

American Association of University Women of North Carolina

2007-09 Public Policy Program

The public policy program underscores the 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 federal and international 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 — and other decision-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 firmly 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 support a fair and balanced judiciary. 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 Right 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 is an economy that provides equitable employment opportunities, a livable wage, reduction of poverty, quality dependent care, paid family and medical leave, decent and affordable 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 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action from the 4th World Conference on Women and subsequent declarations. We affirm our commitment to the US Convention of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Biennial Action Priorities

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

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

- That every child in NC is entitled to an equal opportunity to receive a quality public education as stated in the Leandro court decision.
- 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
- Increased support for, and access to, higher education for women and other disadvantaged populations

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

- A pay equity study commission to look at disparities in male and female salaries of employees of the state of North Carolina. This study would be a step leading to pay equity in North Carolina
- A NC Earned Income Tax Credit
- Enrolling adults in community college and job training programs to connect them to occupations that pay a living wage, provide basic benefits, and offer a chance at upward mobility
- Increase funding for the NC Housing Trust Fund to expand affordable housing for low-income families; many of whom are female-headed households.

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

- Vigorous protection of and full access to civil and constitutional rights
- Freedom from violence and fear of violence in homes, schools, workplaces, and communities
- Increased access to affordable health care, including treatment of mental illness, and expansion of patients' rights
- Support for the Aging (birth to death) Study to be done by the NC Center for Public Policy Research and presented to the General Assembly
- Equal access to Justice