

AAUW NEWS OF NOTE

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Mission Statement: AAUW advances equity for all women and girls through advocacy, education, and research.
Vision Statement: AAUW will be a powerful advocate and visible leader in equity and education through research, philanthropy, and measurable change in critical areas impacting the lives of women and girls.

HINGHAM AREA BRANCH JANUARY 2010

CALENDAR

January 5, Tuesday	Girls Game Night 7:00 PM Home of Hollie Bagley RSVP to Hollie
January 6, Wednesday	Yarn Club 7:00 PM Home of Lynn Howard RSVP to Lynn
January 7, Thursday	Adventures in Dining 6:30 PM Jasper White's, Derby Street Shoppes, Hingham RSVP to Hollie
January 12, Tuesday	Branch Meeting 6:30PM Casual Supper & Book Discussion Allerton House, 15 Condito Road, Hingham RSVP Susan Mahan
January 14, Thursday	Writing Group 7:30 PM Brewed Awakening, Hingham
January 26, Tuesday	Board Meeting 7:00 PM Home of Ginny Giordano

BRANCH MEETING - Casual Winter Supper and Book Discussion

The annual soup and salad supper will take place on January 12, 2010, at 6:30 PM, and will again be held at the Allerton House in Hingham. A discussion of the book Tethered by Amy MacKinnon will follow. There is still plenty of time to read the book before the discussion. There are copies at the library, and it's also available in paperback at the major booksellers. We hope you'll come for what should prove to be a fascinating evening, since we'll have the author with us.

We need volunteers to bring breads, salads, and desserts. Please RSVP your attendance and what food you can bring to Social Committee member Susan Mahan at poetessusan@att.net or 781-335-6912. Don't forget to bring your own place setting! I hope to see you!
RSVP to Social Chair Susan Mahan.

Susan Mahan, Social Committee

Directions to Allerton House: 15 Condito Road, Hingham, MA 02043

From Route 3 South:

Take Route 3 South to Exit 14 (Route 228). At the end of the ramp, turn left and follow Route 228

approximately 4 miles to a red blinking light. Continue straight through the light and follow Central Street through the yellow blinking light in Hingham Square. Directly after the yellow blinking light, turn left onto North Street, and then right at the Lincoln Statue onto Lincoln Street. Follow Lincoln Street to intersection of Route 3A and bear right onto Downer Avenue. Take the first left onto Condito Road. Allerton House at Harbor Park is directly behind Harbor House Rehabilitation and Nursing Center.

From Route 3 North:

Take Route 3 North to Exit 14 (Route 228). At the end of the ramp, turn right. Proceed on Route 228 as instructed above.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope you all had a happy and healthy holiday season. We are beginning our 2010 year with our Annual Book Discussion/Soup and Salad meeting. It is being held at Allerton House in Hingham on January 12th at 6:30 PM. We are pleased to have Amy MacKinnon, the author of Tethered, which we will be discussing, as our guest. It should be an exciting evening. See you at Allerton House. Sheila

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Our Holiday Social brought us another new member:

Nancy P O'Donnell

Remember, if you bring a guest to a meeting and she joins that evening, there is a great saving. The regular membership price is reduced from \$75 to \$50.50. So, if you have friends interested in joining our group, bring them along to a meeting.

We will continue the *Bring One, Buy Two Books* tradition this January 12th at the Supper and Book Discussion Meeting. Bring a lightly used book that we can sell, and while you are at it maybe you will discover a few treasures to buy and add to your library. All in a good cause!

PAMELA J. LINCOLN RECOGNITION AWARD

The Pamela J. Lincoln Recognition Award is a prime example of the AAUW Mission in action. What better way to promote equity, than to encourage and help a deserving young woman further her education? In these harsh economic times every little bit helps, so we urge our members to consider nominating a worthy candidate. We are looking for a young (or not so young) woman of outstanding academic achievement and community service, who is attending or plans to attend college.

If you have such a candidate in mind please contact Beatrice Kelly at 781-925-3310, or johnjackkelly@yahoo.com for an application. Applications are due on March 1, 2010.

This Award is presented annually at the Spring Meeting of the Hingham Branch of the AAUW.

WRITING GROUP

The next meeting of the Writing Group will be held on Thursday, January 14th at 7.30 PM at Brewed Awakening in Hingham.

Four of our members - Kay Campbell, Beatrice Kelly, Susan Mahan and Patricia McKay, braved our shyness and read our poetry at *Borders Bard Night* at Borders in Braintree on December 12th.

Susan Mahan's poem *Castle Island*, is posted on the Boston Foundation Website.

PUBLIC POLICY

New Rules for Jobless Benefits Help Women: The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, signed into law by President Obama in February, provides \$7 billion to aid states in extending unemployment insurance benefits to workers who have fallen through the cracks in the system. However, the majority of workers who have been forced to leave a job due to work-family conflicts, spouse relocation, or domestic violence are women, who remain ineligible for unemployment benefits in the majority of states, Women's eNews reported. By August, about half of states passed reforms to change this, but the National Employment Law Project estimates that an additional 500,000 workers per year could obtain unemployment benefits if all reforms in the federal act were ratified.

Pell Demand Increases in Economic Downturn: According to Inside Higher Ed, the Obama administration confirmed that an increase in the number of eligible students applying for Pell Grants and an increased allowable grant amount will require an additional \$18 billion in funding over the next three years. The government's primary need-based student aid program faces a shortfall due in large part to a down economy, which leads to an increase in the number of students returning to college and a worsening financial situation for most students. The administration and key congressional Democrats said, however, that the need for increased spending will not affect the \$80 billion they hope to direct to Pell Grants, community colleges, and other higher education priorities through the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act (H.R. 3221).

Why Students Leave College: According to Inside Higher Ed, young adults who leave college cite the need to work and make money, rather than the price of college, as the principle cause of leaving. Results from a survey released by Public Agenda and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation indicate that, to get students to go back to college, schools should focus on flexible scheduling, financial aid for part-time students, and cutting tuition prices. More than one-third of students who left college but have the desire to return stated they would not be able to afford to, even if scholarships covered their tuitions and books. The stated goal of the survey was to give students a voice, as discussions surrounding college access are usually dominated by higher education officials and policy makers.

Changes on the Hill: Representative Neil Abercrombie (D-HI) announced his intention to resign his House seat, adding to the number of Democrats who won't be returning to Congress for the 112th session. Representative Brian Baird (D-WA) announced his retirement on Wednesday, joining Representatives Dennis Moore (D-KS) and John Tanner (D-TN) who had previously announced that they won't be seeking reelection in the 2010 election. Abercrombie, who has represented Hawaii's 1st Congressional District continuously since 1991, is expected to run for Governor. Baird has represented the 3rd district of Washington since 1996 and has consistently carried at least 60 percent of the vote, despite his district's support of former President Bush in both the 2000 and 2004 elections. Moore, the first Democrat to represent Kansas's 3rd Congressional District has served since 1999, and Tanner, the longest-serving member of the four, has represented Tennessee's 8th Congressional District since 1989. All four representatives received a 100 percent score in the AAUW Action Fund Congressional Voting Record for the 110th Congress.

Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Coakley won the Democratic primary to fill the Senate seat held by the late Senator Edward Kennedy, the Boston Globe reported. She will face Republican State Senator Scott Brown in a January 19 special election. With the win, Coakley became the first woman to be nominated by a major party for a U.S. Senate seat in Massachusetts.

AAUW ED Attends White House STEM Education Event: AAUW Executive Director Linda D. Hallman attended the White House kickoff event for the Obama administration's new campaign to encourage students to pursue math, science, and technology fields. According to the New York Times, Educate to Innovate is a comprehensive effort that involves partnerships with Sesame Street, Time Warner, and Discovery Communications to create programming focused on science. Technology companies and the MacArthur Foundation are also involved, holding contests to develop video games that teach science and math, as well as donating technology resources to libraries in low-income neighborhoods. In their efforts to promote the cause of science and math education to corporations and philanthropists, the Obama administration has also recruited prominent leaders in the science, technology, engineering, and math field, including Sally Ride, the first American woman in space. The campaign has pulled criticism, though, from some educators who say that the campaign does not tackle the core issue in schools: the quality of teachers and the curriculum.

AAUW supports promoting and strengthening science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, especially for girls and other underrepresented populations. These efforts will help increase America's competitiveness by reducing gender barriers that deter women from pursuing academic and career goals in STEM fields.

FBI Releases New Stats on Hate Crimes: The FBI recently released new data on bias-fueled crimes across the country. In total, there were 9,691 victims of hate crimes in 2008 in the United States. Crimes fueled by race bias were reported the most, followed by religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity/national origin, and disability. The FBI has been collecting statistics on hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation since 1991 and hate crime motivated by a disability since 1997, but in light of the recent enactment into law of the The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, they'll begin adding the collection of hate crimes motivated by gender and gender identity and incorporating them into their annual report. AAUW has long supported this expansion of hate crimes prevention law and led the efforts of women's organizations for enactment of the The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

New Report on Paid Parental Leave for Federal Employees: The Institute for Women's Policy Research has released a report entitled "The Need for Paid Parental Leave for Federal Employees: Adapting to a Changing Workforce." The report finds that as baby boomers begin to depart from jobs in the federal government-the largest single employer in the United States-our government is relying on the hiring and retention of younger workers. These workers have been found to choose jobs that provide good work-life balance benefits, which can be found more in careers in the private industry. Providing paid parental leave for federal workers, the reports shows, would lead to improvements in recruitment and retention of young workers, overall preventing 2,650 departures per year among female employees and \$50 million per year in costs associated with employee turnover.

UN to Disperse Millions to Fight Global Violence Against Women: The United Nations has put forth \$10.5 million in grants for international efforts focused on ending violence against women, according to the Feminist Majority Foundation. The United States is a leading force in these efforts, with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton working with the Security Council to increase preventative measures against sexual violence. Vice President Joseph Biden stated that violence against women is one of the most pervasive global problems today. The funds dispersed by the UN in honor of the UN's International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women will be distributed in 18 countries and territories, assisting 13 current initiatives.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY UPDATES

Senate Continues Health Care Debate; Tables Anti-Choice Amendment: The Senate debated on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (H.R. 3590), with a focus on the public option, expansion of public programs like Medicare, and abortion. Pro-choice advocates fought off language mirroring the House-passed Stupak-Pitts amendment, which would eliminate coverage for abortion services in the public option and private insurance companies participating in the bill's proposed health care insurance exchange. The Senate version of the anti-abortion language, the Nelson-Hatch amendment, was tabled (54-45) on Tuesday, effectively killing the measure. The New York Times published an op-ed from Representative Bart Stupak (D-MI) about his amendment this week, which was quickly countered by Representative Lois Capps (D-CA) on the RH Reality Check website. AAUW Action Network members were very vocal on this issue, sending thousands of messages to their senators before the vote and attending the December 2nd Stop Stupak day of action.

ACTION: AAUW has consistently advocated for choice of a woman's reproductive life and increased access to health care and family planning services. As the health care debate goes strong, AAUW will continue to push for language in the final legislation requiring comprehensive coverage of women's reproductive health services and ensuring access to and coverage of preventative service and care. Thank the senators who voted against the Nelson amendment, express your extreme disappointment to those senators who supported this measure, and remind all senators that health care reform should not come at the cost of women's reproductive health.

House Passes Omnibus Spending Package: the House passed (221-202) a conference report on a package of six spending bills covering a variety of programs and allocating nearly \$447 billion in discretionary spending for

the 2010 fiscal year. As reported by CQ Budget Tracker, the omnibus spending package (H.R. 3288) includes all but one of the remaining spending bills, including Commerce-Justice-Science (H.R. 2847), Financial Services (H.R. 3170), Labor-HHS-Education (H.R. 3293), Military Construction-VA (H.R. 3082), State-Foreign Operations (H.R. 3081) and Transportation-HUD (H.R. 3288). The lone exception is the Defense appropriations bill (H.R. 3326), which may be used as a vehicle to pass other legislation before the end of the year. The Senate is expected to vote on the package on this weekend, before the current stopgap continuing resolution expires on Dec. 18.

Tracking Judicial Nominations: The Senate Judiciary Committee has yet to vote out almost two dozen judicial nominees, including nine nominations to federal courts and other key leadership positions in the Department of Justice, CQ Politics reported. Many of these nominations, including Dawn Johnsen for the Office of Legal Council, have been pending on the Senate calendar for months. AAUW will continue to monitor the judicial nominations process and advocate for nominees who are committed to the protection of fundamental civil rights and liberties for which our members have fought for over a century.

Bill to Extend FMLA Benefits to Flight Attendants Heads to President: The House passed (voice vote) a bill that will allow flight attendants to be eligible for benefits under the Family and Medical Leave Act. The Airline Flight Crew Technical Corrections Act (S. 1422) will reduce the hours that flight attendants need to have clocked to qualify for FMLA. The way the nontraditional hours worked by flight attendants are calculated currently leaves them excluded from the law's benefits. The House had previously passed similar legislation, but by passing the Senate version, which cleared the Senate on Nov. 10, the bill can now move to the president's desk. According to a press release from Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), the bill's sponsor, the President is expected to sign the legislation.

AAUW Promotes Social and Emotional Health Policy Principles: AAUW recently joined other leading women's organizations in proposing seven social and emotional health policy principles to improve girl's social and emotional well-being. These principles will be used in meetings with Congress and the administration to advocate for holistic programs and policies that concentrate on both emotional and physical well-being to guarantee children's physical health, academic performance, and personal growth. Research suggests that other policies on health, safety, and education will have a stronger influence if they incorporate measures to improve children's social and emotional well-being.