



The Pine Summer 2025

FROM THE DESK OF KELSEY WAITS, PRESIDENT

Last month's annual meeting was a wonderful reminder of the power of women, the importance of stories, and the strength of solidarity. It was exactly what I needed. I arrived at the meeting exhausted from the current news cycle but left with a renewed energy and an excitement to get back to work. I hope you felt the same. Thank you so much to the Austin branch for hosting an amazing annual meeting and thank you to the members from around the state who showed up and ensured its success.

As I said in my closing remarks, I am incredibly proud to be part of this amazing organization. When I first joined AAUW, I felt alone and isolated in our community. AAUW gave me hope when I most needed it and it continues to do so. In this political moment, when our long-fought wins for gender equity are being threatened; when words like racism, diversity, and disparities are being purged from the federal government; and when organizations with the power to fight back are instead choosing to be silent; AAUW has chosen a different path. We know now is not the time to compromise our values. It's the time to lean in and

boldly declare that we will not back away from this fight. We will not give up the human rights that we spent decades fighting for.

At our annual meeting, AAUW-MN delegates unanimously passed three resolutions. The first was a commitment to our ongoing support of a state Equal Rights Amendment. The second empowers AAUW-MN branches to work with local government officials to address critical needs in their communities given how federal funding is at risk for many of the programs that support AAUW's policy agenda. The third resolution calls on AAUW-MN branches to work toward fostering a sense of safety and support for LGBTQIA+ residents and visitors in their communities due to the current attacks these individuals are facing around the country. I encourage each of our members to read the resolutions in their entirety.

Our state's decision to be more vocal in this moment aligns closely with AAUW National's work. This month, AAUW members across the country voted overwhelmingly (95%) to amend our public policy priorities. These changes include endorsing Title IX regulations that provide increased support for student survivors of sexual harassment and assault, Title IX protections for LGBTQ+ students, clear articulation of support for inclusion of LGBTQ+ individuals in workplace and educational protections, recognition that the Equal Rights Amendment has met the constitutional requirements for ratification, and more. Coupled with the release of a new strategic plan that calls for "bold advocacy" that will position "AAUW as a leading voice in the fight for gender equity in higher education for generations to come."

National is working hard to give branches the advocacy tools they can use in their local communities, empowering each of us to meet the moment that we are in and leverage our collective power. I encourage you to think about which of AAUW's public policy priorities are the most important to your branch and connect with local organizations who are doing that work. Build partnerships, work together, organize for collective action. History has shown us that this is how change happens.

I'll leave you with a quote from Mother Jones that Mary Cathryn Ricker shared at the annual meeting: "pray for the dead and fight like hell for the living." In life it is

important for us to remember who we have lost while simultaneously advocating for social change and a more equitable society. I am proud to be a part of this work with AAUW. I hope that you are too.

FROM THE DESK OF BARB WONSON LIUKKONEN, AAUW FUNDS VP

Our fund raiser for AAUW Funds at our Austin annual meeting was a great success. Thanks to all the branches that brought items AND thanks to all who bid on the items!

Fifteen branches provided thirty-five (35) spectacular items for our meeting-goers to covet and bid on. We raised \$2660 for three AAUW Funds: the Economic Security Fund, Education and Training Fund, and our Leadership Fund. Remember, the Branch that brought an item received credit for, rather than the individual who was the high bidder. The credit will show up in your Branch's 2025 financial reports from the National Office and will contribute to your Branch's Named Gift Honoree totals for 2025.

In 2024, Minnesota raised \$81,856.90 for AAUW Funds. The list of all branch contributions, as well as the branches that received the Top Ten Total Contribution and the Top Ten Per Capita Contribution awards was printed in the meeting program. A link for that complete program will be sent to all members, so you can see what a great job you all did in fund raising last year.

We also printed the names of all the Named Gift Honorees recognized by each Branch, and the list of Minnesota's Legacy Circle members. Consider joining us a Legacy Circle member and make known the significance of AAUW in your life and your hopes for the future. If you want more information about the Legacy Circle, let me know and I'll help you figure out how to enroll.

2025 State Meeting Austin

Meeting Booklet is available on our website. Hormel Institute gave us fascinating speakers, comfortable seats, and great food. They send us this note.



The Hormel Institute was honored to meet the statewide delegation of AAUW in April. We extend our thanks to AAUW President Kelsey Waits and Sue Grove of Austin for their exceptional planning efforts.

Dr. Leena Hilakivi-Clarke and Dr. Annie Lin shared insightful research connections between diet, cancer risk, and the gut

microbiome, leading an engaging discussion.

We invite you to join our monthly e-newsletter for exclusive updates on the latest cancer research being conducted by our world-renowned team at The Hormel Institute.

Your support is so important to help forward answers to cancer and other diseases like Alzheimer's, leading to better health for one and all — we appreciate your advocacy!

A Movie You Will Not Want to Miss



There will be a Q & A with the director Maisie Crow after the film.

This is not a drill.

ZURAWSKI v TEXAS

Minnesota Women's organizations are sponsoring a screening of *Zurawski v. Texas*, a documentary produced by Jennifer Lawrence, Hillary and Chelsea Clinton highlighting the consequences of restrictive laws on women's health care.

Showings are on Wednesday July 16th 2025 at 3:30 PM & 7:00 PM at:

The Main Cinema, 115 SE Main Street MPLS. Tickets are available only through the QR code below or at: <https://bit.ly/aauwvfm>.

Tickets are a \$20 donation to The Reproductive Freedom Fund. A \$5 donation for students and others.



AAUW Launches New Strategic

AAUW National is excited to announce the launch of AAUW's new strategic plan, reaffirming our commitment to advancing equity for women and girls through education.

AAUW was founded more than 140 years ago with this mission, and with the unprecedented attacks we're seeing on higher education, we believe it is more important than ever to focus our efforts in this area.

AAUW's strength lies in our collective power — our states, branches, and members are the heart of our grassroots movement. States and branches provide meaningful local support for women and girls, and for the policies that matter to their communities. The Five-Star Program provides a framework for branches to align with AAUW's strategic priorities, reinforcing a cohesive and collective approach to advocacy, community engagement, and financial sustainability. When AAUW National and our branches work in alignment, we maximize our collective resources, influence, and success to break down barriers for women in education and beyond.



AAUW
Strategic Priorities:
Advancing Equity through
Higher Education
(2025 and Beyond).

Our Purpose

AAUW advances equity for women and girls by championing success in higher education — a vital pathway to economic security. For over 140 years, AAUW has led the fight for gender equity through advocacy, funding, and collective action.

Watch the program at <https://www.aauw.org/about/strategic-plan-2025/>

In a time of growing challenges to education access, AAUW must meet this moment. This strategic plan renews our commitment to higher education as the key to equity and empowers a stronger, unified movement to create lasting change. In summary we must advocate for

. Funding Higher Education

- Provide grants and fellowships for women in underserved communities and underrepresented fields like STEM.
- Support women in academia and research.
- Build networks for alumnae to lead and expand AAUW's impact globally.

2. Removing Barriers to Success in Education and the Workplace

- Champion legislation supporting paid family and medical leave, paid sick days, pay equity, and workplace harassment protections.
- Promote inclusive, safe, and accessible educational environments through enforcement of Title IX and other civil rights laws.

3. Strengthening AAUW's Reach

- Support an effective network of states and branches through aligned strategies and initiatives like the Five-Star Program.
- Grow organizational sustainability through member engagement and impact evaluation.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What does this shift mean for our K-12 work or other specific focus outside of higher education?

The strategic plan is meant to hone AAUW National's focus on advancing gender equity in higher education, which aligns with the work we set out to do at our founding and meets the current moment. AAUW National continues to support K-12 programming for girls through our Community Action Grant program. AAUW also relies on our AAUW branches, many of which work on K-12 issues in their communities. We view this as part of AAUW's overall impact – a compliment and alignment of branch and national work to create pipelines of success for women and girls. Branches are encouraged to continue with their K-12 initiatives as part of their mission-based work.

2. *Why are we prioritizing women in higher ed when women are already going to college at a higher rate than men?*

While it's true that overall, more women are currently enrolled in higher education institutions, there are many programs and fields where women remain underrepresented such as STEM, where women represent just 35% of graduates. Women also carry more student loan debt. Women of color, particularly, disproportionately face challenges to completion and success in higher education and remain underrepresented in corporate leadership positions. We are also in a moment where higher education is under attack, and believe we need to do everything we can to protect the progress we've made in advancing gender equity in higher education, while continuing to pave more pathways for women in higher education.

3. *At a time when we're seeing a rollback of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives in higher education, why are we choosing to focus on that area right now?*

It is precisely because of these attacks that we are doubling down on our commitment to advance gender equity in higher education. Given the rollback or ending of programs that support women's enrollment and achievement in higher education, our grants, fellowships, and advocacy are urgently needed. AAUW's roots have always been in higher education, and we are dedicated to continuing to be a leader in the space.

4. *How is this plan different from the work we're already doing?*

The purpose of the strategic plan is to focus our work at the national level and to better align AAUW National and the branches in order to have the greatest impact. By centering our work in higher education, we are recommitting to the mission AAUW was founded on and ensuring we are functioning in the best way to serve this mission.

5. *How are we going to continue this work for future generations when our average member is over sixty?*

Our strategic plan was developed with the express goal of bringing in new members who can continue our growth and impact, including younger women. Through National and branch alignment and a focus on mission-based work, AAUW National and branches will have the opportunity to better reach more women to achieve our equity goals.

6. What happens if a branch isn't able to meet these new requirements?

The Five-Star Program provides a clear framework for branches to align with AAUW's strategic priorities, reinforcing a cohesive and collective approach to advocacy, local community engagement and financial sustainability. Branches that struggle to meet these requirements will be supported in a variety of ways from AAUW National, their state affiliate (if applicable) and member peers. Our intention is to work with all branches to ensure they meet the requirements and contribute to our collective impact.

7. What happens if a branch does not complete the mandatory survey?

We would like to have 100% participation from branches in our survey. Participation is important for AAUW National to better understand what different branches are focused on and to support greater alignment between national and branch efforts. If a branch is not able to complete it, we will work with them and their state leadership to ensure that we can get the information that we need.

8. How can I be sure my concerns are reaching the right people at AAUW?

At AAUW National, the feedback of members and branches is incredibly important to us. We invite you to share your feedback and thoughts to executive@aauw.org or connect@aauw.org. Liaison calls will also continue to be a space where you can bring your questions and feedback, and AAUW National has regular calls with state presidents to brief them on our work and hear from them about the issues that matter most to their state. We also encourage you to reach out to your state board. While we can't implement every suggestion, we deeply appreciate hearing from you and take your thoughts into consideration as we advance our shared mission.

9. Does the focus on higher education mean AAUW is no longer committed to open membership?

AAUW National is steadfastly committed to eliminating the degree requirement for membership. The intention behind open membership is to make AAUW a place where all people who wish to help advance our mission are welcome to join, and our focus on higher education does not change this goal.

10. How do we provide more support for undergraduate students?

AAUW's advocacy work helps women at all levels of education as well as in the workplace. With this strategic plan, we envision branch-level efforts to support undergraduate women complementing AAUW National's focus on graduate-level work. Moving forward and with greater resources, we hope to engage Student Associates and develop undergraduate programming more broadly across AAUW.

11. Is AAUW no longer committed to Pay Equity?

AAUW remains committed to pay equity, which is one of the inclusive policies we support to remove barriers to success in higher education and the workplace. We will continue to offer our salary negotiation and financial literacy programs to students, staff, and faculty at our C/U member campuses. At the same time, aligned with our strategic plan, our policy and advocacy work will focus heavily on policies directly related to higher education, as well as defending the Department of Education and its programs.

12. Is AAUW no longer committed to Leadership:?

Due to funding constraints, AAUW phased out direct service leadership programming for the public over the last few years. We remain committed to advancing women's leadership in academia, which is supported by several of our fellowship programs.

13. Is AAUW no longer committed to Research?

AAUW has and will continue to be committed to timely, effective and impactful research. Research is indeed embedded in our mission statement. Our commitment to research is best demonstrated by our support of women through our Fellowships and Grants. We also continue to produce research like the Simple Truth, which was updated this year. AAUW will invest in research

when funding is available and are primarily focused on short, timely and relevant pieces that speak to our policy priorities.

FROM THE DESK OF JAN CAREY, VP PUBLIC POLICY

It has been a privilege to have served two terms plus this past year as AAUW MN VP Public Policy. I leave with confidence knowing members will move forward and collectively advocate the mission of AAUW and complete its Strategic Plan goals.

One important Strategic Plan goal was to establish coalitions and partners. Four years ago, when I was invited to serve on the ERAMN Advisory Group, AAUW MN achieved awareness to organizations who barely knew anything about AAUW. In return, I networked with dozens of MN organizations advocating women's rights. Our partner in League of Women Voters has historically been aligned. But over the years waned. That is no more. In coalition and support, many issues are being advanced.

May be continue to seek additional coalitions and demonstrate to others AAUW MN is a willing partner in the quest to advance equity for women and girls and secure existing rights.

Moving beyond AAUW MN Strategic Plan goals, a review of Resolutions will indicate other work of public policy that has been neglected. Every Resolution that is passed during an Annual meeting, requires an implementation process. Members should know the board and the public policy VP will work to inform and assist members and branches in the execution of each Resolution's intent.

To the Resolutions passed at the recent Annual Meeting, MN State Branches will:

- continue to encourage members to contact their Senators and Representatives to support passing the ERA;
- work with state and local governments to identify and address funding gaps that threaten to interrupt or reverse progress made in support of AAUW's policy agenda; and
- work toward fostering a sense of safety and support for LGBTQIA+ residents and visitors in their communities.

Recent and past Resolutions will be addressed and recognized as critical stances by AAUW MN and its members.

I thank you again for the opportunity to have served in this capacity for AAUW MN. The opportunity now rests with the next VP Public Policy. I also leave with confidence knowing that Liz Mahan will guide members and ensure public policy priorities are met.

As I've stated before, I implore branch public policy leaders to inform and organize members to advocate.

Thank you and best wishes!

What Branches Are Doing This Summer

Brainerd's last program for 2025 is Saturday, June 7, 2025 – 10:30 am What's Involved in Managing a Library with Author Laurel Hall

Brainerd is reading: Someone Else's Shoes by Jojo Moyes

Hibbing is reading: June, 24 Fever In The Heartland by Timotheer Egan

St. Cloud is reading:

June 19: Creation Lake by Rachel Kushner

July 24: All the Beauty in the World by Patrick Bringley

August 28: The Book of Longing by Susan Monk Kidd

St Paul holds its Mystery Book Club May 27, June 24, July 22, August 26 and holds its Tea on 19th of August.

Plan Ahead

AAUW NORTHLAND GATHERING 2025

Saturday, October 4, 2025

Grand Rapids Methodist Church

1701 SE 5th Avenue

Grand Rapids, MN 55744

WATCH FOR MORE DETAILS TO COME!