

AAUW Maryland
2022-23 Annual Report
Public Policy

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In the Fall, the first AAUW Maryland mini-grant for \$500, for a public policy or diversity inclusion activity, was awarded to Anne Arundel County, Howard County, and the Baltimore branches. Together with the Maryland Women's Heritage Center and Dismantling Racism committee in Catonsville, they presented the Artists4ERA exhibit, February 27-March 5, and Reception, March 5, to improve awareness of the need for the Equal Rights Amendment to become part of the Constitution.

At the reception, over 100 people participated, with two panel presentations, speakers and a silent auction that raised over \$3300 for the ERA coalition, from the raffle and sales of the art. The motivation for the activity came from our President, Tracy Lantz, who attended AAUW Garrett County's outstanding Artists4ERA Reception last August. Tracy worked very hard with the sponsors and made our event happen for eastern Maryland.

In the fall, we attended the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women Conference in October, and learned about the bills that might become the MLAW agenda. Following the conference, we got input from members on the bills and submitted AAUW MD's ratings. Subsequently, MLAW, in late December, published eight bills as the 2023 agenda.

Prior to the start of the 2023 Maryland General Assembly on January 12, we led an advocacy training session on January 10. During our fall monthly meetings of branch public policy chairs, we heard from advocates for end-of-life options, mental health care in Maryland, and Maryland's ER wait time problem (longest ER wait time in the nation for the last seven years).

In addition to the eight MLAW bills, we advocated for three additional bills: a bill to expand care for mentally ill and addicted persons in Maryland, a bill to establish a task force to study best ER practices prior to the 2024 Maryland General Assembly, and an End-of-Life Options bill to allow medical assistance in dying under certain situations. At the time of this writing, six of our 11 bills have passed both chambers with several already on the Governor's desk; three have passed on chamber and that version is now being consider in the second chamber; and two bills have shown little progress. The MGA adjourns on April 10. Before the convention we should have the final status of all our bills.

The 2023-24 Mini-grant forms are available with directions on the AAUW MD website. At the winter meeting, \$500 was allocated for the mini-grant program for 2023-24. The deadline for applications is set as May 15. Winners of the grants should be notified by early June.

On February 14, AAUW Maryland held Advocacy Day in Annapolis. We visited 28 offices that morning, urging legislators to support four of our bills, including the three non-MLAW bills. We had talking points, went in pairs, and visited committee members hearing these bills in both the House and Senate. And afterwards we went to lunch together at Rams Head. It was so very nice to be able to do advocacy and lunch in person again.

We attended the Women's Legislative Briefing, the MLAW Briefing, and monthly meetings of the AAUW State Public Policy Chairs national group. All of these were on Zoom.