



## Public Policy Principles and Priorities

**Our AAUW-WA Mission:** To provide leadership and training to invigorate and inform local branches and affiliates, and to advocate as one voice to achieve our national mission and state objectives.

We support the AAUW mission which is to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research. AAUW and AAUW-WA believe that democratic participation in governance and equal rights, benefits, and opportunities in all institutions of society—economic, social, educational, health, and political—are fundamental to women's empowerment and public well-being. For that reason we:

- ✓ oppose all forms of discrimination,
- ✓ support policies that improve racial, ethnic, and gender diversity
- ✓ believe in the separation of church and state, and
- ✓ support a fair, balanced, and independent judiciary

The AAUW National 2019-2021 priorities include:

- ✓ Support for a strong system of public education that promotes gender fairness, equity, diversity and inclusivity, and that eliminates the barriers and implicit biases that hinder the advancement of women and girls,
- ✓ Access to high-quality healthcare
- ✓ The achievement of economic security for all women, and
- ✓ The guarantee of equality, individual rights, and social justice for a diverse and inclusive society.

For decades AAUW members across Washington State have examined and taken positions on the fundamental issues of the day. Basic to all of AAUW-WA's public policy efforts is the understanding that true equity requires women's empowerment as individuals and structural support for their full participation as responsible members of their communities.

Democratic political processes are crucial to women's empowerment in public and private life. For that reason, we support strong protection for the right to vote and meaningful campaign finance reforms. These will elevate the voices of all citizens and therefore promote a government that represents the popular will and general interest more fully.

**Therefore, our Public Policy Priorities are:**

1. A strong system of public K-12 and higher education that:
  - a. Promotes a broadly based education that includes STEM education at all levels
  - b. Ensures equal access to that education for girls and women and underrepresented populations
  - c. Provides training for careers that provide a living wage
  - d. Reduces the costs of higher education
  - e. Promotes research and education on women's status, health, and social contributions.
2. Economic security and gender and racial equity in the workplace that includes:
  - a. Access to ample paid sick and personal leave
  - b. Pay equity and a minimum wage that supports economic independence for all workers
  - c. Workplace equity and protection from discrimination
  - d. Affordable child care so that women can enjoy rewarding work and look forward to a comfortable retirement
  - e. Student loan debt forgiveness.
3. A healthcare system that:
  - a. Provides affordable and accessible reproductive, prenatal and postpartum medical services
  - b. Removes gender, racial and other disparities in health access, treatment, and outcomes.
4. Adoption of a state budget that:
  - a. Fully funds basic education
  - b. Does not rely on local school levies
  - c. Is based on an equitable tax system that will provide a stable source of funds for necessary state programs and services while creating systemic fairness in the distribution of tax burdens.
5. Protection of women and girls from sexual harassment, assault, and physical violence through legislation that:
  - a. Establishes Title IX compliant campus-based strategies and programs that provide protection from violence and safeguard survivors' right to a safe educational environment.
  - b. Provides increased transparency about reporting incidents of violence, securing victims' rights to respectful treatment and effective legal redress, and establishes fair standards for disciplinary actions in educational institutions.
  - c. Provides medical examinations and victim support to survivors of domestic violence or sexual assault
  - d. Restricts access to guns for perpetrators of domestic violence.
  - e. Provides resources and legal tools to enable women to leave abusers safely.