debt in the Ownership Society

Education and housing are inextricably intertwined in both the American imagination and our economy -- yet there has been very little talk about how the student debt crisis and the housing crisis relate to each other in terms of both long-term economic cycles and our changing American identity. As evidenced by the overblown debate over interest rates taking place in Congress, we remain focused on minor details, and have yet to examine the big picture of what these twin crises portend. With over \$1 trillion amassed in student debt, and 41% of the class of 2005 delinquent or in default, our attention has remained stubbornly fixed on interest rate changes that would only amount to \$9 a month in savings, for a handful of borrowers, while a crisis of inequality and poverty develops unchecked by public outrage and resistance. If we look at the cyclical and generational relationship between education debt and the housing market, however, we can see how the failure to treat the real crisis now will produce enormous inequality as millions of Americans continue to fall out of the middle class. At least historically, college graduates have earned nearly \$1 million more over their lifetime than high school graduates, and have suffered from significantly lower unemployment rates, as well. The idea of aspiring to a better life is deeply engrained in the American psyche, with education touted as the path to, among other things, better housing opportunities. By increasing our knowledge-base, and improving our value as workers and entrepreneurs, we have traditionally gained the economic means to live in middle-class communities that offer benefits like good schools and low crime. For the last 30 years we have seen wage stagnation for all but those at the very top of the income heap; thanks to that stagnation, the vast majority of Americans have only stayed afloat by taking on debt. Much of the debt that has been taken on has been educational debt, as aspirational American families have been unable to meet daily needs and save for their children's college education at the same time. Over the last 30 years, total college tuition rates have increased by around 500%; over the last 40 years, the estimated increase runs as high as a 900%. As a result, a full two-thirds of recent graduates carry an average of \$27,000 dollars in student debt upon completion of college. And with 50% unemployment rates, new graduates often must choose between taking on predatory internships that rarely lead to employment, predatory student loans (as they attempt to sit out the recession in graduate school), and predatory low-wage employment that tends to lead to permanent underemployment.

http://www.alternet.org/story/156049/education_debt_in_the_ownership_society

All Education Matters

<http://alleducationmatters.blogspot.com/>

Cryn Johannsen is the founder and executive director of All Education Matters (AEM), an organization that she launched in 2010 to educate the public and elected officials about the growing student loan debt crisis.

Bullying and gender discrimination are not the only problems in schools today.

Schools don't see teen dating violence as a priority

Despite research showing **up to a third of U.S. teens experience dating violence**, a new study finds a majority of high schools don't have procedures or trained staff to deal with the issue. According to the report published in the journal *Pediatrics*, **some 70 percent of U.S. high school counselors have not received any formal training in teen dating violence**. Jagdish Khubchandani, an assistant professor of community health at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, said **dating violence can range from simple verbal abuse to teens being raped, beaten and - in the most extreme cases - murdered**. As for protocols, about 81 percent of surveyed counselors said their schools did not have one in place to deal with a dating violence incident. And only about 16 percent said their schools had talked about creating procedures for handling an incident or had plans to implement them. **Nearly all counselors - 90 percent - said their schools had not provided training related to adolescent dating violence to staff within the past two years**. So the authors make a series of recommendations to improve the ability of school counselors to detect and deal with incidents. These include encouraging health organizations like the National Association of School Nurses to offer guidance counselors information and training. School administrators should periodically assess the extent of dating violence in their schools and come up with strategies for dealing with it. Administrators should also familiarize themselves and their staffs with relevant state laws on dating violence and minor consent. National organizations need to start reaching out to members and start developing policies and protocols, said Khubchandani, who added that there are only limited materials out there now for schools and counselors.

<http://tinyurl.com/7mg7ttj>

U.S. pushes for more scientists, but the jobs aren't there

There are too many laboratory scientists for too few jobs. Traditional academic jobs are scarcer than ever. Once a primary career path, **only 14 percent of those with a PhD in biology and the life sciences now land a coveted academic position within five years**, according to a 2009 NSF survey. The supply of scientists has grown far faster than the number of academic positions. The pharmaceutical industry once was a haven for biologists and chemists who did not go into academia. But a decade of slash-and-burn mergers; stagnating profit; exporting of jobs to India, China and Europe; and declining investment in research and development have dramatically shrunk the U.S. drug industry, with research positions taking heavy hits. Largely because of drug industry cuts, **the unemployment rate among chemists now stands at its highest mark in 40 years, at 4.6 percent**, according to the American Chemical Society, which has 164,000 members. **For young chemists, the picture is much worse. Just 38 percent of new PhD chemists were employed in 2011**, according to a recent ACS survey. The lack of permanent jobs leaves many PhD scientists doing routine laboratory work in low-wage positions known as "post-docs," or postdoctoral fellowships. Post-docs used to last a year or two, but now it's not unusual to find scientists toiling away for six, seven, even 10 years.

Issue: Strengthening Financial Knowledge

If this is true, we need to seriously examine the legacies we are passing on to our daughters.

Dads pass on how to make money to sons

Human capital -- intelligence, advice, work ethic -- may be why high-income fathers have richer sons, U.S. researchers say. Study author David Sims, an economics professor at Brigham Young University said there's a correlation between a father's income and son's - sons of fathers with high incomes tended to end up with higher than average incomes themselves. "We wanted to see if the intergenerational income correlation is due to money -- what we can buy for our kids -- or if human capital attributes passed from father to son play a role as well," Sims said in a statement. The researchers used data from Sweden from 1950 to 1965 that included salary information for fathers and sons as well as clues about fathers' human capital: education levels and the nature of their occupations. "Differing human capital endowments passed from father to son account for about two-thirds of the overall intergenerational income relationship," Sims said.

<http://tinyurl.com/8xvvu5l>

From Woman to Girl, an Introduction to Finance

At the private Westover School in western Connecticut, there is a class aimed at encouraging teenage girls to consider careers in finance. The class was run by a nonprofit group called **Invest in Girls**, which is using three private schools — Westover, which is all girls, and Milton Academy and Middlesex School, which serve both boys and girls — to test its program. The goal is to be more than another “kids and money” program, said its founder and chairwoman, Dune Thorne, who is also a partner at Brown Advisory in Boston. The organizers focus on girls because their program emphasizes learning techniques that work better with girls. The program will be expanded to other schools if the pilot works. The curriculum is a mix of classroom learning, field trips and mentoring. Each part is meant to advance a particular goal in making the students better prepared for future careers. All the classes are taught by a woman who works in finance. The four classes in the first year consist of an overview of the program's objectives, and discussions of spending, savings and investments. Twice a year, Invest in Girls arranges for field trips to see women at work and also to learn how to network with students from other schools, said Emilie Liebhoff, chief executive of the group. This year, they went to Windhaven Investment Management in Boston and the Hanover Insurance Group in Worcester, Mass. But the mentoring part is where they get to ask how to apply their learning. Ultimately, students will be taught not just about their own money, but about roles they can play in a business. Each girl was paired with a woman who works in finance to learn about what they do.

<http://tinyurl.com/6s384fu>

We need many more women in leadership positions to mentor girls than we have now.

Where the Women Fortune 500 CEOs Went to School

At some universities, women outnumber men in graduate programs, and The New York Times reported in December 2011 that more young women are leaving their jobs to go back to school. **The 18 women who made the 2012 Fortune 500 CEO list** may now have some of the most secure jobs in the workforce, but three of the CEOs chose not only to go to graduate school earlier in their careers, but also to earn multiple advanced degrees. **The 18 women CEOs represent 3.6 percent of the 498 chief executive officers on the Fortune list.** (Two members of the Fortune 500 list are CEOs of two different Fortune 500 companies, which is why there are 498 CEOs.) The 18 women on the list collectively earned 13 graduate degrees and 18 college degrees, thus posting a 100 percent college graduate rate, compared to 92.4 percent overall for the Fortune 500 CEOs who went to college. The Fortune 500 companies with female CEOs rank from No. 10 (Hewlett-Packard) to No. 465 (Gannett), with six of the 18 CEOs working at Fortune 50 companies.

<http://tinyurl.com/86xroq3>

Issue: Pregnant and Parenting Students

Consider that Title IX is 40 years old and the U.S. Education Department is just now contemplating guidance on how schools should treat pregnant and parenting teens in 2012. This issue has not gotten the attention it deserves. Teen mothers are easy targets for discrimination. Girls as young as 12 are getting pregnant and bear this stigma, even though they are, in reality, the victims of statutory rape. **Pregnant and parenting teens don't always know they have rights and are rarely in a position to pursue legal redress. Do you know what happens to pregnant and parenting students in your local schools?**

Title IX and Pregnant and Parenting Students

By AAUW Public Policy Intern Christina Cann

Did you know that Title IX protects pregnant and parenting students from discrimination? Many people don't realize that the law ensures that these students have the same rights to continue and finish their high school or college education as other students do. Yet many schools continue to discriminate against pregnant and parenting students by placing them in separate, often subpar academic programs; enacting policies that treat them differently from other students with medical conditions; and preventing them from participating in after-school activities. In fact, the state departments of education in Georgia and Michigan excluded pregnant and parenting students from

participating in homebound instruction until women's rights advocates stepped in and demanded change — and justice.

This discrimination has harmful effects on students. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that just 50 percent of teen mothers receive high school diplomas by the time they're 22 years old, compared with 90 percent of women who did not give birth as teenagers. Failure to graduate from high school has lifelong ramifications. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the median weekly earnings for a person who has less than a high school diploma is \$451, compared with \$638 for high school graduates, \$768 for people with associate degrees, and \$1,053 for four-year college graduates.

Federal policies and proposed legislation are starting to catch up with the realities faced by pregnant and parenting students. A provision in the Affordable Care Act created the Pregnancy Assistance Fund, which provides grants of between \$500,000 and \$2 million annually through 2019 to help underwrite programs that connect young families with the support services they need. These programs help participants focus on high school graduation, good maternal and child health outcomes, and parenting skills.

In addition, the Pregnant and Parenting Students Access to Education Act, introduced in the House of Representatives in 2011, would enable the U.S. Department of Education to offer state and local grants for programs that promote education for pregnant and parenting students.

<http://tinyurl.com/73ldlr5>

Issue: Health Care

If you want to organize a voter education program about health care in your area, start with a good look at the reality in your county:

For example: The Supreme Court upheld critical parts of President Obama's Affordable Care Act, which is designed to provide health care coverage to all citizens. Currently, 13 percent of St. Lawrence County residents have no health care coverage and 17.8 percent say their basic health care needs are not met, according to the St. Lawrence County Public Health Department's Community Health Assessment.

Issue: Peace, Economic & Social Justice

Peace Action's Action Alert Network

If you have an interest in peace and economic justice issues, you may want to take a look at the **Peace Action's Voting Record**. It will show you how Members of Congress

voted on key peace and economic justice issues in the last session. This is the first year they designed their annual voting record as an interactive tool.

<http://peaceactionwest.org/thescore/>

The Economic Hardship Reporting Project

<http://economichardship.org>

Best-selling investigative journalist Barbara Ehrenreich and the Institute for Policy Studies have launched an Economic Hardship Reporting Project to force this country's crisis of poverty and economic insecurity to the center of the national conversation.

Unemployed, underemployed, and anxiously employed Americans need to know that they are not alone, that the current economic crisis is not their fault and that they are not always getting the information they need to find solutions. Just telling compelling stories of individuals and families isn't enough. We want to link such stories to the large picture, as we explore extreme — and deepening — inequality and the decline of the middle class. Here are some recent articles:

- ♦ **The Ones We've Lost: The Student Loan Debt Suicides**
♦ <http://www.alternet.org/story/156153/>
 - ♦ **Peter Edelman on “Why It’s So Hard to End Poverty In America”**
♦ <http://tinyurl.com/73mqmth>
 - ♦ **Preying on the Poor, How Government and Corporations Use the Poor as Piggy Banks**
♦ <http://economichardship.org/preying-on-the-poor/>
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Issue: Employment

Economic Recovery Slower For Women Due To Public Sector Job Cuts, Report Finds

While it is true that women have recovered from the recession much more slowly than men, a new report released by the National Women's Law Center shows that the main economic obstacle holding them back from reemployment is a group of deep public-sector job cuts at the state and local level, mostly implemented by Republican governors. (<http://tinyurl.com/7t623b7>) Three years into the economic recovery, which began in June 2009, women have gained back 24 percent of the jobs they lost, while men have gained back 39 percent. The gap is not in the private sector, where women and men have each gained back about 40 percent of the jobs they lost. Rather, women have lost almost twice as many public sector jobs as men during the past three years -- 396,000 to 231,000, respectively -- which has severely hampered their recovery. For every 10 private sector jobs women have gained back in the past three years, they've lost four in

the public sector. Comparatively, for every 10 private sector jobs men have gained back, they've lost only one in the public sector. **The reason for the gender gap in public sector job losses is** that many conservative state and local governments have made **massive job cuts to public education, a field that disproportionately employs women. In total, about 250,000 teachers have been laid off across the country since June 2009.**

<http://tinyurl.com/7258ho2>

Gallup: Employment gender gap persists

Men in the United States are more likely than women to be fully employed, new data from Gallup shows. **Seven out of 10 men in this country are either employed full time or satisfied with part-time work, the polling company found, compared to 61 percent of women.**

<http://tinyurl.com/ccznqnc>

Employers Get More From U.S. Workers as Jobs Gain Lags Forecast

Companies in the U.S. are relying on existing workers and temporary employees instead of hiring, helping to explain why payrolls grew less than forecast in June. "Firms are still seeing an increase in demand, and there is a need for more labor," said Nigel Gault, chief U.S. economist at IHS Global Insight in Lexington, Massachusetts. "But there are so many risks out there that **businesses don't want to commit to hiring full-time employees.**" The median estimate of 84 economists surveyed by Bloomberg projected a 100,000 gain in payrolls. Forecasts ranged from increases of 35,000 to 165,000. The May advance in employment was revised to 77,000 from a previously reported 69,000. The average workweek climbed by six minutes to 34.5 hours in June, the report showed. **Temporary staffing rose by 25,200, the biggest increase since February.**

<http://tinyurl.com/crrpxmd>

AAUW-NYS Voices Project

I presented a workshop at last year's Summer Leadership Conference in Cazenovia on how to **write OpEds, Letters to the Editor, and use Social Media** to get out the word n AAUW issues. That PowerPoint is still up on the state website. It will help you to find your voice and make the case for women's issues in the media during this critical election season!

<http://tinyurl.com/ckenov5>