The public policy program underscores AAUW's mission of promoting equity and education for all women and girls. The work of AAUW builds upon a century of responsible public participation at the local, state, national, and international levels. AAUW is committed to working in partnership with diverse allies.

The following principles provide a basis for AAUW members' actions at the local, state, and federal levels. Implicit in each is support for government agencies administering programs, including adequate appropriations, effective administration, and provision for citizen participation. We work to increase the number of underrepresented populations, including women, in policy-making positions.

Public Policy Principles for Action

Basic to all of AAUW'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 believe in the separation of church and state.

AAUW supports constitutional protection for the civil rights of all individuals, including the right to privacy. We oppose all forms of discrimination. We support affirmative action as a remedy for past discrimination. We affirm our commitment to passage and ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.

AAUW 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 funding for all levels of education. We advocate increased access to higher education, especially for women in poverty.

AAUW promotes the economic, social, and physical well-being of all persons. Essential to that well-being are an economy that provides equitable employment opportunities, reduction of poverty, quality dependent care, paid family and medical leave, decent housing, and quality affordable health care; freedom from violence; and a clean and healthful environment. We support public budgets that balance individual rights and responsibility to community. We support meaningful campaign finance reform that will promote equitable participation and representation.

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

AAUW believes that global interdependence requires national and international policies that promote peace, justice, human rights, sustainable development, and mutual security for all people. We advocate public discussion to ensure enlightened decisions on these issues. We support a strengthened United Nations and its affiliated agencies. We advocate implementation of the Platform for Action from the 4th World Conference on Women. We affirm our commitment to the


Biennial Action Priorities

Biennial priorities for federal action are chosen according to the criteria of viability, critical need, strong member support, and potential for distinctive AAUW contribution.

To support a strong system of public education that promotes gender fairness, equity, and diversity, AAUW advocates

- Adequate and equitable funding for quality public education for all students
- Opposition to the use of public funds for nonpublic elementary and secondary education
- Vigorous enforcement of Title IX and all other civil rights laws pertaining to education
- Protection of programs that meet the needs of girls in elementary and secondary education
- Increased support for, and access to, higher education for women and other disadvantaged populations

To achieve economic self-sufficiency for all women, AAUW advocates

- Fairness in compensation
- Equitable access and advancement in employment
- Vigorous enforcement of employment anti-discrimination statutes
- Greater availability of and access to quality, affordable dependent care
- Programs that provide women with education, training, and support for success in the work force
- Strengthening programs, including welfare, to improve postsecondary education access, career development, and earning potential
- Social Security and Medicare reform that guarantees improved retirement security for women and all low-wage workers

To guarantee equality, individual rights, and social justice for a diverse society, AAUW advocates

- Vigorous protection of and full access to civil and constitutional rights
- Choice in the determination of one's reproductive life
- Freedom from violence and fear of violence in homes, schools, workplaces, and communities
- Expansion of health rights for women, families, and children
- Support for U.N. programs that address human rights and women's and girls' concerns