



# Public Policy News

A monthly dispatch from the AAUW California Public Policy Team

## AAUW CALIFORNIA ELECTIONS

Vote for strong public policy support!

It is election time for the AAUW CA State Board. We encourage you to vote--for our new Public Policy Priorities (PPPs) AND for candidates to fill open board seats! We would also like to note that Missy and Amy are both on the ballot.

It has been our privilege to serve over the last two years as Public Policy Directors in support of all the important public policy work being done by the branches. We hope to serve for two more years and continue expanding on our work: contributing to and passing meaningful legislation to bolster gender equity in California, providing tools for engaging in impactful political action, and educating and sharing the work of AAUW California more broadly.

As shown by the success of the internship program that we piloted this year, Public Policy is paramount to keeping AAUW relevant and appealing to a new generation of members.

Our work is now more important than ever as California must be a stopgap to protect our residents from the federal attacks on our rights. With our two positions on the Board, we will work hard to ensure that Public Policy continues to be a central priority for our organization. Your votes for us, and for our new PPPs, will be votes for continuing AAUW California's strong commitment to Public Policy.

In Solidarity,  
Missy and Amy

## LOBBY DAYS - APRIL 8-9, 2025

For those of you who will be participating in Lobby Days, we hope you are as excited as we are about this opportunity to advance AAUW California's priority bills!

All of the resources you will need for Lobby Days, including bill talking points, meeting do's and don'ts, and more are posted [HERE](#).

Be sure your team has connected with each other, and has a game plan for your meetings.

If you have any questions, please reach out to [publicpolicy@aauw-ca.org](mailto:publicpolicy@aauw-ca.org).

Happy lobbying!

## BRANCH PUBLIC POLICY CHAIRS' MEETING

### NEXT MEETING

Thursday April 3, 2025  
at 3:00pm Pacific



### ZOOM LINK [HERE](#)



Click [HERE](#) for meeting information.

Unless they fall on a holiday, bimonthly Peer Group Meetings will be held on the first Thursday at 3:00pm Pacific in Feb, Apr, Jun

## SIGN UP FOR ACTION ALERTS [HERE](#).

## WHERE IS THAT?



Key links to your public policy resources:

- [Google Workspace](#)
- [Branch liaisons](#)
- Contact us at [publicpolicy@aauw-ca.org](mailto:publicpolicy@aauw-ca.org)
- Tell us about your branch public policy events by filling out this [form](#).

# School Board Project Monitors & Observers Training

April 24, 2025 6:30-8:00pm - Register Now!

Thank you very much to all of you who responded to our School Board Project survey in February. We received 272 responses representing 97 branches. Kudos to the many branches whose members are attending and speaking up at school board meetings!

While 59 branches have school boards whose majority aligns with AAUW values, 16 branches indicate that they have school boards whose majority is inconsistent with AAUW values.

The School Board Project is now entering a new phase in which we will be encouraging members to monitor and observe their local school boards to ensure they are complying with California law. To this end, AAUW California has entered a collaboration with the [Public School Defenders Hub](#), an organization that provides resources and programs to parents, organizers, activists, and school board members to combat anti-public school extremists.

The Defenders Hub will be presenting a customized training for AAUW members on how to be an effective school board observer and monitor. The training will update you on current California laws that address book banning, curriculum censorship, and discrimination against LGBTQ+ students; what to look for in determining compliance; and how to file a complaint when you observe non-compliance. We hope you will join us for this next phase of the School Board Project.

**The training is scheduled for April 24, 2025 6:30-8:00pm. Register [HERE](#) . We encourage you to pass this information along to interested members in your branch.**

**NEW**

## New Resource for Taking Action!

Interactive and Living Spreadsheet  
Presented by AAUW of California Public Policy

As Co-Directors Amy Hom and Missy Maceyko outlined in a [webinar](#) in October 2024, the objectives of Project 2025 directly counter the Public Policy Priorities of AAUW California. **With federal policy pronouncements and changes continuing to take place at a head spinning pace**, it is clear that changes are underway to make Project 2025 become reality (track implementation [HERE](#)).

To respond to the attack on the people and issues we care about, and to fulfill the mission of our organization, "to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research," we have continued to compile resources to help you take action to fight back. And, with the help of our amazing Public Policy Interns, we are finally able to launch an interactive resource that will provide you with action options.

**Click [HERE](#) to access our new interactive and living Take Action spreadsheet.**

This spreadsheet attempts to create a clearinghouse for ongoing resistance activity, so that you can follow and join-in based on your passions and preferences. We also highlight successful political and legal actions, to give us both hope and a blueprint for moving forward. Click on QUICK ACTIONABLE ITEMS if you are looking for general action resources, LITIGATION & LEGISLATION TRACKERS if you want to keep track of advancing legislation and/or legal challenges, and PODCASTS if you want to learn more and/or encounter even more "good trouble." Click on ISSUE AREAS if you are looking for information and resources in a specific issue area. Please share this resource with anyone who you think will find it useful--inside or outside of AAUW California.

**The spreadsheet will be continually updated. If you want to see a specific addition to the spreadsheet, see the FAQs on the homepage where you can submit them via a Google form, or click [HERE](#). We look forward to hearing from you!**

# Take Action in April

Focus: Voting Rights (national & state)



AAUW California has finally launched our own action-items database! However, we know that the spreadsheet casts a very wide net in terms of issue areas and resources, so **we want to continue to provide a short list of targeted action-items for you each month.**



**We will continue to ask you to take action by choosing one self-focused, one other-focused, and one political-focused item from the list below. This month the topic area is...**

## Take Action: Protect Voting Rights

### Self-Focused: Education



- learn more about the SAVE Act that is moving through Congress
- learn more about California Assembly Bill (AB) 25
- learn more about how voting rights challenges that target small or non-existent populations and issues, like SAVE and AB 25, serve to disenfranchise many others in the process



### Other-Focused: Education & Connection

- tell a few people (2-10) something about the potential impacts of passage of the SAVE Act and/or AB 25
- tell a few people (2-10) something that THEY can do to oppose the SAVE Act, CA AB 25, and/or voting rights challenges more broadly



### Politically-Focused: Outreach to Legislators (State/Federal)

- Use AAUW National's 2-minute activist platform to voice your opposition to the SAVE Act (see Collective Action Spotlight on new AAUW Resource)
- watch the progress of California's AB 25 and reach out to representatives in CA if/when the bill is being heard to make sure bill is actively opposed

## AAUW California Public Policy is On Bluesky

Join us in a healthier social media space



With the gracious blessings of the California State Board (thank you!), AAUW California Public Policy now has its own social media account--on BlueSky!

We are just getting started, but we plan to use this account to send out state-level legislative action alerts, promote Resistbot petitions, and provide real-time updates. **We encourage you to create your own account, if you have not yet done so, and follow us!** You can find us by clicking the link above or by following us on Bluesky

[@aauw-ca-advocacy.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/@aauw-ca-advocacy.bsky.social)

Click [HERE](#) to learn more about why so many former Twitter users have moved to Bluesky.

# Priority Legislation 2025: Why AAUW Will Be Standing Up for the Transgender Community

By Missy Maceyko, Co-chair, Public Policy Committee

As you look at our legislative agenda for 2025, you will notice that we have many bills that focus on protecting the rights of transgender people, including our top priority legislation. We want to say a bit more about why AAUW is standing up for the transgender community, and why it is particularly critical to do so in this moment.

Popular campaigns, executive orders, and federal and state legislation have increasingly targeted transgender and nonbinary people, who make up a very small portion of the US population (estimates range from 0.5% to 1.6%). These campaigns, orders, and pieces of legislation have been intensive, politically strategic, and largely motivated by animus, or hostility.

Anti-trans popular campaigns, executive orders, and legislation are not, then, based on neutral laws. Laws do sometimes **legally** discriminate against historically marginalized groups. They can only do this if and when it is absolutely necessary to discriminate to benefit a general public interest--for instance, you cannot fire someone for having an accent you do not like, which would be illegal discrimination (based on animus and with no real benefit to the public); however, you can fire someone for having an accent if they are a 911 operator and their accent makes them non-comprehensible to most of the public callers). Much of the currently proposed legislation discriminates against trans and nonbinary people, but does not show a clear benefit to the public: as one federal judge has noted, they are “soaked in animus.” In other words, these campaigns, orders, and pieces of legislation are driven not by neutrality, attempts to only narrowly target rights, and the goal of benefitting the wider public, but by open hostility toward trans and nonbinary people.

Furthermore, many of these legislative, popular, and political attacks draw on longstanding dominant sex and gender norms to create fear and moral panic. **They are not just targeting the transgender community, generally, but transgender women and girls, specifically.** This is not surprising, as the regulation of transgender and nonbinary bodies is frequently **focused on trans women and on regulating femininity**--not on the regulation of trans men--as we see in the reasoning provided for attempts to keep trans and nonbinary women and girls out of certain bathrooms, locker rooms, and sports.

AAUW's mission is to advance gender equity for ALL girls and women as girls and women have historically been marginalized on the basis of gender. But feminized and gender-based forms of marginalization are intersectional, which means that, for some, marginalization occurs in many ways at the same time. For trans women and girls--they must, **at the very least**, deal with the same kinds of misogyny that many cis women face on a daily basis **AND**, at the same time, deal with the kinds of hatred and erasure that comes along with being trans and nonbinary in the United States in this political moment.

**Because of intersecting and compounding forms of marginalization, we do not all need the same things to be liberated.** There are often specific members of our community who need different kinds of support--and at times extra support. Right now, that is the trans and nonbinary communities--trans women and girls and feminized people--who are currently facing a great deal of animus, socially and legally.

**When AAUW says that we support ALL girls and women, that means we always support transgender girls and women, and that we offer them extra support right now, at a time when their need is greatest.**

And at the same time, supporting trans rights is supporting and protecting many of the rights that this organization, AAUW, has fought for many years to attain and retain. **The infringement on trans and nonbinary rights is inseparable from broader attempts to restrict women based on gender stereotyping**--regulating your ability to access certain spaces (e.g. bars) or get a business loan without someone else's (a man's) signature or minimizing the likelihood that you will be promoted--all based on assumptions about your (women's) emotions and abilities or judgments about whether or not you/they/we are “feminine” enough (or “too feminine”).



# Public Policy Committee Sets AAUW California 2025 Legislative Agenda

By Missy Maceyko and Amy Hom, Co-chairs Public Policy Committee

The Public Policy Committee met over a weekend in mid-March for our most important meeting of the year, to set the Legislative Agenda for 2025. Prior to the meeting, our committee collectively evaluated over 60 bills related to AAUW's mission and Public Policy Priorities. During our two-day marathon session, we carefully considered each bill. We then voted to select and prioritize the top 25 bills, leaving room to add a few more bills that we know will be coming to us in the next few weeks.

Our three "A" priority bills are SB 771 "Social Media Platforms Endangering Californians", AB 579 "Yaeli's Law", and SB 418 "Ensure Equal Access to Care for All". All three of the "A" priority bills this year fall under the Social Justice pillar of our Public Policy Priorities.

The first "A" bill, SB 771 "Social Media Platforms Endangering Californians", is authored by Senator Henry Stern and is sponsored by AAUW California. SB 771 clarifies that a social media platform may be liable for civil penalty under existing law if and when its algorithms or AI aid or abet individual users who are engaging in already unlawful intimidation of others in online spaces. While hateful speech is problematic, it is not illegal. However, it can cross the line into illegal action. When hate speech is "brought to the doorstep" of marginalized communities, for example if someone maliciously posts anti-immigrant messages on the virtual Facebook wall of an immigrant family, they are engaging in unlawful intimidation, terrorism, and threat. While social media platforms are not responsible for the speech of individual users, aspects of their platform such as algorithms or AI can be complicit in the targeting of marginalized groups, which is unlawful. Social media companies have recently intentionally turned away from providing safeguards that they previously provided for targeted vulnerable communities. They should be held accountable for that decision, in light of the real-world impacts of proliferation of online hate and their complicity in unlawful intimidation.

The second "A" bill, to which we are taking an opposition position, is AB 579 "Yaeli's Law" authored by Assemblymember Leticia Castillo. This bill rests on the premise that denial of support for youth self-identity, including refusal to use a child's name and pronouns, or refusal to provide or allow their gender-affirming care, is not harmful and therefore should not be considered child abuse under the law, and, accordingly, not be allowed as a basis for custody or removal decisions. This is problematic. Research shows that transgender children are more likely to experience anxiety and depression and are at greater risk of substance abuse and homelessness when they live in households that do not accept their gender identity. We oppose this bill because every child deserves to be protected from emotional and physical abuse, including the right to be removed from a harmful household to a more healthy environment.

The third "A" bill is SB 418 "Ensure Equal Access to Care for All" authored by Senator Caroline Menjivar. This bill would prohibit a health plan or a health insurance provider from denying coverage or denying benefits to a person based upon their race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex - including sex characteristics such as intersex traits, pregnancy, and gender identity. Access to gender-affirming care is a fundamental aspect of health equity and human rights. SB 418 will protect against discrimination on the basis of sex, while also sending a powerful message of support to the LGBTQ+ community, affirming that their needs matter. Creating an environment where all individuals can express their identities without fear is foundational to a strong democracy.

To see the full 2025 Legislative Agenda, please go to the [Bill Tracking Report](#). This report is a living document that will be updated as the bills move through the legislative process, so you will always be able to see the latest status.



For online outreach to CA representatives on A-bills, follow [AAUW California's Petitions Page on Resistbot](#)

CLICK [HERE](#) TO ACCESS A TEXT-BASED COPY OF THE NL ARTICLE

# Take Action to Help Kids Feel Safe at School

By Kathi Harper, Chair, Public Policy School Board Project

Many of our members have expressed concerns about the potential for ICE raids in our local schools. These intrusions on school grounds are already happening in some places, and are having a significant detrimental impact on these families, especially for their children.

## Some of the ramifications have included:

- Parents not showing up at school events fearing agents might be there
- Students don't want to come to school, fearing their parents will be taken while they're gone
- Children not learning, consumed by fear of agents coming on campus to take them away

## Here are some things you should know:

- Current law (*Plyler v Doe* 1982) held that all children, even undocumented, have a constitutional right to free public education
- In 2011, DHS issued the "Sensitive Locations" policy, which prohibited raids from certain places including schools
- Although the President has attempted to revoke the order, Executive Orders and Actions cannot change statutes or regulations
- There are currently 4 lawsuits challenging the attempted revocation; 3 from churches have been successful so far, 1 from a school in Denver has resulted in a denial of a request for a temporary injunction
- Current law also prohibits ICE entry on campuses without a warrant
- Even if they have a warrant to enter, that does not entitle them to have access to private/protected student records

## Here are two things you can do:

- Urge your school boards/districts to issue a "Safe Zone" Resolution - template can be found here: [Guidance on Immigration Issues | NEA](#)
- Engage your branch members in a postcard-writing campaign to their school boards with following message:

**WE STAND WITH IMMIGRANT STUDENTS AND LGBTQ+ YOUTH.**



[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS A TEXT-BASED COPY OF THE NL ARTICLE](#)