

First of all, thank you for serving your branch as the public policy chair. Your position enables you to place AAUW's program of helping to promote equity for all women and girls into action. As you know, the way to make changes in our society is through public policy action on issues.

Last year many of you participated in our pilot public policy program. As with any new program we did an evaluation at the end of the AAUW year and found two shortcomings: (1) We were trying to cover too many issues; we had about 31 issues we were trying to cover. (2) We were not getting the message out across the state when action was needed on an issue; you all know that legislators pay attention to the number of messages they receive about a bill.

Your state Executive Committee decided to try a change for 2013 as it is a long session (Jan. to June usually) for the NC General Assembly. We formed a state Public Policy Leadership Team composed of Suzanne Rolland from Brevard, Mari Pino del Rosario from Greensboro, Judy Balsanek from Twin Rivers/New Bern, and Maggie Parish from Wilmington. I have been serving as the facilitator for this committee. They met by teleconference in early March and decided on four categories of AAUW issues: Education, Health, Economic Security and Social Justice.

Education we have the following issues that we are tracking:

S42 Charter School/Gov't Unit
S27 Public School Protection/Firearm Amendment
S12 Appoint Superintendent of Public Instruction
H146 Back to Basics
H176 Charter School Election
H144 Homeschool Education Income Tax Credit
S59 Armed Security Guards in K-12

Issues under Health :

S132 Health Curriculum in Public Schools
H100 Healthy families and Workplaces/ Paid sick leave
Fracking as it relates to regulations to keep potable water

Issues under Economic Security

Payday Lending
Earned Income Tax Credit (NC)
Tax reform that is equitable to all our NC citizens

Social Justice

Safe guards for foster childcare
Voter I.D.

You can follow these bills and issues easily using the Short Track on the AAUWNC website. Under Advocacy click on what's happening in the ncga and then click on AAUWNC tracking list and you see a page with some tabs at the bottom of the page; click on bills we are following and you are there.

We'd like to know if your branch is following any other state issue(s) that they would like to recommend be added to this list. If you send an e-mail to mapeterson2@yahoo.com and I will share the information with the committee at our next teleconferencing meeting on April 1.

We are hoping that by the 2014 session, AAUW will have a state program set up that is similar to their national program called "Two Minute Activist" making it very easy to contact your legislator. Until that time we'd appreciate if the contact legislator would be placed in your branch newsletter, if you haven't already shared it.

This year we are sharing information by using two lists that you can subscribe to on the AAUW NC website. To receive background information on the issue you should subscribe to pp-info@aauwnc.org To receive action alerts asking you to contact your legislator you should subscribe to pp-alerts@aauwnc.org

We will discuss this plan at the annual state meeting in Burlington, so be prepared to share what you have found to be good and what you think needs to be further refined or changed. Suggestions are always welcome as that's how we make improvements.