



Karen Agee
 AAUW Iowa Co-President, 2022-24

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President’s Letter

In 2021, the Iowa legislature repealed the law requiring a background check to purchase a gun. State lawmakers also repealed the law requiring a permit to carry loaded, concealed handguns. Had the people of Iowa demanded that these basic gun safety laws be removed from the books? No, according to the Iowans for Responsible Gun Laws Coalition (of which AAUW-Iowa is a member). A strong majority of Iowans support commonsense gun laws:

- 91% support banning carrying a firearm while under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- 85% support prohibiting felons from possessing firearms
- 85% support requiring background checks on all gun purchases
- 83% support requiring gun safety courses before the purchase of a handgun

At a time when more Iowans are dying from gun violence and most Iowans want to strengthen laws to keep us safe, state lawmakers instead want to further weaken Iowa’s gun laws.

On the November 8 ballot will be a constitutional amendment proposed by the Iowa Legislature to make

ownership and use of guns a “fundamental right,” prioritizing gun rights over public health and safety. Whether they own weapons or not, Iowans of both major parties and especially those in law enforcement warn against adopting this constitutional amendment. See the article by Dev Kiedaisch on p. 2 of this newsletter for more information about threats posed by the proposed amendment.

Our public policy directors, Dev Kiedaisch and Diane Kearns, represent AAUW to the Iowans for Responsible Gun Laws Coalition in support of our advocacy for “freedom from violence and fear of violence, including gun violence and hate crimes, in homes, schools, the workplace, and communities, and services to address the needs of victims of violence.” (This is one of the 22 public policy statements adopted by AAUW of Iowa and available on our website at <https://aauw-ia.aauw.net/publicpolicy/issues/public-policy-program/>.)

By meeting virtually rather than in person this year, your state board is conserving its funds for advocacy and action. We intend to print and distribute yard signs and take other action to support the work of the Coalition.

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What can AAUW members in Iowa do to defeat this reckless amendment?

1. Attend the meeting on Sept. 13 to learn, ask questions, and share ideas.
2. Read information on the Iowans for Responsible Gun Laws website and take the actions suggested there.
3. Contact others in your community and around Iowa.
4. Donate to the Iowans for Responsible Gun Laws Coalition.
5. Write a brief letter to your newspaper on this issue.
6. Contact your Iowa legislators and let them know why you will be voting against reckless gun laws and amendments.
7. Volunteer to distribute and display yard signs, when available.
8. **Vote NO!** Defeat the reckless gun amendment!

Program on the Reckless Gun Rights Amendment

Dev Kiedaisch

Mark your calendar: On September 13, 2022, at 7:00 p.m., AAUW of Iowa will present a program on the Reckless Gun Amendment. Connie Ryan of the Iowans for Responsible Gun Laws Coalition (of which AAUW of Iowa is a member) will present an informative PowerPoint presentation followed by an opportunity to ask questions. The legislature has placed the Reckless Gun Amendment on the November 8 ballot, and AAUW of Iowa opposes this amendment. Use this link to join:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83073432050?pwd=sNBkF1MdiDx_UTdzCbPH4C2zAJZxZN.1

The proposed Iowa constitutional amendment reads, "The right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed. The sovereign state of Iowa affirms and recognizes this right to be a fundamental individual right. Any and all restrictions of this right shall be subject to strict scrutiny."

The Reckless Gun Amendment is not the Second

Amendment. Most states have gun rights language in their state constitution that mirrors the Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. The amendment proposed by the Iowa legislature, however, goes beyond the Second Amendment. It prioritizes the right to possess and carry a gun without any infringement over the right to public safety for our communities and children. The Reckless Gun Amendment could lead to judicial invalidation of any reasonable gun safety measure that keeps Iowans safe.

To see the flier prepared by our Coalition, go to:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uuNWmUNDJGi9gsnNjSTri0VLFcVOW_4_/view

You can also access the flier on the Coalition's website, iowansforresponsiblegunlaws.com. On that site, go to Take Action, and scroll down to Additional Information.

Save the Date!

AAUW Iowa Board of Directors has approved the date and location of our next state conference!

The conference will be held on April 21-22, 2023. We are pleased to announce that we will be returning to the Hilton Garden Inn/Urbandale located at 8600 Northpark Drive, Johnston, Iowa 50131.

Watch each coming issue of the *Iowa Initiative* for additional information about the conference.

Pat Newman and Rebecca Sweeney
AAUW Iowa Co-Program Vice Presidents
Conference Co-Chairs

Help for Local Branch Treasurers

Do you need some help registering new members? Perhaps you need a printed roster or can't find a former member for renewal. Pat Higby, the state treasurer, has been made an unofficial member of all Iowa branches, which means she has access to those branch rosters. If you need help, please contact her at patricia.a.higby@gmail.com. Together we can work on solving some of those tricky issues related to the new national AAUW website.



A Conversation About the 1619 Project with Nikole Hannah-Jones

Nikole Hannah-Jones, Pulitzer Prize-winning creator of the 1619 Project and staff writer at the *New York Times Magazine*, will visit Iowa State to present the 2022 Manatt-Phelps Lecture in Political Science on Nov. 2 at 6 p.m. in C.Y. Stephens Auditorium. [The event is free and open to the public.](#)

Hannah-Jones has spent her career investigating racial inequality and injustice, and her reporting has earned her the MacArthur Fellowship, a Peabody Award, two George Polk Awards and the National



Magazine Award three times. Hannah-Jones is also Knight Chair of Race and Journalism at Howard University, where she is founding the Center for Journalism & Democracy at Howard University. She is also the co-founder of the Ida B. Wells Society for Investigative Reporting, which seeks to increase the number of investigative reporters and editors of color. In 2022, she opened the 1619 Freedom School, a free after-school literacy program in her hometown of Waterloo, Iowa.

[Link to more information about this event.](#)

July 10 Reproductive Rights Rally at the Capitol in Des Moines

AAUW supports women's rights to make health care decisions. For the thousands in attendance at the July 10 rally on the Iowa Capitol grounds, many voices were heard about the need for reproductive freedom - Black, White, Asian, Latina, Indigenous, Jewish, Christian, Atheist, cisgender, transgender, and more. Attendees noticed the use of inclusive language, including "people who can become pregnant" instead of pregnant women.

Near right: Ames Branch members Jean McMaken and Diane Patton attended the Reproductive Rights Rally held at the Iowa Capitol on July 10.

Far right: Diane Patton by Ruth Bader Ginsberg figure with signs: "Freedom is the ability to control your own body." and "I dissent-RBG"



Cedar Falls-Waterloo Branch Tries Something New

Jane Close, Bonnie Smith, and Pat Higby are organizing an "Arts and Crafts for AAUW" online auction to raise funds for the Cedar Falls-Waterloo branch. They are requesting donations of paintings, sculptures, prints, wearable art, quilts, table toppers, placemats, hand woven or knitted items, and other artsy things from AAUW members, their family, and friends. What a good way to downsize your



walls and help your favorite organization! The sale is scheduled for mid November. Other branches are invited to bid (or donate). Items will need to be picked up, or delivery or shipping arrangements made before the bidding is final. We will share the online site later, but please save some of your Christmas shopping budget for something new! For more details contact Pat Higby.

Spring Conference Featured Speaker—Karen Kedrowski from Catt Center

The 2023 AAUW Iowa spring conference will feature a talk by Dr. Karen Kedrowski on “Hard Won, Not Done: The Equal Rights Amendment at 100.”

Dr. Karen M. Kedrowski is [Director of the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics](#) and Professor of Political Science at Iowa State University, a position she has held since January 2019.

Dr. Kedrowski earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, where she majored in Political Science, French, and History. She then earned her Master of Arts and Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Oklahoma, Norman. Her research agenda focuses primarily on women and politics and civic engagement. She is the author or coauthor of three books and numerous book chapters, book reviews, journal articles, encyclopedia entries, and



Karen Kedrowski

blog posts. In addition, Dr. Kedrowski is frequently interviewed by local, regional, national, and international news organizations.

Dr. Kedrowski also leads Iowa State’s student voting engagement efforts and helped organize the Big XII Votes Challenge. In 2022, she was named Campus Champion of the Year by the Andrew Goodman Foundation.

Prior to coming to Iowa State, she spent 24 years at Winthrop University in Rock Hill, South Carolina, where she served in many roles, including as Chair of the Department of Political Science, and later as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. She also led the University’s civic and voter engagement efforts, which received national recognition. Dr. Kedrowski was a Fulbright Scholar at McGill University in 2010 and received Winthrop’s highest faculty honor, Distinguished Professor, in 2011.

The ERA: Moving Forward with an Attorney

Doris Kelley has invited members of AAUW to join in a Zoom conversation with A.J. Conroy, an attorney who is working toward moving ahead with the ERA. That Zoom meeting has been scheduled for September 12 at 10:00 a.m. The link to join in is below.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86445002032?pwd=SnpEYXd1Vm1jekhUOGg1eGVaTCTEdz09>

Meeting ID: 864 4500 2032

Passcode: 341180

ERA Video Now Available

A new video about the Equal Rights Amendment has been released and is now available for us to use when we speak about this issue. That video can be found at <https://hardwonnotdone.com/>, and is also linked to the [AAUW Iowa website](#).

At the Spring Conference, Doris Kelley presented the history of efforts to pass the Equal Rights Amendment, and urged AAUW members to work with other organizations to push this issue, recommending the video for us to use in a presentation.

AAUW DM to host 1619 Project Study

The Des Moines branch invites members of other branches and friends to join us in studying *The 1619 Project*, by Nikole Hannah-Jones, using Zoom beginning in January. We will be using the book version of this work, rather than the shorter series of articles from the *New York Times*.

The following Zoom dates have been confirmed by AAUW Iowa web technician Lois Enger. All meetings are scheduled for 7:00 p.m.

- Jan 3 – Ground rules and preface. See ground rules used by Grand View University.
- Jan 10 Chapters 1-2
- Jan 17 Chapters 3-4
- Jan 24 Chapters 5-6
- Jan 31 Chapters 7-8
- Feb 7 Chapters 9-10
- Feb 14 Chapters 11-12
- Feb 21 Chapters 13-14
- Feb 28 Chapters 15-16
- Mar 7 Chapters 17-18

Please mark your calendar, and invite your friends to participate as well. A Zoom link and ground rules information will be sent closer to these dates.

