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From the President

[Exciting News!!](#)

Congratulations to the Geneva-Batavia-St.Charles Branch for being celebrated for their work to promote the Dignity Index. The Dignity Index is a communication tool that demonstrates how we can disagree with those who don't share our opinion with dignity and respect. This is so crucial today.

The Dignity Index team has been invited to attend the inaugural Dignity Leadership Summit in Salt Lake City. They will be honored by founder Tim Shriver and his team as the recipients of the first 'Dignity Leadership Award'. Special congratulations to Rosie McVay, who spearheaded this initiative and her dedicated team: Pat Hendrix, Maureen Brandon and Christine Bruun. Anita Walls, Branch President, encouraged this initiative and supported their efforts to present to the State Convention in Elgin and many Branches throughout the state.

The State Board supported their efforts with grants. All I can say is that this 'IS BIG'. Thank you for your initiative and dedication to this project.

[Annual Branch Survey Participation and Five Star Awards](#)

Branches came alive and participated in National's Branch Survey. There are 28 Branches in Illinois. Of these, 24 received stars. The survey is the only way National has of knowing what is going on at the Branch level. We demonstrated our commitment to work with National to support AAUW's mission.

At the National level there was a 43% increase in response from all Branches. I am aware that there are Branches who completed the survey and didn't receive credit for all of their responses. I want you to know that National is reviewing this. Their goal is to develop a survey that is inclusive of all Branch initiatives.

Laura Desmarais
aauwilpres@gmail.com

Five Star Recipients: Aurora, Elmhurst Area NFP, Naperville Area, Springfield, Wheaton-Glen Ellyn, NFP, Batavia-Geneva-St. Charles, Schaumburg Area

Four Star Recipients: Chicago, Inc., Crystal Lake Area, Elgin Area, Rockford Area, Waukegan Area, Morton and Jane Addams.

Three Star Recipients: Downers Grove Area, Monmouth Area, Northwest Suburban, Quincy, Pekin, and Palos-Orland Area

Two Star Recipients: Champaign-Urbana, and Deerfield Area

One Star: Salt Creek Area, and Rock-Island Moline

education and achieving economic security.

AAUW-IL has been working with **Women Employed** in Chicago and the Illinois Time to Care coalition to win paid family and medical leave for working people in Illinois.

Women Employed's mission is to improve women's economic status and remove barriers to equity, pursuing policy change and fair workplaces.

Join us for this important update from Sarah Labadie, Women Employed on **Sept. 17, 7:30 pm** Central Time.

[Register here](#). All AAUW members and guests are welcome.

Sarah Labadie is an expert in a wide range of issues, such as paid leave, postsecondary education and training, fair wages and schedules, and pay equity. A member of the Women Employed staff since 2008, Sarah collaborates with various stakeholders to advance and effectively implement laws and regulations at the local, state, and federal levels, thus improving the economic status of women and removing barriers to economic equity. Sarah has launched and managed several coalitions, including the Illinois Paid Sick Days Coalition, the Illinois Time to Care Coalition, and the Illinois Higher Education Network. In 2023, she successfully passed the Illinois Paid Leave for All Workers Act, which guaranteed short-term paid time off to workers across the state. She is also spearheading the legislative campaign to create a long-term paid family and medical leave program in Illinois.



This program is organized by Karen Kortsch, our AAUW-IL State Public Policy Co-Director, and hosted by the Jane Addams Branch.

Questions? Contact Karen, kmkortsch@gmail.com

[Register Now](#)

AAUW-IL Fall Conference

Policy Impacts on Women and Higher Education:
Learn, Plan, Act

Virtual: Sat., Sept. 27, 2025, 9 - 11 AM

Join us for the AAUW-IL Fall Conference! All branch, state and national members are welcome.

Our theme addresses the major governmental policy shifts that will impact women and higher education -- educators and students alike. We'll plan ways that we can advocate to ensure that women have the educational and career opportunities they need and deserve.

[Register Now!](#)

Public Policy

It seems there are major events on the political front every day. At times they seem at odds with each other. It is more important than ever that we stay informed, speak out and take action in support of the [AAUW strategic goals](#) to "empower women and girls by championing their success in higher education and pushing for policy solutions to create lasting change."

both passed versions of the budget, but they need to be reconciled with the same version passed by each house. The Senate version rejected many cuts to education desired by the administration, while the House generally followed the administration's wishes.

On the rulemaking front rules are expected in the Departments of Education, Energy, Veteran's Affairs and Labor that impact opportunities for women. The volume of responses to proposed rules can make a difference, so expect to be asked to comment. Currently the U.S. Department of Labor is moving to roll back anti-discrimination protections, leaving the nation's 36 million federal contract workers—nearly one in five U.S. workers, many of them women and people of color—vulnerable to discrimination. Details and a link for comments can be found at <https://aauw.quorum.us/campaign/137210/>. Comments are due Sept 17.

The U.S. Census Bureau recently released new data on the pay gap. I'm sharing AAUW's press release with you all, highlighting what we are seeing in the numbers:

Pay Gap Data Shows Women Falling Behind; AAUW Steps Up with Solutions: <https://www.aauw.org/resources/news/media/press-releases/pay-gap-data-shows-women-falling-behind-aauw-steps-up-with-solutions/>

Please feel free to share widely!

At the state level we are in the process of planning an AAUW IL state lobby day in Springfield for this spring when the legislature is in session. Logistics are being worked out but watch for details in the coming weeks. In the meantime, prepare to be an advocate to your legislators. Plan to join us for a webinar on **Oct. 9, 7:30 pm – Filing IL Witness Slips & More**. Learn how to file witness slips for IL legislation and how to use the new ILga.gov website to track legislation and the bill sponsors. Expert ilga.gov web tech, Emily Deakin-Harmony will demonstrate how to file a witness slip and answer all our questions.

Here's the registration link for the Filing Witness Slips program:
https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/vMxPPcJoRpm09b_mgBE3bQ

Please join our Action Network from National, you'll receive timely alerts about advocacy opportunities right in your inbox.

✓ With our Two-Minute Activist tool, you can contact your elected officials with just a few clicks.

 [Take Action Now](#)

☐ [Sign Up for Action Alerts](#)

Your voice. Your power. Your impact.

Ken Olson and Karen Kortsch, Co-Directors of Public Policy

Two New AAUW Funds 2025

Plan to donate to AAUW Funds from September through December 2025. In the past years, you have been encouraged to donate to the **Greatest Needs Fund #9110** because this fund allows AAUW to address current issues very quickly since the fund is unrestricted. In 2024, National received many requests from AAUW members to have more specific ways to address current issues through giving. National listened and decided that there should be two new funds that are a little more specific and would allow National to address emerging issues but especially those related to the AAUW Strategic Plan 2025-2027.

One new fund is the **Defend Higher Education Fund #4513**. This fund will enable AAUW to elevate the critical higher education issues impacting women. It will also provide strategic resources to students, staff and faculty on campuses and fuel investment in infrastructure and technology necessary to move AAUW's mission forward. Donations to this fund ensure AAUW can effectively fight on behalf of women on campuses across the country.

The **Public Policy Fund #4337** is the other new fund. This fund will enable AAUW to take action to oppose all forms of discrimination, for example, discrimination on the basis of age, disability, race, ethnicity, sex and gender, etc. This fund will also enable AAUW to invest in strong public education, inclusive curriculum and STEM opportunities. Other areas that this fund will support are economic security for women and the reinstatement of Title IX rules.

Donations to any of the three funds discussed above will count toward the total AAUW Funds given by your branch in 2025. Remember that for every \$500 your branch donates, AAUW-IL provides branches the opportunity to present a Branch Named Honoree Certificate to a branch member who has made special contributions to your branch in 2025.

Sylvia Martin, AAUW-IL Funds Director

National News

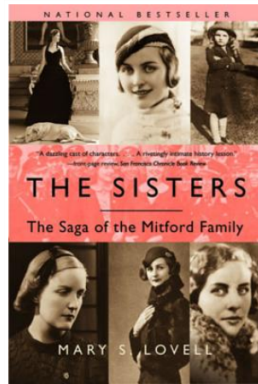
AAUW Fall Member Gathering — Thursday, September 18th 5 p.m. - 6 p.m. ET

[Register here and join us for AAUW's Fall Member Gathering!](#) At this special event, we'll:

- Share the results of AAUW's FY25 Branch Survey
- Provide you with the information you need to answer our 5 Calls to Action!

Don't miss this opportunity to celebrate your branch's contributions, hear about our latest initiatives, and connect with AAUW's mission in action. We look forward to seeing you there!

Branch News



Join us for a discussion of *The Sisters: The Saga of the Mitford Family* by Mary S. Lovell. **Tuesday, Sept 23, 4 pm CT.**

This is the story of a close, loving family splintered by the violent ideologies of Europe between the world wars. Jessica was a Communist; Debo became the Duchess of Devonshire; Nancy was one of the best-selling novelists of her day; beautiful Diana married the Fascist leader Sir Oswald Mosley; and Unity, a close friend of Hitler, shot herself in the head when England and Germany declared war. The Mitfords had style and presence and were remarkably gifted. Above all, they were funny, hilariously and mercilessly so.

[Please register to attend](#)

Guests are welcome!

Next book discussions:

Oct 28: *The Dry* by Jane Harper

Dec 9: *The Paris Novel* by Ruth Reichl

Questions? Contact Kate Skegg
at aauw.JaneAddams@gmail.com

The Deerfield Area and Waukegan Area branches invite you to explore **Creativity, Courage, and Collective Power: How to Initiate Large Scale Change Through Individual Leadership** with Dr. Karen Suarez Flint, Secretary-Treasurer of the Chicago Federation of Musicians Local 10-208 and Vice President of the Illinois AFL-CIO Executive Board.

A passionate advocate for workplace safety and fair pay, she founded the Change the Culture Committee at the American Federation of Musicians.

Tuesday, October 14, 7pm [Please register to attend.](#)

Questions? flautokaren@yahoo.com



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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