

BADGER BRIEFS



Volume 83 No 3

February 2026

FORWARD

EMPOWER



CONNECT

INSPIRE

Wisconsin 105th State Convention

April 17 - 18, 2026

DoubleTree by Hilton Madison East

This issue of Badger Briefs is filled with information about the upcoming State Convention. Be sure to keep reading to find out more.

The 2026 AAUW-WI Convention will be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Madison East on Friday, April 17 and Saturday, April 18. It opens at 1:00 p.m. on Friday and ends at 3:00p.m. on Saturday. For additional information, please click on this link:

<https://aauw-wi.aauw.net/convention/>

The registration form will be live on the site. Convention registration will be done online, with a choice of paying fees either online, or by sending a check in the mail.



**Judge Janet C.
Protasiewicz**

**“A Behind the Scenes
View of The Wisconsin
Supreme Court”**



Melissa LaDuke, PhD

**Vice Chair, National
AAUW Board
of Directors**

**“The Future of AAUW:
Updates from the
National Office”**



Jessica Calarco

**Professor of Sociology,
UW-Madison**

**“Holding It Together: How
Women Became
America’s Safety Net”**

Keynote Speakers and other Convention '26 Information

The convention planning committee is pleased to announce that convention will begin with a welcome from our state president Deb Thiel, as well as a message from Wisconsin’s Governor Tony Evers.

Concurrent sessions will feature topics such as the Good and Bad of Artificial Intelligence, LGBTQ+ Families, Careers of the future, and a panel discussion with three Wisconsin State Legislators.

Traditional convention activities, such as tri-board displays from each branch and a fundraising silent auction, will be included.

On Friday morning, a Wisconsin State Capitol tour is available, or a documentary film touring our capitol. See the public policy article for more information about the capitol tour.

Visit <https://aauw-wi.aauw.net/convention/> to find out everything you need to know about convention. **Registration is open through the website.**

Just Can’t be Silent about the 2026 Convention Silent Auction!!

It’s time to do a little shouting about the Annual State Convention Silent Auction. Our Wisconsin branches have been asked to contribute a basket or other item, valued at \$50 or more, for this fun event. Individual members may, of course, also contribute an auction item. Please submit your form by March 27 to ensure your basket information and photo will be posted in the Silent Auction Gallery



**Special Guest
Miss Wisconsin 2025
Willow Newell
“Promoting Inclusion
through Stories and
Song”**

The fun starts even before the Convention begins, with baskets and items donated to the auction available to be viewed on the AAUW Wisconsin State website (<https://aauw-wi.aauw.net/>). No bids will be taken on the website, but it’s fun to scope out the bidding possibilities. The Silent Auction officially begins at 1:00 PM on Convention Opening Day, April 17 and will end at noon on the 18th. We are looking forward to a lively AAUW Wisconsin fundraiser for National’s Greatest Needs Fund.

Have questions?

Contact: Chris Taylor, Wisconsin V.P.
Funds Development

taylor.christine50@gmail.com

President's Message - Spring 2026 - Deb Thiel

State board members continue to work very hard, accomplishing some wonderful things. In doing this work, we find that the energy and time given to AAUW efforts buoys our souls through these trying times. We serve as the glue and voice of reason in our communities. There are many opportunities to get involved. Action is the elixir for regaining hope and energy.



Encouraging news, the Dido Nash memorial fund collected \$2000, which will help kickstart and fund the efforts of our STEM/Student Empowerment Committee. What a great way to honor Dido's legacy as an educator and mentor. [Donations](#) can continue to be made on our Web page. See Pat Phillips' article on the next page to find out more about the Empowering Student Leadership STEM grants.

Remember our decision to offer virtual branch membership at the State level? We will need to adjust our bylaws to accomplish that, so join our annual business meeting to garner authorization. Shout out to members of District 1 (Beaver Dam, Fort Atkinson, Greater Madison Area, and Janesville) who got together in early December, drafting a wonderful proposal for expanded criteria and the definition of "education equivalency" for AAUW membership. Many of us know wonderful potential AAUW members who may not meet the traditional definition of an advanced degree. We are submitting a pilot proposal to AAUW National for consideration.

Our national office staff and board are really working on all fronts these days in advocacy. It's tough to keep up, ask an AAUW question online and find a toolkit, webinar, etc. from which you will learn something. Your branch's engagement and response to annual surveys and participation nationally is very important. Check out how our past is being preserved: [A Century of Advocacy, Fundraising & Impact](#) Our legacy will certainly help to inform women of the future and measure our progress. Time for planning your April 17-18 trip to Madison, and our State Capital! CONVENTION is for EVERYONE. I'm challenging each branch to show up in record numbers and bring your friends! Anyone bringing a friend to convention will have a chance to drop your name into a box at the registration desk. A lucky member will receive a \$40 Penzey's gift card.

Engage in your annual business meeting and drive our policies and priorities. Meet your friends, learn what's happening and enjoy being part of the action! As it'll be my last official duty, I'd love to see you all! Come support Carole Salinas in her new role as your incoming State President!



Pop-Up Museum Coming to Convention!

AAUW-Wisconsin is now 106 years old, and a lot has happened in the organization since 1920. Obviously, we can't share all the milestones but a small collection of some of the most interesting activities, events, and leaders will be on display. Please stop by and learn a little bit about what came before and plan to be inspired by the leadership, creativity and hard work that brought us to where we are now.

Carol S. Surges
AAUW-WI Historian

Membership Report

Greetings and Welcome to 2026! We are into February, the second month of the new year, and have survived a bitterly cold January with lots of snow. Winter is now on the downhill slide, and there is more daylight. I know my mood improves with the extra light and knowing that spring is returning in 41 days!!

As of 02/06/2026, AAUW WI has experienced growth in membership numbers. The current total membership stands at 1,408, an increase of 9 members since the board meeting on January 24. The state is on track to surpass Illinois in total membership. As a reminder, Carol Surges, who ended her term as Membership VP this past summer, issued a challenge for each branch to add 1 or 2 members. This would move total AAUW WI membership ahead of total Illinois membership and into the top 5 states.

Congratulations to all the branches that have added members! Kudos to all of you on your recruitment efforts.
On Wisconsin!

Thank you to the branch Membership and Financial VPs who reviewed their branch roster before the February 1 deadline, when national takes the membership count. I heard from many of you that you completed this task and answered questions about the February 1 count. The results will be available in mid-March. I plan on updating all of you with a report at the convention.

An essential piece of information in the January Membership Matters is that dues will increase by \$2.00 for FY26-27. The dues will be National - \$76.00, WI state - \$13.00, plus your branch dues. For many branches, the cost to renew for existing members will be over \$100. The Shape the Future program will be available to new members, reducing the dues they need to pay to join, which is helpful. There has been no information from the national office on whether this will be an annual occurrence. Speaking as a Sheboygan branch member, I foresee that even this slight increase may be prohibitive for some members to renew. I welcome all thoughts and ideas about the change.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the convention in April,

Judy Hangartner
Membership VP



Pat Phillips, STEM and Student Empowerment

AAUW Community Action Grants: Empowering Leadership in STEM

AAUW branches are uniquely positioned to catalyze change in local communities. Their connections, knowledge, and passion make them powerful advocates for girls in STEM. That's why AAUW National is offering up to \$10,000 in dedicated funding to support the implementation of innovative STEM programs for girls in grades K-12.

This initiative reflects AAUW's commitment to advancing gender equity in STEM by increasing opportunities for girls. Girls bring unique skills and perspectives to the table, and by investing in their development in STEM, AAUW helps build a stronger, more innovative, and more resilient STEM landscape for the future.

This program is designed to help:

- **Bring STEM to life in their communities:** Support engaging, hands-on learning experiences that spark girls' interest and build their confidence in STEM.
- **Expand local impact:** Reach more girls or deepen engagement with those already being served.
- **Showcase commitment:** Demonstrate AAUW's mission in action through visible, impactful initiatives.
- **Tap into a community of organizations and leaders:** Collaborate with others dedicated to advancing gender equity in STEM.

There are three rounds of grant reviews each year. **Round 3 closes on March 31.** For more details, see www.aauw.org/resources/programs/aauw-branch-and-state-affiliate-community-action-grants/

Applications Are Open for NCCWSL Scholarships



Jan Eriksen
VP-Leadership

NCCWSL is the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders. The 2026 conference will be held at the University of Maryland-College Park (just outside Washington, DC), May 27-30. AAUW-Wisconsin is offering five \$1,000 scholarships to cover conference registration, lodging and meals, and airfare. Some branches will also sponsor scholarships. All women student leaders attending 2- or 4-year colleges or universities in the state are invited to apply. The students must be enrolled in a degree program.

The application for state scholarships can be found at <https://aauw-wi.aauw.net/nccwsl/>. The site also includes a flyer that can be posted on campuses, along with additional information on NCCWSL. Branches, especially those offering their own scholarships, may wish to appoint a branch member to collect student applications. There is a space on the application form to enter branch contact information. Please forward applications to AAUW-WI for state scholarship consideration. For additional details about the conference, please go to <https://www.naspa.org/events/nccwsl>. Deadline for AAUW-WI scholarship applications is April 1.

Conference registration rates are \$585 for double occupancy and \$625 for single occupancy. The registration fee includes all meals during the event and housing in a University of Maryland on-campus residence hall. It is suggested that conference attendees fly into BWI Thurgood Marshall, Reagan National Airport (DCA), or Dulles International Airport (IAD).

NCCWSL unites college women students from across the nation for a transformative experience in leadership development, networking, and inspiration. NCCWSL provides a welcoming and empowering space to build leadership skills, connect with peers, and find inspiration to drive change.

Through engaging workshops and hands-on activities, NCCWSL challenges and inspires attendees to make meaningful impacts on their campuses and communities long after the conference ends. Students attend the conference to become part of a dynamic network of change-makers ready to lead the way.

NCCWSL provides opportunities to connect with other college women leaders to bring light to common challenges and help build supportive networks through which to share ideas and solutions. This space highlights the importance of gathering as women to understand the impact of gender on the following learning outcomes:

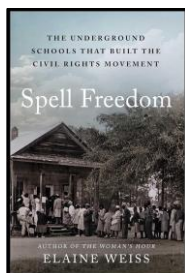
- Awareness of self and others
- Career engagement
- Civic engagement, policy, and advocacy
- Leadership development

Nearly 500 colleges from 48 states have sent campus leaders to NCCWSL. Approximately 50% of NCCWSL attendees are women of color.

Questions? jperiksen@viterbo.edu

Recommended Reading from DEI Coordinator Terri Gulyas

For Black History Month, I immersed myself in two books that completely held my attention—both powerful, eye-opening, and deeply relevant to the work we do. I found myself thinking about them long after I'd closed the covers. Together, Elaine Weiss's *Spell Freedom: The Underground Schools That Built the Civil Rights Movement* and Jennifer Eberhardt's *Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think, and Do* offer a compelling look at how education, bias, and civic structures shape who participates in our democracy and how. As you read the discussion questions, I invite you to consider how the themes raised in these books might spark meaningful conversation for Lively Issues programs or help shape planning for the 2026–2027 year. Here are my reviews:



***Spell Freedom* The Underground Schools That Built the Civil Rights Movement by Elaine Weiss** **Why This Book Matters for AAUW**

Spell Freedom reveals how grassroots citizenship schools in the Jim Crow South taught adults to read, understand government, and pass discriminatory voter tests—laying the groundwork for mass voter registration and, ultimately, the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The book highlights the often-overlooked leadership of Black women and shows that civic education is the backbone of democracy.

Key Takeaways for AAUW Members

- Civic Education Is the Gateway to Voting – Literacy tests were intentionally used to block Black voters. Teaching people how to vote was as revolutionary as voting itself.
- Grassroots Work Creates Lasting Change – Real democratic progress began in churches, kitchens, and community centers.
- Women Were the Architects – Women, particularly Black women, designed and sustained the Citizenship Schools.
- Voter Suppression Evolves – When literacy tests ended, other barriers followed.
- Democracy Must Be Continuously Re-Learned – Citizenship Schools built civic confidence and agency.

Wisconsin Connections

Wisconsin has its own history of voting barriers, including restrictive voter ID laws and frequent rule changes that disproportionately affect seniors, students, people with disabilities, and communities of color. AAUW and LWV continue this work through nonpartisan voter education, outreach events, candidate forums, and election protection.

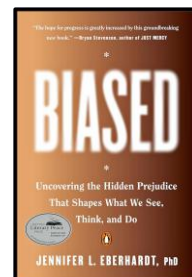
Facilitator Discussion Questions

1. What are today's "modern literacy tests" that limit participation?
2. How can work with LWV to further center community voices in voter education efforts?
3. Where do we still see women's civic labor undervalued today?
4. How does the history in this book change how we view voter disengagement?
5. What barriers do Wisconsin voters face today, and where can we have the greatest impact?

***Biased* Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think, and Do** by Jennifer L. Eberhardt

Why This Book Matters for AAUW

In *Biased*, social psychologist Jennifer Eberhardt explains how implicit bias—automatic, unconscious associations—shapes perception, judgment, and behavior, even among people committed to fairness and equality. Drawing on decades of research, the book shows how bias operates at both individual and institutional levels, with significant implications for democracy, civic participation, and justice.



{Biased continued}

Key Takeaways for LWV Members

- Bias Is Widespread—and Human – Implicit bias is a product of culture and exposure, not a personal moral failing.
- Bias Shapes Perception – Bias influences what we notice and interpret before conscious reasoning begins.
- Context Activates Bias – Stress, fear, time pressure, and ambiguity increase biased decision-making.
- Bias Is Embedded in Systems – Policies and institutional practices can amplify bias over time.
- Awareness Alone Is Not Enough – Lasting change requires intentional design, accountability, and transparency.
- Bias Can Be Disrupted – Evidence-based strategies can reduce bias and improve outcomes.

Relevance to Civic Engagement and Voting

Bias affects who feels welcome to participate in civic life, whose voices are amplified, and how public issues are framed. Elections, policy debates, and civic decision-making are especially vulnerable to bias, making intentional counter-bias strategies essential to an inclusive democracy.

Facilitator Discussion Questions

6. Where do we see implicit bias shaping public debate or voter perceptions today?
7. How do stress, fear, or urgency influence civic decision-making?
8. What systems—not just individuals—need redesign to reduce biased outcomes?
9. How can civic organizations model bias-aware practices in their own work?

AAUW WI Public Policy Committee

**Barb Peterson and
Stephanie Malaney,
co-chairs**



Barb



Stephanie

2026-28 AAUW WI Public Policy Statement

On even years the public policy statement is voted by the membership. By the time it is printed in the convention program it has been revised and approved by the Public Policy Committee and approved by the AAUW WI Board. It has a new look to align with AAUW. It is in this newsletter as well.

Capitol Visit

The convention timeline doesn't allow everyone to visit the Capitol, but it is an opportunity. A tour of the Capitol is set for AAUW members at 9:00. The city bus stops directly in front of the hotel if you prefer not to drive and find parking. Most current information on the bus will be at the convention.

Meeting Your Legislators and Other Helpful Information

The committee will not be setting up meetings with legislators but here are some links to assist you as well as calendars and a variety of other information.

<https://legis.wisconsin.gov/> General Information and tabs for further information.

<https://maps.legis.wisconsin.gov/> Find your legislator

<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2025> Calendar of activities 2025-26

Talking points will be available at convention.

Wisconsin Constitution

https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/constitution/wi_unannotated

Collaborations

We are working with two statewide organizations on Fair Maps and Getting Out the Vote.

Fair Maps is working to end gerrymandering with a permanent solution. The process is already started. FairMapsWI.com

Unite & Rise 8.5 is League of Women Voters to activate and mobilize 8.5 million voices nationwide to defend democracy. <https://my.lwv.org/wisconsin>

Resolutions

The Public Policy Committee submitted two resolutions for the state convention, ERA and revising an older version on redistricting voters. These resolutions will also be found in this newsletter.

Proposed AAUW-WI Public Policy Statement 2026-28

WE STAND FOR EDUCATION promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Higher Education:

- Support affordable, inclusive higher education that yields high-quality credentials or degrees; reduce barriers to completion; and addresses the student debt burden, especially for women and borrowers of color.

Public Education:

- Invest in quality public K–12 systems schools that promote excellence and oppose the use of public funds for nonpublic (tuition tax credits, vouchers, etc.) education.
- Rigorous state standards for entry into the teaching profession and recognition of a teaching license as the primary requirement for employment in public schools.

Inclusive Curriculum including critical thinking and conflict resolution:

- Ensure curricula are accurate, science-based, and free from censorship or bias.
- Comprehensive and medically accurate health and human sexuality programs, research-based science, the arts, humanities, multicultural studies, and world languages in elementary and secondary schools.

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Opportunities:

- Address the gender gap in STEM and expand access to all post-secondary education.
- Increased level of participation and mentoring for girls and young women in STEM in elementary and secondary schools.

Strengthened Civil Rights Protections:

- Vigorous enforcement of Title IX and other civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination at all levels of education from early childhood through elementary, secondary, and post-secondary institutions.

WE STAND FOR ECONOMIC SECURITY, self-sufficiency for all women across their lifespans

Pay Equity:

- Ensure equal pay for work for equal value through salary transparency, fair wage laws and anti-discrimination enforcement.
- Programs that empower women by providing them with education, training, and support for success in the workforce, including non-traditional occupations.

Support for Caregivers:

- Expand access to paid sick and family/medical leave and affordable child and elder care.

Retirement Security:

- Protect and strengthen Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

Reproductive Freedom:

- Ensure access to contraception and abortion care.
- Secure rights of individual choice in the determination of one's reproductive life.

Physical and Mental Health:

- Improved accessibility and affordability of quality comprehensive mental and physical health care.
- Recognizing the importance of social and emotional wellness.

WE STAND FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND CIVIL RIGHTS for a diverse society

Constitutional Rights:

- Vigorously enforce civil rights, including recognition and publication of the Equal Rights Amendment.
- Promotion of gender-fair opportunities, representation, and compensation at all levels of employment.

Expanding Voting Rights:

- Promote equitable political participation and ensure all Americans have full access and the right to vote.
- Increased voter education, voter registration, and candidate development.
- Vigorous enforcement of voting rights and campaign finance reform that will promote equitable participation and representation.

Freedom from Harassment and Violence:

- Strengthening Wisconsin laws regarding victims' rights, sexual assault, domestic abuse, spousal impoverishment prevention, and sexual harassment through increased legislative efforts and improved enforcement.

AAUW-WI State Action Priorities-To be determined by a wider and more representative group such as the Convention.

Getting ready for Convention

The proposed Public Policy Statement, Nominations, and Resolutions are things that will be reviewed and voted on during the business meeting at the Convention. Be sure to familiarize yourself with these items. If you are not going to convention, please voice your opinions to someone from your branch who is. Your input is valued, even if you are not there.

If you have never been to convention, please consider attending. Sign up is easy. Visit the website and get signed up. <https://aauw-wi.aauw.net/convention/>

On the website you will find everything you need to get signed up, watch a promo video, https://youtu.be/LzUL-mG_WPE?si=hemAnmp19Lsyd5Ge and see information about the schedule and speakers. Menu choices, as well as hotel information are all there.



See you at Convention!

Nominations Report

The Nominating Committee is thrilled to announce our slate of candidates for 2026-2028. Each nominee has been extensively involved with AAUW at both their local and the state levels. They will bring a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to our board.

I would also like to thank everyone who suggested individuals who would be candidates in these roles. The recommendations were welcomed and so appreciated!

Thank you also to the members of the nomination committee.
This year's members are:

Mary Kay Weston- Fort Atkinson Branch
Carol Montoto- Greater Milwaukee Branch
Nancy Schultz- Wausau Branch

Julie Anatasio- Racine Branch
Suzanne Hagen- River Falls Branch



Sue May
Nominations
Committee Chair

Program VP Bettie Westcott - Racine Branch

When I retired in 2017, I knew I wanted to join AAUW. My degrees are in Psychology from Sangamon State University in Springfield, IL, and in Rehabilitation Administration from Southern Illinois University.

In AAUW, I quickly accepted the jobs of local program VP. I have helped to bring some very interesting programs to our branch meetings. This local position led me to working with the State Board as Local Program person for the 2024 state convention. It is an honor and a privilege to be able to participate in AAUW.



Fund Development VP Lisa Balster - Appleton Branch

I have been a member of AAUW for almost three years. I started by volunteering at the annual book sale that raises funds for scholarships to women from our branch. I was thrilled to join the group and quickly became involved in various activities including being the Assistant VP of programs and the next year being the VP of Programs for our branch. I am excited to join the statewide group and assist and facilitate member's efforts for fundraising as the AAUW State's Vice President of Fund Development. I like to travel so let me know if a visit to your branch is needed to help in your endeavors.



Finance VP Christine Ebert - Northwoods Branch

I am a retired Mathematics professor with an emphasis in Math Education relative to research on teaching and learning mathematics.

Since moving to the Northwoods from Delaware in 2011, I became happily active with the Northwoods Branch of AAUW and the state board. I also serve on the Foundation Board for Nicolet College and chair the Juday Committee which allocates several thousand dollars each semester. I continue to sing with the Northwoods Singers (14 years) and serve as their treasurer, also serve on various committees within the Northern Great Lakes Synod of the ELCA, as well as at our church in Eagle River.



Resolutions Report

Three Resolutions have been sent to the Resolutions chair, reviewed by the Resolutions Committee and are offered to the 2026 AAUW-WI Convention as printed in this booklet.

AAUW Wisconsin Resolution in Support of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)

Offered by the AAUW-WI Public Policy Committee

AAUW Wisconsin Resolution Supporting a State of Wisconsin Constitutional Amendment for Redistricting

Offered by the AAUW-WI Public Policy Committee

AAUW Wisconsin Proposed Resolution on Accountability for AAUW State Resolutions

Offered by Mary Messerlie



Kathy Walsh

When considering a Resolution, the Chair will follow Robert's Rules of Order. This will include having the Resolution read into the minutes.

Discussion will be ten minutes in length with the author going first with any comments. This will be followed by discussion from the floor, alternating between pros and cons. Each person will be limited to two minutes. At the end of the ten minutes, the President will call for the vote.

Resolutions from the floor at the convention will need to be presented in written form to be considered.

Proposed Resolution in Support of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)

** See footnote*

Whereas AAUW's mission is to advance equity for all women and girls through research, education, and advocacy; and AAUW National supports recognition and publication of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) as a means to guarantee equality of rights under the United States Constitution; and Federal AAUW Public Policy Priorities include vigorous enforcement of and full access to civil and constitutional rights, including the ERA; and

Whereas the version of the Equal Rights Amendment approved by Congress in 1972 and sent to the states reads:

"Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article"; and

Whereas the United States Constitution does not explicitly guarantee equality of rights regardless of sex, leaving protections against sex-based discrimination subject to shifting statutory law and judicial interpretation; and the ERA would provide a clear constitutional standard for equality under the law; and

Whereas constitutional equality under the ERA would strengthen the legal foundation for protections against sex-based discrimination in education, employment, healthcare, and civic life; and AAUW members have a long-standing history of advocating for constitutional equality for women under the law;

Therefore, be it resolved,

That AAUW-Wisconsin endorses and supports the Equal Rights Amendment as a necessary and enduring constitutional guarantee that equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged on account of sex; and

That AAUW-Wisconsin encourages its members and branches to educate their communities about the ERA, including its history, constitutional significance, and continued relevance; and

That AAUW-Wisconsin calls upon Wisconsin's federal and state elected officials to support efforts to recognize, publish, and uphold the Equal Rights Amendment as part of the United States Constitution, consistent with the amendment approved by Congress in 1972; and

This resolution will be distributed to AAUW National, Wisconsin's federal and state legislators, and public media outlets to affirm AAUW-Wisconsin's commitment to constitutional equality of rights regardless of sex.

* "The ERA resolution language is aligned with the original 1972 word usage, therefore "sex" refers to men and women and "equality" was the preferred term versus equity that AAUW commonly uses today."

Proposed by AAUW-WI Public Policy Committee
February 1, 2026

Proposed Resolution Supporting a State of Wisconsin Constitutional Amendment for Redistricting

Whereas AAUW-WI, while maintaining a strict non-partisan stance, encourages all citizens to take an active role in exercising their civic duty to vote and to hold legislators accountable for their actions,

And whereas gerrymandering creates an unfair advantage for whichever party is in the majority,

And whereas political parties have used gerrymandering in redistricting to protect their majority status by creating "safe" districts where a specific party is guaranteed to win,

And whereas our democracy depends on voters being assured that their vote counts and that they have a say in the election of their legislative representatives,

Therefore, be it resolved that AAUW-WI advocates for the legislature of the State of Wisconsin to adopt a Wisconsin Constitutional Amendment that honors a non-partisan redistricting plan that creates an independent redistricting commission which is transparent, citizen/voter-led and distinct from the state legislature, not controlled by any political party. This constitutional amendment shall be created for the purpose of drawing state legislative and congressional district boundaries after every 10-year census. The Wisconsin districts should not provide a disproportionate advantage to any political party.

Submitted by the AAUW-WI Public Policy Committee
February 1, 2026

Proposed Resolution on Accountability for AAUW State Resolutions

Whereas, resolutions approved at the state convention are established priorities for AAUW WI and respective branches

Whereas, currently there is no vehicle to measure the success of the resolutions, recommend actions to take, and no accountability as to what worked well and areas for improvement.

Therefore, be it resolved that the person and/or committee submitting the resolution will create a toolkit including suggested specific actions for the branches (and State, if appropriate) and establish measurements for success within 60 days (could be longer or shorter) after the convention. The toolkit and measurements for success will be posted on the state website and disseminated to all branches via local presidents. And a possible press release to local media. Each branch decides how they want to prioritize working on any resolution based on local priorities and capacity.

Therefore, be it resolved that the convention committee for the following year may determine, if useful, to invite the person and/or committee sponsoring the resolution from the previous year to lead a break-out session to debrief success/progress and/or provide a summary of activities for the convention book.

Proposed by Mary Messerlie, West Suburban Milwaukee branch
January 30, 2026

District Reports

District Four In-person Gathering

On November 1st the District 4 branches gathered at the Chippewa Falls History Center for meeting. After an ice breaker and lunch, members were informed about Badger Briefs deadlines, Five Star Concerns, State Archivist's requests, the online state events calendar, and next year's convention. Also discussed was NCCWSL, and the new STEM/Empowerment program.

The Resolution Committee and the process for writing and approval was discussed, as well as a reminder from Kathy Walsh to re-visit old resolutions for possible updating. A reminder that updated By-laws are due to Sue Ramaker by spring 2026.

We discussed Public Policy listing voting rights, voting access, and fair maps as our priorities. Be sure to sign up for Two Minute Activist.

Plans are in the works for a summer social gathering because this meeting was both fun and informational. Annie Allen-Wyman (LaC)

How Melinda French Gates Plans To Fund "Chronically," "Unconscionably" Underfunded Programs For Women And Girls

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/luisakroll/2026/02/09/how-melinda-french-gates-plans-to-fund-chronically-unconscionably-underfunded-programs-for-women-and-girls/>

[Melinda French Gates' Plans To Give Away More Than \\$12.5 Billion](#)

AAUW District 1 Organizational Goals

District 1 Organizational Goals

1. Women's Economic Power Initiative Webinars. To reach a wider demographic, our branches will invite local colleges, especially Junior College/Tech schools' students and staff to participate in AAUW's Women's Economic Power Initiative—Work Smart/Start Smart/Money Smart.
2. Public Policy Chairs: These important positions require dedication
3. Programming: "Mission Building" Programs should be cornerstones of our local branch meetings.
4. Bridge Building: Tech Savvy, a sterling example of *community outreach*, increases the participation (Janesville, Fort Atkinson) of girls and family members in AAUW's mission.
5. Community Enrichment: Consider holding community enrichment projects.
Increasing Membership New marketing materials, and being present at community events to promote membership.
6. Degree Equivalency
Widen opportunities to join AAUW. Women in community leadership positions today are sometimes ignored through AAUW's national process of determining equivalency. We are asking National and State for guidance.
7. Branch Mentoring and Leadership Positions: Focus on onboarding new members and mentoring branch leadership. Provide Committee members with solid mentoring to promote success in their positions. Job descriptions should go beyond tasks to describe their purpose. How is each position helping to achieve our tasks? Review job positions annually.
8. Fundraising: We carry out Holiday events, book sales, auctions, Pi Day (Janesville), special event fundraising offerings.

"Lilly" the story of Lilly Ledbetter.

AAUW (although not mentioned in the movie) was very supportive in her fight, and was funded through the Legal Advocacy Fund.

<https://www.netflix.com/us/title/82193714?s=a&trkid=13747225&trg=cp&vlang=en&clip=82625533>

AAUW WI State Board 2024-26

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Badger Briefs articles due 2 weeks after State board meetings.

Special issues may be sent as needed.

The issues will be sent to branches to be forwarded to their members.

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<https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/ways-to-give-aauw/leave-a-legacy/>

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Board Meetings: Due Dates:
April 17th May 9th

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