



# IOWA INITIATIVE

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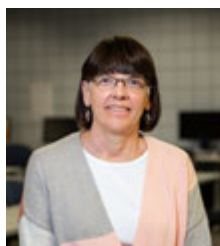
May 2025

## Co-President's Letter

Kim Folkers, AAUW Iowa Co-President

It's been a week since our 2025 State Conference and I'm still feeling its uplifting energy! Apparently, others who attended felt much the same, as the online survey we sent out has been completed by a good share of attendees, and the feedback is very positive. Highest ratings went to our four outstanding speakers – Steve Corbin, Susan Langan, Sarah Corkery, and Sheritta Stokes. Also very well rated was the one-day format and the location – Cedar Falls/ Diamond Event Center. Click on “State Conference Highlights” at the top of the AAUW Iowa [website main page](#) to access speaker info and related materials.

Other than the interesting “comedic relief” – if you weren't there, you'll have to ask someone who was! – the most frequent feedback we got is to build in more time for attendees to mingle and catch up with one another at future conferences. Stay tuned for updates on our next state conference.



Thanks again to our Co-VPs of Programming who planned this event – Penny Foy and Linda Morgan! And thanks to the more than 100 attendees who made it a real success!

Highlights of the State Annual Meeting held at the beginning of the Conference were:

- ◇ Remembering fellow members who have passed away, especially Elaine Kresse, Janet Heinecke and Suzanne Peters. A memorial table was set up at the conference for people to share memories and make donations to the AAUW Greatest Needs Fund in memory of these three.
- ◇ Recognizing three 50-Year members (7/1/75):  
Diane Edwards, Clarion Branch  
Polly McNeill, Algona Branch  
Diane Patton, Ames Branch
- ◇ Recognizing the Cedar Falls-Waterloo branch for their 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.
- ◇ Passing our revised state bylaws – thanks to Leslie Moore for her work on this!

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## ◇ Electing new state officers for a 7/1/25 start:

Co-President Elects: Mary Gill, e-Network branch  
and Pat Higby, Cedar Falls-Waterloo branch

Co-Vice President – Program: Maxine Lampe, e-Network

Treasurer: Nancy Henderson, Cedar Falls-Waterloo branch

VP Membership: Rebecca Ahrendsen, Clarion & eNetwork branches

Nominations Committee: Kathie Farris, Indianola;  
Anne Stansbury-Johnson, Palo Alto; Sue Jorgenson, Cedar Rapids; Kathleen Laurila, Des Moines and e-Network; Jan Creasman, Loess Hills; Janie Montang, Algona



# Reading Free in Iowa - Advocacy for Iowa Public Libraries

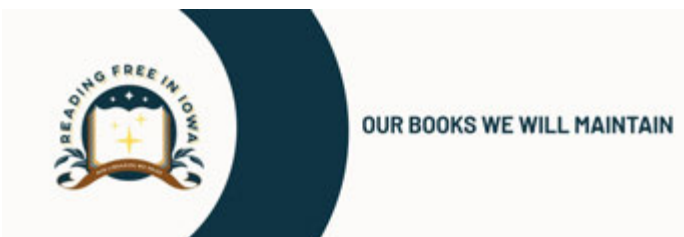
Janeal Weeks, Cedar Rapids Branch

*Janeal Weeks is a retired librarian in Cedar Rapids.*

**Reading Free in Iowa** works with librarians and patrons across the state to monitor anti-library activity, develop defense materials, promote the services and resources that libraries provide, encourage patron advocacy and support, and advocate for small, rural libraries that are most affected by challenges and funding threats.

**Reading Free in Iowa** was started in Johnson County by a group of ordinary Iowans shocked by defamatory attacks on libraries, books being pulled from public school shelves, and baseless accusations of obscenity in children's book collections. To protect Iowa's public libraries, we are developing a statewide network of patrons willing to mobilize and defend their libraries when they come under fire.

We are parents who want every child to feel at home in a library. We are community members who want diverse viewpoints and ideas represented. We are readers who believe in the artistic and educational value of challenged books. We fight for the right to access information, and we repudiate legislation that promotes censorship and criminalizes librarians' fundamental duties.



At **Reading Free in Iowa**,

- We believe public libraries protect freedom and independence.
- We defend books against challenges and removal.
- We support varied collections that serve entire communities.
- We oppose book bans, censorship, and attacks on librarians.
- We promote digital services that expand library accessibility.
- We recognize the remarkable role libraries play for patrons of all economic, religious, and cultural backgrounds and beliefs.

We keep our members informed through emails and Instagram (a Facebook is in the works), and we provide in-depth guidance for individuals who have never contacted their legislators or done advocacy

work before. While we do not ask librarians to actively engage in our efforts if they feel it would threaten their positions as neutral quasi-public figures, they provide critical context and information about the needs of Iowa's libraries and the difficulties they face at all levels. *We are nonpartisan and pro-patron.*

The **pressing danger** to our libraries right now is President Trump's Executive Order calling for the elimination of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). It is the only federal agency that distributes funds to America's public libraries, and it is crucial in providing small rural libraries with funding, internet access, websites, and untold other resources. Libraries in larger cities are not necessarily greatly at risk, but 75% of Iowa's 544 libraries serve under 2,500 people. Many serve under 300 people; the smallest I've found so far is a library in a town of 114. These libraries already have minimal funding and staff who work more hours than they are paid. The amount of money distributed to public libraries from the federal government is infinitesimal, and it is a fantastic example of public funds directly aiding the public. Libraries supply critical resources to their communities - for the disabled, the intellectually delayed, the elderly, the very young, the poor, the sick, the unemployed, small business owners, veterans, and on and on. We have much to lose if these libraries close. In the meantime, Iowa's libraries deal with challenges and threats as they come.

Every day our numbers grow. Together, we can monitor attacks and challenges to libraries and support them at every level, from small town committee meetings to the Iowa State Capitol.

Please consider joining the fight by emailing [readingfreeiniowa@gmail.com](mailto:readingfreeiniowa@gmail.com).





## AAUW Members Using Our Voices



*Algona members and others outside a meeting featuring local legislators*

AAUW is a non-partisan organization, but many of our members participated in nationwide protests on April 5 and since then.

In Algona, members met with friends to protest outside a forum for members of the legislature, and then went to a second protest in Mason City. They protested again outside the Kossuth County Courthouse on May 1.

Carol McGuire in Clinton: We had a great turnout on April 5th National Day of Action/Hands Off protest here in Clinton. A member of our AAUW has formed an activist group titled "Voices 4 Democracy." We intend to be involved here in Clinton whenever the national activists plan events. We are planning some local events as well. We are teaming with area counties for a stronger presence here in eastern IA.



*Left: Algona member Jane Nettleton in Mason City on April 5*

*Right: Iowa City  
photo taken by  
member Mary Helen  
Stefaniak on April 5.*



*Meredith Keelan, Fern Kruger, Karen Lehmann, and Kim Folkers, with Ann Rathe in the background at the Waverly Public Library. Some then joined the protest in Waterloo afterwards.*



*From a May 1 protest in front of the Kossuth County Courthouse in Algona. AAUW members Chris Louscher, Janet Brandt, Tara Brandt, Kathie Gerber, and friend Kris Peterson.*



## Legacy Circle and You

Maxine Lampe, National Legacy Circle Liaison

By making a planned gift to AAUW National, you become a member of the AAUW Legacy Circle and affirm your commitment to equity. These gifts — or bequests — are donations that you designate in your will, estate or trust.

There is no minimum gift requirement to join the Legacy Circle, and the benefits are many. For example:

- Planned gifts afford you flexibility to provide for your family and support AAUW.
- Certain planned gifts may reduce estate or capital gains taxes.
- Planned gifts need not affect your cash flow during your lifetime.
- Certain types of planned gifts allow you to support AAUW while also providing income for the rest of your life — or a fixed income for a loved one.

The joy of knowing that your legacy gift will sustain AAUW's programs for years to come is the ultimate benefit!

However, many of you do not want to set up a trust, change your will, or affect any other retirement programs you already have in place. One thing you can do is set up a savings account at your bank naming AAUW as the Paid-on Death (POD) beneficiary. You don't need to open the account with thousands of dollars, a few hundred will do! Most banks want a minimum of \$200.00 to open an account. Then, over time, you can add funds as you wish. Even after setting up the account, if you need to withdraw any money in the future, you can do that! It's good to know you have that flexibility. Once you have opened the



The graphic features the AAUW logo at the top left. Below it, the text 'EMPOWER FUTURE GENERATIONS' is displayed in white on a dark blue background. To the right of this text is a QR code with the text 'SCAN TO LEARN MORE' underneath it. Below the QR code, the text 'NEED MORE INFO?' is followed by contact information for Maxine Lampe: 'Contact your state liaison Maxine Lampe: lampe.maxine@gmail.com' and 'or AAUW National: planned-giving@aauw.org'. At the bottom, a dark blue banner contains the text 'TOGETHER WE CAN SHAPE THE FUTURE' and the URL 'bit.ly/AAUWLegacy' in orange.

account, you fill out a simple form called Legacy Circle Enrollment Form and forward it to AAUW National. That form can be found on the national website. [AAUW Leave a Legacy](#)

If anyone would like to know more, feel free to contact me. I want to encourage other AAUW Iowa members to participate in Legacy Circle now and in the years to come.

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## Vote in the AAUW Election

Voting is now open for the 2025 AAUW national member election! AAUW members will vote on amendments to the national Bylaws recommended by the member-led national Governance Committee and changes to the Public Policy Priorities recommended by the member-led national Public Policy Committee. Members will also vote on the candidates for the AAUW Board of Directors.

Voting in the AAUW Election 2025 ends on May 13, 2025 at 5:00 pm ET.

Check your email from about April 14 for a message from AAUW <vote@simplyvoting.com>. It contains links to voting information and your own unique Elector ID and

password. You will need those to vote. That email will contain a link to your ballot.

Or visit: <https://aauw.simplyvoting.com/> Then enter your elector ID and password. For more information on the candidates and ballot initiatives, please visit <https://act.aauw.org/MemberVote2025>.

If you have any questions, or updates regarding your membership or changes to your address or email, please contact [connect@aauw.org](mailto:connect@aauw.org).

Thank you for taking the time to vote on these important matters.



## Investiture Ceremony for Jean Lloyd-Jones and Michal Eynon-Lynch Iowa Women's Archives Women in Politics Archivist



On April 17, there was a University of Iowa Investiture Ceremony at the Old Capitol celebrating the appointment of Kate Orazem to the position of **Jean Lloyd-Jones and Michal Eynon-Lynch Iowa Women's Archives Women in Politics Archivist**. Jean is a former AAUW member who served in the Iowa legislature and was a co-founder of 50-50 in 2020. Jean included the name of her granddaughter in the gift she gave to the Iowa Women's Archives, assuring that the family's legacy of generosity and advocacy will continue.

*Front: Michal Eynon-Lynch, Jean Lloyd-Jones. Back: John Culshaw, Jack B. King University Librarian; Kate Orazem, Recipient, Jean Lloyd-Jones and Michael Eynon-Lynch Iowa Women's Archives Women in Politics Archivist; Lynette Marshall, President and CEO University of Iowa Center for Advancement; Kevin Kregel, University of Iowa Executive Vice President and Provost*

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## Girl Power on Display at Loess Hills

Jan Creasman, Loess Hills Branch President

The Loess Hills Branch of the American Association of University Women brought together 100 people for its fourth annual Girl Power on Display event at Iowa Western Community College on Thursday, April 24. Nine girls from middle schools in Pottawattamie County and one girl from Woodbine School in Harrison County were honored for their perseverance in overcoming challenges in their personal, academic, or extra curricular lives. Each girl was honored for her achievement with a framed certificate, a gift card, a financial award, and a goodie bag. Keynote speaker Dr. Keshia Bradford, a graduate of Abraham Lincoln High School in Council Bluffs, shared her educational journey of perseverance which resulted in the completion of her doctoral degree. She impressed upon the honorees that it is okay to fail because you learn from those failures which then allows you to continue to persevere.

Members of AAUW reached out to school officials to recommend one girl who had pushed through challenges such as health issues, injuries, family problems, language barriers or academic challenges. Each girl who was honored walked up to accept the honorary gifts from AAUW Loess Hills Branch President Jan Creasman.

Dr. Vergarie Sanford, chair of Girl Power on Display, read each girl's letter of recommendation aloud to

the audience. Dr. Sanford said, "I am delighted and honored that we had the opportunity to celebrate these remarkable young ladies. They are our inspiration as we begin planning ahead for next year's fifth annual awards ceremony."

The event was made possible by a grant from AAUW of Iowa and sponsorships from Iowa Western Community College, Council Bluffs Retired School Personnel, Charles E. Lakin YMCA, and some generous contributions from supporters. Both sign language and Spanish interpreters were hired for the event as well as a videographer.



Students Adalynn Warrior, Ava Bardsley, Liviana Riggs, Ellie Redden, Lainey Cox, Danielle Bramman, Molly Lemieux, Grace Shively, Willow Minshall, Melanie Gutierrez-Gato

## Spring Conference in Cedar Falls Was a Hit!

The 2025 AAUW Iowa Spring Conference on April 26 was a big success, with over 100 attendees, beating recent records.

**Steve Corbin** is an emeritus professor of marketing at UNI and a freelance writer. He read three of his recent op-eds, and a lively discussion followed. You can find those articles at the links below:

- [Project 2025's threat to democracy](#) (June 15, 2024). Corbin noted that of the 312 issues identified by Project 2025, 97 (31%) have already been implemented, and 62 (20%) are in progress.
- [Free speech and freedom of the press under assault](#) (March 16, 2025). Corbin drew parallels between the novel 1984 and present day United States.
- [Trump 2.0's alleged trifecta crisis](#) (April 27, 2026). Corbin named 10 controversial actions by the Trump administration in the first 100 days, and invited us to determine whether they put America in a precarious dilemma.



Steve Corbin

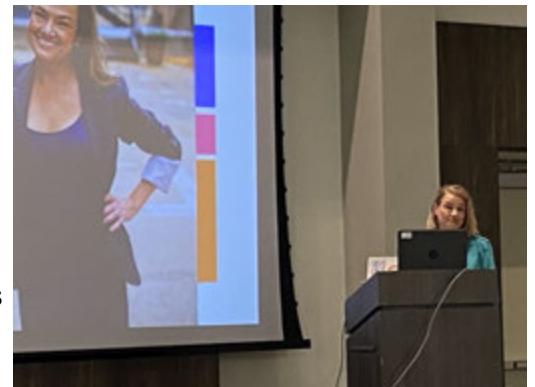
**Susan Langan** is a high school counselor in Cedar Falls. She gave us five tips when having a difficult conversation.

1. Self-examine for an agenda, and be aware of cognitive bias and attribution bias.
2. Be curious. Ask open-ended questions.
3. Listen to understand and reflect back on what the person said.
4. Frustration is normal. Take a relaxed approach. Take a deep breath.
5. The point is not to win the argument but to raise awareness.



Susan Langan

**Sarah Corkery** is a mother, business owner, cancer survivor, and candidate for the US House of Representatives. She and her husband used videos to tell her story and enlist public support to build an accessible park, lobby for legislation, and run for office.



Sarah Corkery

**Sheritta Stokes** is a teacher and the co-director of the 1619 Freedom School. The school is an after-school literacy program in Waterloo. Sheritta gave us an update about the progress made by the program, and the changes made in children's lives and their families.



Sheritta Stokes



Diane Patton, Ames Branch, (far left) and Polly McNeill, Algona Branch, (3rd from left) were honored for their 50 years of membership in AAUW. They are pictured with AAUW Iowa co-Presidents Pat Higby and Kim Folkers. Missing from the photo is the other new 50-year member Diane Edwards, Clarion Branch.



## Remembering Elaine Kresse, 1940-2025

Elaine Kresse was a teacher, community organizer, and supporter of many organizations devoted to serving others. We will miss her energy. Videographer Susan Wakefield filmed Elaine's interview with 50-50 in 2020 co-founders Maggie Tinsman and Jean Lloyd-Jones. [Find that interview here.](#)

**Marielle Sweborg and Maggie Tinsman:**

Elaine Kresse was not just a name; she was a beacon of inspiration and a pillar of strength in Scott County, Iowa. Her contributions to the American Association of University Women (AAUW) were not merely professional; they were deeply personal, reflecting her commitment to advancing the roles of women in education and society. As a prominent officer at both the state and local levels, Elaine embodied the spirit of leadership, advocacy, and community.

Her role as the chairman of the Scott County AAUW was a testament to her dedication and passion for uplifting women and promoting educational opportunities. Under her guidance, the organization flourished, becoming a vital resource for women seeking to expand their horizons through education and empowerment. Elaine was not only an advocate for women's rights; she was a nurturing figure who understood the importance of inclusivity and support. Her welcoming nature and genuine desire to connect with others made her an exceptional leader. When she invited me to join the group, it felt like more than just an invitation; it was a warm embrace into a community that celebrated growth, learning, and solidarity.

Elaine's ability to promote the AAUW was remarkable. She had an innate talent for rallying people around a common cause, inspiring them to believe in the potential of women everywhere. Through her efforts, she helped spread awareness about the organization's mission, bridging gaps and fostering connections that transcended beyond Scott County. Her enthusiasm for the AAUW was contagious, igniting a passion in others to participate and contribute to the cause. Elaine was not just a promoter; she was the pride and joy of the entire organization, a living testament to the values the AAUW stood for.

Her legacy extends beyond her titles and accolades. It lives on in the lives she touched, the women she inspired, and the community she helped build. Elaine Kresse was a champion of education, a mentor, and a friend. Though she may no longer be with us, her spirit continues to inspire those who carry on her work. Her commitment to empowering women and fostering educational opportunities is a light that will never dim.



As we reflect on her contributions, we remember not just a leader but a trailblazer whose impact will resonate for generations to come. May Elaine Kresse rest in peace, knowing that her legacy will continue to inspire countless individuals in their pursuit of knowledge, empowerment, and community.

**Sue Jorgenson:** Elaine was a good friend and we often talked on the phone about AAUW and Life! For several years we toured the Northeastern part of Iowa during the annual open studios and galleries. In recent years she would bring a friend to Cedar Rapids to visit her family. This was our time to visit museums and dine in Czech Village.

**Mary Helen Stefaniak:** Elaine Kresse was one of the liveliest, most enthusiastic, and most generous women I have had the pleasure and privilege to meet. Elaine was funny, friendly, and unflappable. I owe her a particular debt of gratitude for the interest she took in me and the support she gave me as a writer. I will miss her (sometimes fashionably late) arrivals at eNetwork meetings in the past and Iowa board meetings this year. I am just so glad to have had the opportunity to know her.

**Janie Montag:** Elaine was such a passionate person and exhibited that passion for everything she cared about. I am so grateful to her for leading the path to the videoed interview with the women from 50-50 in 2020. To have that information archived is extremely valuable to the future.

**Kim Folkers:** I met Elaine when I came on the State Board in 2021 to co-serve with her in the C/U & Membership position. It was a learning experience for sure, kind of like "drinking out of a firehose" as they say! She shared insights and advice that proved invaluable. We co-led a breakout session at the 2022 State Conference in Des Moines on Marketing Strategies, and worked three Way Up Conference vendor tables together for AAUW – twice in Coralville and once in Des Moines. Watching Elaine in action as she advocated for and educated on the value of AAUW was always a "master class!" We shared a lot of email conversations, phone calls and Zoom meetings over the past five years and it's still hard for me to believe that I will never again experience the force that was Elaine... Thank you, Elaine, for all you did for AAUW!

**Penny Foy:** I worked a booth with her in Iowa City - promoting AAUW to students. I cannot recall the name of the festival held downtown - but she was so warm and friendly to everyone. She was always upbeat and a positive member of the eNetwork.



*At the Way Up Conference in Coralville, November 2024*



*At the Regional Conference in St. Louis in October, 2023. Elaine is on the far left.*

## Legislature Season Nears the End for 2025

Diane Kearns, AAUW Iowa Public Policy Director

The 110<sup>th</sup> Day of Iowa General Assembly 91<sup>st</sup> Session is May 2, 2025. This has been a very interesting and frustrating session. I am going to do a brief summary of some of the AAUW priority legislation and their status at the time of this newsletter. It is doubtful the legislature will adjourn on Friday. Also, before I continue, I would like to thank Penny Foy and Linda Morgan for putting together an excellent spring conference. So without further adieu, here are some of the bills and their status as of now:

### **Judiciary:**

HF367/SF287. Relating to family interactions during an ongoing child in need of assistance processing. Status: SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR APRIL 18, 2025.

HF298/SF17. Relating to the placement of a child who is the subject of a pending delinquency petition in a supervised apartment living arrangement pursuant to consent decree and the circumstances under which the placement is paid by the state. Status: SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR MARCH 28, 2025.

SF418/HF583. Relating to sex and gender and including those and related terms for purposes of statutory construction, indications of a person's sex on certain vital records, gender identity under the Iowa Civil Rights Act and school curricula related to gender theory. Status: SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR FEBRUARY 28, 2025.

HF946/HSB285. Relating to the enforcement of immigration laws and providing penalties. Status: At the time of this writing, I am not sure of the status.

Amendments have been filed and a Fiscal Note. It passed the Senate on 3/26/2025-61 Yes and 35 No votes.

### **Education:**

SF288/SF12. Relating to students who are pregnant or who recently gave birth who attend state institutions of higher education governed by the Board of Regents of community colleges. Status: Passed the House and Senate 4/28/2025.

HF76/SF175/HF391. Incorporating provisions related to pregnancy and fetal development into the human growth and development and health curriculum provided by school districts, accredited nonpublic charter schools, and innovation zone schools to students enrolled in grades seven through twelve. Status: Passed the Senate 4/28/2025 – 33 Yes. 16 No. Passed the House 4/17/2025 – 60 Yes. 31 No.

SF369. Requiring students to pass the US citizenship and immigration naturalization civics test as a condition of high school graduation and high school equivalency diplomas. Status: Passed House-4/17/2025 – 60 Yes. 33 No. Passed Senate 4/15/2025 – 38 Yes. 7 No.

HF103/SF288. Relating to students who are pregnant or who recently gave birth who attend state institutions of higher education governed by the board of regents and community colleges. Status: Passed Senate 4/28/2025. Passed House 4/22/2025.

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HF437/SF519. Establishing a school of intellectual freedom at the University of Iowa. Status: 4/15/2025 – Passed the Senate 32 Yes. 15 No. 3/18/2025 – Passed the House 60 Yes. 37 No.

HF149/HF865. Modifying provisions related to the harassment or bullying of students enrolled in school districts or accredited nonpublic schools. Status: 3/18/2025 – Passed the House 64-Yes. 33-No. 4/29/2025 – Passed the Senate 32 Yes. 16 No.

HF883/HF543/HF333. Providing access to feminine hygiene products in public school restrooms. Status: 3/7/2025 Sent to Appropriations. As of this date Appropriations has not met concerning this bill.

HF782/SF370. Relating to electronic devices in schools, including student access during instructional hours, school safety plans, and instruction related to social media in grades 6-8. Status: 4/30/2025 -SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR.

HF884/HF334. Authorizing school districts, charter schools, and innovation zone schools to employ chaplains, or engage volunteer chaplains to provide services to students. Status: 3/26/2025 – Passed the House 57 Yes. 39 No. As of this time, it has been placed on unfinished business. It was scheduled for debate April 28 and 29 but was pulled from the debate calendar those two days.

SF167. Establishing a state percent of growth of public school funding for budget year beginning July 1, 2025. Status: It passed the House 4/8/2025-60 Yes. 36 No. On 4/7/2025, it passed the Senate 32-Yes. 15 No. There was much discussion between the two houses as to the percent of growth. Senate proposed 2% and it went back to the House and they proposed 2.5%. A Fiscal Note has been published.

#### **Guns/Weapons:**

HF924. Relating to the minimum age for acquiring or

carrying weapons. Status: Passed the House – 79 Yes. 18 No. Passed the Senate – 33 Yes. 14 N. SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR 4/18/2025.

#### **Human Trafficking:**

HF649. Relating to human trafficking. Status: 4/23/2025 – Passed the House and Senate.

**Higher Education:** There were several bills under the new Higher Education Committee which at this point in time have been placed on the calendar. Many of these bills relate to diversity, equity and inclusion. I will report on these as they progress.

We have had some successes during this legislative session. However, there has been an assault on higher education, especially in relation to diversity, equity and inclusion, according to a press release from AAUW national regarding the first 100 Days of the Trump Administration. The Administration is waging an aggressive campaign to dismantle higher education, impacting the students that need it the most: women, students of color, low-income students, LGBTQ+ students, and students with disabilities.

AAUW is gravely concerned by sweeping moves to roll back civil rights protections, slash student aid, and weaponize political power against institutions of higher learning that should serve all students. There has been a barrage of misleadingly named executive orders which tear down the pillars of educational access. According to AAUW National, “we will not stand silent while these rights are stripped away behind closed doors or buried in bureaucratic budgets. We are proud to be an independent, fearless voice for equity, and we are organizing with renewed urgency against this dangerous agenda. The future of higher education is at stake. The future of opportunity is at stake. We must act – loudly, boldly, relentlessly. Join us. Fight back. Defend the right to learn.

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## **Do You Need to Renew Your Membership?**

Many of us have memberships that expire on June 30, 2025. You might get an email from the national AAUW office reminding you to renew your membership, so you can click on a link in that email. Or you can check your status on the [AAUW website](#). Click on **Log In** in the upper right corner. If you go to your personal snapshot, you can see when your membership expires at the bottom of that page. If it expires soon, just click on the



red **RENEW** button. In addition to your national membership, you can also choose your branch and state AAUW memberships, and make a donation to the AAUW Greatest Needs Fund if you like. National dues is \$74, and Iowa dues is \$10. Branch dues vary. If you have any difficulty, you can contact our newly-elected membership vice president, Becky Ahrendsen, at [becahr@gmail.com](mailto:becahr@gmail.com) or 515-851-1187.

# Simple Spring and Summer Support Tips for HT Prevention

HT Taskforce: Mary Ann Ahrens, Maxine Lampe, Marielle Sweborg

Spring, summer and early fall seasons bring people outdoors to participate in a plethora of activities that take place. **Our IOWA Human Trafficking Prevention work to educate, create a greater awareness, and stimulate action, is a simple one.** Identify members in your branch (friends or family, too) that would be willing to help *distribute brochures where the people and events take place in your area.* Keep a small supply of HT brochures in your vehicle and/or bag as activities take place. If you need brochures contact Mary Ann Ahrens

[maahrens@mchsi.com](mailto:maahrens@mchsi.com)

**Keep in mind** that human trafficking is a non-partisan, non-controversial issue which both political parties support. Our brochure was designed for junior high to adult readers. When awareness kicks in, people begin to look at their environment around them differently. People can gain interest, enthusiasm and begin to talk with leaders to advocate for stiffer penalties in trying to reduce HT and for survivor funding to help the healing process. There is an increasing number of stakeholders in Iowa who work tirelessly in many ways to identify and help to prosecute traffickers to reduce this unconscionable transnational crime that can ruin the lives of women, children, and men.

**Looking at the events:** celebrations, graduations, political fundraisers, sporting events, weddings, conferences, non-profit fundraisers, family reunions, religious camps, picnics, parades, and county fairs are popular during this time of year. *Traffickers target fairs and public events!* **Take a look at your community calendar** and identify opportunities to volunteer to pass out brochures.

- County Fairs (99) begin in June. There are 4-H students to reach, many parents that are coming and going, and other visitors that can be targeted.
- Contact both the Democratic and Republican parties and ask to work in the booths or take a supply of brochures to place in their booths.
- Encourage 4-H students to create a human trafficking prevention project for the Fair. Develop a display table during a community celebration or farmer's market.
- Some communities have Flag Day events on June 14, celebrate Juneteenth Day activities on June 19, July 4 events with picnics, Labor Day events on Sept. 1, fundraisers, Art in the Park, parades, contests.
- Distribute HT brochures at legislative forums and protests.
- Bring brochures to community centers/non-profits, public libraries, college libraries, little free libraries, senior centers, retirement groups, city transportation systems, city halls, chambers of commerce, highway, and trucker rest stops (Truckers Against Trafficking), summer schools, retail and medical establishments, and religious establishments. Don't forget email, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter.....

**Which of these activities will be happening in your community in the next few months?** Which might you attend? Who do you know that will be at some of the other events? Develop a simple plan to share the task. Our sisters and brothers continue to desperately need our help. **Thank you for your leadership/support in joining our HT prevention care team to create a more informed Iowa. We are stronger together!**

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## Harm Reduction Vending Machine Launched at Polk County Health Department

**DES MOINES, IA** —A new harm reduction vending machine has been installed outside the Polk County Health Department to offer free health and safety resources to the community. The vending machine was provided by the Family Planning Council of Iowa. It will be available 24/7 to ensure simple access to life-saving tools and preventive health supplies.

The vending machine dispenses Narcan (naloxone) to reverse opioid overdoses, emergency contraceptives, birth control, condoms, lube, harm reduction kits, gun locks and more—all at no cost. No ID, payment, or registration is required. “We want to make it easy for the community to access

essential resources, not requiring someone to schedule an appointment or ask a store clerk to unlock a case,” said



Allison Smith, Executive Director of the Family Planning Council of Iowa. Through partnering to provide free harm reduction resources, the Family Planning Council of Iowa and Polk County Health Department aim to improve health outcomes for individuals and the community as a whole.

The vending machine is located directly in front of the Polk County Health Department building at 1907 Carpenter Ave. in Des Moines. It will be regularly stocked and monitored to ensure it continues to meet community needs.