

Proposed AAUW- Montana Public Policy Program, 2016-2018

To support a strong system of PUBLIC EDUCATION that promotes gender fairness, equity, and diversity, AAUW-Montana advocates:

- Adequate and equitable funding for quality public education for all students with full funding of mandated programs.
- Increased support for and access to higher education.
- Promotion and protection of academic freedom.
- Vigorous enforcement of Title IX.
- Public school programs that focus on the educational needs of all women and girls for career preparation, the full participation of girls in science, math and technology programs, and training in diversity for all students.
- Community and school programs that ensure that schools are safe for all students, regardless of race, creed, disability, and, especially, sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.
- Utilization and acceptance of federal funds for special programs and needs.
- Funding for the education of gifted and talented students.
- Funding for educational and scientific research.
- Funding for and access to arts, reading and writing programs for both boys and girls in all levels of public education.
- Censorship or the release of personally identifiable information of the reading or research activities of users of school libraries and classrooms with the standards of the Office of Public Instruction.
- Vigorous implementation and full funding of Montana's constitutionally mandated (American) "Indian Education for All" educational requirements.
- Continued state reimbursement of full day kindergarten.
- Support the expansion of state funding of the Early Start Pre-School Program.
- Establishment of and support for a state-level college loan forgiveness program.

And opposes:

- The use of public monies to fund private educational alternatives.
- Censorship or the release of personally identifiable information of the reading or research activities of users of school libraries and classrooms.

To guarantee EQUALITY AND INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS for a diverse society, AAUW-Montana advocates:

- Affirmative action, elimination of all forms of discrimination, and inclusion of protection from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression in the Montana Human Rights Act and in institutional, municipal, and county policies.
- Gender balance, racial parity, and representation of low income levels in appointments to state boards and committees.
- Accessible health care services and affordable insurance coverage for all Montanans
- Self-determination in one's reproductive life, access to full reproductive health care services, and protection of privacy in one's health and reproductive choices.
- Reforming hate crime statutes to include coverage of gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation.
- Freedom from violence, harassment, and intimidation in homes, schools, workplaces, and communities.
- Programs that address the underlying causes of crime, violence, and abuse.
- Eradication of sexual harassment and bullying through training programs, policy development, and enforcement policies in the community, workplace, and educational institutions.
- Strong support for access to affordable legal services at local, state, and national levels.
- Vigorous defense of civil and constitutional rights.
- Protection of victims of sex and human trafficking and increased investigation of and reporting on sex and human trafficking in Montana.

And opposes:

- Efforts to limit civil rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.
- Unwarranted governmental surveillance on individual citizens.
- Legislation, referenda, initiatives, and constitutional amendments that establish "personhood" at any time prior to birth.

- Legislation, referenda, initiatives, and constitutional amendments that limit or restrict access to voting.
- Legislation, referenda, initiatives, and constitutional amendments addressing immigration that create unreasonable requirements for proof of citizenship or limit access to public education and basic health and safety programs.
- Legislation, referenda, initiatives and constitutional amendments that unreasonably limit or restrict refugees.

To achieve ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY FOR ALL WOMEN, AAUW-Montana advocates:

- Prohibition of employment discrimination to ensure equitable access to, equal pay for, and advancement in employment.
- Vigorous enforcement of anti-discrimination and equal pay statutes, including Montana's 1983 Comparable Worth Legislation.
- Access to high quality, affordable dependent care.
- Programs that provide women with education, training, and support for success in the workforce.
- Programs that improve access to post-secondary education, career development, child care, and increased earning potential for persons making the transition from public assistance to self- sufficiency.
- State funding for welfare and unemployment programs.
- Measures to ensure legal recognition and financial benefits for unpaid work.
- State support of small and micro businesses.
- Affordable housing.
- Protection of environmental quality.
- Development and maintenance of adequate infrastructure in MT.
- Tax policy that provides for funding of essential state services.
- Protection from predatory lending practices.

And opposes:

- Weakening or eliminating the state's non-gender insurance laws.
- Any laws, referenda, or initiatives that, in the name of tax relief, result in the reduction or elimination of government programs and services for women, children, and the poor.

D. To promote the ARTS and HUMANITIES, AAUW-Montana advocates:

- Adequate funding of cultural and aesthetic projects, public radio, public television, and public organizations which support the arts and humanities, including but not limited to the Montana Arts Council, the Montana Committee for the Humanities, Montana State Library System and the Montana Historical Society.
- Adequate funding for basic research in the arts and humanities.

And opposes:

All forms of censorship of the arts.

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS, 2016–2018

Resolution #1

Opposition to All Efforts to Suppress Voting in Montana.

Montana has an enviable reputation for its open registration laws which especially work to the benefit of women and residents of rural counties. Same day registration ensures that citizens who have difficulty getting to their county courthouses will still be able to participate fully in our democracy.

Therefore, be it resolved that AAUW-Montana oppose all efforts at voter suppression.

To implement this resolution, AAUW-Montana will work in coalition with other organizations to educate their members about this issue and to join local coalitions in opposition to voter suppression.

Resolution #2

Support for Development and Implementation of Policies against Sexual Violence on Campus.

Montana has been in the center of the recent controversy over campus policies and actions re sexual assault and violence on campuses. During the last four years, AAUW has been one of the organizations at the forefront of addressing this issue. AAUW wrote a letter urging the regents' to adopt best practices and training across the MT University System. State AAUW leadership has also spoken at two regent's meetings. In response, new federal guidelines and regulations have been issued and distributed to campuses. Now, each campus is responsible for developing and implementing policies in keeping with the new guidelines and regulations.

AAUW supports legislation to change the statutes on sexual assault. The new language is proposing to delete a requirement to prove force in sexual assaults and replace it with a requirement to obtain consent for sexual acts. This work is happening now in the Law and Justice Legislative Interim Committee and will be presented to the MT Legislature in 2017 from this committee. This change will reflect national best practices.

Therefore, be it resolved that AAUW-MT Board of Directors urges all MT AAUW branches to ask legislative candidates about their support of this proposed change in statute language re sexual assault and violence on MT campuses. Also, each AAUW branch is strongly encouraged to educate their members and the public about this change.

To implement this resolution, the AAUW-MT will work in coalition with other organizations as well as the MT Board of Regents and the MT university campuses to educate and encourage their support of the legislation to be presented to the 2017 MT legislature.

Resolution 3

Continue support of Montana's Medicaid Expansion Program—HELP (Health & Economic Livelihood Partnership).

The 2015 Montana Legislature passed the HELP Act to ensure all eligible consumers are enrolled in and have access to quality health care, regardless of location in Montana.

By April 2016, 42,166 people have now enrolled in HELP to improve their lives and health. Because of HELP 5,100 Native Americans (12% of the enrollment) will now have a choice for their health care.

Therefore, be it resolved that AAUW -MT will support the HELP Act and will oppose measures to decrease this program.

To implement this resolution, AAUW-MT will work in coalition with other organizations for the expansion of HELP and will educate their members and communities about the need for quality health care.

Resolution 4

Support efforts to close the Gender Wage Gap and establish Equal Pay for all.

Montana currently ranks 43th in the United States in terms of paying women the same as men. Montana women, working full time, currently earn 74% of what working men make, Native American women 49%, Africa American women 61%, and Hispanic women 54%.

Therefore, be it resolved that AAUW-MT will work to established Equal Pay for all.

To implement this resolution, Montana AAUW will support the Governor's Equal Pay Summit and the National Equal Pay Day.

Establish Start Smart workshops on the campuses of the Montana universities and colleges to educate college women to better negotiate for salaries and benefits.

Support Senate Bill 158, the Paycheck Fairness Act.

Resolution 5

Support efforts to increase the minimum wage in Montana

The current minimum was in Montana is \$8.05 an hour. This is inadequate pay even for those individual who work 40-hours per week.

Therefore, be it resolved that AAUW-MT will continue to support state and federal legislation to increase the minimum wage, incrementally based on the cost of living index, as defined by federal guidelines.

To implement this resolution, AAUW-MT members will monitor state and federal legislation and lobby in support of increasing the hourly minimum wage, in tandem with increases in the salary threshold for overtime exemption.