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AAUW

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connection

From the President

There were two exciting Branch milestones this month.

Two exciting things happened this month -

AAUW announced The International Alliance for Women (TIAW) named our CEO, Gloria L. Blackwell, as a 2024 TIAW World of Difference Award winner! The TIAW World of Difference Award recognizes those whose efforts have advanced the economic empowerment of women locally, regionally, or worldwide. This award is a testament to her tireless dedication and the transformative impact AAUW is making on women across the U.S.

The AAUW-IL State Board, with a LEG grant, sponsored the Naperville Area Branch's participation in a STEM career event coordinated by Vision 1948. It was a huge success. 300 participants were at the event titled: Our STEM Era – Powered by Girls. Naperville North HS Girls Engineering, Math and Science Club and Neuqua Valley HS Girls in STEM helped plan and organize this event. They received positive feedback and achieved their goal of educating and engaging students, especially girls, in all aspects of STEM and STEM careers. More details are below.

Happy Holidays!
Laura Desmarais
aauwilpres@gmail.com



HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND BEST WISHES FOR THE NEW YEAR !

The results of this year's election are finalized, and we know there were mixed results. At the state level the makeup of the Legislature is unchanged. The Democrats retain a super majority in both houses with a 40 to 19 majority in the Senate and a 78 to 40 edge in the Assembly. The members who have been supportive of AAUW priorities are back, so we look for a productive year on issues at the state level.

At the national level things are different and somewhat concerning relative to AAUW priorities including equality, education, healthcare, reproductive rights and more. The GOP now controls the Executive Branch as well as both Houses of Congress. In the Senate they have a 53 to 47 majority, but due to the filibuster 60 votes will be needed to pass many pieces of legislation, meaning bi-partisan efforts will still be needed. The House is even closer with the GOP holding a 220 to 215 advantage, meaning almost every member of the GOP would need to vote for a bill to pass on a party-line basis. Again, this seems likely to mean that most legislation will require bi-partisan support to pass, so it is important to work with both sides for the aisle I both chambers as we advocate for AAUW Priorities.

At the national level AAUW has been doing several things since the election to seek to protect past progress. We have long been an advocate of the Equal Rights Amendment, but while passed by the required number of states, it still has not been added to the constitution. AAUW has been working with other allies in urging President Biden to have the amendment published prior to his leaving office as without this it is virtually certain that it will not be added in the next four years and it is likely that there will be efforts to roll back what has been accomplished over the past 101 years since the effort began.

Another effort is urging the Senate to confirm all remaining judicial appointments made by President Biden. We know that in the previous Trump administration, many judges were appointed who were opposed to DEI, women's reproductive health care, Title IX updates, gun safety provisions and more. We need as many judicial appointments as possible confirmed so that we continue to have a fair and balanced judicial system.

Looking to the coming 119th Congress there is concern over many of the proposed cabinet appointments and efforts by the GOP to eliminate the Department of Education, make significant changes to Health and Human Services, FDA, EPA and more. Many of these items would require action by Congress, so it will be important to have our voices heard. In light of the situation at the national level it is expected that there will be a greater focus on actions that can be taken at the state level to protect women's rights. There will be work with states on federal advocacy and outreach to members of Congress. AAUW remains nonpartisan but will be looking at how we can best protect and advance AAUW priorities at all levels.

At the state level we will be monitoring proposed legislation as the General Assembly returns to session. We will seek to identify and support legislation that promotes AAUW Priorities and urge opposition to those at odds with our priorities. We will share information as it becomes available and invite your feedback. We know that Paid Family and Medical Leave will be a priority in the coming session. Progress was made in the past, but efforts are still needed. Based on voter reaction to this year's ballot initiatives property tax relief, defending democracy and assuring reproductive rights can be expected to generate discussion and likely action.

Thanks for your interest in and support of public policy initiatives. We look forward to your continued positive responses to calls for action with the "Two-Minute Activist," calls for submitting Witness Slips at the state level and more.
Have a Great 2025.

In Solidarity,
Karen Kortsch and Ken Olson
Public Policy Co-Chairs

Branch News

AAUW **Jane Addams Online Branch** Program:

Wed January 22, 7 pm - **Travel Experience as a Solo Woman**

Are you worried about traveling safely as a solo woman traveler? You can get good advice from an experienced traveler. The program includes preparation tips, tour provider recommendations, and examples of savvy, exciting traveling experiences. Get answers to all your questions. Presenter: Maria Manhart, an experienced international traveler of 40 years.

Questions? Contact aauwJaneAddams@gmail.com

[Register](#)

This is a much-delayed follow-up and note of appreciation for AAUW IL's generous sponsorship of Vision 1948's event in partnership with Naperville HS's.

Our STEM Era, put together by Vision 1948 in partnership with Naperville North HS Girls in Engineering,

enjoying and learning from hands-on demos and speakers. There were also refreshments and door prizes. We received much positive feedback and believe we achieved our goal of educating and engaging students, especially girls, in all aspects of STEM and STEM careers. Another important point of note is that the event was planned and organized by a team of girls and women, as is underscored in the event title: Our STEM Era - Powered by Girls. You can see our flyer [here](#). Photos are Illinois Senator Laura Ellman with participants, an overhead view of the event, and Naperville Mayor Scott Wehrli with participants.

On behalf of the whole planning team, I would like to express my most sincere appreciation for the LEG grant that AAUW IL provided, without which this event would not have been possible. The grant enabled us to do broad marketing (flyers, digital billboards, marketing tables at other events), event supplies as well as refreshment and prizes. We owe much of our success to AAUW IL! Thank you!

Tina Hinch
Naperville Branch



WHEATON-GLEN ELLYN BRANCH
ZOOM Meeting January 8, 2025, 6:45 pm

TOPIC: *A Resilient State: What Illinois is Doing Right and Why It Is Better Than You Think*

Speakers: **Dr. Robert Bruno and Frank Manzo**

Ready to start out 2025 on a positive note? Join us from the comfort of your warm home to hear from two experts, Dr. Robert Bruno and Frank Manzo IV, who will share good news about the state of Illinois. They will discuss: What Illinois is Doing Right and Why It Is Better Than You Think. Dr. Bruno and Mr. Manzo are responsible for much in-depth research on this topic (some has recently been reported in the Dec. 9th Chicago Tribune) and their findings show that the population of Illinois is stable, its workforce has grown and, as its economy has become more robust, it is a good place to earn a living! They will dispel media reports and myths claiming otherwise.

Dr. Robert Bruno is a Professor of Labor and Employment in the School of Labor and Employment Relations at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, as well Director of the Labor Education Program and the Director of the Project for Middle Class Renewal. He has published numerous scholarly articles on a range of labor relations subjects, and has authored five books on labor relations. He has given expert testimony to the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce. Dr. Bruno is co-editor of the Labor Studies Journal and is an executive board member of the United Association for Labor Education. He earned his BA from the University of Illinois, his MA from Bowling Green University and his PHD from New York University. He also currently serves as the president of Glen Ellyn's School Board for District #41.

Frank Manzo IV is an Economist at the Illinois Economic Policy Institute (IEPI), a nonprofit research organization that he cofounded in 2013 to promote economic growth for businesses and working families. In the last 11 years, Manzo has authored or co-authored more than 200 research reports, been published in 4 peer-reviewed academic journals and his work has been cited by numerous government agencies and the Biden White House. He authors a monthly column in the Daily Herald. He earned his BA in Economics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and his Master in Public Policy degree from the University of Chicago.

To attend the meeting via Zoom, please send an email to wgeaauw@comcast.net. Include your full name and email address. The Zoom link will be emailed to you on the day before the event. More information about the AAUW Wheaton-Glen Ellyn Branch can be found at <https://wheatonglenellyn-il.aauw.net/>.



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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AAUWLConnection@gmail.com

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