

MEMO

June 9, 2018

To: Christa Slaten and Cheryl Wilson
From: Christina Little, 2018 Public Policy Chair
Subject: Public Policy Portfolio, AAUW-Las Cruces

NATIONAL

AAUW has a strong public policy agenda. Both on the National and State level, there is an active Lobby Corps that monitors legislation and advocates for AAUW values. The policy agenda is wide and includes the following topics:

Civil Rights - AAUW advocates for equality, individual rights, and social justice for a diverse society.

Affirmative action - Equal Rights Amendment - Federal Judicial Nominations - Hate crimes prevention - Human trafficking - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues - Reproductive rights

Education - AAUW supports a strong system of public education that promotes gender fairness, equity, and diversity.

Career and technical education - Charter schools - Common core standards – Disabilities Education and training in welfare/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families - Higher education - Every Student Succeeds Act - School vouchers - Single-sex education - Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education - Sexual harassment and violence in school

Economic Security - AAUW advocates for all women to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Health care - Pay equity - Retirement security - Social Security privatization - Paid Leave

Title IX - AAUW supports vigorous enforcement of Title IX and all other civil rights laws pertaining to education.

Title IX - Equity in school athletics - Sexual harassment and violence in school - Single-sex education

Nationally, AAUW has recently found plenty of opportunity for advocacy. It has lobbied for protection of the Affordable Care Act, Title IX, pay equity, passage of the Dream Act, etc.

Before AAUW-Las Cruces actively engages in these issues, it is probably wise to consult with AAUW-National.

TAKE ACTION

AAUW members are invited to TAKE ACTION with National AAUW. They have created a convenient way of directly contacting federal officials. Here is the web page on the AAUW website:

<http://www.aauw.org/what-we-do/public-policy/two-minute-activist/>

STATE

NEW MEXICO

The Public Policy Chair should sign up to receive Action Alerts and other communications from New Mexico AAUW, email Sonya Berg at berg.sonya42@gmail.com.

It is appropriate to communicate with AAUW-New Mexico when taking action on state issues.

LOCAL

On November 6, 2018, there will be a General Election with many important offices on the ballot. These include:

- Federal – US Senate, US Representative
- State – Governor, Lt. Governor, Secretary of State, State Auditor, State Treasurer, Attorney General, Commissioner of Public Lands, NM Public Education Commission, All State Representatives
- Local – County Commission (Districts 1 and 3), County Assessor, County Sheriff

The City of Las Cruces will have a MAIL IN General Obligation Bond Issues election in the summer of 2018. The new election laws require that all special elections be conducted by mail.

Scott Krahling, Dona Ana County Clerk, is doing a very proactive job of registering voters (especially young people). There is an Election Advisory Meeting which meets once a month on a Tuesday afternoon. I encourage the new Public Policy Chair to attend one of these meetings and find out what is happening. Scott's email address is scottkr@donaanacounty.org.

The League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces will have a Voters Guide in the Bulletin and televised forums on KRWG before the General Election. Contact Vicki Simons (AAUW member) for more information. There is contact information in the AAUW Yearbook. You might also

want to check in with Erika Graf-Webster (also AAUW member) about her League work on Youth Engagement. The current president of the LWVGLC is Kim Sorensen. Her phone number is 910-8449, and her email address is sorensentweet@gmail.com.

NEW ELECTION LAWS

A bill was passed in the 2018 Legislative Session to change many of the election procedures. In the future, General Elections will be held in November of even numbered years (current practice). In odd numbered years, there will be consolidated elections in November for **all** of the various governing bodies that have nonpartisan elections. This includes the school districts and groups like the Water and Soil Conservation Board. It will also include municipalities throughout the County. The City of Las cruces has voted to opt in to this system.

The City has also voted to have RANKED CHOICE voting. Voters will have a chance to rank candidates. The computer will do the calculations. This process should eliminate run-offs (though the City Charter still reads that someone must receive 40% of the vote to avoid a run-off). and save the City considerable money. However, it is going to be somewhat confusing for voters and require a good deal of education. AAUW might participate in this.

LOCAL PRIORITIES

Historically, the local AAUW Branch has focused its primary attention on Equal Pay Day. In 2018, there were proclamations at both the City and County for Equal Pay Day as well as a letter to the editor. I have all these on files and will be happy to forward them if asked.

To arrange for a proclamation at the County, contact Jess Williams at jessw@donaanacounty.org. You will also need a County Commissioner to sponsor the proclamation. Contact Jess well in advance, and he will seek a County Commissioner to support the effort. Jess does want early notice. Get to him by the end of January.

Contact the Mayor's office for the City of Las Cruces. They do not need as much notice, but it is good to get on the calendar early.

And, you may certainly branch out from this concentration on Equal Pay Day. As you can see from the first section, AAUW-National has broad interests.

CHRIS LITTLE AS RESOURCE

I run the Interagency Council, which is a resource of which you should take advantage. Primarily, it is a networking organization for social service providers. I maintain a Listserve with about 600 names and pass out information about all kinds of events, activities, needs, job opportunities, etc. happening in our community. Bonnie Schranz routinely passed along information about AAUW activities, which I forwarded to the group. There is also a monthly

presentation. Early in 2018, Ann McCullough was the major presenter at the Interagency Council. She primarily talked about Girls Can!!, but included information about AAUW.

Occasionally, I will get a notice that I think may be relevant to your portfolios. When this happens, I will forward the message to you. You are free to do anything you want with these messages. They may or may not be useful.

I have low vision but manage quite well when I can handle things from a computer. I do not drive which limits my mobility. Unless I am taken off the list, I will continue to receive Public Policy notices from AAUW-New Mexico. If I can help either of you in any way, please let me know. If a personal meeting is appropriate, I will be happy to participate.

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