

[View this email in your browser](#)



From the President

FY25 Annual Branch Survey

I was notified by National that we just missed the goal of having all Branches complete the FY25 Annual Branch Survey. We are a large state with over 25 diverse Branches. National was excited to get such a great response.

I spent time with Gloria Blackwell, AAUW CEO after the Spring Convention in Springfield. We discussed the Branch Survey. National has struggled with the best way to communicate goals and priorities to Branches. Thus, the Annual Branch Survey was developed. The value of the Survey for us is that we can let National know what we are doing to support AAUW's priorities.

The criteria for FY26 Branch Survey have already been posted. AAUW-IL will work with Branches to explore ways to incorporate AAUW priorities into our Branch programming activities.

Laura Desmarais
aauiilpres@gmail.com

Public Policy

The first half of 2025 has been challenging on the policy front, especially at the national level. Let's pause to take a brief look at what has happened, what we have done and what we might do for the future.

With higher education and equity under attack, AAUW's new Public Policy Principles chart a clear path forward. They build on our recently released [strategic plan](#) and highlight our federal priorities for 2025–27 as we seek to address the escalating threats to inclusive education and take action to defend and advance gender equity at this pivotal moment. As an independent and trusted advocate, AAUW is leading the charge — and your voice is essential to help turn our vision into lasting change. We remain proudly nonpartisan, but never neutral when it comes to standing up for education, equity, and civil rights.

The [Public Policy Principles and Priorities](#) underscore AAUW's mission to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy. They establish principles for action on which AAUW members across the country can focus their advocacy efforts in a unified manner. They guide the work of AAUW's federal priorities and that of AAUW state organizations and branches on state and local issue advocacy efforts.

AAUW's 2025–2027 Federal Action Priorities are to support equitable access to higher education—and to reduce the barriers that hinder women's advancement, especially women of color—AAUW advocates for:

- Reinstating Title IX rules that strengthen and clarify protections for student survivors of sexual harassment and assault, ensure accommodations for pregnant and parenting students, and affirm protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Defending inclusive education from attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Reducing barriers to postsecondary success, including increased financial support and manageable student debt.
- Addressing non-tuition barriers such as paid leave, childcare, and access to contraception, and abortion care.

On the legislative front the primary action and news has been passage of the Budget Reconciliation Bill H.R. 1. AAUW joined many other organizations in vocal opposition to the bill, but it passed on a strictly partisan vote. On June 12th, AAUW had a major lobby day that included staff, National Board Members and others. Participants visited 51 offices with drop in visits and there were 9 constituent meetings with legislative staff for Virginia, Missouri, Missouri, Maryland, New York and Illinois. Illinois was one of eight states providing letters for their senators in addition to phone calls in the state. Senator Duckworth did reply indicating her opposition and listing many of the same concerns as AAUW. The AAUW Press

At the state level there was limited action on legislation related to AAUW Priorities that passed. It is equally important to stop bad legislation so it should be noted that no bills opposed by AAUW passed. This is also a positive for our advocacy. The state budget was passed, but there is concern about possible impacts that may come due to actions of Congress. Senator Laura Murphy says: "This budget does the difficult job of ensuring vital services continue to be funded, regardless of the uncertainty of funding from the federal government. I would like to thank my colleagues for coming together to ensure that financial needs of this state are addressed in a fair and equitable way."

What can you do?

Make Good Trouble with AAUW: Join the National Day of Action – July 17

AAUW is proud to support the [Good Trouble Lives On National Day of Action](#) — a nationwide call to protect our democracy and civil rights — honoring the legacy of Congressman John Lewis before, during, and beyond July 17. This is not a day of quiet reflection — it's a day of courage and action! There are many events across Illinois and the nation.

Stay informed.

One of our partners is providing an opportunity later this month: You are invited to register for a Zoom webinar! When: Jul 25, 2025 10:00 AM Central Time (US and Canada) Topic: Policy Briefing: One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) - Medicaid, ACA & SNAP. [Register in advance for this webinar](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

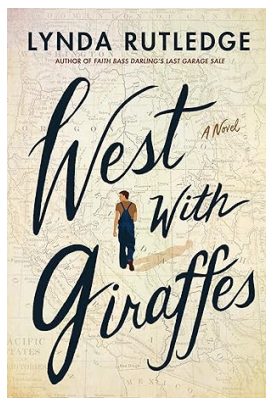
Take action with your Branch.

We have branches doing innovative things like holding a "Whine and Wine" night at a local wine emporium, so members can socialize and drink wine while we write postcards to lawmakers about AAUW issues. Others are updating social media sites. Let us know what you do so we can share ideas.

The article may be a bit lengthy, but now is the time we need to speak out. Hopefully this helps. Thanks for all you do. Continue to speak up for AAUW priorities and values.

Ken Olson and Karen Kortsch
Co-Directors of Public Policy

Branch News



Book Discussion on Zoom, Tuesday, July 22nd, 4 pm - 5.30 pm

The **Northwest Suburban Branch** and the **Jane Addams Branch** invite you to discuss **West with Giraffes** by **Lynda Rutledge**.

It's 1938. The Great Depression lingers. Hitler is threatening Europe, and world-weary Americans long for wonder. They find it in two giraffes who miraculously survive a hurricane while crossing the Atlantic. What follows is a twelve-day road trip in a custom truck to deliver Southern California's first giraffes to the San Diego Zoo.

An emotional, rousing novel inspired by the incredible true story of two giraffes who made headlines and won the hearts of Depression-era America.

[Please register to attend](#)

Guests are welcome!

Questions? aauwjaneaddams@gmail.com

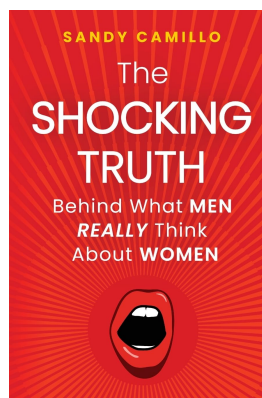
Join the Jane Addams Branch on Thursday, August 28 at 7 pm Central Time for a conversation with **Sandy Camillo** about communication between the sexes and the role of gender bias in male-female relationships.

Sandy, a lifelong advocate for women, is the author of **The Journey of an Invisible Woman** & her latest book: **The Shocking Truth Behind What Men Really Think About Women** - About the uncensored thoughts that men secretly harbor about women.

Sandy has previously served as a director, secretary, and governance officer of the National Board of AAUW, and she is currently president-elect for AAUW New York State.

[Please register to attend.](#)

Questions?
aauwjaneaddams@gmail.com



[Subscribe](#)

[Past Issues](#)

[Translate ▼](#)

[RSS](#)

If your branch has a program of 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



Our mailing address is:

AAUWILConnection@gmail.com

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).