

A Remedy for COVID-19

Yes, there is a remedy for COVID-19. It is: MDC - maintain as much normalcy as possible/develop creative communication methods/continue advocacy and action.

Simple? Probably not. But in this update I will provide some ideas for you to explore in this difficult and stressful time of uncertainty. As I do so, I wish each of you, your family and friends good health and wellness.

Lisa West, AAUW MN president, has communicated the cancellation of AAUW MN Legislative Day, April 15, 2020. But our advocacy need not be canceled. The March issue of THE PINE is dedicated to Public Policy. The issue contains training guides, how-to's for meeting with Legislators and the media, links to AAUW National resources & examples of advocacy around the country.

Here are some additional ways you can continue to express and promote the ideals and mission of AAUW to your local, state and national political leaders and community leaders.

PUBLIC POLICY ACTION PROPOSALS FOR BRANCHES:

Every Voice, Every Vote

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment and the 55th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act — two critical milestones in ensuring women's right to vote. It's an important time to remember that many individuals, particularly people of color, still face voting suppression. This year, AAUW will strongly advocate for policies that expand and protect people's voting rights. We encourage branches to integrate this priority into their work too. For example, the AAUW Boise Area Branch has an ongoing voter registration project called [What The Vote!](#), which is targeted to high school and college students. The project's aims are to teach students how to research candidates and register those of voting age. Since the project's inception in 2018, the branch has registered 5,084 students. Voter registration activities are easy to develop and implement. **Let's be on the front lines with this activity.**

Our Work to Ensure Women's Financial Futures

As part of our [2020 Gender Policy Agenda](#), AAUW is pushing for policies that will protect women and their families, including paid leave, access to high-quality health care and stronger Social Security benefits. In the wake of the coronavirus crisis, those priorities are even more urgent. That's why we're partnering with other organizations to advocate for paid sick leave for public health emergencies. It's critical for women to be able to take care of themselves and their loved ones without worrying about a lost paycheck or retaliation from their boss. **Consider developing a Pay Equity Plan similar to the one used by the Ely Branch.**

SET UP A TWO-MINUTE ACTIVIST SESSION:

At your next branch meeting (whenever that may be), set aside time for a Two-minute Activist session. It can be done manually or electronically. If your branch is able to meet where there is adequate WIFI/Internet connectivity, members can complete a two-minute activist session very quickly. As a substitute to a group session, individuals can easily be an activist by [following the process outlined on the AAUW Website.](#)

LETTERS and OP-EDS:

In addition to a Two-Minute Activist or as a substitute to that process, writing a letter to the editor (LTE) or an op-ed is a great way to energize branch members, promote AAUW visibility in the community, and spread the word about important issues. These media outreach tools can be used to correct and clarify facts in a previous news story, oppose or support the actions of an elected official or agency, direct attention to a problem, spur news editors to cover an issue that is being overlooked, or urge readers to support your cause. Letters to the editor and op-eds are especially effective in local community papers. For additional information go to: <https://www.aauw.org/resource/lte-vs-op-ed/>

Here is an example for Equal Pay -

April 4 is the day we “celebrate” when the typical woman working full time in the United States catches up to what a white man was paid the previous year. That’s right, making 80 cents to a man’s dollar means women must work three extra months! The pay gap is even worse for most women of color who have to work even longer for their salaries to catch up.

As a member of the American Association of University Women, I have worked tirelessly to urge legislative action to close the gender pay gap once and for all. But we need additional legislation to give employers and employees the tools to prevent wage discrimination in the first place — and we’ve been waiting too long for that.

In [state], women face a pay gap of [insert amount] cents, which translates into less money for feeding families, paying off student loans, and saving for retirement. Passing a federal law like the Paycheck Fairness Act would help protect everyone in all states. But until that happens, each state will continue operating under antiquated regulations and piecemeal state and local laws to combat unequal pay. As we wait for Congress to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act, [state] AAUW members, including myself, will continue to urge the state legislature to make improvements to [state] equal pay laws so that fair pay is an accessible reality for everyone. I encourage all [what state residents are called, e.g., Washingtonians] to join us and demand equal pay now!

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!:

I have often touted the use of community driven Public Access TV. Public Access TV allows individuals or organizations to submit pre-recorded information or live interviews.

Every city, that provides a cable network provider, collects a franchise fee and it is used to air free Public Access Television programming. In Hibbing, it is HPAT – Hibbing Public Access Television. HPAT has three stations: government, education, and community. HPAT has a large, captive audience that watches and learns much of what is happening in the community. AAUW Hibbing branch members have been interviewed to advertise its annual book sale and other special activities.

Look into this in your city. Develop a specific program or a panel discussion on a public policy issue or concern. And, be ready to say, “I’m ready for my close-up Mr. DeMille!”

For additional resources go to - <https://www.aauw.org/resource/how-to-do-media-interviews/>

SOCIAL MEDIA IS YOUR FRIEND:

Social media can have tremendous rewards for your state and branch if you’re creative and persistent. It can help you raise your branch’s visibility, recruit new members and donors, and influence important community stakeholders. Common platforms for advocacy include Facebook and Twitter, but other tools like Instagram are unveiled every week. Talk to others about what they’re doing, and see how your efforts can fit into or shape what’s already happening. Create a social media strategy that will launch your branch or state even further into the conversation about women and girl’s empowerment. Social media is a conversation, not a monologue.

Create Social Media Strategy using FB, Twitter and follow the steps and process at:

<https://www.aauw.org/resource/how-to-use-social-media-for-advocacy/>

Please share any actions, activities or initiatives your branch develops. Send to jmcfree@aol.com

Together – Moving Forward for AAUW

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