



Iowa Branch Connector

August, 2013

A Monthly Electronic Bulletin for AAUW Leaders in Iowa

The Value of Affiliation with AAUW: *By joining AAUW, you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance.*

Welcome to this monthly electronic publication. You are invited to share this information with other members and branch leaders by forwarding it to them, or providing a hard copy.

Maxine Lampe, AAUW IA President 2012-2014

This year we will be having guest editors who are AAUW IA board members. Our first guest editor is Diane Edwards who is the Gender Equity Director on our board. This is what she has to share:

AAUW Iowa Needs Your Help Establishing & Monitoring Gender Equity on Boards & Commissions in Your County

Iowa is the only state nationwide that requires gender balance at the state, county and municipal level. Since the law does not penalize those counties which refuse to comply with HF243 (the law) or provide the means by which to determine if a county's appointed boards and commissions are gender balanced, someone must fulfill the role of "Watch Dog" for board and commission gender balance in our state.

The Carrie Chapman Catt Center at Iowa State University along with Friends of the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women (ICSW) hired an intern to collect data for the six boards found in all Iowa counties. In May 2013, the report containing that data was released and it stated that **only two counties are gender balanced**. Another problem is that without updating the data every quarter, that data will become quickly out of date as new board members are appointed and others resign. Additionally, 6 counties either refused to release or collect the data, or are still compiling data.

As part of the AAUW Iowa Strategic Plan for 2013-2014 to support Gender Equity on all appointed local boards, committees and commissions, we are seeking the help of branches to find a member who will work to establish a Gender Balance Coalition in their county. The first step as chair of the coalition will be to find 3-4 women from various organizations in the community who would like to help with achieving county and city gender equity. Two years ago, Florine Swanson, a former AAUW Iowa President, and I asked 4 women to join us to form the Wright County Women's Coalition. We expanded our group to include a woman from each of the 6 towns in the county. We agreed to meet quarterly to monitor the board and committee openings and to offer suggestions to the city clerks and the President of the Board of Supervisors for potential women candidates. At one point this spring Wright County was 100% gender balanced but one committee appointment was made that made it no longer balanced.

In the next month I will contact each Branch President and request the name of a member who is willing to work with AAUW Iowa on this important project. A written guide will be sent to the member who volunteers to work on county gender balance with the following information:

1. Iowa Law, HF 243
2. Sample Boards and Commissions Application
3. Instructions for forming a County Gender Balanced Coalition
4. How to go about collecting the data.

Without the help of a group such as ours, this law will fail. Consider volunteering to be your branches “Watch Dog” for Gender Equity in your county.

And finally a reminder to all Iowa branches that you need to file a 990N every year with the IRS. AAUW national will be glad to do this for you. Branch finance officers and presidents will be receiving information on that in the near future. Do not delete. Branches also need to ensure that they have signed an affiliate agreement with AAUW. Particularly since the Citizens United decision, IRS is scrutinizing nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable and 501(c)(4) social welfare organizations more carefully to ensure compliance with nonpartisan stipulations of those tax statuses. This leads them to more readily uncover noncompliance with 990N filing standards, etc.