



IOWA INITIATIVE

A PUBLICATION OF AAUW-IOWA
VOLUME 104 NUMBER 9
April 2024

Co-President’s Letter

Kathie Farris, AAUW Iowa Co-President

A presidential election year in the United States provides the opportunity to set one’s priorities on the political front and to do something about them. The first goal must be to choose the issues that are most compelling for you at this point in time. A top 10 list could include reducing crime, inflation, public education, strengthening the economy, women’s health issues, immigration, the influence of private money on politics, protection from terrorism, climate change, and reducing health care costs. Deciding which two or three issues resonate with you sets the stage for selecting the candidate/s you will choose to volunteer for.



Choosing the one or two candidates you want to support takes time. The Media Bias Chart provides good sources. For example, NPR, AP, and PEW Research Center provide fact-filled middle of the road coverage. On the other hand, Fox News (TV), The Political Tribune, Hannity, and the Palmer Report are much less balanced. Then look at photo ops and cute slogans. Catch words like “the American Way” and “law and order” sound good but reveal nothing of a candidate’s plans. Debates, speeches, and press releases are good sources of information. Phony issues and promising the sky are also warnings along with rumor mongering and name calling. After your research, you should have great candidates to support.

There are multiple ways to support candidates. One of the best ways is being willing to go door to door speaking for your candidate. Another is making phone calls. If these are not your strengths, how about addressing postcards or writing thank you letters. You can deliver yard signs. You can host a candidate’s meeting or a neighborhood coffee. The day of the election you can drive people to the polls or be a poll watcher.

You can donate to a campaign. Rent, printing, advertising are just a few of the expenses a campaign has. Again, you can make a difference. Just a caution, if you are donating more than a couple of thousand dollars, get tax advice.

Finally vote. Vote early so you can help out on Election Day.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Co-Presidents’ Letter	1
Spring Conference	1-2
Iowa’s Stagnating Minimum Wage	3
Distinguished Faculty Award	4
50-Year Member	4
GVU Student Branch	5-6
Girl Power on Display	6
eNetwork Meets Pauli Murray	7
We’ve Come a Long Way, Ladies!	7
Help with Repro Kits	8
Public Policy	9
Economic Justice for the Justice System ...	10-11
Vote in the AAUW National Election	11

What a Great Conference!

Rebecca Swainey, AAUW Iowa Program Co-VP

The AAUW Iowa Annual State Conference has come and gone. A big thanks to everyone involved--committee, presenters, attendees --together you made it a memorable weekend.

Things kicked off Friday evening with *Gridshock*, a documentary about human trafficking. This hard-hitting video is gut-wrenching. The matter-of-fact manner in which the victims relate their horrific stories is chilling. It quickly becomes all too clear they could be any one of us, or our loved ones. The presenter, Melody Stone, has worked with victims of human trafficking for many years. She has made it her mission to raise awareness. She is available to show GRID SHOCK and/or speak on the dangers of human trafficking in Iowa. She can be reached at prairiemelody@gmail.com.



Melody Stone

Continued on next page

Conference, continued from previous page

After welcoming remarks from Co-Presidents Karen Agee and Kathie Farris, Saturday's full lineup began with Meghan Kissell, AAUW National Director of Advocacy, coming to us on ZOOM from the AAUW Virginia State Conference. There were some frustrating glitches, especially with the audio. But despite these issues, her passion for the rights of women was palpable.

Dr. Amy Bix, Professor of History at ISU, entertained as she enlightened us on the often overlooked contributions women have made in the fields of science, engineering, technology, and math. Some highlights: Vassar, an all women's college, built an observatory for astronomy in 1864. The first 'computers' were not machines but skilled women who processed astronomical data. The biggest laugh of the day came when she shared the observations of Edward Clarke, a Harvard Medical School Professor. In his book, *Sex in Education*, written in 1875, Dr. Clarke stated that women should be allowed to receive higher education, but that it would come at the expense of their reproductive health. Their bodies couldn't possibly support both their brains and their female bodily functions. He felt, if they did pursue higher education, they should take a break every four weeks.

Next up after Dr. Bix was the video 50-50 in 2020--a Gender Equity Initiative in Iowa. In this video by Susan Wakefield, our own Elaine Kresse interviewed former legislators Jean Lloyd-Jones and Maggie Tinsman. They spoke about their goal to see the Iowa House and Senate comprised of women holding 50% of the seats by 2020. This goal fell short, but there were other achievements such as women from Iowa serving in the U.S. House and Senate as well as in the Governor's office. The video may be viewed here: [50-50 in 2020: Women's Equity in Political Office SD 480p - YouTube](#)

Following the video, Jean, Maggie, and Susan were all publicly recognized and each presented with the book *The Pink Wave: Women Running for Office After Trump*. This book was coauthored by our Distinguished Faculty Award winner for 2024, Regina M. Matheson.



Jean Lloyd-Jones



Maggie Tinsman

Lettie Prell, former Research Director of the Iowa Department of Corrections, and a member of The League of Women Voters, shared data and some initiatives the League has put forth to bring economic justice to the justice system. She also offered ways AAUW might join with them in pursuit of these goals.



Lettie Prell

Dr. Emily Boevers spoke of the impact of reproductive freedom on women, families, and communities. She shared facts and data that again and again refute the misinformation so prevalent on this subject in our society. One of the more appalling statistics was how high the mortality for women in childbirth is in the United States compared to other developed countries. Another disturbing fact was a serious rise in infant mortality in Iowa over the past few years.



Dr. Emily Boevers

Dr. Tara Shochet from the Family Planning Council of Iowa followed Dr. Boevers with information on services they provide including education, counseling, and access to reproductive health care options. They currently have offices in 55 of Iowa's 99 counties.



Dr. Tara Shochet

Elaine Kresse, AAUW Iowa College/University Director, introduced Samantha Swacker to share a bit about her experiences with NCCWSL. Samantha enjoyed her experience last year so much that she's signed up again for this year. Her enthusiasm is contagious and there are a number of other young women going from Grandview and Simpson.

Branch Presidents, former Distinguished Faculty recipients, and Legacy Circle members were all recognized.

We also heard from Diane Kearns, AAUW of Iowa Public Policy Director, on what's been happening in the Iowa Legislature.

Last, but far from least, AAUW Iowa's 100th birthday was celebrated with cards of congratulations and donations made to the National AAUW Greatest Needs Fund. A total of \$2,231 was raised.

Iowa's Stagnating Minimum Wage: A Bleak Picture for Iowa Families

Mary Ann Ahrens, 2024 Equal Pay Day AAUW Iowa Event Chair

The minimum wage was created to keep workers at decent living standards, not living below the poverty line. The minimum wage has failed to keep up with struggling working families. Iowa's (and Federal) minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour has been in place since 2007. The Center for Economic and Policy Research found that, had wages kept up with productivity as they did before 1968, the minimum wage would be \$21.50 an hour.

Twenty-three states increased their minimum wage in late 2023 and January 1, 2024.

States surrounding Iowa have raised their minimum wage as follows: Minnesota \$10.85, Illinois \$14, Missouri \$12.30, and Nebraska \$12. Five states have not adopted a state minimum wage. (National Conference of State Legislatures) Twenty states, including Iowa, continue to keep their state minimum wage at \$7.25 an hour. Today, a person working a full-time, minimum wage job makes \$15,080 per year, which is almost exactly the same as the designated 2024 Federal poverty level of \$15,060 per year. (HealthCare.gov)

The number of Iowans living under the poverty line is approximately 352,770 or 11% of Iowa's total population. (U.S. Census Bureau Iowa) In 2021-22 forty percent of Iowa's children were eligible for free lunches. (National Center for Education Statistics) One in five American children live below the poverty level, *Business Insider* tells us.

The 2022 Iowa Legislature cut earned unemployment benefits from 26 weeks to 16 weeks. The bill further mandates people accept jobs even if the offered wage is significantly less than what they were earning starting in week two of unemployment, which is problematic.

Why are these facts and conditions important to women and their families? *The National Partnership for Women and Families* reports that in the U.S. mothers are breadwinners in 40% of families with children under 18 each year, and about 70% will be the primary earner at some point in their first 18 years of motherhood. Nearly 35 million households in the U.S. are headed by women, more than six million of them

with children under 18. More than 8.4 million households—including 2 million with children—have incomes that fall below the poverty level.

Women tend to hold lower-paying jobs, work in lower-paying industries, and spend less time in the formal workforce. These trends result from factors such as pervasive stereotypes and social norms about gender and work, a lack of workplace support for family caregiving, gender and racial discrimination, and the devaluation of work when it is primarily done by women. The effects are both starker and qualitatively different for women of color. Forty-eight percent of white mothers, 49% of Latina mothers, 79% Black mothers, 64% of Native American mothers, and 43% of Asian/Pacific Island mothers are breadwinners. Yet the wage gap for mothers is larger than for women overall! (The National Partnership for Women and Families)

How many more Iowans must struggle in poverty before the Iowa Legislature *makes it a priority to take ACTION* to increase the minimum wage? The *necessity* of Equal Pay Day is a stark reminder to Iowans and our elected officials at all levels of what's at stake!



Professor Regina Matheson, AAUW of Iowa Distinguished Faculty Award 2024

Elaine Kresse, College/University Director

Dr. Regina Matheson has served as the named AAUW representative for St. Ambrose University for most of her career there. In that role she has introduced many others to AAUW, including Dr. Lisa Powell, the Director of the Women and Gender Studies program and Curriculum Coordinator for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at St. Ambrose. Dr. Powell initiated Regina's nomination.

Dr. Matheson started her journey at St. Ambrose in 2000 as one of very few junior female faculty members. Her experience in the Sociology Department as the only female faculty member certainly shaped what she experienced. Female students and colleagues naturally gravitated to her as a mentor and colleague. This seems to have piqued her interest in supporting women in the profession and understanding the unique experiences of women in various social institutions.

Dr. Powell said in her nomination of Dr. Matheson for this honor, "Her knowledge and ability in the study of statistical data merged with her sincere interest in sociology, which has served us all well as she began speaking and publishing in 1995." Dr. Matheson's research presentations include these: "The Influence of



HIV/AIDS Knowledge and Sexual Behavior on Sexual Responsibility Among College Students," presented in 1995 to the American Sociological Association, Washington, DC; "Gender and Communication," presented in 2011 to the Women's Bar Association, Rock Island, IL, and Scott County, IA; and (with William W. Parsons) "COVID and the Changing Nature of Work," presented in 2022 at the Midwest Sociological Society Conference, Chicago, IL.

In 2023 New York University Press published *The Pink Wave: Women Running for Office After Trump*, by Dr. Matheson and William W. Parsons. Their book provides a comprehensive picture of the campaign experience for women running in state legislative races across the country in the hotly-contested election cycles of 2018 and 2020. After the 2016 election, the number of women interested in running for office increased, creating a *pink wave* of women running across all levels of government. Regina Matheson and William Parson wondered why.

Dr. Matheson is now the Associate Vice President of Academic Grants and Sponsored Programs and continues to teach classes in sociology, marriage and family, and methods and statistics.



Irene Brucker - 50 Year Member

Loess Hills members surprised Irene Brucker with a celebration of her 50 years as an AAUW member, actually 52 years, but this time with an official AAUW 50-year certificate. She was honored at our AAUW Girl Power on Display event on April 18. You may have known her as Irene Dodder.



In 1972 she was asked to join the former AAUW Council Bluffs Branch. She served on the AAUW of Iowa Board of Directors: 2010-2014

Nominations Chair, 2008-2010 Nominations Committee, 2005-2008 Membership Committee, and 1998-2004 Education Foundation Director. Irene so enjoyed the friendships she made with women of like minds and ideas.

She accepted a surprise invitation from AAUW to fly her to Washington, D.C. for training. At one session she was impressed to learn that many former Iowa state presidents became presidents of national AAUW.

Irene is forever the optimist and advocate for women and girls so when AAUW Council Bluffs folded, Irene initiated AAUW Loess Hills Branch in 2007 and became our first president. Irene is an inspiration to all of us. She welcomed us to gather at her house which has become home for our meetings.

Grand View University Student Branch in Action!

Mary Ann Ahrens, AAUW Iowa Equal Pay Day Event Chair

I first met Dr. Amy Getty, professor at Grand View University in Des Moines, at the AAUW Iowa summer state board meeting at Mercy College of Health Sciences. She replaced me as state membership vice president and continues to be instrumental as the College/University representative at Grand View. Her co-advisors are Brigid Ernst, an academic advisor who runs the GV Tutoring Center, and Leilani Bucchi. The group there makes a continuous difference as AAUW students on campus who plan and implement creative, fun, and mission driven events and opportunities. Dr. Getty received the AAUW Iowa Distinguished Faculty Award in 2022.

Amy states: "AAUW was started at Grand View after I attended the Way Up Conference and learned about the AAUW College/University branch option. I had been a member of AAUW since 2005, but I did not know until that conference that there were C/U branch options.

"Once I got the national membership for our campus, I put out a call for students for our first meeting. Ella (Heinicke) Bauer (Biology major who now has her Ph.D.) was the only one who showed up. Her grandmother, Dr. Janet Heinicke, was an AAUW member in Indianola. So, Ella had a history with AAUW her whole life. Ella was our first student president, and she graduated in 2014, so I am thinking our branch started in 2013. She was also our first student to attend NCCWSL. We used only private funds (both AAUW Des Moines and AAUW Iowa funds to help) so she went all by herself. An intrepid person!

"We have been a group on campus ever since. We started **Start Smart** salary negotiations that year as well—2013—and ran it at least 3-4 semesters until 2019. Now Work Smart is free online, so it does not make sense for us to buy the license for in-person workshops anymore."

Elise Morrow and Sammy Swacker, Grandview University student leaders, volunteered to assist with AAUW Iowa's recent Equal Pay Day Event at the Capitol. Both are part of the Women's Empowerment Club with ten active members and 21 members-at-large which is a part of Grandview's AAUW Branch along with Planned Parenthood Generation Action affiliate Chapter. After getting acquainted I found they were doing creative, meaningful, fun, mission-driven projects, and gaining campus recognition for them. This year they earned "Club of the Month" twice and have won the "Most Outstanding Club of the 2023-24 Year" from the campus student leadership group. They won the Viking Council Clubs and Orgs Olympics based on their service projects, activity, and events. They are the only club to have a member voted

Viking of the Month, Connie Welcher, secretary/communications officer (Political Science Class of 2025, Social Work Class of 2026). Since their campus existence and activities are known by few, this was an opportunity to share their accomplishments with our branch members and college university institutional members throughout Iowa.



Celebrating International Women's Day

Their club mission statement indicates "The purpose of the Women's Empowerment Club is to inspire and enrich women's lives at Grandview and in our community by providing experiences to educate and empower women to use their voices to advocate for equitable opportunities to reach their full potential in health, well-being, education, learning and social inclusion."

The women involved in the Grand View Campus group are also involved in other campus activities. Elise Morrow is president of the GV Social Work Club, Vice-President of Equity and Advocacy for Women's Empowerment Club and Bachelors of Social Work Student – Class of 2025. Their President Sammy Swacker is a Game Design major, and both are headed to NCCWSL (National Conference of College Women Student Leaders) this spring. Other officers and positions include Emily Nguyen, VP of Leadership; Monica Cunningham, VP of Education; and Elise Thornton, Finance Officer.

Their campus projects and events include:

- March Women's History Month posts on social media
- Wonder Woman scavenger hunt about pioneering women in politics
- Phillips Elementary visit dressed as Barbies to act out a book they read to the children
- Barbie Bingo

Continued on next page

Grand View University, from previous page

- Menstrual product drive with Pride Club and the House of Mercy
- Three Lobby Day visits to the Capitol: AAUW Iowa Lobby Day, AAUW Iowa Equal Pay Day, and Planned Parenthood
- Sex Ed After Dark April Event to hand out Repro Kits and knowledge
- Lunch and Learn with a financial advisor about Empowering Women and their Financial Freedom.
- Fundraising for five members wanting to attend NCCWSL this summer
- Grand View International Woman’s Day

These student leaders/members are doing an incredible job implementing AAUW priorities in the campus environment and community, in addition to juggling their coursework and other commitments as they work toward graduation. They not only deserve AAUW recognition but

deserve to take part in the NCCWSL Conference this summer. *What a grand view of our future* as college prepares these young women!



Advocating for reproductive rights at the capitol

Girl Power on Display

Jane Goldsmith, Loess Hills Branch

AAUW Loess Hills Branch hosted Girl Power on Display to honor ten middle school girls who display perseverance in overcoming obstacles in private, academic or extracurricular life. Nine middle schools in Pottawattamie County and one in Harrison County participated.

The girls were recognized at a ceremony on April 18 from 4:30 - 6:00 pm at Iowa Western Community College Looft Hall. The girl’s family and school nominators were invited with about 65 in attendance. After refreshments, Barbara Sanford led the group in a relaxing meditation. Marie Torres and Jarolin Turek spoke about how each displayed perseverance when younger. Loess Hills Branch members honored each girl with a framed certificate, monetary stipend and goody bag.

In preparation, members visited principals and counselors near where they live. They invited each school to select

one middle school girl who displays perseverance and submit a paragraph about why she should be honored.

Nominators wrote about girls showing perseverance in learning English; overcoming physical injury; family medical, physical and emotional issues; living transitions; personal, social and academic challenges; striving for algebra advancement; and encouraging others at school. Vergarie Sanford, emcee, read each girl’s paragraph as the honoree came forward.

Loess Hills Branch hired a sign language interpreter and a Spanish interpreter. All parents/ guardians signed permission to allow the name of their girl and photo to appear on screen at the event and for an article and photo in the *Council Bluffs Daily Nonpareil* by a reporter who attended.



The e-Network "Meets"

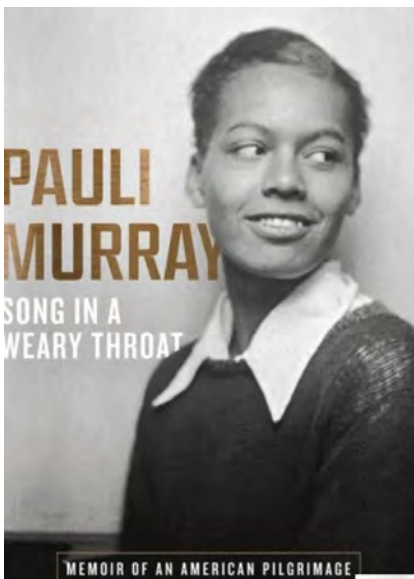
Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray

Mary Helen Stefaniak, eNetwork branch

In our March meeting, the eNetwork branch explored the life and ideas of Pauli Murray (1910-1985), a non-binary Black lawyer, activist and poet who influenced both Thurgood Marshall and Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Murray's activism and writing were foundational for the civil rights movement and the women's movement.

Our guest speaker was Angela M. Mason, Executive Director of the Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice (www.paulimurraycenter.com), which is located in Murray's childhood home in Durham NC. Members of the North Carolina virtual branch and others were invited to join us for Angela Mason's presentation portraying one of the most remarkable lives of the twentieth century.

Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray was a founder of the National Organization for Women, the first Black person to earn a JSD (Doctor of the Science of Law) degree from Yale University (where a residential college is now named for her), and the first Black person perceived as a woman to be ordained an Episcopal priest.



Murray's legal arguments--including one entitled "Jane Crow"--provided winning strategies for public school desegregation, women's rights in the workplace, and an extension of rights to LGBTQ+ people based on the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

Murray's friendship with Eleanor Roosevelt informs *The Firebrand and the First Lady* by Patricia Bell-Scott. (See the AAUW webinar "In Conversation with Dr. Patricia Bell-Scott.") Pauli Murray's own work--the memoir *Song in a Weary Throat* and *Proud Shoes*, a family history--provides a more detailed picture of an amazing person who will soon be featured on the U.S. quarter!

View the recorded meeting--including a brief video with Ruth Bader Ginsburg--at [eNetwork 3 26 24.mp4 - OneDrive](https://www.aauw-ia.aauw.net/) or go to <https://www.aauw-ia.aauw.net/> and look for "Pauli Murray - hosted by eNetwork" on the home page.

We've Come a Long Way, Ladies!

Three members of the Des Moines branch joined Indianola members for a performance of "We've Come a Long Way, Ladies!" on March 27 at Simpson College. Opera singer and Simpson grad Audrey Johnson performed songs about suffragists while wearing clothing reminiscent of the period. All of us enjoyed the performance, and would recommend it for others. Audrey is interested scheduling more Iowa performances. We encourage you to visit her website, and explore possibilities for bringing her back to Iowa. Find more here - <https://www.audreyjohnsonmezzo.com/>



Audrey Johnson



Johnson was joined by singers from Simpson for two songs.



Ann Gale and Faith Sherman, Des Moines, Jackie Brittingham, Kathie Farris, and Pat Wilson, Indianola, and Janet Pickerell, Des Moines, attended the performance.

Yes, There Is Something You Can Do!

Pat Higby, Co-President-Elect

Yes, There Is Something You Can Do!

Do you, like many other women, feel depressed about the overwhelming issues we currently face? Gun safety, reproductive rights, pay equity, human trafficking—there are just so many problems! Does it make you want to grab some wine and/or chocolate and hide under the covers until it all goes away? That might make you feel better, but it won't solve the problems. Please help us make the world a better place for women and girls by participating in our latest project instead!

Iowa AAUW has donated \$5,000 to the Family Planning Council of Iowa (FPCI) to help with the purchase, packing, and distribution of 1,000 Reproductive Health Kits (Repro Kits). Each Repro Kit includes a booklet on sexual and reproductive health, condoms, lubricant, emergency contraception, and a pregnancy test. (Emergency Contraception prevents pregnancy after sex; it does not interrupt a pregnancy that is already established.) The items are discreetly packed in an opaque plastic purple bag.

The Repro Kits were available at our Spring Conference, and many participants were able to take one back to show to their branch members. We also had a sign-up sheet at the conference for leaders to sign up for “packing parties.” FPCI will send out all the Repro Kit items in bulk. Your branch members are asked to put the Repro Kits together and distribute them in your area. To get the materials, please contact Tara Shochet tshochet@fpcouncil.com or Allison Smith asmith@fpcouncil.com. Or you can call the FPCI office at 515-288-9028. If you need any help from FPCI staff, just ask Tara or Allison.

April is Sexual Assault Awareness month, so it is a perfect time to take action! One in five women in America have experienced completed or

attempted rape in their lives. Help them be prepared. Every young woman should have emergency contraception in her lingerie drawer! You can't put it there yourself, but you can contact student groups to help with distribution. Or perhaps there are events or celebrations where your members can staff a table. Taking action is a great way to counteract depression. Thank you for your help.

Request a Repro Kit Today

What is a Repro Kit?
A repro(ductive) kit is a collection of **reproductive and sexual health tools** that you can **request** to be sent to your address **for free**.

All Repro Kits Contain:

- 1 Educational booklet with information about all included items and more
- 2+ Condoms
- 2 Packets of lube
- 2 Doses of Emergency Contraceptive (morning-after) pills

How to request a kit

- 1 go to: fpcouncil.org/request-a-repro-kit/ or scan this QR code
- 2 Fill out the form
- 3 You will receive your kit in approx. 2 weeks in discreet packaging

Don't need a kit but want to help?

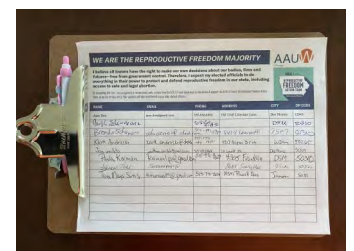
Consider donating to help lowans in need receive repro kits **\$25 → 5** Donated kits sent

Volunteer to help pack kits!

Donate and sign-up to volunteer at [fpcouncil.org!](https://fpcouncil.org/)

Reproductive Rights Petitions Continue

Becca Eastwood from ACLU-Iowa reports that our members have collected a total of 715 signatures!!!! They are really impressed, and gratefully thank each of you for your help. But we aren't done yet. There will be a statewide door knock day on May 18 to do another big push before the Iowa Supreme Court decides the future of a six-week abortion ban. If you and/or your branch can find a time and place to collect more signatures, please do so. The petitions can be downloaded from our Iowa AAUW website at <https://aauw-ia.aauw.net/files/2024/01/AAUW-ACLU-PETITION.pdf>



Public Policy

Diane Kearns, AAUW Iowa Public Policy Director

Welcome to Spring! Before I continue with my article, I wish to thank the Spring Conference Committee for an excellent Conference. I have worked on conferences before and I know the time and thought that goes into those.

This past Wednesday I sat in on a Webinar from AAUW entitled, "It's My Vote! AAUW Priorities in the 2024 Election." They discussed the fact that AAUW is a non-partisan organization, however, we can be political. They are putting a Voter Guide on their website and it will be in printed form next week. They stressed that as an organization, we do not endorse any particular candidate. They did refer many times to our Public Policy Priorities, including support for a strong system of public education; diversity, equity and inclusion in higher education and others.

The Guide will include lists of questions to ask candidates, for example: How do you view the role of diversity in higher education? Do you support or oppose restrictions on abortion? What steps would you take to address misinformation about the integrity of elections? Do you support the ERA as part of the US Constitution? These were just a few of the questions that could be directed to candidates.

The Iowa Legislature's 100th Day was April 16. This is the day they schedule to adjourn. The Senate adjourned at 3:26 a.m. and the House adjourned at 4:23 a.m. on April 20.

As I stated at the Conference, everyone needs to hold legislators and those running for office accountable for their decisions and their stands on issues of importance to women.

Legislative Update:

SF2174/HF2098-Assault against a person for whom a protective order is issued. **PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE-TO GOVERNOR.**

SF2386/HF2612-Modifying provisions related to AEA's. **SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR 3/27/24.**

SF2150/HF2617-Pregnancy, fetal development in health curriculum. **3/19/224 Senate Calendar. This bill did not progress so is dead for the session.**

HF2487-Grooming behavior. **Passed House and Senate. SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR 4/19/2024.**

SF2385-Relating to boards and commissions. **Passed House 54-42, passed Senate 30-14. 4/19/2024 Immediate message.**

SF2411-Work based learning. **Read first time. Passed Senate 33-13. Immediate message.**

HF2545-Review of high school graduation requirements, core curriculum. **Passed House 57-36. Passed Senate 33-14. 4/18/2024 Immediate Message from House.**

HF2613/SF2258-Percent of Allowable Growth. **3/15/24 On calendar. Unfinished business.**

HF2570-County Attorney permit to carry weapon. **4/9/2024 Passed House 70-24. Passed Senate 34-12. To the Governor.**

HF2421-Transfer large capacity ammunition. **Passed Senate and House. 4/15/2024 Immediate Message.**

HF2586-Related to school security and permit to carry. **4/15/2024 Passed House 62-36. Passed Senate 30-14. SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR 4/19/2024.**

HF2464-Payment card transactions firearms and ammunition. **4/19/2024 Passed House and Senate. SIGNED BY GOVERNOR.**

Sf2252-Options for maternal support. **Passed House 61-34. Passed Senate 31-16. 4/10/2024 SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR.**

HF2460/SF2170-Human trafficking parole and work release. **4/19/2024 Passed by the House and Senate. Immediate Message.**

SF2251/HF2583-Pregnant women and infants under Medicaid program. **Passed House 70-25. Passed Senate 34-13. 4/17/2024 Immediate Message. Fiscal Note.**

SF2243-Sexual exploitation minor. **Passed House and Senate. 4/10/2024 SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR.**

SF2096/HF2540-Repeal of gender balance on boards and commissions. **4/3/2024 SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR.**

As stated previously, the 90th General Assembly adjourned in the early hours of Saturday, April 20.

Everyone have a great spring and summer. Remember this is an election year and stay informed on issues related to AAUW's Public Policy Priorities.



Economic Justice



One of the speakers at the AAUW Iowa Spring Conference was Lettie Prell, from the League of Women Voters, who spoke about "Bringing Economic Justice to the Justice System." The content below is from the League of Women Voters. It is a companion piece to the study, "Bringing Economic Justice to the Justice System." The complete article can be found here—[LWVIA-Study-Bringing- Economic-Justice-to-the- Justice-System- Amended- Final.pdf](#).



Economic Justice in a Nutshell

What does it cost when an indigent (poor) person is charged with a crime? If they ask for a trial, which is their constitutional right, people charged with crimes are often released from jail by posting bail. But a person who is indigent cannot afford bail, and cannot even afford a bail bondsman's fee to have bail paid for them. They must therefore remain in jail until their case is heard.

Incarceration awaiting trial sometimes means that the defendant loses a job, a place to live, and their possessions during an eviction. Obviously their debts then become an even more insurmountable burden.

The constitution requires that everyone charged with a criminal offense must have access to a lawyer to represent them, and if a person cannot afford a lawyer, one is appointed for them. In Iowa, state law then requires that in addition to other fines and fees that they cannot afford to pay, they must pay back the charges for that lawyer they could not afford in the first place. Even if the person is found not guilty and the case is dismissed, those charges must be repaid.

The fines and fees continue if a person is found guilty. In many Iowa counties, persons sentenced to jail are often charged a fee for each day they are incarcerated in the jail – which a person who is indigent can't afford, either.

The LWVIA positions below are presented in two sections: Bail & Pretrial Alternatives, and Criminal Justice Debt.

There is little evidence to support the efficacy of monetary bail in achieving the intended goals of reducing community harm and increasing court appearances.
~ VERA Institute of Justice

Bail and Pretrial Alternatives

The LWVIA believes justice delayed is justice denied. We believe that bail is seldom necessary as most defendants do show up for trial and are not a danger to the public. We believe that holding nonviolent persons in jail pretrial is counterproductive, often compounding poverty for

defendants, causing loss of job, car, schooling, and possessions.

The LWVIA supports:

- Funding the courts to provide indigent persons awaiting trial an adequate number of high-quality defense attorneys or contract attorneys to ensure a speedy trial.
- Providing prosecutors, defense attorneys, contract attorneys, and judges with regular training about the alternatives to jail for those awaiting trial, including pretrial diversion, pretrial supervision, and restorative justice programs. Funding for pretrial alternatives should not be assessed to indigent defendants.
- Amending Iowa Code 811.2 (which provides that judges consider the likelihood of a defendant's appearance in court and safety of others when ordering pretrial release) to add consideration of the risk of harm to the defendant and the defendant's family if the defendant were detained.

Of the 42 states that allow defendants to be billed for the services of a public defense attorney, Iowa assesses some of the highest fees in the nation.
Legal Aid & Defender Association, 2022

Criminal Justice Debt

The LWVIA believes that just as the state has the responsibility to prove a defendant guilty, so does the state have the responsibility of proving that the defendant has the ability to pay fines and fees. The determination should be based on all relevant evidence and sources of information. The burden of proof should be with the state which has greater resources than an indigent defendant.

We believe that Iowa should institute a sliding scale for assessing fines based on an individual's ability to pay. Ability-to-pay policies must include a presumption that some individuals will not have the ability to pay any fine, fee or other monetary sanction. We believe that resources devoted to collecting fines and fees could be better spent on efforts that actually improve public safety.

We believe that after the court determines a person's ability to pay and assesses any fines, fees, or other monetary sanctions, it must allow payment plans as an acceptable payment method. The court should also consider converting the reduced amount to an alternative method of fulfillment such as community service. An individual should not face incarceration, have probation extended, be denied services, or have a driver's license suspended for missed payments or nonpayment of fines and fees.

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

The LWVIA Supports

- Providing free legal services of high quality for indigent defendants, and repealing Iowa Code Section 815.9(3) to make this possible.
- Eliminating fees assessed to indigent defendants whose charges are dismissed.
- Mandating use of a guideline for all judges and court clerks to apply in determining reasonable ability to pay.
- Requiring monthly payment amounts that do not exceed 2% of an individual's monthly net income (including wage and excluding any child support or Supplemental Security Income) or \$10—whichever is greater.
- Waiving or reducing fines, fees, or any other monetary sanctions after a court determines an individual's ability-to-pay. Courts should permit individuals to enroll in a payment plan and should offer community service as an alternative form of payment. Courts should be flexible and allow a wide range of activities to qualify as community service.
- Mandating that collected public defense fees be remitted to an indigent defense fund rather than the general fund (should indigent defendants continue to be charged these fees).
- Streamlining and simplifying forms, petitions and processes designed to determine indigency and ability to pay. The "Financial Affidavit and Request for Reasonable Ability to Pay Determination for Category B Restitution" form should be rescinded.

The LWVIA opposes:

- Incarceration, extension of probation, denial of services, or driver's license suspension as punishment for missed payments by an individual on a payment plan.
- Issuance or execution of warrants for any failure to pay.
- The use by some County Attorneys in making Category B restitution a factor in plea negotiations, such as requiring agreement to forgo a Reasonable-Ability-to-Pay determination.

League of Women Voters 2024

Public Policy Priorities

Voting. Promote equal access to voting and ensure all votes are counted. Adopt automatic voter registration. Enact ranked choice voting. Pass a constitutional amendment allowing Iowans with felony convictions to vote after time served.

Transparency and Citizenship. Demand government accountability and transparency by requiring all amendments and bills discussed in committee to be available to the public prior to a vote. Demand timely processing of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. Encourage direct citizen participation by continuing virtual committee and subcommittee meetings. Preserve gender balance requirements for state boards.

Education. Increase oversight and track public funds being used for non-public schools. Require any non-public school receiving public funds to meet the same standards as public schools. Fully fund public schools. Continue to expand access to affordable childcare and four-year-old preschool.

Reproductive Rights. Guarantee access to the full range of women's reproductive health services. Make contraception available without prescription. Ensure Medicaid services are comprehensive and accessible. Support new moms with 12 months of postpartum Medicaid coverage. Set policies that attract maternal health professionals and address the state's OB/GYN deserts.

Human Trafficking. Prevent human trafficking in all of its forms, support its victims, and enact "Safe Harbor" legislation to protect human trafficking survivors from criminal prosecution.

Environment. Increase funding for environment and water quality initiatives, including REAP, and develop state climate change strategies.

Gun Safety. Enact comprehensive common sense gun safety legislation to address increasing gun violence in the state. Enact background checks on all gun sales, close gun show loopholes, require gun safety locks, repeal "stand your ground" law, and resist efforts that expand carrying in public spaces and schools.



Vote in the AAUW National Election!

AAUW members were sent an email from vote@simplyvoting.com around April 3, 2024. (AAUW is using a third-party vendor to conduct this vote).

This email contains your unique voting credential. If you have not received it, it's possible that AAUW does not have your current email address. Contact Kim Folkers

@ kimberly.folkers@wartburg.edu if you haven't received an email with a link that allows you to vote on the Open Up AAUW issue.

Members without an email address on file will receive a paper ballot.

Voting closes Monday, May 15, at 12 p.m. ET.

