

Public Policy Report, 2021-2022

During the 2021-22 public policy year, to date, we attended the SPPC meetings on the first Wednesday afternoon with other public policy state organizers from around the nation. At one of these first meetings, the representatives from Virginia described a public policy mini-grant program. We are happy to announce that our first round of diversity/public policy mini-grants has been approved by the Board to award a total of \$500 in grants to branches during the 2022-2023 AAUW Maryland fiscal year. Directions and applications are now available on our website. The deadline for submission is June 15th. We hope to be able to announce our first branch recipients around July 1. Projects must be completed during the 2022-23 fiscal year.

We held regular monthly meetings with branch public policy chairs or representatives on the third Thursday of each month. Following the meeting, we sent out a meeting summary to all the branches including information on upcoming events or issues.

AAUW Maryland was well represented at the November MLAW meeting, which was held virtually. Fifteen proposed bills were presented by the advocates. Afterward, branches submitted their ranking of the fifteen bills, which we tallied and submitted as AAUW Maryland's ranking. The resulting 2022 MLAW agenda of seven bills very closely matched our state ranking. Two of the bills, the Repeal of the Spousal Defense for sexual crimes and the inclusion of electronic and internet tracking into the definition of Stalking, passed both chambers of the General Assembly during the first two weeks of the session, which started on January 12. Several other bills have passed one chamber. There is still much work to be done before the adjournment of this legislative session on April 11. At the present time, two bills, the Paid Medical and Family Leave Bill and the Abortion Care Access Bill have garnered lots of interest. Both have passed one chamber and hopefully will pass the other by the end of the session. We are also active members of the coalitions supporting each of these bills.

On January 6 we presented a one-hour long Advocacy Training session using Zoom. It included information about participating in the MLAW legislative alerts, how to write email letters of support, basic use of the General Assembly website, and how to be involved with national legislative issues.

On February 3, the same day that many of us attended the virtual (due to pandemic restrictions) 2022 MLAW Briefing, we held our AAUW Maryland Advocacy Day virtually, asking members throughout the state to contact the senator and delegates for their district, urging support for the MLAW agenda of bills, and thanking them if sponsoring any of the bills.

AAUW Maryland was a community sponsor of the Women's Legislative Briefing on January 30th, hosted on Zoom by the Montgomery County Commission for Women; and a sponsor of both the fall MLAW Conference and the 2022 MLAW Legislative Briefing.

We regularly reported on our activities in the *Marylander*.

Respectfully submitted,

Debby Chessin and Roxann King, co-Vice Presidents,

Public Policy, AAUW Maryland