



# U P D A T E S

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Issue 04

## President’s Message

Cathleen Boivin, Co-President

**A**s we enter the last month of 2023, multi-media publishes lists: what major events occurred in the past twelve months, what notable people have passed away, what is now passé, etc. It’s a retrospective of what is now history and an opportunity to reflect on where we are. We can all agree that the past few years of the ongoing pandemic have hit all of us hard. Our economic security has been shaken and the calamitous events in other parts of the world are a major concern as we move into 2024. I think we can agree that we cannot roll back the last four years and that there is, therefore, a “new normal.”



The question is: what will that look like and how can we make our society better and, by that, I mean more equitable? We just held an election which will be pivotal in determining how Virginia governs itself in the years ahead. Our November speaker, Delegate Kathy Tran, addressed us about some of these issues. Of course, it is to be hoped that representatives from both parties can effect social change and equity in a positive way.

Delegate Tran spoke about changes in health coverage. National COVID funds are coming to an end. We need to appropriate more funds to increase Medicaid funds for children, low-income individuals, and immigrants. New bills are in the works to provide better emergency medical care, improvements to hospital structures, and modernization especially in rural areas.

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AAUW National Website: <https://www.aauw.org/>  
AAUW-VA Website: <https://aauw-va.aauw.net/>

Springfield-Annandale Website: <https://sprann-va.aauw.net/>  
Like us on Facebook. Search *Springfield-Annandale AAUW*

### AAUW Mission Statement

*To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy. Vision: Equity for all. Values: Non-partisan. Fact based.*

### AAUW Diversity Statement

*In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks an inclusive membership, workforce, leadership team, and board of directors. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, geographical location, national origin, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status.*

## President's Message *continued from page 1*

Schools are also in need of modernization. Since COVID, the teacher-student ratio has changed in many districts, some students still lag due to the pandemic, and we need trained staff like reading specialists.

There is an ongoing effort to address the issue of paid family leave in Virginia. It is currently voluntary with businesses deciding whether to give paid leave. Delegates are working on legislation to provide more required paid leave which would enable more women to be able to work and still take care of their children, families, and the elderly.

As you know, political division is difficult when the majorities are so slim and the governor is of a different party than the house majority. Redistricting has occurred in many areas and Delegate Tran has a new district this year. She has just been elected to her 4th term and has been named Democratic Caucus Chair. There are only 61 repeating delegates this year. Happily, the new members are very diverse with more women, minorities, LGBTQ, and others included in our state government.

I'm very proud of how many members of our branch and others hand wrote 3,000 post cards encouraging people to vote. Read the public policy information passed on to you via emails or in *UPDATES*. The



information contains valuable ways in which our AAUW members can be well informed about issues and offers ways to participate. After a hiatus of several years due to COVID, our Lobby Corps is back. If you cannot lobby in person, you can send letters to our lawmakers highlighting support of bills that will, hopefully, work towards inclusion and equity.

Every time we get information on Equal Pay Days, it underlines the fact that women still have a long way to go to achieve financial equity with men. I hope that part of our "new normal" will be to narrow that gap as well as give women access to paid leave to care for their families.

## AAUW Bylaws

Judy Baldwin

Our bylaws are written in two forms. One is the set our Branch has created that include how many meetings, what officers, and what a quorum is. The other is mandated by National AAUW and must be part of each Branch's bylaws. The bylaws were voted on at the last national convention and we have adjusted our bylaws to accommodate the changes. The one that directly affects us is the change from 60 days to 30 days of the comment period when AAUW announces a change in national dues.

### Section 4. Dues of Members.

- a. **Amount.** The annual dues and member benefits for any category of member shall be established by a two-thirds vote of the AAUW Board of Directors. Members shall be notified at least **thirty (30) days** in advance of the intent to consider a change in the dues, the proposed amount, and the rationale for the change.

Refer to the Branch Directory for the complete listing of the Bylaws.

## November Branch Program Meeting

Irene McGhee Co-Vice President for Programs

Delegate Kathy Tran was the featured speaker at the Branch Meeting on November 18, at Pohick Regional Library in Burke.

Delegate Tran was excellent. She talked about our ability to influence the agenda for the next session by writing to our District representatives and telling them what are the issues that we would like addressed. The deadline for their considerations was November 30. The Delegates then start working on setting forth proposals, bills, and committee recommendations to be addressed in the coming session.

Delegate Tran talked about funding for education and what it is used for, namely teachers and salaries, sometimes facilities. Rural areas cannot make matching funds for such due to numbers. Delegate Tran also wants to codify provisions for abortion so that there is a clear understanding of what is expected. Other health insurance is now available through the state which can be beneficial to a lot of people. Child care and paid family leave are also a priority.

She talked about funding for Metro by the State which is now under-performing due to Covid and employees working from home. And she talked about surplus money in the State and the forthcoming budget. All was interesting, sometimes a lot more complex than we can imagine. Plus, the fact that the Democratic Senate and House Majority still must deal with a Republican Governor. One more thing, another new caveat - roughly one third of the elected Delegates are new, and primarily minorities. So, the next session will be very interesting.



Irene McGhee and Del Kath Tran

## Branch Program Meeting – Holiday Tea – December 6

Irene McGhee, Amy Crolius, Co-Vice Presidents for Programs

Our December holidays meeting is at Tea with Mrs. B ([www.teawithmrsb.com/](http://www.teawithmrsb.com/)), 136 West Jefferson Street, Falls Church. **December 6**, 1:00 – 3:00 P.M. Sweets, savories, and teas will be served. The RSVP date has passed.

## Branch Program Meeting – Financial Security – January 18

Irene McGhee, Amy Crolius, Co-Vice Presidents for Programs

In compliance with our mission objective that we help women achieve financial security, we present, “What every woman should know.” Our speakers are Michele Massey of Merrill Lynch, and Sylvia Auton, Author of “Grandma Sylvia’s Guide to the Stock Market.” Both have information that will educate and energize Branch members in the area of financial security. Attend the Zoom meeting **January 18**, 7:00 P.M. Watch your email for the Zoom link.

## Public Policy

Susan Burk, Public Policy Chair

As a result of the recent election in Virginia and several retirements, the General Assembly (GA) will have a lot of new faces, and some old faces in new positions. Consider reaching out to your recently elected or re-elected state delegate and senator to congratulate them on their election and let them know about AAUW-VA's legislative priorities in the coming GA Session including, but not limited to, Paid Family and Medical Leave, Paid Sick Days, strong support for our public schools and teachers, access to women's health care and reproductive rights, and full access for all eligible Virginians to the ballot box.

Remember, your elected officials work for you! It can be easy to set up a Zoom or a live meeting for Branch members or to make an appointment for a few members to meet with them and discuss our policy agenda. Most of their candidate websites include contact information. AAUW website has great resources to help you to engage with elected officials: <https://www.aauw.org/resources/policy/advocacy-toolkit/meeting-elected-officials/>

### League of Women Voters of VA (LWVVA) Pre-Session Legislative Roundtable.

LWVVA will have its Legislative Pre-session on **December 6**, from 9:00 A.M. – 2:30 P.M. It is a free, virtual event. This will be a chance to hear from the League's Advocacy Team, along with many advocacy partners, including AAUW-VA, about their legislative priorities.

Guests Include:

- Susan Beals, Commissioner, Virginia Department of Elections
- Stephen E. Cummings, Secretary of Finance, Commonwealth of Virginia
- Brian Koziol, Executive Director Virginia Housing Alliance
- Kathy Harkey, Executive Director, Virginia Alliance on Mental Illness
- Jamie Lockhart, Executive Director, Planned Parenthood Advocates of Virginia, Planned Parenthood Virginia PAC
- Helena Burger and Susan Lydick, Co-Chairs RevUP Virginia
- Kim Bobo, Executive Director, Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy
- More than 20 partners presenting during the session.

Tickets for Pre Session are available now at Eventbrite. <https://LWVVA2023PreSession.eventbrite.com>

### AAUW-VA Public Policy Meeting.

Our next scheduled Virginia Public Policy meeting is **January 4**, at 6:00 PM on Zoom. We will discuss Legislative Priorities and Lobby Day. Active planning has begun for the AAUW Women Legislators Reception on **January 30**, and our State Lobby Day on **January 31**. AAUW-VA has reserved a block of rooms at the Hampton Inn in Richmond for the night of January 30. You can make reservations here: <https://group.hamptoninn.com/xfvxmr>.

In December, AAUW-VA's Co-Vice Presidents for Public Policy will be canvassing Branches to find out who plans to attend State Lobby Day in January, and which State Delegate and State Senator represents you. If they have that information, they will try to assign you to visit your own lawmakers. And there will be a second virtual Lobby Day on **February 28**. This is a great opportunity for non-partisan activism. Let me know if you are interested in attending the reception and/or Lobby Day. Carpooling with members of our or other branches may be possible.

## More from our AAUW-VA Co-VPs for Public Policy.

We were excited by some legislation introduced in Congress by Virginia Representative Bobby Scott, the America's College Promise Act of 2023. The legislation would create a joint state-federal partnership to provide free community college tuition. We sent Representative Scott a letter of support, (attached at the end of this newsletter). We also sent a letter to the editor of the *Virginia Pilot* which was published.

[http://digitaledition.pilotonline.com/infinity/article\\_share.aspx?guid=ab30691c-d479-46cf-9aa3-5fac64eba79f](http://digitaledition.pilotonline.com/infinity/article_share.aspx?guid=ab30691c-d479-46cf-9aa3-5fac64eba79f)

## It's Math, Not Myth!

By the time you read this, Native Women's Equal Pay Day, November 30, will be behind us. The pay gap tends to be larger for women of color and in some cases the gap appears to be widening. Compared to white, non-Hispanic men, Native women make 59 cents on the dollar. The Equal Pay Day Calendar now encompasses a broader cross-section of women, including those who work part time or seasonally, to represent a more accurate picture of how the gender pay gap impacts diverse communities. The COVID-19 pandemic pushed many women, especially women of color, into part-time or seasonal work, or out of the workforce all together. Because of this, past methods of calculating the wage gap fell short of accurately capturing the full picture. With the new inclusive methodology, we can advocate on behalf of all women in the workforce. <https://www.aauw.org/resources/article/equal-pay-day-calendar/>

## From Planned Parenthood Advocates of Virginia.

Want to hear more about what happened in the November 2023 election? Make sure you sign up for our Post-Election Update on the evening of **January 15**, where our team will walk you through the impacts of this key election on the upcoming legislative session and beyond.

## From Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy.

The General Assembly will be here before you know it! Now would be a great time to register for Day for All People, our annual advocacy day that lifts concerns of "all people" (especially those who have low-incomes and are marginalized) to legislators.

Here are the details:

**Date:** Wednesday, **January 17**

**Time:** 8:30 A.M. to 3:15 P.M.

**Place:** St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 815 E Grace St, Richmond, VA (1 block from the General Assembly)

**Fee:** \$30 early bird rate (\$40 after January 1)

**Buses:** Buses will be available for free from northern Virginia and Tidewater

The day is energizing, impactful and a bit long for those who must get up early to get to Richmond. We will have hot donuts to greet you, a keynote by Reggie Gordan, President and CEO of the Richmond Memorial Health Foundation and former head of the Richmond Office of Community Wealth Building, visits set up with legislators (or aides), workshops and denominational/faith gatherings.

## Evening Book Group – Virtual

The Evening Book Group will meet via Zoom Thursday, **December 7**, 7:00 P.M. The topic book is *The Things We Cannot Say*, by Kelly Rimmer. Ann Sauberman is the scheduled reviewer.

The group will meet virtually **January 4** for a discussion of *The Lost Girls of Willowbrook*, by Ellen Marie Wiseman. Judy Titterton is the scheduled reviewer. Contact Debbie Gilligan for more information.

## Morning Book Group – Live

The Morning Book Group will meet live **December 14**, 10:00 A.M., for a discussion of *The Violin Conspiracy*, by Brendan Slocumb. Karen Flann will lead the review and Helen Cassidy will host.

The group will meet **January 11**, and review *The Phantom Tollbooth*, by Norton Juster. Mary Helmantoler will lead the review and host the meeting. Contact Jo Domingues for more information.

## Movies at Midweek

Bev Wise and Helen Cassidy, Movie Mavens

Movies at Midweek will not meet in December. The next meeting will be **January 17**. Watch your email on the Friday preceding for the movie selection.

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## December Events 2023

**December 3** is the First Sunday of Advent, marking the beginning of the Advent season.

**December 6** is Saint Nicholas Day. The patron saint of children is the model for Santa Claus and gift-giving.

**December 7** marks the beginning of Hanukkah this year, the eight-day Jewish festival of lights.

**December 8** is Bodhi Day in the Buddhist calendar, celebrating Buddha's enlightenment; it's celebrated in a way that's similar to how Christians celebrate Christmas to honor Jesus Christ.

**December 13** is St. Lucia's Day, which has long been associated with festivals of light. Before the Gregorian calendar reform in 1752, her feast day occurred on the shortest day of the year (hence the saying "Lucy light, Lucy light, shortest day and longest night").

**December 21** is the Winter Solstice—the astronomical day when the Earth is farthest away from the Sun. Starting in ancient times, people celebrated the rebirth of the Sun event through Yule.

**December 25** is Christmas Day, a Christian holiday commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ.

**December 26** is Boxing Day (Canada, UK) and the first day of Kwanzaa.

On the last evening of the year, **December 31**, kiss the person you hope to keep kissing!





## CALENDAR

December 6, 1:00 P.M.	Branch Program – Holiday Tea With Mrs. B	<a href="#">page 3</a>
December 6	LWVVA Legislative Pre-Session	<a href="#">page 4</a>
December 7, 7:00 P.M.	Evening Book Group Meeting – Virtual	<a href="#">page 6</a>
December 14, 10:00 A.M.	Morning Book Group Meeting – Live	<a href="#">page 6</a>
December 27	January newsletter articles due to Judy Titterton	
January 4, 7:00 P.M.	Evening Book Group Meeting – Virtual	<a href="#">page 6</a>
January 4	Public Policy Zoom	<a href="#">page 5</a>
January 11, 10:00 A.M.	Morning Book Group Meeting – Live	<a href="#">page 6</a>
January 15	Planned Parenthood Post Election Update	<a href="#">page 5</a>
January 17	Movies at Midweek	<a href="#">page 6</a>
January 17	Day for All People	<a href="#">page 5</a>
January 18, 7:00 P.M.	Branch Program – Financial Security – Virtual	<a href="#">page 3</a>
January 30	Women Legislators Reception	<a href="#">page 4</a>
January 31	State Lobby Day	<a href="#">page 4</a>

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**AAUW** published the groundbreaking *Campus 1970: Where Do Women Stand?* report, which documented widespread sexual discrimination against women at all levels of education. Our members forged new pathways in leadership. **AAUW** member Rep. Shirley Chisholm (D-NY) was the first Black woman elected to the U.S. Congress, the first Black American to run for president and the first woman to run for presidential nomination from a major political party. **AAUW** member Patricia Roberts Harris was the first Black woman appointed to the U.S. Cabinet, serving as U.S. Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. She was also the first Black woman to become a U.S. Ambassador. **AAUW** member Juanita Kreps was appointed as the first woman U.S. Secretary of Commerce.

In 1971, **AAUW** members passed resolutions supporting the legalization of abortion and the Equal Rights Amendment. **AAUW** Action Fund created the Capitol Hill Lobby Corps to monitor congressional hearings and lobby for bills that match **AAUW**'s legislative program in 1975. And in 1977, around 115 **AAUW** members representing 37 states served as delegates at the landmark National Women's Conference in Houston along with Gloria Steinem, Coretta Scott King, Maya Angelou, Billie Jean King and other activists. The first women's conference supported by Congress, this gathering was conceived by a presidential commission exploring barriers "that [prevented] women from participating fully and equally in all aspects of life." ([www.aauw.org/about/history/](http://www.aauw.org/about/history/))

Newsletter articles for January **UPDATES** are due **December 27**.

— Judy Titterton, Editor



AAUWVApolicy@gmail.com  
October 23, 2023

The Honorable Bobby Scott  
2328 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

By email

Dear Congressman Scott:

On behalf of AAUW of Virginia and its members, many of whom are your constituents, we would like to thank you for introducing *The America's College Promise Act of 2023*. As a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization founded to provide access to higher education for women we are always heartened by proposed legislation that increases college access and reduces cost.

The proposed legislation would particularly benefit women, who face a disproportionate burden from the rising cost of education. The price tag of a college education has more than doubled over the past generation while household incomes have barely budged. Women hold almost 2/3 of the country's \$1.54-trillion student debt: [\\$929 billion](#). Women earning a bachelor's degree graduate owing an average of \$2,700 more than their male peers. Student debt is the [second-highest source](#) of household debt after housing.

Women take about two years longer than men to repay student loans. From the moment women graduate from college, most face a [gender pay gap](#) — which compounds as they age. This makes it even harder to pay off their larger share of student debt. As a result, women often put off [saving for retirement](#), buying a home or starting a business.

For the first time in five years, tuition at Virginia's 23 community colleges was raised this fall, which will add to these burdens for students in the Commonwealth and could deny access for many. The 3% increase in tuition for the 2023-24 academic year translates into an extra \$4.61 per credit hour. Incoming students will pay \$2,379 for a typical 15 credit-hour semester. The College Promise Act's proposals for a state-federal partnership to waive tuition and fees for community college students would be an extraordinary step towards economic equity for all.



The Honorable Bobby Scott

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Thank you, again, for focusing on this important issue.

Sincerely,  
AAUW of Virginia

Lane Stone, President  
Sarita Gregory, Administrator  
Janine Greenwood, Co-VP Public Policy  
Denise M. Murden, Co-VP Public Policy