



A CALL TO
ACTION: PUBLIC
POLICY
OBJECTIVES
FOR LOCAL
BRANCHES

WHAT WILL YOUR BRANCH DO?



A CALL TO ACTION: PUBLIC POLICY OBJECTIVES FOR LOCAL BRANCHES

- Why public policy and new forms of activism are important
 - To strengthen democracy through citizen involvement
 - Because women’s empowerment requires state activism on their behalf
 - *Discrimination in private and public institutions cannot be remedied without feminist laws*
 - *Fighting workplace discrimination is an ongoing task*
 - *The public sector affects women’s lives drastically—strong, equitable public schools give girls and women the tools for economic wellbeing; women are disproportionately employed in the public sector (teachers, social workers, clerical, librarians); protecting women from all forms of violence requires law enforcement institutions to be held to high standards*



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

- Bills passed

- Forbidding employers to inquire about an applicant's salary history
- Employers in certain service occupations must provide a sexual harassment policy, train managers and employees, and provide a panic button in certain locations
- Reproductive Health Access for All Act would expand existing law to ensure reproductive health access for all people, specifically including immigrant and transgender communities
- Law enforcement must adopt best practices regarding rape kits and investigations. After Jan. 1, 2021, all rape kits must be tested within 45 days. Requires hospitals to help survivors locate rape kits if none are available at the hospital.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

- **I-1000.** An initiative to the legislature would require restoring affirmative action to remedy discrimination. **PASSED.**

Now being challenged by Referendum 88 which will be on the ballot in November. Branch members should write op-eds and letters to the editor.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

- Bills carried over
 - HB 1123 would waive first two years' tuition for students enrolled in degree or certificate programs at community and technical colleges. In House Appropriations committee
 - SJR 8201 would reduce requirement for passage of school bond issues from 60 to 50%--failed to get 2/3 vote in committee. Focus actions on this committee.
 - SB 5143 allows police to remove guns from domestic violence perpetrators and to retain them for five days. In Senate Rules Committee "X" File.
 - SB 5142 requires a certain proportion (10-15%) of women on corporate boards. In Senate Law and Justice Committee.
 - House Bill 1998 would create a task force on sexual assault (not on our 2019 Lobby Day list), in House Rules Committee for third reading after passing the Senate.



PUBLIC POLICY IS MORE THAN LOBBY DAY

Year-round lobbying--build relationships with your legislators and meet with them outside of the legislative session

- Invite them to speak before your branch
- Schedule constituent meetings with a focused agenda (including ideas for bills you would like to see or problems that require a legislative solution); this does not always have to be under the auspices of AAUW (it requires prior approval for us to lobby for specific bills)
- Encourage members to communicate regularly with their legislators—post contact information on your branch website
- Monitor your legislators’ votes on key bills; keep a scorecard
- Report your experiences to other branches; write for the Evergreen Leader



ENGAGE IN OTHER FORMS OF ACTIVISM

- Become a two-minute activist
- Write letters to the editor, op-eds
- Focus programs on public policy issues and activities
- Hold public meetings to advance AAUW goals (strengthening public schools, promoting gender equity in all institutions, empowering women economically)
- Become experts on one or more issues (use national AAUW and other resources); testify before the legislature on behalf of AAUW



FOLLOW UP ON OUR ISSUES

- Meet with employers to encourage equitable practices under Washington law
- Rape kit laws require action by local law enforcement to ensure that those identified are brought to justice
- See “An Epidemic of Disbelief,”
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/08/an-epidemic-of-disbelief/592807/>
- This study found the cities given money for rape kit testing usually did not follow through on the results because police and prosecutors believe women are liars. As a result, rapists were free to assault again and again. Two cities—Cleveland and Detroit—investigated and convicted hundreds of rapists, many of them serial rapists. They also found that men who committed acquaintance rape sometime also committed stranger rape

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