

## Public Policy Priorities



The mission of AAUW Washington is to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research. Nationally, AAUW is the leading voice promoting equity and education for women and girls. Since our founding in 1923, AAUW members across Washington State have examined and taken positions on the fundamental issues of the day — educational, social, economic, and political. Thus we believe in the separation of church and state. We support a fair, balanced, and independent judiciary. We oppose all forms of discrimination and support policies that improve racial, ethnic, and gender diversity. AAUW Washington's vision as manifested through our public policy priorities strives to break down the barriers that impede equity for women and girls.

### Public Policy Priorities 2016-18

1. Provide ample funding for basic education within a public education system that promotes postsecondary access. Therefore we support:
  - a. the McCleary decision requiring the legislature to comprise a budget that fully funds basic education and does not rely on local school levies
  - b. fair, competitive compensation and professional development for teachers
  - c. practical strategies, practices, programs, and activities that promote increased rates of postsecondary success, transfer, and graduation
  - d. a strong system of public education that advocates for and access to higher education for women and other disadvantaged populations in STEM fields
  - e. Title IX's efforts to prohibit sex-based discrimination in education and athletics
2. Protect access to and improve comprehensive reproductive health care. Therefore we support:
  - a. programs and policies that entrust every woman with the ability to make her own informed choices regarding her reproductive life within the dictates of her own moral and religious beliefs
  - b. health insurance benefits & access to the full spectrum of contraception & reproductive health services
3. Promote economic security and gender equity in the workplace. Therefore we support:
  - a. access to paid sick and safe leave
  - b. a living wage by raising the minimum wage
  - c. eliminating the pay gap for women, especially women of color
  - d. programs and training for women to negotiate equitable salaries
  - e. programs and training for increased representation of women in leadership roles
  - f. the adoption of a balanced State budget that balances individual rights and responsibility to community within an equitable tax system that will provide a stable source of funds
4. Protect women and girls from violence. Therefore we support:
  - a. programs and activities which work to eradicate human trafficking
  - b. campus-based strategies and activities that address violence prevention and early intervention
  - c. increased transparency and reporting processes about incidents of violence, victim's rights, and established standards for disciplinary actions



Basic to all of AAUW-WA's public policy efforts is the understanding that true equity requires a balance between the rights of the individual and the needs of the community. We firmly believe in the separation of church and state. We support a fair, balanced, and independent judiciary. We oppose all forms of discrimination, and we support affirmative action to improve racial, ethnic, and gender diversity. We affirm our commitment to passage and ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.

AAUW-WA supports constitutional protection for the civil rights of all individuals, including the right to privacy, and we believe in choice in the determination of one's reproductive life.

AAUW-WA believes that quality public education is the foundation of a democratic society. We advocate equity, academic freedom, protection from censorship, bias-free education, and responsible, ample, and stable state funding for all levels of education. We advocate high quality, accessible, comprehensive public education at all levels, early childhood through post-secondary, including programs that support lifelong learning and meet the needs of women re-entering the workforce. We advocate the right of citizens to be informed and involved in the goals, policies and operations of all public education institutions with school boards, trustees and regents being fully accountable to the public. We advocate for well-educated, fairly compensated and highly competent teaching professionals and high quality, innovative professional training programs.

AAUW-WA promotes the economic, social, and physical well-being of all persons. Essential to that well-being are an economy that provides equitable employment opportunities; a livable wage; reduction of poverty; quality affordable dependent care; paid family and medical leave; decent and affordable housing; and accessible affordable quality health care. Critical to the well-being of all persons are freedom from violence and a clean and healthful environment. We support public budgets that balance individual rights and responsibility to community, and a tax system that will provide a stable source of public funds and produce over-all equity in the distribution of tax burdens. We support meaningful campaign finance reform that will promote equitable participation and representation and public disclosure of finances of elected and appointed officials and candidates.

AAUW-WA values and is committed to the arts and humanities, which develop and enhance our pluralistic cultural heritage.

#### **AAUW-WA Public Policy Priorities – Approved for 2014-2016**

**AAUW (The American Association of University Women) advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, research and philanthropy. AAUW of Washington State is a champion of equal rights for women and girls and for quality education in Washington State.**

**We support State legislation and budgets that:**

Provide ample funding of Basic Education as required by the McCleary Decision

- Improve access to postsecondary education
- Protect access to comprehensive reproductive health care
- Provide access to paid sick and safe leave
- Promote pay equity
- Support programs and activities which work to eradicate human trafficking

We support public budgets that balance individual rights and responsibility to community, and a tax system that will provide a stable source of public funds and produce over-all equity in the distribution of tax burdens.