**AAUW MN**

**Public Policy**

**Update**

**May 2021**

**RECAP:**

AAUW MN recently held its Annual Meeting via ZOOM technology communication platform. Albeit a different method to hold a ‘convention’, but it was delivered well and featured nearly every aspect of an in-person event. The ‘Annual Meeting Information’ program included Public Policy Committee actions, such as Resolutions. If you could not attend the Annual Meeting, included here is: my annual Public Policy Report and the Resolutions approved by the voting delegates.

AAUW MN

Annual Meeting – May 1, 2021

Public Policy Report

Submitted by Jan Carey, AAUW MN VP Public Policy

What a year it has been! The disruption of our routine lives has been challenging. I never expected to spend so much time on my computer. But I’m thankful to have a stable internet service provider and the ability to attend local, regional, state and national meetings via the ZOOM communication platform. Accomplishing some Public Policy goals was difficult, but did not deter the visioning process or the advocacy needed to promote AAUW’s mission.

Goals completed in 2020

* engaged members and develop outreach strategies to AAUW National & State Public Policies and Issues
* attended AAUW national SPPC(State Public Policy Chairs) monthly ZOOM meetings

• continued statewide Email communications to PP branch chairs

• provided Public Policy updates for publication in The Pine.

• provided Public Policy updates for the AAUW-MN website

* implemented the “I will vote in 2020 because…” media campaign with circulations submitted to Duluth Tribune, St. Paul Pioneer Press and Rochester Post Bulletin.

• texted & emailed State Legislators and Congressional Representatives & Senators.

• published and reported AAUW MN public policy branch events and activities to AAUW

 National for its outreach publications.

• forwarded the AAUW MN State Public Policy Legislative agenda to AAUW National.

• outlined a 2021 AAUW MN Virtual Legislative Day.

Visioning for 2021/22:

Using social networking and technology creates a strong channel for communicating AAUW Public Policy Priorities. Taking a cue from SPPC training sessions and the new national website, AAUW-MN Public Policy envisions a program that will invigorate members and promote advocacy through:

* selected features on the Public Policy page of the state website; such as hotlinks to Public Policy webinars, video resources and tools;
* continued sharing of StateNet Legislative tracking postings to branch public policy chairs/contacts;
* continued communication with AAUW MN branch public policy chairs/contacts;
* creating & hosting AAUW-MN State Public Policy webinars;
* convening ZOOM meetings (or other online communication formats) with branch chairs;
* creating another Public Policy media campaign;
* organizing a f2f AAUW MN Legislative Day, 2022.

During state legislative sessions, Kate Nielson, AAUW Director of Public Policy and Legal Advocacy, requested a Legislative Agenda from each State Public Policy Chair (SPPC). The information is used to create StateNET searches and send Equity Action Alerts to members.

AAUW MN determines and approves its Public Policy Priorities and Policy Directives in uneven years. Using previously approved policy, Kate was provided the following AAUW MN Legislative Agenda of Public Policy Priorities:

**AAUW MN advocates public policies & priorities that promote, enhance and ensure:**

**1. Economic Security for All Women**

* Equity in the workplace
* Equal Pay
* Enforcement of anti-discrimination statutes
* Security in retirement
* Access to job training for career development
* Work-life balance, including access to quality affordable childcare and paid sick and care-giving leave

**2. Equal Access to Quality Public Education for All Students**

* Vigorous enforcement of Title IX
* Adequate and equitable funding at all educational levels, including pre-school and post-secondary
* Instruction in STEM fields
* Opposition to the use of public funds for schools that do not meet public school civil rights and accountability standards

**3. Social and Racial Justice for All Members of Society**

* Self-determination in reproductive health
* Equal access to quality affordable health care
* Freedom from violence in all its forms and wherever it occurs, including racially-motivated violence
* Guarantee of civil and constitutional rights for all
* Protection and expansion of voting rights

There is much work to continue, as normalcy inches forward. Stay well, stay safe.

***Moving Forward – Collectively Advocating***

Resolutions approved by the voting delegates:

Resolution #1 – Hastings - AAUW of Minnesota supports closing the academic opportunity gap for all students with a special emphasis on students of color and working toward greater awareness among AAUW of Minnesota’s membership and the greater community regarding existing educational disparity through advocating for greater financial and educational system access which would lead to better high school completion outcomes. Approve 86 Disapprove 5 Abstain 8

Resolution #2 – Ely - AAUW Branches will actively support and advocate for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment within Minnesota and nationally. Approve 92 Disapprove 1 Abstain 6

Resolution #3 – Ely - AAUW Minnesota actively supports and advocates for passage of the Paid Family and Medical Leave Act (House File 1200 and Senate File 1205) through the Minnesota State Legislature. Approve 83 Disapprove 2 Abstain 14

Note: Resolutions requires the approval of ¾ of eligible voters voting. 99 voters x ¾= 74.25

Also reported, during the Annual Meeting, was the vacancy of the position of VP Public Policy. As there were no nominees for the position and to eliminate any complications to the order of business in a virtual meeting environment, the AAUW MN board suspended the nominations from the floor portion of the by-laws. AAUW MN president, Mary Ann Lucas-Houx, then appointed me to continue in the Public Policy position for 2021-2022. A member has come forward who will shadow me during the time period. This may lead to a permanent solution. Meanwhile, I will serve two positions in 2021/22 – VP Public Policy and AAUW MN President-elect.

**PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE:**

The **MN legislative session** approved a number of bills which impact girls and women, minorities, educational opportunities and civil rights. Search here to find specific bills passed in the 2021 regular session. [Bill Search, Status, and MyBills - Minnesota State Legislature (mn.gov)](https://www.leg.mn.gov/leg/legis) The special session will focus on the state budget.

This photo compilation of MN female legislators appeared in the *Sunday* *Star Tribune, April 11, 2021*. Find your legislator, contact them and thank them for their support. Let them know their importance as women. It is imperative they serve to govern and advocate in the best interests of women and girls. They represent the most women to serve in Minnesota’s Legislature. Seventy-two (72) women are serving the MN Legislature, including the youngest women ever elected to the state Senate and the first Native American women to serve in that chamber.



**Nationally, the U.S. House** has passed numerous bills which address the inequities borne by women and minorities. But many have not been debated in the Senate. AAUW aggressively worked to advocate for passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act. Go to this chart to review the statements surveyed to formulate how each state currently views pay equity.

 [Pay Equity Laws Chart\_2020 for website (aauw.org)](https://www.aauw.org/app/uploads/2021/01/Pay-Equity-Laws-Chart_2020-for-website.pdf) Minnesota ranks 16th nationally and has a moderate rating. More can be done.

The AAUW Policy Center provides a list of all issues and AAUW’s stance on each issue. [Policy Center – AAUW : Empowering Women Since 1881](https://www.aauw.org/act/policy-center/#edu)

President Biden and his administration are working to reverse the former Presidential executive orders which were detrimental to women and girls; in the areas of Title IX, education, women’s health, etc.

Let us not forget the actions in many states, including MN, to suppress voting rights. It is insidious. Be vigilant at the grass roots level as voter ID conversations are prevalent. Do not forget Georgia …



I will continue to post updates as I received them and as State Public Policy Chairs meet monthly via ZOOM with the Washington staff.

Remember to sign-up for email postings from the Equity Network and receive Washington Updates. Go to: [Act Nationally – AAUW : Empowering Women Since 1881](https://www.aauw.org/act/national/) , signup at the bottom of the URL page.

Until the next AAUW MN Public Policy Update …

*Moving Forward – Collectively Advocating*