

# 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      MARCH 2010

### CALENDAR

March 2, Tuesday	Book Group 7:30 PM <u>Those Who Saved Us</u> by Jenna Blum Home of Pat Laidler
March 7, Sunday	Photographic Exhibit "The Art of Movie Theater" National Heritage Museum, 33 Marrett Rd, Lexington Contact Jann Sheehy, sheehyJ@earthlink.net
March 9, Tuesday	Branch Meeting 7:00 PM "Beyond Belief", Susan Retick, Speaker Widow to Widow - US to Afghanistan Tufts Library, 46 Broad St., Weymouth
March 18, Thursday	Girls Game Night 7:00 PM Home of Sharon Lemoff
March 23, Tuesday	Board Meeting 7:00 PM Home of Sandy Carle
March 24, Wednesday	Yarn Group 7:00 PM Home of Sharon Lemoff
March 25, Thursday	Adventures in Dining 6:30 PM Aoyama, 14 Snow Rd, Marshfield (Webster Square next to Shaw's Market)
April 1, Thursday	Girls Game Night 7:00 PM Home of Sandy Carle

### BRANCH MEETING

Just a note about the next program - Susan Retick will be discussing her documentary "Beyond Belief" at the Tufts Library in Weymouth on Tuesday, March 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM.

### PRESIDENT'S LETTER

AAUW is celebrating Women's History Month in March. Information can be found on the AAUW Website or the AAUW Facebook page to see what activities have been planned. We in Hingham will be celebrating Women's History Month by having Susan Retick speak at our meeting on Tuesday, March 9<sup>th</sup>. She spoke to us in November when we viewed the movie "Beyond Belief" at Hingham High School. She will again tell us in depth about the

programs she has founded and of her unbelievable journey from Needham to Kabul. Together with her friend, Patti Quigley she has helped many women in Afghanistan. Both women became widows after September 11th and have vowed to help Afghan women who have also been widowed by channeling their grief towards empowerment. I hope to see you on March 9th at the Tufts Library in Weymouth at 7:00 PM. Sheila Doherty, President

## **MEMBERSHIP NEWS**

We send our condolences to Jane Street on the death of her brother, Tom Fulton.

We have a new E-mail address for Susan Mahan: [poetesssusan1@verizon.net](mailto:poetesssusan1@verizon.net)

## **GIRLS GAME NIGHT**

The next girls game nights will be March 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM at Sharon Lemoff's house and April 1st at 7:00 PM at Sandy Carle's house.  
Sharon Lemoff

## **BOOK CLUB**

The Book Club will meet at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 2nd at Pat Laidler's home. We will be discussing the book Those Who Save Us by Jenna Blum. Everyone is welcome to join this group.

## **YARN CLUB**

The Yarn Club will be meeting at Sharon Lemoff's on Wednesday, March 24th at 7:00 PM Come and join us in making squares for Rosie's Place afghans or working on one of your own projects. Lynn Howard

## **BUDGET**

The proposed budget for 2009-2010 will be voted on at the Annual Meeting in April. If there are questions they can be addressed at that time.  
Ginny Giordano

## **PUBLIC POLICY**

Women Wrestlers' Suit Upheld by Appeals Court: The Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals ordered the University of California at Davis to defend itself against sex discrimination charges filed by a group of former wrestlers at the school. The court overturned a 2008 opinion by District Court Judge Frank Damrell, Jr. who ruled that the group of female athletes had failed to notify the University that it was being accused of discrimination, and that the University was not given a chance to rectify the situation. The 2007 case was brought after several women were dropped from the team and reinstated only to be forced to compete against men for their spots on the team. The appeals court has challenged the Davis's record of upholding the second prong of Title IX, "a history and continuing practice of program expansion [for women athletes and women's teams]," and sided with the athletes' right to sue the University for discrimination under the Constitution's Equal Protection Clause.

Lack of Paid Sick Days Connected to Spread of H1N1: A new briefing paper by the Institute for Women's Policy Research reports that in 2009, nearly 8 million employees took no time off work while infected with the H1N1 flu. The study relied on data from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, ultimately suggesting that a lack of paid sick days permitted the spread of H1N1 in the workplace.

USA Today Launches New Blog on Girls and Women in Sports: USA Today contributor, Christine Brennan, has a new feature blog focused on girls and women in sports. In her February 9 introductory post, Brennan states, "We welcome female athletes and sports fans -- and their parents, coaches and friends, as well as interested observers from the bleachers to the press box -- to participate in a lively exchange of thoughts and ideas, scores and information, history and advice." She goes on to sing the praises of Title IX, but also notes, "It has now been in effect for nearly 40 years. There's much to discuss. Let's get going."

First Lady Unveils New Childhood Obesity Initiative: First Lady Michelle Obama laid out her new initiative to combat childhood obesity in the United States, accompanied by a formal memorandum by the president to establish

a national taskforce incorporating the departments of the Interior, Health and Human Services, Agriculture and Education. The project, called "Let's Move," focuses on better nutrition information and access to healthy foods, increased physical activity and personal responsibility.

While it is estimated that female students receive 1.3 million fewer opportunities to play high school sports than do male students, the U.S. Department of Education does not require high schools to make athletic opportunity, participation, and funding statistics publicly available, even though they already collect this data. Colleges are required to report this data, it's time our high schools are too.

Sweeping Changes to National Education Policy: In the budget, the Obama administration proposed big changes to the national education policy and the controversial "No Child Left Behind" law, and a \$3 billion increase to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The administration proposed new benchmarks like academic progress and college readiness to judge educational achievement, as opposed to the old policies of high-stakes testing and across-the-board proficiency. The administration promises a serious, competitive and comprehensive approach at education and has consolidated past methods to allow for a budget that provides for new opportunities for grants, innovative teacher trainings, community-based programming and STEM education for minority groups.

Emergency Contraception Approved for Overseas Military Bases: The Department of Defense announced its decision this week to make emergency contraception (EC) available on all overseas U.S. military bases, overturning President George W. Bush's 2002 decision. Approximately 350,000 military women who rely on overseas care will now have access to all of their legal reproductive health rights.

National Teen Pregnancy and Abortion Rates on the Rise: Data released by the Guttmacher Institute verifies the first national rise in teen pregnancies, abortion and birth rates in more than a decade. Closing a past gap, pregnancy rates among Black and Hispanic teens both showed a 126 percent increase in 2006. The study also links a 3 percent increase in 2006 to declining trends in teen contraceptive use and education in the early 2000s around the promotion of abstinence-only programs.

AAUW supports the right of every woman to obtain medically accurate information about and access to safe and comprehensive reproductive health services. Because the United States has one of the highest rates of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection in the developed world, AAUW supports comprehensive sexuality education programs that include information about both abstinence and contraception. Such programs are critical in helping to combat teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection.

TANF Caseloads Increase in Recession: A report issued last year by Legal Momentum, the Center for Community Change, Jobs with Justice, and the Institute for Policy Studies asks Congress for \$16.4 billion a year in order to provide Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) with the resources and money needed to expand its accessibility to more people who are in need of assistance. New data released from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) shows the number of people receiving TANF has increased by only 12 percent since the beginning of the recession, though not accurately reflecting the number of families in need. The HHS data suggests measures need to be taken in order to make TANF more accessible.

New Report on Work-Life Balance: A new report released by the Center for American Progress (CAP) shows that American families work longer hours, with fewer laws to support them, than approximately 30 other industrialized democracies. The authors, CAP Senior Economist Heather Boushey and University of California-Hastings College of Law Professor Joan Williams, look at issues like paid parental leave, discrimination against workers with family responsibilities, paid sick days, work-time flexibility without retaliation, and proportional wages for part-time work. Of note, the report concludes that 90 percent of mothers and 95 percent of fathers in the U.S. report work-family conflict.

Title IX Suit Brought against LGBTQ Harassment: The parents of a 15-year-old gay student in upstate New York are suing their school district for not providing their son protection from sex stereotyping and discrimination required by law under Title IX. After knife threats, taunts of lynching and harassment from both students and teachers, the family finally filed suit when the boy suffered a sprained ankle from being pushed down the stairs. Many are hopeful that past Title IX court decisions, combined with the Civil Rights Division's request to intervene on behalf of the family, will expand Title IX to include sexual orientation as a part of sex stereotyping.

Pentagon Moves to Dismantle DADT: Defense Secretary Robert Gates told the Senate Armed Services Committee that the Pentagon would begin taking steps to dismantle the controversial "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy that forbids lesbians and gays from openly serving in the U.S. military. Gates confirmed that a working group of military officials was formed to "immediately begin a review of the issues associated with properly implementing repeal."

AAUW Celebrates Ledbetter Anniversary: the enactment of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. As the first piece of legislation signed into law by the new president, it was a proud moment for AAUW members - a reward for all the emails sent, calls made, and visits paid to your members of Congress. Together with the House passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act, we felt we were on the road to fair pay.

However, the Paycheck Fairness Act, the essential companion legislation to the Ledbetter bill, remains stalled in the Senate. What a difference a year almost made for women and their families. But there is good news: thanks to your efforts, the Senate leadership just announced that a Senate committee hearing on the Paycheck Fairness Act will be scheduled in the next few months! This is the next critical step toward getting the bill to the floor for a vote. Even if you have taken action on this issue before, we need your voice now! (Paycheck Fairness Act (S. 182)). As Lilly said, passing the Ledbetter bill without passing the Paycheck Fairness Act is like giving someone a nail but not a hammer. Data released by the U.S. Census Bureau showed that, in 2008, women continued to earn just 77 cents for each dollar earned by her male counterpart.

State of the Union Address: President Obama gave his first State of the Union address, speaking predominantly about the economy, but also dedicating a significant portion of the speech to education, where he proposed \$10,000 tax credits for families who pay for four years of college, along with a further increase in Pell grants, long an AAUW priority.

AAUW was pleased to hear the president assert that his administration will crack down on violations of equal pay laws, but disappointed that he did not call on the Senate to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act. The president called for an end to the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy with respects to gays in the military, but did not lay out a specific timetable for doing so. A federal commission will be created via executive order to take a hard look at reducing the deficit, but it remains unknown whether such a commission will have the power to fast-track cuts to Social Security and Medicare. While noting that we are "so close" to passing health care reform, the president remained silent on the need for protection of reproductive rights in health reform legislation in general, and on the Stupak amendment in particular.

States & Health Reform: The Urban Institute released a report that shows how individual states would be affected by the Senate health care bill. Low income populations and those who fall below the federal poverty level are more prevalent in these states, making it likely that the majority of people eligible for federal subsidies under the bill, roughly 87 million, would reside in the southern and western parts of the country. Different population conditions in northeastern states means that 95.2 million Americans, in those states, would likely not be eligible for these benefits.

Gender Gap in Higher Education Continues: the American Council on Education (ACE) reports that the gender gap in higher education continues, but is staggering, with women outnumbering men on college campuses 57 to 43 percent since 2003. The data show that the problem is not across the board and may be one solved by focusing on certain populations. For example, numbers of "traditional students," who go to college straight out of high school, are split evenly; whereas, men are not as likely to go to college at a later time.

National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month Declared: Earlier this month President Barack Obama declared January 2010 National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, reminding Americans that "even today, the darkness and inhumanity of enslavement exists" throughout the world and in our own country.

Roe v. Wade Anniversary Marked in DC, Across the Nation: Reproductive rights supporters and opponents marked the 37th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark Roe v. Wade decision with marches and rallies, both in Washington, D.C. and across the nation.

In related news, NARAL Pro-Choice Virginia released a report this week with the findings of their year-long investigation of 52 crisis pregnancy centers in Virginia. The report found that at least 38 of the centers do not have any medically trained or medically supervised personnel on staff, and that 67 percent of the centers, which do not do not provide or refer for abortion care or birth control, shared some degree of medically erroneous information.

The Washington Post ran a story about the group's investigation into the centers that receive funding from the purchase of specialty "Choose Life" license plates. The Virginia NARAL group instead urges Virginia residents to order "Trust Women, Protect Choice" specialty plates.

Percentage of Women Breadwinners Rise, But Pay Inequity Remains Prevalent : The Pew Research Center released a report on the affects that women's advancement on college campuses and in the workforce has had on various aspects of marriage. Women, Men, and the New Economics of Marriage analyzed demographic and economic data and found that more men in 2007, compared with men in 1970, were married to women whose education and income exceeded their own. The report found that, in 2007, 22 percent of men were married to women who made more money that they did, compared to just 4 percent of men in 1970.

Academia Looks at New Work-Life Balance Policy: A new study of academic scientists found that female scientists spend up to 10 additional hours on family housework in their homes than their male counterparts do, a time gap that could hinder the advancement of women. According to Inside Higher Ed, the study, published in the magazine of the American Association of University Professors, calls for colleges and universities to create an employee benefit option for faculty members to have financial assistance for housework.

## LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY UPDATES

Senate Confirms Director of Women's Bureau: the Senate confirmed by unanimous consent the nomination of Sara Manzano-Diaz to be the director of the Department of Labor's Women's Bureau. President Obama nominated Manzano-Diaz on September 30, 2009, and her confirmation was one of 27 executive branch nominations confirmed by the Senate just prior to the President's Day recess. Manzano-Diaz previously served as Deputy Secretary for Regulatory Programs at the Pennsylvania Department of State, a position to which she was appointed by Governor Ed Rendell. She also served as part of Governor Rendell's STEM Initiative Team. Prior to her service in Pennsylvania, she served Deputy General Counsel for Civil Rights and Litigation at the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The Women's Bureau at the Department of Labor was established by Congress in 1920 and is the only federal agency exclusively devoted to the concerns of women in the workplace. The office has played a critical role in helping to reduce the gender pay gap and advocating for passage of such landmark laws as the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. Staffing and budget cuts weakened the office during the previous administration, but AAUW looks forward to working with a strengthened and revitalized Women's Bureau to advance our priorities for working women and their families.

Federal Budget Released for FY11: President Barack Obama released his budget proposal for FY11. The proposal, which follows and builds the Jan. 27 State of the Union address, offers a broad look at the state of the national economy, outlines the administration's fiscal priorities, and promotes initiatives for federal departments and agencies. Congress will spend the next several months debating and working on passage of the individual appropriations bills, which may or may not reflect the president's priorities.

President Threatens Recess Appointments; Senator Shelby Places, Lifts Hold on Nominations: President Obama threatened to make several recess appointments if the Senate did not act in quicker fashion and Republicans continued to filibuster a large number of nominations. Several nominees to various federal court and cabinet agency positions have seen their nominations stall, with some waiting more than a year since their nomination was sent to the Senate. Under the Constitution, recess appointments bypass traditional Senate confirmation; however, those appointed in this fashion may only serve in their posts through the conclusion of the current congressional session.

President Obama's announcement comes on the heels of Senator Richard Shelby's (R-AL) placing a hold earlier on each pending nomination as he tried to force the White House's hand on pending earmark requests for his home state. Bowing to political pressure, Senator Shelby released his holds soon thereafter. However, nominees continued to stall in the Senate; Republicans successfully denied cloture on Craig Becker, a nominee to the National Labor Relations Board who fell eight votes short (52-33) of the 60 required to move to a final confirmation vote. Although the Senate had confirmed 29 appointees and avoided recess appointments over the Presidents' Day break, dozens of other nominations remain in limbo.

Democrats Seek Legislative Response to Supreme Court Decision: Democrats in the House and Senate are working to draft campaign finance legislation in response to the landmark Supreme Court decision, *Citizens United v. FEC*, that ruled that corporations could not be barred from direct spending in elections. Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) has designated Representative Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) to lead a task force of committee chairpersons to draft the House bill. On the Senate side, Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY) is coordinating the effort and hopes to have a Senate bill. Some Democrats, lead by Representative John Larson (CT) and Senator Richard Durbin (IL), were pushing for public financing of congressional campaigns (HR 1826, S 752) before the Citizens United decision. As mentioned last week, Representatives Donna Edwards (D-MD) and John Conyers (D-MI) have proposed a constitutional amendment (HJ Res 74) to give explicit power to Congress and the states regarding corporate spending on political speech.

House Clears Debt Limit and PAYGO: The House of Representatives voted to increase the national debt limit by \$1.9 trillion and restore the PAYGO policy often attributed to President Clinton's budget surplus in the 1990s. Once reinstated, PAYGO will require budget neutrality for any mandatory legislation to avoid adding to the country's increasing debt. Although the House is allowing the debt limit to increase, House Democrats believe the policy will help to fiscally discipline Congress and decrease the national debt over time. AAUW supports public budgets that balance individual rights and responsibility to the community.

### RESOURCES FOR ADVOCATES

Plan Now for Equal Pay Day: Equal Pay Day is quickly approaching on Tuesday, April 20. Find out how you can get involved with this symbolic day when women's wages catch up to men's wages from the year before. Download our Pay Equity Resource Kit and Equal Pay Day Program in a Box, and order AAUW "Women at a Discount" posters and stickers for use. Let us know what your branch is doing to mark this day so we can share your ideas with the AAUW community.

Massachusetts Election Denies Dems of Supermajority: Republican state Senator Scott Brown defeated Democratic candidate and state Attorney General Martha Coakley in a special election in Massachusetts to fill the Senate seat long held by the late Senator Edward Kennedy (D). The win by Brown means that the Democrats no longer have the critical 60 votes they need to overcome Republican filibusters on controversial issues, including health care reform legislation. Senator Paul Kirk (D), who currently holds the seat, was appointed as an interim senator by the Democratic governor. Brown is expected to be sworn in in February.