

# PUBLIC POLICY SURVEY RESULTS

AAUW ST. PAUL BRANCH

PUBLIC POLICY & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

APRIL 3, 2023



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In early 2023, the Public Policy & Environment (PP&E) Committee conducted an on-line survey of St. Paul Branch members to assess their interest in actively advocating as a branch on specific public policy issues supported by AAUW Minnesota and AAUW National. Eighty-one out of 292 Members responded (27.7%) responded by the cut off date of March 1, 2023.

What is clear is that our branch members are a diverse group with a wide range of priorities and goals. None of the three major public policy areas – social and racial justice, economic security for women, or equal access to quality education – received a majority of votes for being the top priority for advocacy in 2023 and 2024. To reflect the priorities of as many members of possible, we believe that the branch would be best served by picking one or two specific topics in each area to focus on in the coming two years. These topics are:

- The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) within the “social and racial justice” area, with a secondary emphasis on combating restrictions on reproductive health,
- Adequate funding for all levels of public education within the “equal access to quality education” area, and
- Equal pay within the “economic security for women” area.

The actual results of the survey and the reasoning used to select these issues are contained in the rest of the report.

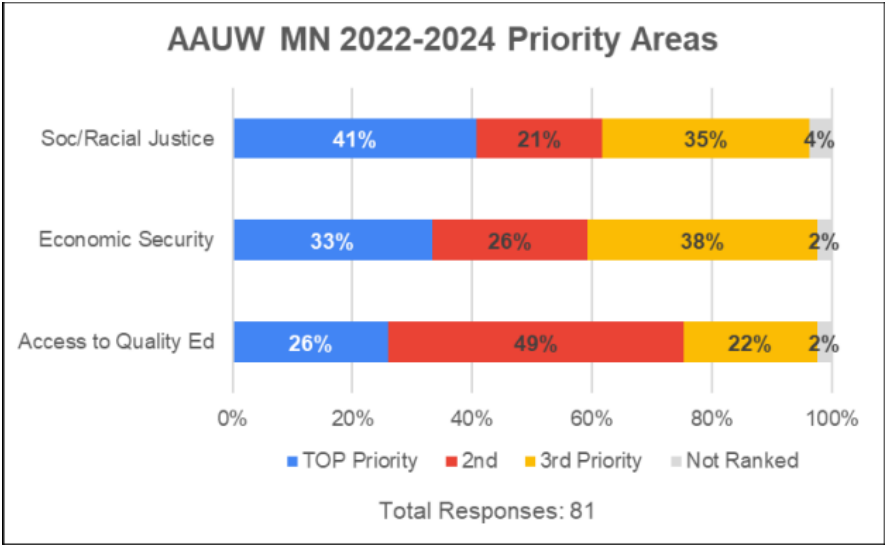
## PRIORITY AMONG MAJOR PUBLIC POLICY AREAS

The three public policy areas we asked about are based on the public policy priorities established by AAUW Minnesota (a brochure listing these is included in [Appendix 3](#)). They were chosen because our Branch bylaws limit us to taking public action that does not conflict with AAUW and AAUW MN activities and policies. AAUW MN public policy priorities for 2022-2024 are as follows:

- Priority #1 – Economic security for all women
- Priority #2 - Equal Access to Quality Public Education for All Students
- Priority #3 - Social and Racial Justice for All Members of Society

As the chart below shows, the policy area that received the most top priority votes in the survey (33 out of 81) was social and racial justice. Equal access to quality public education had the fewest votes for top priority but had the most combined first and second priority votes. No public policy area received a majority of the top priority votes. For this reason, we believe that the branch should consider advocating within all three policy areas.

Chart I – Which Public Policy Area should be our Top Priority?



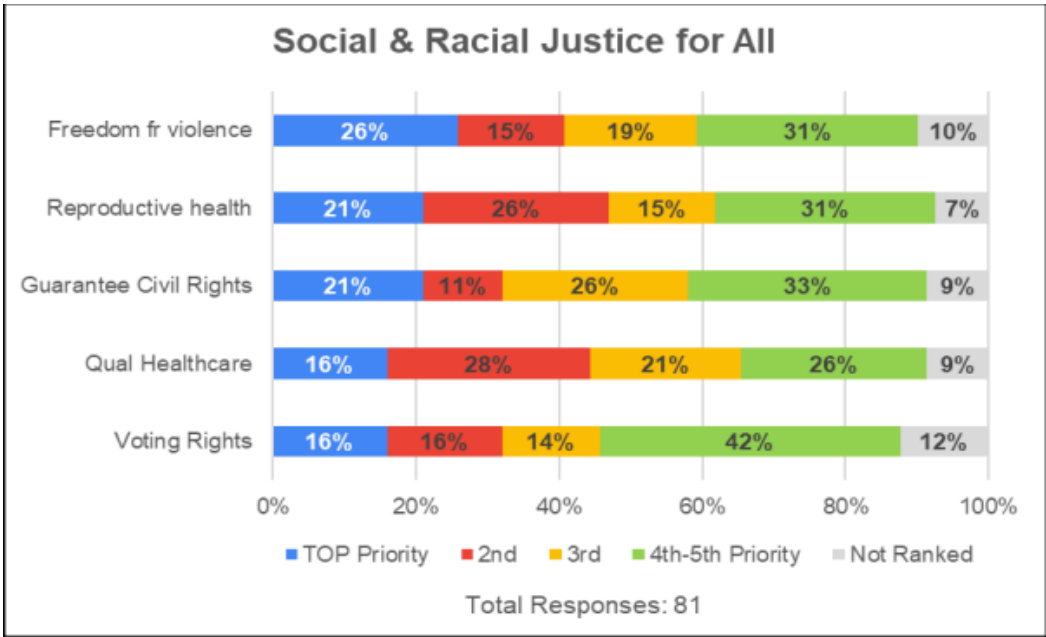
# PRIORITY ISSUES IN EACH OF THE MAJOR PUBLIC POLICY AREAS

Advocating for every issue within each of the major public policy areas is beyond the ability of the PP&E Committee and our Branch to do in a meaningful way. Therefore, it makes sense to identify one or two specific issues within each broad area to focus on. Again, the AAUW MN public policy brochure for 2022-2024 was used to identify potential issues within each area for the survey.

## ISSUES IN THE “SOCIAL AND RACIAL JUSTICE FOR ALL MEMBERS OF SOCIETY” AREA

There were three issues that at least 20 percent of all responding members chose to be the top priority. All responses are shown in the chart below. We also looked at the top priorities of only the respondents who chose social and racial justice as their top priority. “Freedom from violence in all of its forms and wherever it occurs, including racially-motivated violence” was the number one issue for both groups. “Guarantee civil and constitutional rights for all” was either the second choice or tied for the second choice in both groups. “Self-determination in reproductive health” was tied for second in the total group of respondents but was only the top priority of 4 out of the 33 respondents who considered social and racial justice their top priority.

Chart 2 - Which Social and Racial Justice issue should be our top priority?



The issue area of freedom from violence received the most top priority responses. However, this issue is extremely broad and could include anything from gun control to police reform to battered women protections to increased school security. This issue needs further exploration and definition on the part of our Branch members and the PP&E Committee before we take on this topic.

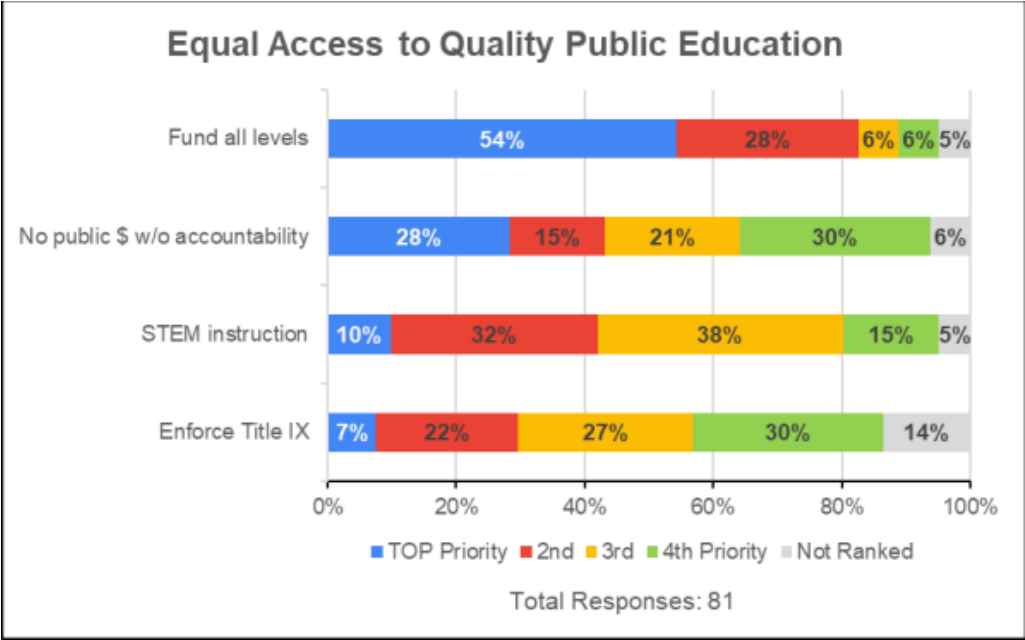
Another top priority was “guarantee of civil and constitutional rights for all”, and we did get some additional direction on that subject. One question at the end of the survey asked, “If you had to pick only one issue to lobby on what would it be?” The number two response was the “ERA Amendment”.

Reproductive health was also among the three top priorities. However, given the bills on this issue that have already passed the Minnesota Legislature this session, it seems that most of the heavy lifting in this area has already been done. The plan is just to monitor the situation and only give priority to this issue if bills are introduced to limit access to reproductive health options.

**ISSUES IN THE “EQUAL ACCESS TO QUALITY PUBLIC EDUCATION FOR ALL STUDENTS” POLICY AREA**

There was a clear top choice for the most important issue to advocate on in this public policy area – the funding issue. Fifty-four percent of all responding members chose this as their top priority, and respondents who chose education as their top priority in the broad public policy area also chose this as the top issue within the area (13 out of 21 respondents). Currently, the PP&E Committee has not been following legislation in this area, but we will begin to do so. Given the number of bills introduced every year on this topic, we will start with a focus on K-12.

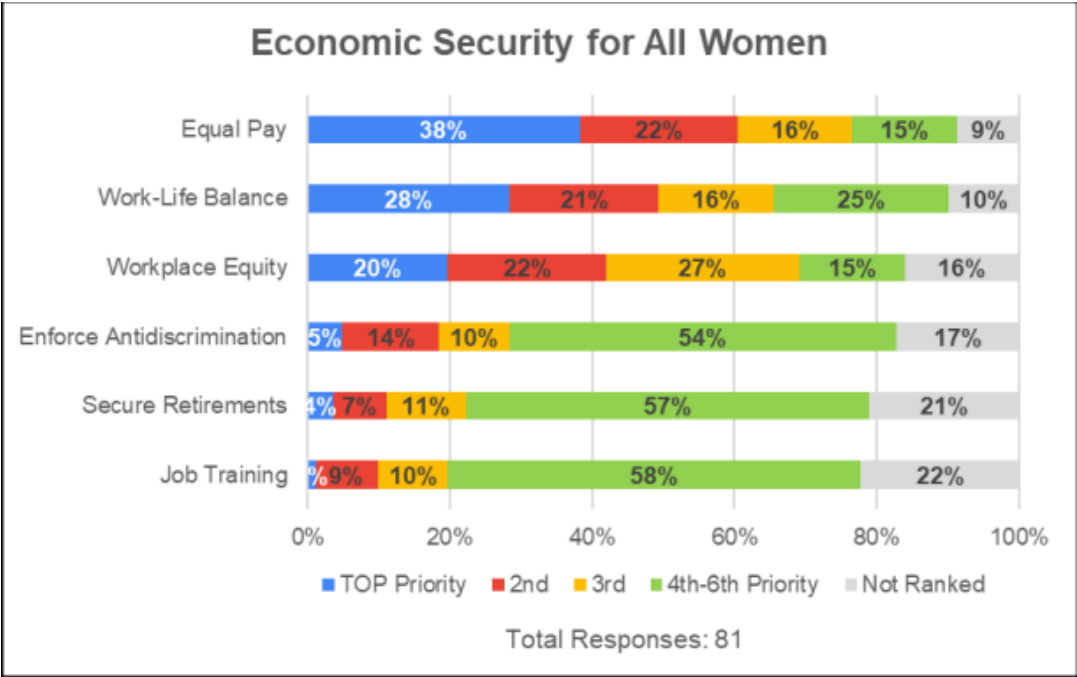
Chart 3 – Which “equal access to public education for all students” issue should be our top priority?



ISSUES IN THE “ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR ALL WOMEN” POLICY AREA

Equal pay is the top issue in the area of women’s economic security. One-third or more of both all responding members and those members who picked economic security as their top priority policy area selected equal pay. The PP&E Committee is currently following pay equity bills at both the state and national level and will continue to focus on that issue.

Chart 4 – Which “Economic Security Issue for All Women” issue should be our top priority?



## RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS OF THE SURVEY

The survey also included two open-ended questions. The first question asked respondents to identify the most important single policy or issue for which the branch should advocate. Ten respondents chose education or education equity funding, while the ERA amendment was mentioned eight times. The third most popular answer was economic security for women with 5 votes.

The final survey question was very open-ended and allowed respondents to share any thought about AAUW advocacy. While these were extremely varied a couple of themes we noticed were:

- Appreciation of the new information being provided by the PP&E Committee,
- Fear that advocacy might take away from our emphasis on scholarships, and
- Desire to advocate on environmental issues.

Regarding the last issue – we did not ask about environmental policy since this is not a national AAUW or AAUW MN policy goal. However, the PP&E Committee is happy to work with interested individual(s) if they want to add links on our take action page to environmental advocacy opportunities and resources for individuals to pursue.

The actual responses to these two open-ended questions are shown below. Our [conclusion](#) follows these responses.

**Survey question 1:** If our branch were to choose to **actively advocate for only one policy or issue** at the MN Legislature in 2023 and 2024, what would you want it to be? Please be as specific as possible.

Response
MN ERA
Laws to reduce air and water pollution in neighborhoods of BIPOC concentration.
Protect abortion rights
Social and Racial Justice
ERA MN (reproductive rights has now been addressed by this legislature)
Paid Family Leave
Reproductive rights
Don't know.
ERA MN
economic security for women
Improving pay and respect for teachers, nurses, childcare workers in jobs that are traditionally held by women
My two concerns are protection of our planet and economic and racial equality and access for all members of society. Since the first issue is perhaps a more federal or world issue, I have focused on the second issue, economic and racial equality, in my responses.
Term limits
Stop giving any money (federal/state/county) to private/religious/charter schools. Hopefully this would raise the educational level of our public schools by forcing citizens to have a vested interest in their local school.
Gun legislation
ERA
passage of the equal rights amendment
Affordable housing and/or housing support for low income individuals and families.
The environment
healthy environment and clean energy
economic security for women
Pass ERA
Education priorities
Equal Rights Amendment
The budget surplus must go back to the overtaxed people and businesses - not the general population



Response
Gun laws
Economic security for all women.
Women make up more than 50 percent of the population, but constitute only around 27% of legislators and 25% of Fortune 500 board seats. ( <a href="https://wallethub.com/edu/best-and-worst-states-for-women-equality/5835">https://wallethub.com/edu/best-and-worst-states-for-women-equality/5835</a> ) What can we do to put a spotlight on this issue? Progress is way too slow on equity.
Housing and reasons for tremendous increase in the Homeless
Equal Access to Quality Affordable Healthcare
Funding for Public Schools
Homelessness
Equity for women and girls.
Education
Access to appropriate women's health (abortion rights)
Improving public school education. More teachers, better trained, and freed to use techniques they are comfortable with, although not specifically "approved". No method or technique works for all children - some flexibility needs to be built in, given that improving test scores are the current measuring sticks.
Gun control
protection and expansion of voting rights for all
Work to get the Equal Rights Amendment passed.
Free lunches for all Minnesota public school students.
Economic security for women
Social and Racial Justice for all members of society
Equal education for all children
Enforcement of and full access to civil and constitutional rights, including affirmative action and expanding voting rights
Public education and free post high school education up to 2 years, either community or technical college.
Social & racial justice for all
Social and racial justice for ALL races, ALL genders, ALL economic categories, and all recognized religions (that is to exclude cults that are mentally and physically harmful to individuals and society).
Not taxing Social Security Benefits
Equity education
Protection and expansion of voting rights and reproductive freedom in health care
Free breakfast and lunch for all school children.

**Survey question 6:** Is there anything you'd like to share with the Public Policy & Environment Committee about advocacy efforts in areas of importance to our AAUW Mission and Values?

Response
It is embarrassing that MN does not have an ERA - it is critical to get this on the ballot ASAP.
Climate Change issues affect all ages, races and sexes. Without it, none of the other priorities will matter much in the long run. AAUW should play a role in publicly advocating for these policies and laws , hand-in-hand with advocating for policies helping women and girls specifically.
I like hearing about what is happening in the MN legislature. This survey was hard. All issues are important.
Thank you for all your work in providing us information on public policy!
No
Early childhood education, support for ongoing education for women and support for work & life balance. Environmental: increased emphasis/education on the specific examples such as micro-plastics, throw-away fashion clothes and the life of American garbage--perhaps this would involve education for the parents as well.

Response
See my initial comment and all of the above.
Please choose the issues we actually may be able to influence. Some of the above choices are so broad that our branch could not realistically make a real difference. Supporting our scholars is the most direct good that we can do, while encouraging progress in broader policy issues at the same time. Opposing school vouchers for private schools in Minnesota is another we may be able to directly lobby at the legislature.
The time has come!
healthy environment, green space and clean energy
Some of your proposed answers were 1. already on the books and unenforced AND 2. so glitteringly broad as to be meaningless.
No, not at this time.
Think that the focus of branch should be the scholarship program. Is there anyway to publicize to the wider community. I don't want our priorities to be diluted to the point where we don't have adequate support for scholarship program
While we are luckier in MN than in other states, we must always work to retain the rights that we have and bolster the programs for equity and equality.
You've covered them all!
Thank you, current committee members, got moving advocacy efforts front and center for our Branch.
Continue to advocate for clean energy and issues regarding climate change.
Love how you are keeping the branch informed--so great--
LONG ANSWER MAILED IN ( <a href="#">included in Appendix I</a> )

## CONCLUSION

The Public Policy & Environment Committee will prepare a resolution for the April Branch Annual Meeting stating that the branch is authorized to publicly advocate in the following policy areas:

- Social and racial justice with an emphasis on the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and a secondary emphasis on combating restrictions on reproductive health,
- Equal access to Quality Education for all with an emphasis on adequate funding for all levels of public education, and
- Economic security for all women with an emphasis on equal pay.



## APPENDICES

1. [Long Open-ended Question Response](#)
2. [Public Policy & Environment Committee report on their research into advocacy and lobbying efforts as a 501\(c\)\(3\) nonprofit organization](#)
3. [AAUW MN 2022-2024 Public Policy Priorities](#)

### APPENDIX I – LONG OPEN-END RESPONSE

Q6. Is there anything you'd like to share with the Public Policy & Environment Committee about advocacy efforts in areas of importance to our AAUW Mission and Values?

1. As an organization I see our first mission as EDUCATION - what enables/advances educational opportunities for women and girls in MN. As above I see it all beginning at the breakfast table (Q1).

Then I considered what OTHER non-profits might be best equipped to lead the charge on, say, voting rights (League of Women Voters, ACLU) or health care issues (Planned Parenthood, et al.).

2. The following is offered to the best of my knowledge and with the best of intentions:

Advocacy and lobbying can be trigger words in the life-span of a non-profit. A portion of our annual AAUW dues that goes to National AAUW is NOT deductible because it is designated for lobbying/advocacy and (501(c)(3) public charities are NOT allowed\* to to use their non-profit funds for these purposes. (\*or perhaps with highly-restricted caveats.) I don't know what the situation is with regard to State AAUW or how they are incorporated.

Two quick resources for review (there may be other resources on line):

the MN Attorney General's legal guidance for operating public charities: <https://www.ag.state.mn.us/Charity/InfoNonProfits.asp>

MN non-profit operational guidance such as this: <https://bolderadVOCacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/PRACTICAL-GUIDANCE-MN-Lobbying-2022.pdf>

I am not in a position to advise which route to take on the issues you are surveying - and I truly hope the implications are understood by the PP&E members.

I am just a member concerned that after so many years trying to get 501(c)(3) status established for AAUW St Paul we might inadvertently jeopardize it for lack of understanding MN law and the special IRS reporting requirements. (My answers above are predicated on the assumption that the law and reporting requirements are understood.)

I believe it's very important to have a straightforward, operational understanding of what we can/cannot do as an AAUW Branch -- in particular what we call what are doing -- in light of the rotating slate of volunteer committee members who may/may not understand the ramifications of using certain words to describe our activities, e.g., lobbying.

Non-profits crash and burn every day for lack of knowledge about the details of their organization's incorporation and the laws for operating as a public charity (see State Attorney General link above.) As a former ED of large and small non- profits in another state, issues such these were thoroughly drilled into me for decades. Got to know the law. Got to follow the law. Good luck!!

\*\*\*NOTE: The PP&E Committee's January 9, 2023 report to the Executive Board ([Appendix 2](#)) addresses the issues raised in this survey response.\*\*\*

## **APPENDIX 2 – PUBLIC POLICY & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE 501(C)(3) REPORT**

DATE: January 9, 2023

TO: AAUW St. Paul Executive Board

FROM: JoAnne Tomczak, Public Policy & Environment Committee Co-chair RE: Branch

Advocacy Initiative Update – Protecting our 501(c)(3) Status

Kelsey Waits, AAUW MN VP Public Policy, has provided some additional information from AAUW National and the IRS regarding the ability of our branch to be more actively involved in advocacy and lobbying without compromising our 501(c)(3) status.

The short answer continues to be that we can be political as long as we are not partisan.

Broadly speaking, being political means taking stands on issues and policies in keeping with our AAUW Mission and Values. Being partisan means supporting a specific candidate or candidates in an election at any level of government.

Following is a print version of the information from National. It can also be accessed at:

<https://ww3.aauw.org/resource/political-vs-partisan-guide/>.

There is also an excellent webinar on this topic that our committee has recommended several times. It is available on YouTube:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rI\\_PmhMcclo&list=PLTL0yfGgwGXMyK\\_sroxieiKh4StRXtW3aN&index=2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rI_PmhMcclo&list=PLTL0yfGgwGXMyK_sroxieiKh4StRXtW3aN&index=2)

Following the information from National is the transcript of an IRS podcast regarding political activity by 501(c)(3) charities. It can also be accessed at:

[https://www.stayexempt.irs.gov/se/files/downloads/PoliticalCampaigns\\_Print.pdf](https://www.stayexempt.irs.gov/se/files/downloads/PoliticalCampaigns_Print.pdf)

One additional point to reiterate is that, as individual AAUW members, we can be as political and partisan on any issue as we choose to be. It is only when we speak on behalf of AAUW in general, or our branch specifically, that we have to limit ourselves to being nonpartisan.



# Political vs. Partisan: A Guide to Your AAUW Advocacy Actions

AAUW is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating equity for women and girls. We are focused on **creating social change through public policy efforts**. Because this is sometimes confusion about AAUW's political work versus our nonpartisan work, we want to clarify the difference.

Our work has not been partisan. Values influence our work, but what is the line between political and nonpartisan work can be characterized by simply being political is a way to influence legislation and regulation through government or public affairs, while partisan activities have a firm adherence to a party, faction, or person.



For example, AAUW believes **there is a gender pay gap** and that we should do something to address it. AAUW believes **sexual assault is a big problem on campuses** that undermines women's access to equal educational opportunities. These are political positions, but we work to solve them in a nonpartisan way. We'll work with any policy makers who share our goals — even if they differ with us on another facet of the AAUW **Public Policy Priorities**.

When members take advocacy actions in the name of AAUW, those actions must be political rather than partisan. Here are some things to keep in mind when determining if your actions are political or partisan:

## DO


- Remain nonpartisan. Do not endorse candidates in partisan races.
- Work on issues guided by our values and mission, including taking positions on ballot initiatives that are in line with AAUW's Public Policy Priorities.
- Engage with candidates and elected officials from all major parties equally, making sure questions are phrased in a neutral manner.
- Encourage voter registration for everyone, regardless of their political persuasion.

## DO NOT

- Expressly advocate for or endorse any particular partisan candidate.
- Encourage voter registration for a particular party.
- Share AAUW membership lists with campaigns or political parties.
- Fundraise for partisan candidates or coordinate any election activity with a campaign or political party.

AAUW is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, and most AAUW state-level organizations and branches have a 501(c)(4) tax status. In order to protect this tax status, there are rules that must be followed. Be sure to know the tax status of your branch, and always check your local election laws before hosting or promoting an event.

For more detailed policies, information about your branch's tax status, or help determining whether your action is political or partisan, contact [VoterEd@aauw.org](mailto:VoterEd@aauw.org).

By:  E. B. Olden Type: FAQs  
Role: Policy

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AAUW is a top-rated 501(c)(3) charity.  
Donations are tax deductible.  
Tax ID#: 52-6037388



[Read Our Annual Report](#)  
[Donate Now](#)

The following is for use by assistive readers and users who prefer a text version of this course.

## **Political Campaigns and Charities: The Ban on Political Campaign Intervention Course**

### **Page 1 – Welcome**

**Voice 1:** Welcome to *Political Campaigns and Charities: The Ban on Political Campaign Intervention*. This program is brought to you by IRS Exempt Organizations.

**Voice 2:** The Exempt Organizations division of the Internal Revenue Service, in keeping with its mission to help taxpayers understand and comply with the tax law, is presenting this podcast to help the directors, officers and leaders of our nation's charities, including churches, understand the rules on participating in a political campaign.

### **Page 2 – The Law**

**Voice 2:** The law says that organizations exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, which include charities and churches, may not participate or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.

**Voice 1:** We will explain this ban on political campaign intervention and look at how it applies to section 501(c)(3) organizations that conduct voter education activities, advocate public policy issues, or play host to candidates. Our discussion will also highlight those areas where these organizations can participate in the electoral process.

### **Page 3 – Definitions**

**Voice 2:** For the sake of brevity we will use the word "charity" in place of, "section 501(c)(3) organization" and the word "charities" to refer to all section 501(c)(3) organizations.

Likewise, we will use the term "political campaign intervention" in place of the phrase, "participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office."

Finally, when we say "candidate for public office," we are referring to any candidate in an election for a national, state or local public office.

Okay, let's begin.

### **Page 4 – Prohibited Campaign Intervention**

**Voice 1:** First, let's make sure we understand the basic rules. A charity engages in political campaign intervention when it:

- Makes or solicits contributions to or for candidates or political organizations
- Endorses a candidate or rates the candidates (no matter how objective such rating may be)
- Publishes or distributes partisan campaign literature or written statements
- Has its representatives speak out about a candidate
- Uses its resources to influence an election

All of these activities are prohibited.

## **Page 5 – Nonpartisan Activities = Permissible**

**Voice 2:** Charities are, however, allowed to conduct nonpartisan activities that educate the public and help them participate in the electoral process. A charity furthers a valid educational purpose when it offers instruction. Such instruction can take various forms, including voter education guides, voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives and candidate forums.

**Voice 1:** But take heed! An educational activity can cross over into political campaign intervention, depending on the context of how it is used!

## **Page 6 – Acts of Possible Political Campaign Intervention**

**Voice 1:** For example, charities would violate the ban on political campaign intervention by issuing a statement in support of, or opposition to, a candidate. Even a statement that does not explicitly urge its audience to vote a certain way might implicitly support or oppose a candidate if:

- The statement mentions a candidate for public office
- It expresses approval or disapproval of a candidate's positions or actions
- It is published during a political campaign
- It mentions voting or the election
- It raises an issue on which the candidates disagree

## **Page 7 – Mitigating Factors**

**Voice 2:** Then again, even with these elements present, a statement could possibly be permissible if:

- It is part of an ongoing series of communications on the same issue that are made irrespective of the timing of any election
- It is related to an event other than the election, such as a scheduled vote on specific legislation

As you can see, the answer to the question whether a statement is in support of, or in opposition to, a candidate depends on the circumstances. We will examine some of those circumstances as we proceed.

## **Page 8 – Websites**

**Voice 1:** But first, a word of caution on the use of websites to convey political statements. As the web becomes a pervasive and indeed, predominant means of communication, it is increasingly serving as the electioneer's medium of choice. Beware! Statements posted on a website are treated no differently from statements appearing in print or over the television, and a charity that posts a statement on its website that favors or opposes a candidate for public office



is at as much risk of political campaign intervention as if it had communicated in print or made oral remarks. It may be at risk, as well, if it posts links to other websites that advocate for or against a candidate.

However, links to the official campaign websites of the candidates are acceptable if:

- There is a link to every candidate's official website
- The links are presented in an educational context and are for informational purposes only
- The links are presented in a consistent, unbiased manner

*For example*, if a charity posts an unbiased, nonpartisan voters' guide on its website, it may include a link to the official campaign website of each candidate covered in the guide accompanied by the text, "For more information on Candidate [X], you may consult [URL]."

## Page 9 – Voter Education

**Voice 2:** Now let's look at some of the ways in which charities engage in voter education and what is and is not acceptable.

One way charities engage in voter education is by helping people register to vote; a second is to help them participate in an election. A charity may conduct a voter registration or a get-out-the- vote drive as long as it does so in an unbiased manner. To minimize the chance for bias, the charity and the people conducting the activities should avoid mentioning the candidates or political parties in written or spoken communications about the activity, including publicity, posters, placards, registration materials and handouts.

**Voice 1:** Any communication should do no more than urge people to register and vote or describe the hours and places of registration and voting. And, any services offered in connection with the activity – voter registration forms, transportation to the polling place – should be offered to all, regardless of their political persuasion.

## Page 10 – Voter Guides

**Voice 2:** Publishing voter guides is another way that charities can engage and educate the electorate. Voter guides inform the public of the attitudes or actions of their elected representatives or of the candidates for a public office. Such guides can take different forms. Some are compilations of the voting records of political incumbents, including incumbents standing for reelection. Others document the candidates' responses to questions posed by the charity.

**Voice 1:** Whatever its form, a voter guide must cover a broad range of issues and must refrain from judging the candidates or their positions.

## Page 11 – Voting Records

**Voice 2:** Voting records are published to report the activities of a body of lawmakers, not to comment on an election campaign. Charities that publish voting records often do so to lobby for a cause.

**Voice 1:** But, regardless of the charity's motive, voting records can be considered political campaign intervention if they identify any incumbent as a candidate in a campaign or compare an incumbent's positions with those of other candidates or the charity. This is especially so if the

voting records are published simultaneously with a political campaign or aimed at areas where campaigns are occurring.

**Voice 2:** For instance, a charity that publishes an annual compilation of the voting records of members of Congress on major legislative issues that cover a wide range of subjects is not engaged in political campaign intervention if the publication contains no editorial opinion and its contents and structure do not imply approval or disapproval of any member or his or her voting record.

**Voice 1:** On the other hand, an organization that publishes a compilation of incumbents' voting records on *selective* issues and distributes it widely during an election campaign may have engaged in political campaign intervention, even if the guide contains no statements that support or oppose any candidate.

## Page 12 – Candidate Questionnaires

**Voice 2:** Another type of voter guide, the candidate questionnaire, can be a good tool for collecting information about candidates and the issues and disseminating the information to the public.

**Voice 1:** But, it can also be a means to intervene in a political campaign.

**Voice 2:** To avert the charge of political campaign intervention, a charity should take care in how it phrases the questions so as not to suggest a preferred answer. It should:

- Send the questionnaire to *all* candidates for a particular office
- Publish all the responses it receives without substantive editing
- Avoid comparing those responses to its own positions

## Page 13 – Issue Advocacy

**Voice 1:** As we have seen, a charity may not advocate for or against a candidate for public office.

**Voice 2:** On the other hand, it may advocate for or against a particular issue as long as that advocacy furthers its mission. Charities may continue to advocate issues during a political campaign, but must not use advocacy as an excuse for, or to double as, political campaign intervention.

**Voice 1:** A charity risks intervening in a political campaign when its message invites the recipient to compare a candidate's position on an issue with the organization's own views. The message need not expressly urge a vote for or against a candidate, nor need it even mention a candidate by name. Candidates can be conjured up by substituting party labels or code words for names like, "conservative," "liberal," "pro-life," "pro-choice" or when the message concerns an issue that figures prominently in the campaign and on which the candidates hold opposing views.

Imagine, for instance, two candidates running for the state senate in an urban district. One candidate favors a controversial mass-transit project, and the other opposes it. A local charity dedicated to community development and an advocate for mass-transit would be engaging in political campaign intervention if its director were to give a public address shortly before the election and tell the audience:

*For those of you who care about quality of life in our district and its growing traffic congestion, there is a very important choice coming up next month. We need new mass transit. You have the power to relieve the congestion and improve your quality of life.*

*Use that power when you go to the polls and cast your vote for state senator.*

**Voice 2:** A charity can continue advocating for its issues during an election, but it should avoid mentioning voting or an election and it should not identify whether candidates agree with its position. If the charity has a pattern of substantially similar advocacy during non-election periods, this is another helpful factor that indicates it is not attempting to intervene in any particular election.

## **Page 14 – Non-candidate Appearances**

**Voice 2:** Now let's talk about candidate appearances at charity functions. Candidates often attend or are invited to speak at charity ceremonies or functions either in the role of candidate or in some other role like a subject matter expert, public figure or celebrity, for example.

When a candidate appears in a role other than that of candidate or to speak on a topic other than the election, the host charity should make certain that:

- It maintains a nonpartisan atmosphere at the event
- None of its representatives mentions the campaign or the invitee's candidacy
- No campaign activity occurs during the candidate's appearance

Furthermore, any announcement concerning the candidate's appearance (such as an invitation) should clearly indicate the capacity in which the candidate is to appear and avoid mention of his or her candidacy.

**Voice 1:** The host charity should inform the invitees that the events are not campaign events and obtain their commitment to appear in their non-candidate capacity and not mention the election or their candidacy.

## **Page 15 – Candidate Appearances**

**Voice 1:** A charity that invites one candidate to speak in the role of candidate is engaging in political campaign intervention unless it gives all qualified candidates an equal opportunity to speak. If the charity invites one candidate to speak at its popular annual banquet and invites the opposing candidate to speak at a sparsely attended general meeting, it has not given the candidates an equal opportunity. The speaking invitations and events must be substantially similar.

Plus, the charity must make it clear that it neither supports nor opposes the invitee's candidacy. Needless to say, no political fundraising should be allowed at the event.

## **Page 16 – Candidate Forums**

**Voice 2:** One solution is to have all the candidates appear together on the same stage and answer questions posed by a moderator or by members of the audience. A candidate forum gives its audience a unique opportunity to evaluate and compare the candidates.

**Voice 1:** But the host charity must see to it that the candidates are treated fairly and impartially.

**Voice 2:** A candidate forum is more likely to be fair and impartial if:

- All qualified candidates for a given office are invited to the forum
- The questions are prepared and presented by an independent nonpartisan panel
- The discussion covers a broad range of issues of interest to the public
- Each candidate is given an equal opportunity to speak
- The moderator and the forum's sponsors refrain from commenting on the questions, the answers or the candidates

## Page 17 – Electioneering by Charity Officials

**Voice 1:** While a charity is forbidden to participate or intervene in a political campaign, directors, officers or other charity officials are not under the same restriction as long as they act in a private, not an official capacity. So as to leave no doubt, officials should make it clear that they are acting or speaking for themselves alone and not for the charity. Additionally, officials may not use the charity's financial resources, facilities or personnel in their efforts to support or oppose a candidate.

**Voice 2:** Officials acting in a private capacity may mention their association or position with the charity for the purpose of identifying themselves, but they should disclaim any endorsement of their actions by the charity. On printed matter, the following language would serve as a sufficient disclaimer:

*“Organization shown for identification purposes only; no endorsement by the organization is implied.”*

**Voice 1:** In contrast, officials are not acting in a private capacity when they endorse a candidate at charity functions or through the charity's official publications. Then their actions are considered to be the actions of the charity, and the charity itself is considered to have engaged in political campaign intervention.

## Page 18 – Consequences of Intervention

**Voice 2:** What happens if the IRS finds a charity engaged in prohibited campaign activity?

**Voice 1:** The charity could lose its tax-exempt status, and it could be subject to an excise tax on the amount of money spent on that activity.

Since 2004, the IRS has conducted limited scope examinations of allegations of political campaign activity by section 501(c)(3) organizations. While less than half of the allegations received resulted in an examination, the IRS found political campaign intervention in over two-thirds of the organizations that were selected for examination.

**Voice 2:** As we are primarily interested in educating organizations and promoting compliance, in most of these cases, we alerted the organization to the violation and strongly cautioned them not to repeat the activity.

**Voice 1:** Because the tax law forbids charities to participate or intervene in any political campaign for or against any candidate for public office, the IRS could revoke the exempt status of a charity that engages in political campaign intervention. We have proposed revocation in a few egregious cases.

## Page 19 – IRS Resources

**Voice 2:** To help charities, the media and the public understand the political campaign intervention rules, the IRS publishes guidance and maintains a comprehensive web page. Among other helpful tools at [www.irs.gov/eo](http://www.irs.gov/eo), you will find:

- IRS Revenue Ruling 2007-41, which outlines a number of scenarios to help charities and churches understand the ban on political campaign activity and actions that may arise
- Publication 1828, *Tax Guide for Churches and Religious Organizations*, which discusses the political campaign prohibition as it applies to churches
- *EO Update*, a free an on-line newsletter

APPENDIX 3 - AAUW MN 2022-2024 PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES



EQUALITY FOR ALL

Priority # 1.  
Economic Security for All Women

- Equity in the workplace
- Equal Pay
- Enforcement of anti-discrimination statutes
- Security in retirement
- Access to job training for career development
- Work-life balance, including access to quality affordable childcare and paid sick and care-giving leave

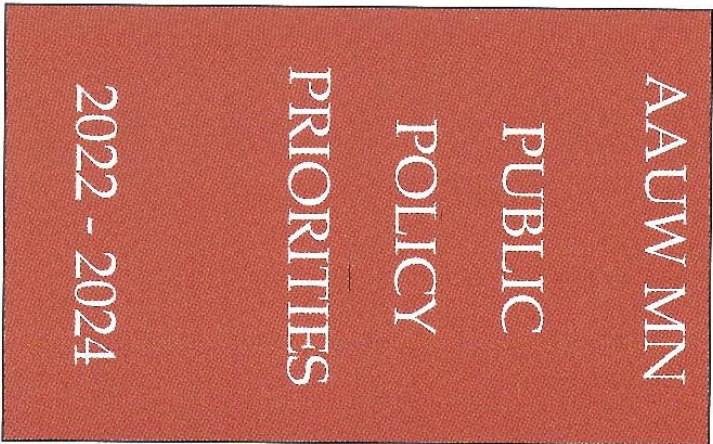
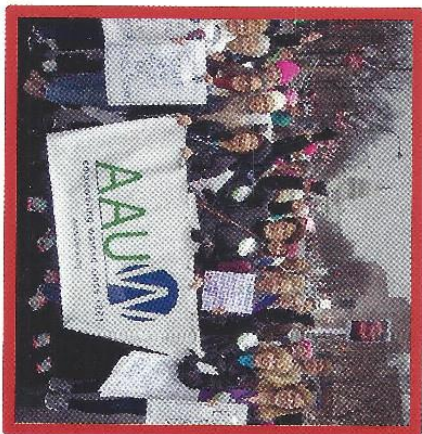
AAUW - leading the fight for fair pay and economic opportunity for women since 1881.

WE ARE AAUW MN

About AAUW MN Public Policy Priorities

AAUW MN Public Policy Program establishes policy directives that will guide members, inform AAUW MN members to its Legislative agenda, while serving the mission of AAUW - to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy.

In accordance with AAUW MN Standing Rules V. Officers/Chairs; B. Specific Duties; Sec.6h, AAUW MN Public Policy Priorities are presented to member delegates for approval on even numbered years, during the AAUW MN State Annual meeting.







**Priority # 2**  
**Equal Access to Quality Public Education for All Students**

- Vigorous enforcement of Title IX
- Adequate and equitable funding at all educational levels, including pre-school and post-secondary
- Instruction in STEM fields
- Opposition to the use of public funds for schools that do not meet public school civil rights and accountability standards

*"AAUW's Mission – to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy."*

**AAUW MN STRATEGIC PLAN =  
 AAUW MN PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES**

- Education & Training
- Economic Security
- Leadership
- Governance & Sustainability

**Goal: Education**

Champion equal access to all levels and fields of education \* Ensure education at every level is free from gender discrimination

**Goal: Economic Security**

Achieve pay equity by 2030 \* Create inclusive career pathways for women, free of systemic biases, to attain economic security \* Deepen women's retirement security and quality of life

**Goal: Leadership**

Bolster the participation of girls and women in leadership roles throughout their lives \* Advance the number of women in leadership, particularly in education and non-profit organizations.

**Goal: Governance & Sustainability**

Implement best practices in governance, inclusion, organizational functioning



**RIGHTS - FAIRNESS - FREEDOM -POWER**

**Priority # 3**

**Social and Racial Justice for All Members of Society**

- Self-determination in reproductive health
- Equal access to quality affordable health care
- Freedom from violence in all its forms and wherever it occurs, including racially-motivated violence
- Guarantee of civil and constitutional rights for all
- Protection and expansion of voting rights

**For additional information contact:**

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