



The Advocate

December 2025

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“We do not have to become heroes overnight. Just a step at a time, meeting each thing that comes up, seeing it not as dreadful as it appears, discovering that we have the strength to stare it down.”

- Eleanor Roosevelt, diplomat, activist, former US First Lady



Get ready to enjoy some holiday cheer with your DAW branch friends! Members, plus ones, prospective members, and friends are all invited to enjoy this celebratory gathering.

- Warm up your voice for singing seasonal tunes with Chris Ritter at the piano,
- Get ready to be inspired as some members share their creative projects,
- Please bring a sweet or savory appetizer to share with the group.

It's sure to be a fun evening!

[Click here for more info and
to RSVP](#)

Third Thursday Community Program – January



Innovations in Ninth Grade Learning – “Cohort Learning”

Thursday, January 15, 2026, 6:00 pm
Danville Congregational Church

Spend the evening with parents, teachers, and students from the innovative, exciting Ninth Grade Cohort Learning program in San Ramon Valley Unified School District! This new program is being piloted and will be rolling out to the entire district.

More details to come – save the date!

President’s Message

By Deborah Wechsler, President

Well that was quick! The end of 2025 is almost upon us. That seems impossible, but change is constant, as they say. We recently learned about two changes, and the juxtaposition is poignant. One is the November 17 passing of long-time DAW member Gwen Regalia. Gwen was a huge presence in our community, a former mayor of Walnut Creek and very active in local politics, advocacy and philanthropy. You can read her obituary [here](#).

We also learned that one of our Tech Trek alumni from 2017, Alexis Makarov, was promoted to Assistant Camp Director at the Sonoma State Tech Trek camp. Alexis has been a camp counselor for several years, and more recently was a dorm mom/monitor and also led the robotics workshops. We have several other Tech Trek alumni who continue to be active and give back to their Tech Trek community and peers.

Hope to see many of you at our holiday gathering on December 18!

Stay warm,
Deborah



December Checklist



December To Do's

- **December 2 – Giving Tuesday**
See page 9 for more information
- **December 6, 11:00 am – Congressman Mark DeSaulnier's Town Hall**
[Click here](#) for more information and to RSVP
- **December 9, 6:00 pm – San Ramon Valley Unified School District Meeting**
[Click here](#) for more information
- **December 13, 11:00 am - AAUW Livermore-Pleasanton-Dublin (LPD) Branch Virtual Program : *The History of the Missing 28th Amendment***
[Click here](#) for more information
- **December 18, 6:00 pm – Holiday Gathering**
[Click here](#) for more information and to RSVP
- **January 15, 2026, 6:00 pm – Third Thursday Community Program - Innovations in Ninth Grade Learning – “Cohort Learning”**
Save the date!
- **January 20, 6:00 pm – San Ramon Valley Unified School District Meeting**
[Click here](#) for more information
- **Volunteer!** We have open positions for FY 25-26 on our branch board and committees.
[Click here](#) to learn more
- [Donate here](#) to support DAW branch programs

Public Policy, DEI, and Advocacy

By Ogie Strogatz, DEI Officer

Update on efforts to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education

Per an article from the NPR KQED website, on 11/18/25 the “Trump administration unveiled a sweeping plan to sidestep Congress and outsource large pieces of the U.S. Department of Education, shifting work dedicated to, among other areas, elementary and secondary education, postsecondary education, and Indian education to other federal agencies.” [Click here](#) to read the full article.

AAUW strongly disagrees with this direction. Gloria Blackwell, AAUW's CEO states in a recent press release: “When you hollow out the Department and scatter its knowledge of K-12 and higher education, you make it harder for students to challenge discrimination and harder for Congress or the public to hold parties accountable.” To see the full press release, [click here](#).

Urge Congress to block efforts to dismantle the Department of Education's ability to do its job — advancing gender and racial equity in every classroom and protecting students' rights. [Click here](#) to join AAUW's Action Network.

San Ramon Valley Unified School District (SRVUSD) Topics

Herein, some thoughts on two topics that have come up recently in conversations with a number of DAW branch members.

1. **Censorship and book banning concerns have surfaced regarding a recent authors' visit with some SRVUSD TK-third grade classes.** The visit has been the subject of a good deal of reporting and commentary. The co-authors of the book, *The Day the Books Disappeared*, visited several SRVUSD elementary schools in October. The district subsequently was contacted by principals, faculty, and certified staff at the schools who stated that parts of the authors' presentation were not suited to the youngest learners in TK to third grade (4 years old to 9 years old) and extended beyond the students' developmental level. They did not have any complaints about the book.

Based on this feedback, district staff asked the organization coordinating the author visits to share the concerns about the presentation with the authors prior to their next SRVUSD school visit and request that the authors adjust their discussion to accommodate a young audience. The district staff received no response. When the authors arrived on the campus of Country Club Elementary School for their next school visit, the staff respectfully reiterated their request. The authors declined to modify their presentation and chose to leave without presenting.

DAW appreciates the district's demonstrated, consistent support for author visits and the inclusion of diverse books, perspectives and dialogue as meaningful educational opportunities for students. Grounded in [AAUW CA's Public Policy Priority of equal access to quality public education -- including diverse curricula -- for all students](#), we acknowledge SRVUSD's unwavering commitment to provide engaging, age-appropriate learning experiences in the classrooms and on all campuses that reflect the best academic and social-emotional interests of the district's students, aligned with their developmental levels.

2. **Several DAW members have inquired about AAUW's position on SRVUSD's grade reform plans.** Because this topic is not within the scope of [AAUW CA Public Policy Priorities](#), AAUW is not taking a position. That said, as community members it's important for us to stay informed about matters of active local interest. We encourage you to access the [Grade Reform Committee](#) content on the SRVUSD website to learn more about this important initiative.

Excellent videos to inspire your advocacy

AAUW National's 10/29/25 webinar, ["Defending Equity: Standing Strong Against Attacks on Equity in Education"](#), is available for viewing on YouTube; it's about 1 hour long. Moderated by AAUW CEO Gloria Blackwell, and featuring three AAUW fellowship alumnae and scholars, the webinar is rich with their insights, eloquence, strategies, and tactics.

A beautiful recorded arrangement of [Suffs' "Keep Marching"](#) by Shaina Taub (video is about 6 ½ minutes in length); Ms. Taub wrote the award-winning music, lyrics, and book for the musical, "Suffs", which is based on suffragists and the American women's suffrage movement.



Onward!

November 20 Community Program - Recap

For our November 20 Third Thursday Community Program, about 30 attendees learned about **The Reality of Reproductive Rights and Services in Contra Costa County**.



From left – Bette Felton, Deborah Wechsler, Sarah McNeil

The featured speakers were Sarah McNeil, MD, with Contra Costa Regional Medical Center, and Christian Garcia, from Planned Parenthood Northern California (PPNorCal), who explored how women's health care, and particularly reproductive health, has evolved. Christian covered the wide range of health services offered by Planned Parenthood for both women and men, and both speakers noted the significant funding shortfalls about to take effect due to the recently passed federal HR 1 legislation (known as the Big Beautiful Bill). After short presentations, we had lively group discussions along with engaging responses to questions from the attendees, all moderated by DAW Program Chair Bette Felton.

Key points we learned were:

- About ⅓ of all babies in Contra Costa are born at Contra Costa Regional Medical Center, our public hospital. About 50% of women delivering there have not had pre-natal care.
- Abortions make up only about 9% of the services provided by PPNorCal.
- About 40% of PPNorCal clients are male.
- A federal funding loss of over \$15 million is expected by PPNorCal and of \$270 million by Contra Costa County Health (CCH) due to cuts by the current administration. CCH is an integrated health care provider and includes: emergency care, the public hospital, mental health emergency, in and out-patient care, environmental health, public health and clinic visits at 6 satellite health centers, vaccines and infectious disease services, and more.

Suggested actions we can take are:

- Make efforts to educate others through thoughtful conversations based on "curiosity" about the critical role of Planned Parenthood in reproductive health care for both women and men.
- Normalize conversations on sexual and reproductive health with family and friends so people appreciate the importance of having appropriate care available to all.
- Donate to PPNorCal - note that donations to national Planned Parenthood go toward lobbying efforts, while donations directed specifically to PPNorCal go toward services in our area.



Christian Garcia

Useful links for making donations, volunteering, and finding more information are:

Local PPNorCal Donation Options

[Care Can't Wait Campaign](#): A strategic, one-year initiative to safeguard access to sexual and reproductive health care in the face of extraordinary challenges.

[Planned Parenthood Northern California](#): A general donation link to support PPNorCal health centers.

Volunteer Opportunities with PPNorCal

[Clergy for Reproductive Freedom](#): is a group of volunteer faith leaders who support the right of all people to have access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care. Join the group to help their mission.

[Become a Super Supporter](#): Sign up to become a Super Supporter and get a toolkit for becoming a reproductive freedom champion.

[All Volunteer Opportunities](#): learn about the many areas where you can help PPNorCal.

PPNorCal Services Information

[Get Care with PPNorCal](#): Planned Parenthood Northern California serves all people regardless of immigration status, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or ability to pay. Get care or learn about the range of services provided.

Contra Costa County Health (CCH) Services Information

[Contra Costa Health](#): learn about the wide range of services supported.

[Volunteer - Contra Costa Health](#): to donate or to consider opportunities to volunteer with CCH.

Click here to see slides from
the meeting

Community Collaboration Corner

DAW Volunteers Help Bring Quest STEM Programs into our Community

By Ann Willoughby, Quest Advisory Board member

DAW members have enthusiastically volunteered at Quest Science Center events this past year and are helping to expand Quest's family-friendly STEM programs into the San Ramon Valley. Quest exhibits feature fun, exploratory, hands-on STEM activities geared to elementary and middle school aged children and up and attract hundreds of families.



San Ramon Art and Wind Festival

Thanks to DAW encouragement, Quest participated in the San Ramon Art and Wind Festival in May. Joanne Quijano and Ann Willoughby volunteered at the festival helping children design, build and test paper rockets. Manju Jindal, Judy Lauper, Kate Waters and Ann Willoughby enabled Quest to participate in Rancho Romero Elementary School's first ever science night on September 25 where enthusiastic students built battery-operated circuits. Debbie Koos and her husband Greg volunteered at Quest's October 4 Science@Stockmen's Park in Livermore working with children as they designed, built, and tested their own engineering creations. Joanne Quijano and Kate Waters volunteered at Quest's circuits exhibit at Vista Grande Elementary School's science night on November 6.

DAW was out in full force assisting with two Quest exhibits at the Danville Veterans Memorial Building open house on November 11 in honor of Veterans Day. Asha Bajaj, Manju Jindal, Debbie and Greg Koos, Isabel Lau, Kate Waters, and Susan Mann, a friend of Joanne's, enthusiastically guided swarms of families throughout the day in experimenting with paper parachutes in a wind tube and at a table of electrical circuit blocks. As one volunteer said, watching the enjoyment of the children and adults was magical. It was also a privilege to listen to the Town of Danville speaker program with the theme "Veterans Continue to Serve." At the end of the day, event organizers expressed their deep appreciation to Quest for its third annual contribution of family-friendly STEM activities at the Danville Veterans Day celebration.



Veterans Day in Danville

From Monya Lane, Quest CEO and Board Chair – *"I am deeply grateful to AAUW DAW for its collaboration, which has enabled Quest to expand its local impact, and am hugely impressed by DAW volunteers. Your enthusiastic volunteers have helped Quest bring its hands-on science exploration to our local communities, making STEM fun and relatable and encouraging interest in STEM by youngsters of all ages."*

For more information about DAW's collaboration with Quest, [click here](#).

DAW Helps Self-eSTEM Receive \$8,000 Grant

By Ann Willoughby

This past April, AAUW Community Fund Action Grant recipient Adamaka Ajalo spoke to DAW members about [Self-eSTEM](#), the Oakland-based nonprofit she founded and manages. Self-eSTEM is a remarkable organization dedicated to empowering girls and women by creating equitable access to STEM opportunities, foster innovation, and cultivating the next generation of changemakers poised to lead and thrive in industries of tomorrow. DAW members continue to stay connected with Adamaka and alerted her to Lawrence Livermore National Security, LLC's annual Community Giving Program, coaching her and her staff on how to submit a competitive application. Adamaka was delighted to report that Self-eSTEM received an \$8,000 grant for its spring 2026 Digital & AI Literacy program and is grateful for the support provided by DAW that helped make this grant a reality.



US Congressman's Town Hall Will Feature Education and Transportation Topics

DAW is focusing efforts on supporting equity in our area's schools and promoting honest, inclusive education for all students. **Mark DeSaulnier, US Congressman from California's 10th District**, has long been a champion for public education. Here's an opportunity to learn from him about his current efforts.

From Congressman Mark DeSaulnier – "I'm always hearing from folks I meet with that two of the top priorities for families in the East Bay are transportation and education. As a senior member of committees with jurisdiction over both topics, come hear from me about my work in Congress to

reduce commutes, make transportation safer, and support public schools and all students at our upcoming in-person town hall on **Saturday, December 6, at 11:00 am** at Live Oak Elementary School in San Ramon.”

To RSVP, [click here](#) to visit Congressman DeSaulnier’s website.

Presentation by AAUW Livermore-Pleasanton-Dublin (LPD) Branch

Save **December 13 from 10:00-11:00 am** on your calendar! The LPD Branch will be joining other



Alameda County AAUW Branches to co-host the short virtual presentation ***Constitution in Crisis: The History of the Missing 28th Amendment***, by Molly Gonzalez, an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) scholar and Advocacy Manager for the Alice Paul Center for Gender Justice. The center is a nationally recognized non-profit organization named for Alice Paul, the primary author of the ERA, and provides education around women’s history.

For more information about the presentation – [click here](#).

For more information about the Alice Paul Center for Gender Justice - [click here](#).

AAUW Fundraising News

Giving Tuesday: Five Ways to Support AAUW DAW

By Isabel Lau, Social Media Manager

As we look ahead to a new year of advocacy, education, and community impact, we invite you to participate in our Giving Tuesday campaign. There are many meaningful ways to support AAUW DAW and strengthen opportunities for women and girls in our community. Of course, giving doesn’t begin and end on just one Tuesday, but it is year-round. Let this list inspire you!

1 - Attend

Engage with our branch by participating in monthly programs, events, and activities. Your presence helps build a vibrant community committed to equity and education. *See the “to do” list in this and every Advocate for events and dates.*



2 - Volunteer

Your time and talents make a real difference. Whether you can help at a one-time event, take on a short-term volunteer task, or serve on a committee. If you have skills in computer technology, marketing, fundraising, or grant writing, we welcome your expertise.

Together, we can create a brighter and more equitable community. Your involvement has a lasting impact. *To learn about branch committees needing volunteers, [click here](#).*

3 - Join

Membership in AAUW opens the door to impact, learning, and connection. As a member we ask you invite others to join. By joining they, too, will support AAUW's national and local advocacy work on issues such as equal pay, family leave, education equity, and ending harassment.

Membership strengthens our collective voice. *For information about Joining AAUW, [click here](#).*

4 - Donate

Each year, our members and friends generously support Tech Trek, Local Scholarships, and AAUW Fund. These initiatives rely on financial contributions to thrive.

Every contribution helps move our mission forward. *To learn more about each project or to donate, please [click here](#) to visit our website.*

5 - Share

Help us amplify our message. By sharing our updates with your friends, family, and networks, you increase our reach and help us connect with others who believe in equity for women and girls. *Forward this Advocate to those who might be interested.*

Follow our social media pages on Facebook and Instagram. Like, share, and comment on posts to help promote our visibility. Click on these links to find us -



Join the Giving Tuesday Movement

In this season of giving, we invite you to be part of a global wave of generosity. More than just a one-day event, every action—attending, volunteering, joining, donating, or sharing—brings us closer to creating meaningful change. The choice is yours, and every contribution matters.

Thank you for your continued support and donations. Together, we make progress possible.

The Virtue + Vice Fundraiser Is a Wrap!

By Pat Morris, Fundraising Chair

Our “Dine for a Cause” event on November 12 at the Danville restaurant Virtue + Vice was a success - making \$1,739 for our Tech Trek girls. The branch members who volunteered as servers (and who mainly had no experience) did a fabulous job! I want to thank them - Joanne Quijano, Chris Ritter, Debbie Koos, Deborah Wechsler, Lee Garverick, Susan Terzuoli, and myself. Also, special thanks to Linda Jimerson and Isabel Lau for all the fantastic advertising.

It was a fun event with many AAUW members joining in to contribute as diners and bringing their friends and neighbors along. It felt like a party! To cap off the busy evening, the volunteer servers enjoyed a delicious pomegranate salad and vodka pasta dinner as a thank you from the restaurant.



Chris, Deborah (in back), Debbie, Lee, Pat, and Joanne

AAUW Fund - Change to the National Five Star Program Advancement Criteria

From Jana Multhaup, Funds VP

AAUW National has announced an important update to the AAUW Five Star Program that affects how contributions to the Fund are counted toward the **Advancement Star**. It will help give our branch members more flexibility with their donations while strengthening our alignment with national priorities.

As part of achieving the Advancement Star for 2025-26, branches may now count contributions not only to the Greatest Needs Fund but also to the Defend Higher Education Fund or the Public Policy Fund toward their Advancement criteria. This change opens more meaningful ways for branches and members to support the areas they're passionate about, while still fulfilling star-earning goals.

AAUW California – Public Policy Updates

Supporting Public Education: Community-based Coalitions

By Ogie Strogatz, Member AAUW California Public Policy School Board Project

It began with one quietly determined advocate on a mission. Laurinda Ochoa, a Danville-based grandmother and retired attorney, was alarmed by the 2021 launch of Moms for Liberty chapters across California. In 2022 she began monitoring San Ramon Valley Unified School District (SRVUSD) board meetings, where she observed a swelling stream of demands from Moms for Liberty and their allies favoring restrictive and/or anti-LGBTQ+ curricula. Laurinda's desire to organize with like-minded local public education champions led her to join the Danville-Alamo-Walnut Creek (DAW) branch, where in 2023 she secured a strong commitment for branch representation at monthly meetings of the SRVUSD Board. Laurinda noted the organizations represented by other community attendees at the school board meetings. She nurtured relationships between our DAW branch and other groups who share AAUW's dedication to outstanding public education.

And she pressed on. Hearing DAW members' concerns about the challenges confronting school boards throughout the area, recognizing the synergistic political impact of multiple organizations speaking with a unified voice, and the potential for grassroots public education advocates across school districts to learn from one another through shared successes and challenges, Laurinda scaled up. She contacted the leaders of local pro-public education organizations to solicit their interest in forming a grassroots coalition that would serve as an additional source of support for public education across Contra Costa and Alameda Counties. The response was widespread enthusiasm. After several leadership planning meetings, the Lift Up Public Schools coalition launched formally in April, 2024.



Lift Up Public Schools (LUPS) is an all-volunteer coalition of grassroots groups from Contra Costa and Alameda Counties advocating for excellent public education delivered in settings that are safe and welcoming to all. LUPS has about 250 members including leaders from AAUW branches; PTA; Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG); the League of Women Voters; teachers unions; county and local partisan organizations; and current and former school district faculty and staff. The coalition is not funded by any political organization or entity. LUPS does not raise funds or make donations. The coalition's mission is to advocate for high-quality

public education that values diversity, equity, and inclusion. Its vision is a vibrant, democratic society of compassionate, well-informed, engaged community members.

LUPS initially focused on helping recruit, vet, and drive turnout to elect 2024 pro-public education school board candidates. The coalition supported 10 candidates running for seats in 8 Alameda County districts, 6 of whom won, and 6 candidates running for seats in 4 Contra Costa County districts, 4 of whom won. The coalition's support included social media promotion, assistance with the planning and conduct of candidate forums, and volunteering for candidate campaigns. In addition to electoral work, LUPS conducted community outreach to cultivate awareness, understanding, and action regarding the challenges facing public education; submitted public comments supporting diverse and inclusive ethnic studies curriculum; and endorsed a district parcel tax campaign. In the wake of the 2024 elections, the coalition has worked on capacity-building – evolving its organizational structure to stimulate the growth of LUPS local hubs in nearby school districts, expanding community outreach and education about the work of school boards, and developing as a trusted source of insight on the local impact of key public education-related issues at all levels of government.

As a LUPS organizer, I can attest to the value of our nascent coalition. We are growing compassionate grassroots power – holding a summit where presenters and the public exchange national, regional, and local perspectives on how best to respond to crucial challenges confronting public education; promoting outstanding school board candidates; publicizing local pro-public education initiatives; encouraging the development of local advocacy hubs; and leveraging the thousands of person-years of LUPS members' collective experience to help communities fulfill our highest aspirations for public education.

It can start with a single advocate – might be you!

2025 Legislative Session Ends with Some Big Wins and Tough Losses for AAUW California

By Amy Hom and Missy Maceyko, Co-chairs AAUW California Public Policy

The 2025 legislative session has closed in California.

Kathy Van Osten, AAUW California's Legislative Advocate, summarized the session this way: "In 2025, 917 bills were sent to the governor, of which he signed 794 bills and vetoed 123 bills. The 2025 Legislative Session was tumultuous as policymakers worked to address the impacts of ravaging urban wildfires in Los Angeles, to pass a state budget that closed a \$12 billion deficit, and to address a multitude of impacts created by the violent upheaval of federal funding and policies that have or will decimate services for Californians, that threaten existing or future projects in the State, and that threaten our educational institutions."

With these issues in mind, AAUW California put together our 2025 Legislative Agenda, taking a support position on 26 bills, and for the first time in our recent history, taking an opposition position on 7 bills. With the blessing of the Public Policy Committee and the AAUW California Board, we were proud to advance this agenda, which confronted some of the most pressing issues that we face as a state, and a nation, around gender equity and social justice. We were also proud to take strong opposition positions this year, given the large number of bills introduced at the start of the session that were antithetical to AAUW California's values and Public Policy Priorities.

While our A-priority support bills did not fare well this session, we are happy to report that we had a great deal of success with the rest of our support-bills as well as with stopping the opposition bills from advancing.

First the bad news: Our A-priority support bills were vetoed or gutted.

- **SB 771 was vetoed.** This A-priority bill, authored by Senator Henry Stern and sponsored by AAUW California, would have held social media companies liable if their algorithms aid or abet individual users who are breaking the law and intimidating or threatening others in online spaces. The Governor vetoed the bill, indicating that current civil rights laws have not been tested in the courts with respect to algorithms' complicity in hate crimes, and that until existing law is deemed insufficient by the courts, SB 771 is premature.
- **SB 418 was vetoed.** This A-priority bill, authored by Senator Caroline Menjivar, would have prohibited a health service provider from denying coverage for services based upon race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex, including sexual preference or gender identity, intersex traits, and pregnancy. The Governor vetoed the bill, citing a concern that the bill's requirement to cover prescribed hormone therapy without utilization management (UM) is likely to drive up the cost of health care.
- **AB 1098 was gutted and amended.** This A-priority bill, authored by Assemblymember Mike Fong, would have prohibited a postsecondary educational institution from discriminating against a student based on their current, potential, or past pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions. According to the author's office, the bill had run into significant opposition from the public universities, and they chose not to continue to move the bill this year. Instead, the bill language was gutted and replaced with language that establishes the Office of the Interagency Council on Education within the Governor's Operations Agency. The amended bill was signed into law.



Now, the good news: Of our fourteen support bills that made it to the Governor's desk, eleven were signed into law. Below are some important wins:

- **AB 621 - signed into law!** This B-priority bill, authored by Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, heightens penalties for companies whose platforms distribute deepfake pornography.
- **SB 669 - signed into law!** This B-priority bill, authored by Senate President pro Tempore Mike McGuire, authorizes up to five rural hospitals throughout the state to partner with licensed birth centers to provide perinatal services in rural communities.
- **AB 260 - signed into law!** Authored by Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, this bill protects access to medication abortion.
- **SB 627- signed into law!** Authored by Senator Scott Wiener, this bill bans law enforcement officers from wearing facial coverings during their duties. **This is the first such law enacted in the nation!**



And of the seven bills that AAUW California opposed, four have become 2-year bills and three have died:

- **AB 579 is dead!** This A-priority bill, authored by Assemblymember Leticia Castillo, would have stated categorically that parents' refusal to acknowledge a child's gender identity can never be considered a form of abuse or neglect, and therefore cannot be considered in a custody dispute.

- **AB 25 is dead!** Authored by Assemblymember Carl DeMaio, this bill would have required an elections official to verify the citizenship of voters and authorized the official to require a person to provide documentation of citizenship for that purpose.
- **AB 1012 is dead!** Authored by Assemblymember Bill Essayli, this bill would have prohibited the provision of Medi-Cal to people without legal immigration status.

To see the full results of the 2025 Legislative Agenda, please go to the [Bill Tracking Report](#).

To read the full edition of AAUW California's November Public Policy News, [click here](#).

Membership Corner

A Holiday Viewing Suggestion

From Isabel Lau, Media Manager

Lilly, a film based on the life of Lilly Ledbetter, premiered at the Hamptons International Film Festival on October 10, 2024, just two days before her passing. She was the pioneer of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009, legislation signed by then President Obama to ensure all women receive fair pay for their work.

Ms. Ledbetter and AAUW had a long-lasting, strong, and productive relationship, and we held her in high esteem as an unwavering icon and trailblazer in the fight for equal pay. Together, Ms. Ledbetter, AAUW, and countless other organizations advocating for equal pay participated in marches, wrote letters, and sent emails which motivated Congress to pass the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. Today, we continue her legacy by championing equal pay legislation such as the Paycheck Fairness Act, which would give workers new tools for ensuring that employers pay women and men equally for equal work.



Join the 2026 DAW-AAUW Great Decisions Study Group!

Great Decisions is produced by the Foreign Policy Association (FPA), which has been encouraging nonpartisan discussion on U.S. foreign policy for over 100 years. The program gives citizens the opportunity to learn about some of the most critical global issues facing America today. After the program, the FPA gathers participants' feedback to create a national opinion ballot report, which is shared with members of Congress.



Facilitated by Bette Felton, the DAW study group will meet in-person weekly starting Thursday, January 29, from 3:00 to 5:00 pm in Koinonia Hall (or the Spirit Room)

at Danville Congregational Church. The group is open to all interested people.

There will be 8 sessions and reading every week from the Great Decisions 2026 Briefing Book. Participants are expected to read and consider questions developed by the FPA facilitators in the week before each meeting.

For more information, see The Foreign Policy Association at www.fpa.org or contact Bette Felton, bfelton25@gmail.com

In Memoriam

We are saddened to report that long time DAW member Gwen Regalia passed away in November. Gwen had lived in Walnut Creek for over 60 years where she and her late husband, Ed, raised four children. She was very active in local, regional, and national politics. She served as an elected official for 30 years, first as a member of the Walnut Creek School Board, then as a member of the Walnut Creek City Council, and she served as mayor of Walnut Creek five separate times. She and Ed helped create the Kennedy-King Memorial Scholarship Fund in response to the assassinations of John Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. Through generous donations, this foundation has provided millions of dollars in scholarships for under-represented and minority students in Contra Costa County.



We extend our most sincere condolences to Gwen's children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and the rest of her extended family.

AAUW California

AAUW California Board Candidates

By Charmen Goehring, President, AAUW California

Our nomination form for the AAUW California Board of Directors is now open! As you may know, each year we have directors whose terms expire. This year we need to elect a new board secretary, four two-year directors, and one one-year director. We are specifically seeking someone with web services skills to manage the website, among other tasks, as well as someone with knowledge of the AAUW Fund and a passion for it.

You can find all the details [HERE](#). Serving on the board is a fantastic way to learn more about AAUW, help provide tools and guidance to our branches, and meet some really special people!

AAUW National

From AAUW California's November Public Policy Newsletter – AAUW Showing Up!

At the Supreme Court: AAUW showed up. Our CEO, Gloria L. Blackwell, spoke at the rally on October 15, and our members were there on the steps. While some of the justices' questions were disheartening, it was powerful to see our community out in force. Check out the pictures of our members in [this article](#).

More layoffs? Maybe not. AAUW signed a joint statement with disability, civil-rights, and education partners opposing harmful layoffs that would have gutted the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), and the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE). On October 15, a judge temporarily blocked the administration from moving forward at most agencies and extended this to an indefinite block on October 28. Read more [here](#).

Opposing the Higher-Ed “Compact”: The administration’s “Compact for Academic Excellence” ties funding to rollbacks of DEI and academic freedom. AAUW has joined a coalition letter urging presidents and trustees to reject the “administration’s invitation to violate the law, abdicate your duty to your students and campus community, and betray academic freedom.” MIT and Brown University have both publicly rejected the Compact. See AAUW CEO Gloria Blackwell’s statement [here](#).

AAUW has submitted an organizational comment opposing the U.S. Department of Education's proposal to adopt the supplemental priority "Promoting Patriotic Education." Please see a background briefing on the Department's proposal from Democracy Forward [here](#). AAUW’s comments are [here](#).

Stay Connected: Re-Subscribe to AAUW Emails

Do you think you may be missing out on vital updates and important announcements from AAUW National? Don't let valuable information slip through the cracks! Ensure you stay connected with us by re-subscribing to AAUW emails. Simply [click here](#) to re-subscribe or update your contact information and guarantee that you’ll receive all the latest news, webinars, and opportunities from AAUW National.

“Stay Home” Policy Statement

While we understand that people want to participate in person at our branch events, we also want to foster consideration for all members in creating a safe environment for everyone. Please consider this direction when you plan to attend a branch meeting.

If you are feeling ill in any way, or have been in close contact with someone known to have tested positive for COVID in the last 10 days, please do not attend any meeting!

Remember that COVID exposure remains a serious issue and that we need to be constantly vigilant. If you plan to attend a branch event, please stay home if you feel ill or if you have been exposed to COVID or any other significant communicable disease. We encourage you to be considerate of everyone attending a function, some of whom might be more susceptible than others. If you have any doubts, test, wear a mask, and err on the side of caution.

While there are inherent risks in attending an in-person event, with your help we will do our best to keep everyone safe at our meetings.

From the Editor - Joanne Quijano

Contribute to the Advocate - Send ideas, articles, and pictures by the 23rd of the month to appear in the next issue. Please use the [Submittal Form](#) on our website to direct your contribution to the Advocate, or other DAW social media, to our communications team.

Submissions are preferred in the following format:

- Articles in a .doc or .docx file, or in the body of an email
- Calibri font, size 12
- Pictures in .jpg format
- Permissions set to enable editing

Find contact information about people mentioned in the Advocate on our [branch website](#) and in your directory. If you do not have a directory, [click here](#) to send us a request.

Comments about the Advocate? – I’m always interested in making improvements to the newsletter to better meet our members’ needs. Please let me know your comments and suggestions at jtq@sbcglobal.net.

From the Treasurer – Chris Ritter

Handle money matters here - Please send expense vouchers or deposits to our AAUW mailbox at: P.O. Box 996, Alamo, CA 94507 for expedited processing. Refer to our branch website for specific forms and instructions – Click on [Members Page](#)

From the Corresponding Secretary - Julie Grisham

Know someone who needs a note? - Julie Grisham, our Corresponding Secretary, sends cards on behalf of our branch. If you know of an AAUW-DAW member in need of a get well, condolence or congratulations card, contact Julie via email at juliegrisham@sbcglobal.net.

Our Branch Sponsors

We are proud to acknowledge our loyal branch sponsors. We appreciate their support, which goes directly to fund DAW projects that include scholarships for local college students, Tech Trek camperships, and community education programs. For more information about becoming a sponsor, please visit our website at <https://daw-ca.aauw.net/sponsorships-2024/>



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The American Association of University Women (AAUW) is the nation's leading voice promoting equity and education for women and girls.

Mission: AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research.

Value Promise: By joining AAUW, you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women and girls have a fair chance.

Vision: AAUW empowers all women and girls to reach their highest potential.

The Danville-Alamo-Walnut Creek branch promotes and supports our AAUW mission through local scholarships, AAUW program support, panel discussions, Tech Trek, AAUW Fund, and topical guest speakers.



The Advocate

Online at <https://daw-ca.aauw.net/newsletter/>

Joanne Quijano, Editor
AAUW Danville-Alamo-Walnut Creek Branch
P.O. Box 996, Alamo, CA 94507