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## *connection*

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### **President's Letter**

Are you as surprised as I am that we are at the end of another year? The days, months, and years seem to pass more quickly, and I wonder if time has speeded up. 2023 has been a tumultuous year and we remember all those who have suffered losses whether they be weather / climate related, war-related, or a result of physical or economic difficulties. We also celebrate the successes within our family and friends – births, graduations, marriages, promotions, recovery of health and celebrations of life. We live in a country that has given us many blessings and continues to be a place where others looking for a better life hope to come.

And yet, there is much work remaining to be done to support our mission. We have not yet achieved gender or pay equity and continue to support the efforts to make that a reality. The ERA Amendment is not yet a part of our US Constitution. A letter is being circulated by 84 organizations (including AAUW) for signatures to be sent to President Biden requesting that he certify the ERA Amendment through the Archivist to the US Constitution. It is long past due that women's rights are enshrined in that document. Your Public Policy Chairs are circulating this letter for signature. If you wish to do so, you can sign your name to this Petition.

If you are traveling, I wish you pleasant and safe journeys. If you are spending time with family and friends, I wish you love and laughter. May your holidays be a time of renewal, growth, celebration, love and hope. May the New Year bring peace to our world.

Let us rededicate ourselves to AAUW and its mission. May every branch have a successful year. May every member find the support they need. May our scholarship recipients achieve their desired outcomes. May more women lead in every aspect of our communities. These are some of my hopes for the future. May these and all your hopes and dreams come true in 2024.

[Donna Jean Simon](#), President



### 2024 Convention Updates:

Book your hotel room early to secure a spot! [AAUW IL HOTEL 2024](#)

Can you help? A committee is needed for AAUW-IL State Convention: Celebrating 100 Years of Empowering Women. To ensure full state representation, we are looking for a committee of branch members from across Illinois to assist with planning the April 19/20 convention in Elgin. Committee members, in collaboration with State Program VPs, will: identify critical topics, suggest speakers, create networking opportunities, utilize hotel resources, plan activities, and support effective scheduling/agendas. We also want to develop a plan to celebrate our branches' many accomplishments. We anticipate short monthly meetings via Zoom, with our first meeting scheduled for Wednesday, January 10th from 7 to 8pm.

If you are interested, please email Becky and Peg, Program VPs, at [aauwilprograms@gmail.com](mailto:aauwilprograms@gmail.com)

Stay tuned next month for updates for AAUW-IL 2024 State Convention: Celebrating 100 Years of Empowering Women

### **AAUW-IL State Convention: Celebrating 100 Years of Empowering Women**

**April 19-20, 2024, Elgin Community College, Elgin, IL**

AAUW-IL is 100! Join your friends and colleagues in Elgin, IL as we celebrate 100 years of Advancing Equity for Women and Girls in Illinois! We'll have an engaging program focused on saluting our accomplishments and pursuing new ways to support women as we look forward to the next 100 years. Watch for details on registration, programming, and activities on the AAUW-IL website and via the monthly Connection.

Venue: **University and Business Center at Elgin Community College** - As AAUW has deep roots supporting academic opportunities for women, it seems fitting that we should gather for this significant anniversary at an educational institution. The conference center at Elgin Community College (ECC) in Elgin, IL is perfectly poised as the setting for us to come together. Elgin is situated between Chicago and Rockford on the scenic Fox River Valley and home to Elgin Area Branch, an active AAUW-IL branch.

Hotel: [The Holiday Inn & Suites Chicago Northwest](#) - Elgin, a contemporary hotel just off I90 is holding a block of rooms for us. This full service hotel is less than 5 miles from the ECC. We have a free shuttle to transport us to and from the Friday evening convention session. The address for the hotel is 495 Airport Road, Elgin, IL 60123. The cost for the double queen standard room is \$109 and the junior king suite is \$124 (plus tax).

[Click here to Reserve Your Room in the AAUW-IL Block](#)

Group Code: AAU

You can also make reservations by calling 847.488.9000 but you have to say that you are part of “AAUW-IL Room Block” to receive the discounted rate.

Please reserve early to guarantee your spot in the hotel block, reservations made after April 5th, 2024 will not be eligible for the group discount.

## From the State Board

### Call for nominations/suggestions for AAUW-IL Board positions for 2024– 2026.

Open positions will be—President, 2 Vice Presidents of Programs, Funds Director, Bylaws and Policy Chair and Nominating Chair. These are two-year terms.

AAUW has been fortunate to have so many wonderful and dedicated leaders but we need your help going forward. If you or another member has an interest in one of these positions, please contact Carol Heisler at [carolheisler@gmail.com](mailto:carolheisler@gmail.com) or another committee member. The Nominating committee consists of Judy Schultz of the Rockford Branch, Elaine Fisher of the Jane Addams Branch, Jo-An Takamoto Sabonjian of the Waukegan Branch and Tracey Sherman-Falcon of the Aurora Branch.

The slate is presented to the membership prior to the convention and voting occurs at the convention business meeting.

## Public Policy

AAUW ERA Advocates,

Please read the below email from Nicole Vorrasi Bates, the Executive Director at Shattering Glass. AAUW has already signed on. If another organization you belong to supports the ERA, have them sign on as well.

Thanks for all you do!  
Paula and Tracey

*Dear Friends, Neighbors, Colleagues and Equality Allies:*

*I would like to share an opportunity for you to sign on to a historic opportunity, a letter directly to President Biden to publish the duly ratified Equal Rights Amendment without delay, during this December 2023, 100 years after it was first introduced to Congress.*

*We are still soliciting organizations.*

*We are expanding the campaign to individuals.*

*We want you.*

*I am thrilled to report that, on behalf of 84 organizations across the country, on December 5th, 2023, Shattering Glass and [The National ERA Publication Task Force](#), co-led by Nicole Vorrasi Bates and Eileen Murphy sent a letter to President Biden, urging him to immediately publish the ERA. It went to his top advisers as well as the GenderEC and Deputy White Counsel to whom we have been speaking.*

*Here is a link to [the press release](#). The letter and complete list of signatories may also be found [HERE](#).*

*Please consider proceeding to this page to co-sign this important letter: [Individual Sign-On Endorsing Letter From Activists to President Biden, Urging The Immediate Publication of the Equal Rights](#)*

Thank you kindly.  
Best regards.

**Nicole Vorrasi Bates**

Executive Director, *Shattering Glass*

[nvbates@shatteringglass.org](mailto:nvbates@shatteringglass.org)

202-669-4024

## Branch News

### ABCD Book Group

The new AAUW-IL state-wide ABCD book group will meet online on Tuesday, January 23, at 7 pm to discuss ***Three Girls from Bronzeville: A Uniquely American Memoir of Race, Fate, and Sisterhood*** by Dawn Turner

Further books on the overall theme of families fighting poverty in the US will be -

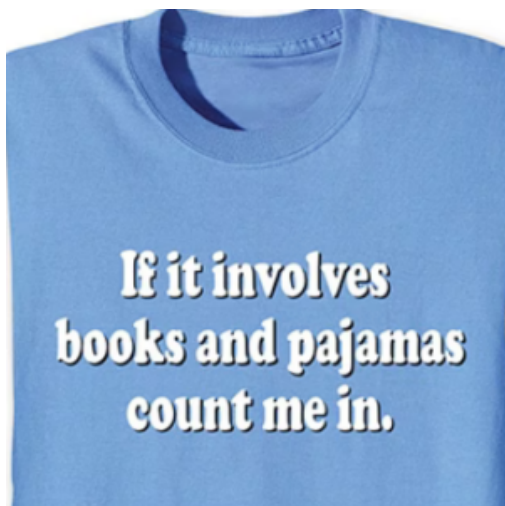
February: *Nomadland* by Jessica Bruder

March: *Forgotten Girls* by Monica Potts

All AAUW members and guests are welcome to meetings. Questions? Contact [Carolheisler@gmail.com](mailto:Carolheisler@gmail.com)

## Register

The **Naperville Area Branch** held a program on November 14th and the recording is now available on their website. Debunking Gun Violence Myths was presented by Devin Hughes, GVPedia President and Founder. In the in-depth discussion on prevalent myths about guns and safety, Hughes presents well-researched data debunking four common gun violence myths and provides suggestions for countering the gun lobby's "firehose of falsehood." [Listen here.](#)



Our Dec 20th AAUW branch program will be a casual, social get-together with the **AAUW Northwest Suburban Branch** via Zoom at 7 pm Central Time: **Did You Say Books and PJs? Count Me In!**

Wear your holiday PJs or your holiday sweater, and plan to share one (or maybe two) of your favorite books with all of us that you have read in 2023.

It can be a novel, historical fiction, mystery, thriller, non-fiction, or even poetry; your choice - your favorite!

Please share; guests are always welcome.

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The **Chicago Inc., Branch** and the **Jane Addams Online Branch** invite you to a joint program, Saturday, January 13, 2024 at 10:00 am

AAUW IL has been working on a bill to provide insurance for folks to take paid medical and family leave. One of the reasons that women have less earning power and fewer retirement resources is that often, it is the woman who leaves the job force to care for ailing parents, in-laws, siblings, partners, and children. This legislation, when passed, will allow all workers to take paid family and medical leave. We have been working on this legislation for several years. The proponents only sometimes agree, and many opponents do not accept this idea.

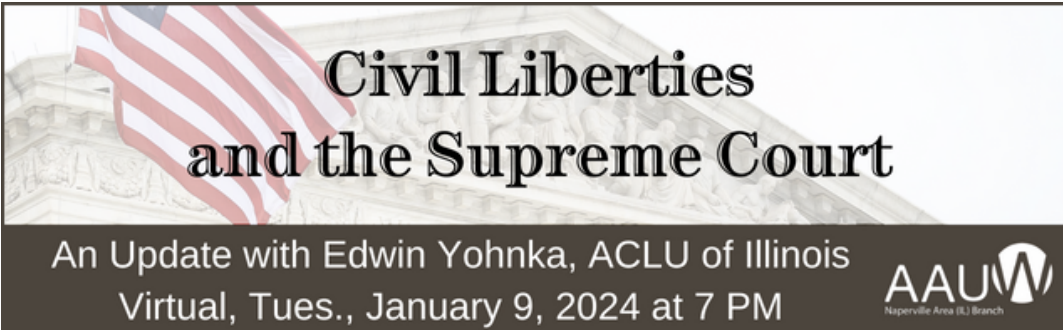
On January 13 at 10 am, Sarah Labadie from Women Employed will share the ups and downs of getting this complicated legislation passed. As you better understand this issue, we hope you will contact your Representative and Senator and share why this bill needs to become law. Developing and passing legislation is how we get AAUW values working for everyone.

Sarah Labadie has expertise in various issues, such as paid sick days, postsecondary education and training, fair wages and schedules, and work and family. A member of the Women Employed staff since 2008, Sarah promotes the passage and effective implementation of laws and regulations at the local, state, and federal levels that improve the economic status of women and remove barriers to economic equity. She has spearheaded the campaign to pass paid sick days legislation and led an effort to create a unified definition of career pathways in Illinois. All this ultimately streamlined processes and led to smoother pathways for students. She is also an expert in online advocacy and grassroots organizing.

Sponsored by the Chicago Inc. branch in partnership with AAUW's Jane Addams Online branch. For more information, contact [chicagoaauw@hotmail.com](mailto:chicagoaauw@hotmail.com) or <http://chicago-il.aauw.net/>

Register

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**Civil Liberties  
and the Supreme Court**

An Update with Edwin Yohnka, ACLU of Illinois  
Virtual, Tues., January 9, 2024 at 7 PM

AAUW  
Naperville Area (IL) Branch

Civil Liberties and the Supreme Court

Join **AAUW Naperville Area** online, Tuesday, January 9, at 7 PM as Ed Yohnka, Director of Communications and Public Policy at the ACLU of Illinois, updates us on how a string of recent decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court impacts basic civil liberties for all. Register for the link.

Register

*If your branch has a program or recognition or an idea you'd like to share, please [email Jennifer Urish](#) by the 14th of each month.*

Our Mission: Gender Equity & Economic Security

Our Values: Intersectionality Inclusive Intergenerational Empowering

Our Focus: Economic Security Education Advocacy



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