**AAUW Maryland Public Policy 2023-24 Annual Report**

The Maryland General Assembly 2024 session ended on April 8, 2024. Seven of our 12 bills passed. They are listed here:

* [**SJ1**](https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/sj0001)**, HJ1**. **Affirming the Federal Equal Rights Amendment**, which endorses a resolution that our Congressional delegation from Maryland will present to the President and Congress indicating that Marylanders want the Congress to make the ratified Equal Rights Amendment law.
* **SB758,**[**HB496**](https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0496). **Definition of Consent and Repeal of Force,** which changes the definition of Consent in situations involving sexual assault to recognize that a victim may freeze and/or not fight back and that this does not indicate consent.
* **SB197,**[**HB39**](https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0039). **Homecare Worker Rights Act of 2024,** which would require homecare companies to classify their workers as employees and not as independent contractors. Most homecare workers are women. This would entitle them to Workmen’s Compensation, overtime pay, sick and family leave and other benefits shared by employees in Maryland.
* **SB525,** [**HB649**](https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0649). **Equal Pay for Equal Work – Wage Range Transparency**, which would require all Maryland employers to post salary ranges when they advertise a job position. This bill is one of AAUW’s strategic priorities for bridging the pay gap.
* [**SB119**](https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/SB0119?ys=2024RS)**, HB691**. **Legally Protected Healthcare – Gender-Affirming Treatment**, which extends to transgender medical care the same protections won for abortion care in 2023.
* [**SB113**](https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/sb0113)**, HB99. Sexual Solicitation of a Minor through Child Pornography – Prohibition**, which would make it a crime to solicit minors on the internet into making pornographic content.
* [**HB1143**](https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb1143)**. Maryland Emergency Department Wait Time Reduction Commission**, which would address factors throughout the health care system that contribute to increased emergency department wait times and requiring the Commission, beginning November 1, 2025, to report annually to the Governor and General Assembly on its findings and recommendations including the development, implementation, and impact of the recommended policies and programs on emergency department wait times.

AAUW Maryland was a co-sponsor of both the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women’s Fall Conference in November and the Women’s Legislative Briefing presented by the Montgomery County Commission for Women in January. We had a table representing AAUW Maryland at the WLB and Tracy Lantz represented us at the Presidents’ Networking Session.

An advocacy training session was held online on Tuesday, January 9, just prior to the start of the Maryland legislative session.

Advocacy Day was held following the ERA Rally on Lawyers Mall on February 19. Members, in small groups, visited offices of legislators encouraging support for several of the bills in our legislative agenda.

Additional funding approved by the Board brought the mini-grant budget to $1000 for 2023-24. A grant was awarded to the Garret County branch for their August community presentation “Women’s Economic Equity and Empowerment”. Harford County branch received a grant to help support the Resnik Brunch, honoring high school girls with outstanding success in STEM. Harford also received a grant to offset some the expense for an activity called “All Girls’ School View of the World”, providing a television to a girls’ school in Kenya, that their branch continuously supports through fundraising activities.  
The next deadline for mini-grants is June 15, 2024. The applications are available under Tools for Leaders on our website. The applications submitted for the previous grants are also there to read.

We have allotted most of the remaining funds in the public policy budget for an umbrella project highlighting the ERA efforts. These funds are expected to easily be returned to the account with the sale of the umbrellas at our events and possibly at the regional convention. Susan Crawford, Anne Arundel branch, developed this project.

The public policy committee met monthly on the third Thursday, with meeting reports and updates sent to the presidents, branch chairs and other committee members. In addition, Roxann King and Judy Carbone have attended the meetings on the first Wednesday of each month for state chairs of public policy. There have also been quite a few AAUW webinars that we have attended related to public policy: legislative, Title IX, diversity, and, currently, a series of six concerning getting out the vote.

Looking forward to summer and fall, we expect to be working on getting out the vote. We also expect Title IX guidelines to be published by the U.S. Department of Education soon: educating our membership, legislators and the public concerning the guidelines will be a priority.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxann King, Co-Vice President, Public Policy  
AAUW Maryland