

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 NOVEMBER 2009

CALENDAR

November 5th, Thursday	Girls Game Night 7:00PM Home of Sharon Lemoff
November 10th, Tuesday	Branch Meeting 7:00PM <i>Beyond Belief</i> Hingham High School
November 19th, Thursday	Declutter Bugs 4:30PM Panera Bread, Derby Street, Hingham
November 19th, Thursday	Adventures in Dining 6:30PM Sweet Lemons Washington Street (RT53), Weymouth RSVP: Hollie by Monday, Nov 16th
November 19, Thursday	Writing Group, 7:30 PM Brewed Awakening, Hingham
November 26th, Thursday	<i>HAPPY THANKSGIVING</i>
December 6th, Sunday	Holiday Social 11:00AM Raffael's, Hull RSVP: Susan Mahan
December 10, Thursday	Writing Group, 7:30 PM Home of Kay Campbell
December 17th, Thursday	Girls Game Night 7:00PM Home of Sandy Carle

BRANCH MEETING

Because we have not yet confirmed the program for our November 10th meeting, we are postponing the event at the Hingham Library and instead attending the viewing of *Beyond Belief* at Hingham High School. This event will happen on November 10th at 7:00. Tickets will be \$10.00 and they are available at the door. If anyone has any questions, they should contact me at csulliva@lesley.edu.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With the seasons changing quickly, we in the Hingham Area Branch are settling into our winter schedules. Programs and interest groups have been great so far. During our last program meeting "our own" Pat Laidler spoke on some aspects of social networking. The meeting was very well attended and also attracted 3 new members. There has been a change in our next meeting, so we will meet on November 10th at 7:00 PM at the Hingham High School to view *Beyond Belief*.

For our new members please use your Directory to reference the times and dates for meetings. The "News of Note" comes to each member electronically at the beginning of each month. If you are not getting your "News of Note" please let me know. You can contact me at greenharbor11@verizon.net.

Our December meeting will be at Raffael's in Hull on December 6th at 11:00AM. Please RSVP to Susan Mahan.

Sheila Doherty

HOLIDAY SOCIAL

This year's holiday social will be held at 11 AM on Sunday, December 6, 2009, at Raffael's, 45 Hull Shore Drive, (on Nantasket Beach) Hull. The cost is \$26. Please RSVP to Social Committee member Susan Mahan at poetesssusan@att.net or 781-335-6912. I hope to see you all there!

ADVANCE NOTICE – JANUARY BRANCH MEETING

We hope you will read ahead for the January book discussion/dinner when we have our annual **Soup and Salad Supper**.

On January 12th, we'll have the special honor of hosting Amy MacKinnon, Marshfield resident and author of the acclaimed novel *Tethered*, to take part in our discussion of her book. *Tethered* explores the inner life of Clara Marsh, an undertaker who doesn't believe in God. This complex, dark yet lovable character tries to unravel the mystery surrounding a little girl who starts hanging around a Brockton funeral home during the holiday season. It's fascinating reading - the prose is riveting, and the setting rings true. The book is out in paperback and on CD. The OCLN library system has several copies, though it seems quite popular so you'll probably need to put one on hold. If you can't get one from the library, we can find you a loaner copy. Read more about Amy and her book at www.amymackinnon.com
Contact Kay at: kaycam@aol.com (781-740-0788) if you need help locating a copy.

Here's what the *New York Times Review of Books* had to say about *Tethered*: "[An] hypnotic debut... There's a quiet, almost stealthy quality to the writing... Clara is an astonishing character, and with language as blunt as the death she sees every day, she expresses herself with devastating simplicity."

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We are happy to welcome three new members who joined our branch at the October meeting. Please extend a warm welcome to Ann Blair, Ruth Ann Moore and Gail Saccone.

WRITING GROUP

We hope everyone got a chance to see Gwen Sayian's AAUW Article in the September 24th issue of The Hingham Journal. The Writing Group will meet on November 19 at 7.30 p.m. at Brewed Awakening in Hingham.

The Writing Group will meet on December 10 at 7.30 p.m. at the home of Kay Campbell, 30 Hancock Road, Hingham.

Beatrice

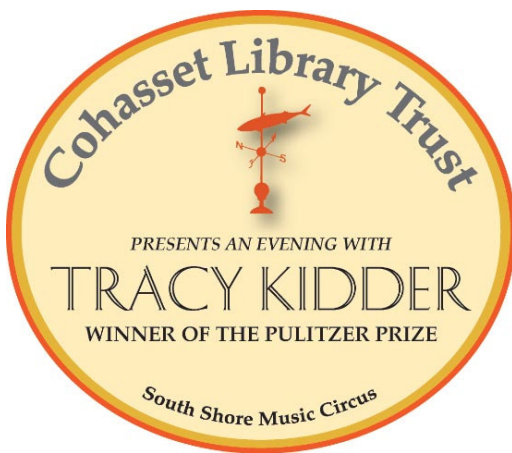
BOOK GROUP

For next month's meeting of our branch's book group, on November 2nd, we're reading Tracy Kidder's new book, *Strength in What Remains* and planning to attend his presentation at Cohasset High School at 7:00 PM. (See flyer attached.) We're hoping to have a bite to eat before the talk to discuss the book. Details will be forthcoming.

Tickets for the event are \$10. If you would like us to purchase a ticket for you, please notify me by Wednesday, October 14th so we can get the tickets.

We hope you'll join us for what should be a fun book group event!

Pat Laidler



An Evening with Tracy Kidder

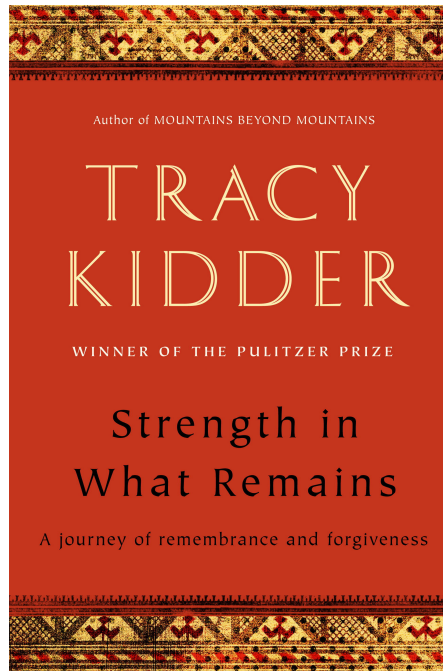
Monday, Nov. 2, 2009: 7:00 pm

At the Cohasset Middle High
143 Pond St. Cohasset

Tickets are \$10.00 and will be sold
Memorial Library, 35 Ripley Rd.,
781-383-



This event
Lecture in
to the



School,

at the circulation desk at the Paul Pratt
Cohasset
1348 www.cohassetlibrary.org

is the first South Shore Music Circus
recognition of SSMC's \$100,000 donation
Cohasset Library Trust.

WANTED:YARN CLUB MEMBERS

Do you knit or crochet? Would you like to learn how to make a felted purse? Would you like to get together with other yarn enthusiasts? If so, you should join the Yarn Club. Several members are interested in starting a Yarn Club. If you interested, please contact Lynn Howard at lynnphoward82@comcast.net or 781-901-9120. Let her know what days and times are most convenient for you to meet. All levels are welcome to join this group, including people who would like to learn how to knit or crochet.

Susan Mahan

LAF

AAUW Supported Plaintiff Wins Latest Legal Battle *Claire Schuster Continues Fight for Pay Equity at Berea College*

A plaintiff supported by the AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund has won her latest legal battle over allegations of sex-based pay discrimination at Berea College in Kentucky. Claire Schuster, a tenured associate professor of nursing, sued the institution for sex discrimination in pay in violation of the Kentucky Civil Rights Act.

The Kentucky Supreme Court issued an Aug. 19th ruling in favor of Schuster, denying Berea College's motion for Discretionary Review of the decision of the Court of Appeals in Professor Schuster's favor, remanding for a new trial. Her next state trial court date, at which her lawyers can now use important discovery, has not been set.

"AAUW is pleased that this latest ruling will help move the Schuster case forward. We stand with Claire and support her right to a trial on her claim for fair treatment," said AAUW Executive Director Linda D. Hallman, CAE. "It's past time that employers treat their employees fairly, regardless of gender, but far too often women still face harassment and discrimination in the workplace. That can never be tolerated, but feels especially egregious in these tough economic times."

Enthusiastically embraced by the AAUW community, Schuster has traveled to various AAUW events to update members on her case, which AAUW has supported since 2003. Schuster said she was relieved to find that she "was not the only one who felt like this was worth fighting for" and that "a national organization recognizes that what happened was very wrong."

Schuster alleged, in part, that Berea's all-female nursing department had hired its first male faculty member at a salary that exceeded the salaries paid to female nursing faculty members, and that he had been hired directly into the associate professor rank despite his lack of required experience.

Berea College charges no tuition and admits only academically promising students, primarily from Appalachia with limited economic resources. It has recently received a four year, \$214,000 grant for its *GEAR UP* program to increase the number of women and underrepresented populations in science, technology, engineering, and math (or STEM) fields. These funds are provided by the Department of Education through the Women's Educational Equity Act; this program promotes better enforcement of Title IX, the federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in any educational program receiving federal funds.

"AAUW has long advocated for strengthening STEM education for girls and other underrepresented populations to encourage their entry into these high wage careers," said Lisa Maatz, AAUW director of public policy and government relations. "However, it's not difficult to see the irony in the fact that these federal dollars come to Berea College at a time when it is facing a lawsuit suggesting that it is not doing right by the women already working in these fields."

View the full case summary of *Schuster v. Berea College* <http://stageaauw.aauw.org/advocacy/laf/cases/schuster.cfm>

PUBLIC POLICY

Five Women, Including One AAUW Member, Win Nobel Prizes: Various Nobel Prizes were awarded to five women this year, including one AAUW member. This is the first time in history that so many women have been honored as Nobel laureates within one year, according to The Globe and Mail. **Elinor Ostrom** won the prize for **economics**, **Herta Mueller** was the winner for **literature**, and **Ada Yonath** was awarded the prize for her work in **chemistry**. **Dr. Elizabeth Blackburn** and **Dr. Carol Greider**, an AAUW member, were honored for their work in the field of **medicine**, an honor they shared with colleague Jack W. Szostak. The three doctors were recognized for their work with chromosomes, which plays a vital role in the development of new therapies for cancer treatments. As women continue to be disproportionately represented in STEM fields, these honors reflect the significant advancements and achievements of women.

Social Security Recipients Won't Receive COLA Next Year: For the first since 1975, Social Security recipients will not receive a cost-of-living-adjustment in their benefits next year, the Social Security Administration announced. By law, cost-of-living adjustments are based off of inflation rates, which were negative this year because of lower energy costs. However, Social Security payments cannot go down. Instead, the Obama administration proposed that beneficiaries receive a one-time \$250 payment. The payment would be equal to about a 2 percent increase for the regular Social Security recipient.

Social Security is more than a retirement plan for women; it can also be financial family protection. Women are more dependent on social security because they are half as likely as men to receive a pension and on average live longer than men. Social Security benefits are the only source of income for many elderly women and persons with disabilities; without them, more than half of all women 65 and older would fall below the poverty line.

Community College and Student Loan Access Report Released: A report released by The Project on Student Debt found that that nearly one in 10 community college students in the U.S. do not have access to federal loans because their school chooses not to participate in the federal loan programs. However, federal loans are the safest and most affordable way to pay for college. Community colleges opting out of the federal loan program are attempting to protect their students from high levels of debt. As a result, many students are turning to more risky forms of lending such as private loans and credit cards, taking fewer classes, working excessive hours, or simply dropping out. The Obama administration has been pushing for the creation of a new Consumer Financial Protection Agency (CFPA), which would help protect private loan borrowers from unfair rates and treatment.

AAUW Provides Policy Recommendations for a True "Woman's Nation"; AAUW Applauds Shriver, Center for American Progress on Report Release: AAUW has provided detailed policy recommendations that will help society's institutions catch up with the women's progress detailed in The Shriver Report-A Woman's Nation Changes Everything. AAUW's recommendations on a variety of subject areas, including pay equity, work-life balance, and education, can be found at www.aauw.org/womansnation.

A Woman's Nation emphasizes one of the most remarkable changes of the past half century: the movement of millions of women into paid employment. Women now make up half of all workers in the United States, a stunning shift from just a few generations ago.

"There hasn't been a comprehensive account of the status of women in more than 45 years," said AAUW Executive Director Linda D. Hallman, CAE. "Given the nation's rather complicated economic situation, this report could not have come at a better time. AAUW is taking the lead on providing policy recommendations and grassroots action items for our

members and others who are interested in issues affecting working women. These recommendations are aimed at continuing to improve women's status and strengthening the economic security of their families."

The report highlights the rise of women in the workforce while emphasizing that working women and their families lack critical supports. An opinion poll linked to the report found that women and men both want to change social norms to improve family and economic security, particularly on issues of balancing work and life.

"Women have broken through many barriers in the last 45 years, but there is still much to be done to adequately respond to women's-and men's-changing roles. We only need to look at the stark reality for working women who are simultaneously caring for children or parents to know this is true," said Lisa Maatz, AAUW director of public policy and government relations. "Even though there are laws on the books to promote equity in education and income, it does not necessarily mean that those laws are enforced and that women are being given a fair chance. CAP's timely report and AAUW's policy recommendations help bring those subjects to the forefront as women move forward in true, equal partnership with men."

Glass Ceiling Exists in Academia: A recent article by Forbes focused on the lack of women who head up our nation's institutions of higher learning. While 75 percent of U.S. school teachers, not including professors, are female, the American Council of Education reports that only 23 percent of college presidents are women. The president of the ACE suggests that one part of the problem is that college presidents are selected by the institution's board of trustees, who are almost always dominated by men. AAUW Director of Research Dr. Catherine Hill is also quoted in the article, pointing out that nearly twice as many male professors have tenure as compared to female professors.

The Opt-Out Revolution: Data recently released by the U.S. Census goes against the so-called "opt-out-revolution," the theory that well-educated women are leaving the workforce to become stay at home mothers. According to the Washington Post, the census data shows that women who are staying home to care for their families tend to be less educated and have lower incomes. Since a 2003 New York Times article highlighted a group of high-achieving women who had decided to leave their careers to care for their children, discussions have soared on this topic, yet census data shows that there is no upward trend of successful women opting out. The article argues that since the women staying home are less educated, they have less opportunity to find well paying jobs that would cover the costs of childcare and offer family friendly benefits with which they could balance family and work life. While there are 5.6 million stay-at-home mothers in the U.S., there are only 165,000 stay-at-home dads.

AAUW ED Attends VAWA Event with Vice President: AAUW Executive Director Linda Hallman attended an event at Number One Observatory Circle, the residence of the vice president, to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the landmark Violence Against Women Act. Vice President Biden wrote the act, which provides funding for victim services and stronger enforcement efforts, while serving on the Senate Judiciary Committee in 1994, and AAUW's advocacy was instrumental in the enactment of the law. Although much progress has been made, AAUW and our coalition partners are working to support the International Violence Against Women Act, as well as the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act in 2011.

UNESCO Elects First Female Chief: UNESCO, the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, elected its first female head this week, the Associated Press reported. Irina Bokova, the former Bulgarian foreign minister, is also the current Bulgarian ambassador to France. A Saudi delegate was quoted as saying, "Women's equity, I think that is what won it over for Mrs. Bokova. UNESCO promotes international collaboration, events, and projects on education, science, and culture through specialized centers throughout the world."

Clinton Global Initiative Focuses on Narrowing the Gender Gap: This year's theme of the annual Clinton Global Initiative summit, which took place in New York, focused on investing worldwide in women and girls in order to narrow the gender gap, according to Bloomberg. Hosted by former President Bill Clinton, attendees at the event include global leaders from non-profits, government, current and former heads of states, prominent leaders of multinational corporations, and celebrities. President Obama also spoke at the opening session. All who attend will help with developing and funding ideas to aid global problems focused on women and girls, particularly in the areas of education and employment. "In all the world there is only one strategy which clearly slows population growth, raises income and promotes more social stability that is supported across all religious and cultural lines," Clinton said. "And that is putting all the girls in school and giving all the young women access to the labor market."

U.N. Votes to Create New Women's Agency: Three years after the 2006 original plan emerged from then-Secretary-General Kofi Anan, the United Nations General Assembly voted to create a new and more powerful women's agency. The resolution will merge four existing offices, the U.N. Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues, the U.N. Division for the Advancement of Women, and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) into a single body devoted to women's equality and rights. Supporters heralded this as a major breakthrough, as the new agency will have a larger budget and more clout than the existing offices. The resolution also gives the U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon a year to draw up a proposal that

would specify the mission, organizational arrangements, funding, and executive board of the new women's agency. Accordingly, the new agency has the potential to make monumental strides for women and girls around the world, but its success will depend heavily on whether the Secretary-General's proposal receives the needed support from the many member states.

Women Make More Effective Lawmakers: According to a study from Stanford University and the University of Chicago researchers, women are more effective lawmakers than men. According to Politico, the study, which focused on the performance of House members from 1984 to 2004, found that on average, women representatives introduced more bills, attracted more cosponsors, and brought more money to their districts than their male peers did. The researchers accounted for things like representatives' seniority, party affiliation, majority/minority status, and priorities when making their comparisons. Women currently hold just 17 percent of the seats in the House and the Senate.

NCAA President Dies: Myles Brand, president of the National Collegiate Athletic Association, died recently after a battle with pancreatic cancer, USA Today reported. Brand was a strong supporter of Title IX and worked with organizations like AAUW to rescind the harmful 2005 Prong Three clarification, which makes it easier for schools to prove compliance by using a less rigorous and thorough e-mail-based survey method. He will be missed by many, but his work on behalf of student athletes will be remembered.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY UPDATES

House Passes National Women's History Museum Act: the House passed (voice vote) the National Women's History Museum Act of 2009 (H.R. 1700). The bill, introduced by Representative Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), permits the National Women's History Museum to purchase land from the National Mall for a museum in appreciation of women's many accomplishments and contributions to our nation. This is the first time a bill of this type has passed the House of Representatives, and AAUW Action Network members helped to make this possible by contacting their representatives in advance of the vote.

Health Care Reform Bill Clears Senate Committee: The Senate Finance Committee passed (14-9) the America's Healthy Future Act (as yet unnumbered), CQ reported. Senator Olympia Snowe (R-ME) was the only Republican to support the health care reform bill put forward by Chairman Max Baucus (D-MT). The Congressional Budget Office had previously stated the bill will cover an additional 29 million uninsured Americans and will reduce the federal deficit by \$81 billion over the next ten years.

The bill now needs to be merged with the version passed by the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee in July, stated USA Today. Similar work is being done to merge three differing versions of health care reform bills in the House. The Senate HELP Committee also held a hearing this Thursday, "What Women Want: Equal Health Care for Equal Premiums," to address the differences between women and men in terms of healthcare.

House Passes Hate Crimes Legislation: the House passed AAUW-supported legislation that would strengthen the federal response to hate crimes, the Associated Press reported. While current law only allows federal involvement in the prosecution of non-federal hate crimes when the victim was targeted because of race, color, religion, or national origin, this legislation would allow the Department of Justice to take on cases motivated by the victim's actual or perceived gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability as well. It would also provide federal grants to assist local authorities in the prosecution of such hate crimes and would allow the federal government to prosecute hate crimes where the state is unwilling or unable to do so. The hate crimes measure was added to the Department of Defense appropriations bill conference report, which passed (281-146) with bipartisan support.

President Nominates Head of Office on Violence Against Women: President Obama announced his intent to nominate Susan B. Carbon as the director of the Office on Violence Against Women in the Department of Justice. An accomplished judge, Carbon is a member of the Governor's Commission on Domestic and Sexual Violence, and she chaired New Hampshire's Domestic Violence and Fatality Review Committee. She has also served as president and faculty member for the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and as faculty for the National Judicial Institute on Domestic Violence. Judge Carbon also chaired the project which produced the Effective Issuance and Enforcement of Orders of Protection in Domestic Violence Cases (The Burgundy Book), a document used throughout the country to guide professionals in their work around civil protection orders. The Office on Violence Against Women was created in 1995 to administer financial and technical assistance for communities across the country that have or are developing programs, policies, and practices aimed at ending domestic violence stalking, and sexual assault.

EEOC Files Hiring Discrimination Lawsuit: The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission filed a lawsuit alleging that a nationwide company unlawfully discriminated against a class of black, Hispanic, and male job applicants. Rejecting applicants based on their credit history and select types of criminal records has a "significant disparate impact" on

these classes of applicants based on their race, national origin, and sex, the EEOC argued, in violation of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

Workplace discrimination charge filings with the EEOC, which enforces federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination, rose to an unprecedented level of 95,402 during FY08—a 15 percent increase from the previous fiscal year.

Senate Committee Wraps Up Debate on Health Care Bill: The Senate Finance Committee finished its debate of more than 100 amendments offered to Chairman Max Baucus' (D-MT) health care bill early Friday morning, CQ reported. The committee is expected to hold its final vote on the America's Healthy Future Act (as yet unnumbered), after which Sen. Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) will begin the work of combining that bill with one passed in July by the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. Debate on a health care bill may begin in the full Senate as early as Oct. 12, although some senators are pushing to wait until the Congressional Budget Office has a chance to officially calculate, or score, the cost of a final bill, a process that may take a few weeks. Two amendments that would have included a public option in the legislation were voted down by committee members, the Washington Post reported. Among the amendments debated by the Senate Finance Committee several were of interest to AAUW. The committee approved (14-9) a Baucus amendment to provide \$50 million to states to fund comprehensive sex education programs, but they also approved (12-11) an amendment by Senator Orin Hatch (R-UT) to provide \$50 million a year through 2014 for the extension of Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage programs. Senators Blanche Lincoln (D-AR) and Kent Conrad (D-ND) joined all 10 Republicans on the committee in supporting the Hatch amendment. The committee also voted down (13-11) a Hatch amendment that would bar any insurer receiving federal funds from covering abortion unless women purchased a separate "rider" policy to cover such services.

National Women's History Museum Bill Clears Committee: Legislation that would create a National Women's History Museum on the National Mall in Washington, DC passed (voice vote) out of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on Sept. 24. H.R. 1700, introduced by Representative Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) would honor the role that women have played in American history. AAUW is a strong supporter of the National Women's History Museum, a nonpartisan, nonprofit educational institution dedicated to preserving, interpreting, and celebrating the diverse historic contributions of women and integrating this rich heritage fully into our nation's history. Until this legislation becomes law, the National Women's History Museum continues to promote women's history through its permanent and temporary exhibits, special events, CyberMuseum, and online educational materials via its website.

Women Workers and Green Jobs: Climate change legislation introduced in the Senate will include a demonstration program for targeting some jobs to certain underrepresented groups, including women, in construction. The Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act (as yet unnumbered) will include the Green Construction Careers Demonstration Program, which was also included in the House-passed American Clean Energy and Security Act (H.R. 2454). The Senate bill is expected to be marked up by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee later.

President Nominates Head of Women's Bureau: President Obama announced Sara Manzano-Diaz as his nominee for director of the Women's Bureau in the Department of Labor. Manzano-Diaz has served as Deputy Secretary for Regulatory Programs at the Pennsylvania Department of State and as Deputy General Counsel for Civil Rights and Litigation at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Latifa Lyles, who recently ran for president of the National Organization of Women, is expected to become the deputy director of the bureau. The Women's Bureau was created by law in 1920 to formulate standards and policies to promote the welfare of wage-earning women, improve their working conditions, increase their efficiency, and advance their opportunities for profitable employment.

Changes on the Hill: Senator Paul Kirk (D-MA) was sworn to temporarily fill the seat of the late Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA). Kirk was appointed by Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick (D) after the Massachusetts state legislature passed legislation allowing Patrick to do so. According to CQ Politics, Kirk will serve until a Jan. 19, 2010 special election that will determine who will fill the remainder of Kennedy's term, which runs through 2012. Kirk has said he will not be a candidate in the special election.

Representatives Call for Gender Equity in Construction: Representatives Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Pete Stark (D-CA) recently sent a letter to Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis urging a reform of the affirmative action goals set in 1978 by the Office of Federal Contracts and Compliance Programs. Cosigned by 24 representatives, the letter asks that the goals set for female participation in the construction industry be recalculated using current census demographics data to reflect the current times. The representatives argue that the federal government should ensure equal access to new jobs created by the American Investment and Recovery Act and reaffirm the government's commitment to gender equity in the workplace. This reform will also increase the number of women in nontraditional occupations, which on average provide wages 30 percent higher than traditionally female oriented occupations.

House Passes Landmark Student Aid Bill: the House passed (253-171) the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act (H.R. 3221). As one of the single largest investments in higher education ever, this bill, sponsored by Representative George Miller (D-CA), the chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, will make college more affordable for millions of students and their families. Earlier, AAUW and the Obama administration both came out in strong support of this legislation. AAUW strongly supports the bill's provisions to move all federal loans to the Direct Lending program by 2010, and the bill's expansion of the Pell grant funding program. While this bill will help all students, women in particular stand to gain from an amendment that AAUW played a key role in adding to the bill which focuses on the need to have more women and underrepresented minorities enter science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) careers.

Senate Subcommittee Questions Voucher Program: the Senate Financial Services and General Government Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee held a hearing to review federal appropriations for the District of Columbia school voucher program. Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL), chair of the subcommittee, expressed concern about the financial accountability and oversight of the safety and academic records of some of the schools involved in the program, according to the Washington Post. "There is a cadre of these vouchers schools really going unaccounted for," he said. "That is unacceptable."

AAUW opposes the voucher program and the Scholarships for Opportunities and Results Act (S. 1552), introduced by Senator Lieberman (I-CT), which would reauthorize the DC voucher program, allow new students into the program, increase the number of students who receive vouchers, and increase the voucher amount.

AAUW has long opposed diverting public funds to private or religious elementary and secondary schools. The DC voucher program was created in 2003 as a five-year pilot program, scheduled to expire in 2008. This program funnels taxpayer money to private schools that do not have to follow laws that apply to public schools, such as the No Child Left Behind Act and Title IX. This program is the nation's only federally-funded voucher program. In addition, the program has not been shown to improve academic achievement. In April 2009, the Department of Education released a new report which found no improvement in academic achievement for those students receiving vouchers from public schools in need of improvement-the target audience of the voucher program.