

Advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research

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In principle and practice, AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class.

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NC Women Matter: Organize for Action Now!

Approximately 80 women participated in a lively and timely conference on Saturday, July 20, 2013 in Greensboro, NC at the Global Learning Center of Bennett College. The conference was sponsored by NC Women Matter and included at least nineteen AAUW members, some as the primary representatives of other organizations.

The purpose of the conference was to bring women together to discuss issues of importance and to prepare action plans.

An update on key issues resulting from the recently concluded session of the General Assembly included Tazra Mitchell of the NC Justice Center on the state budget, Jina Dhillon of NC Women United on the National Health Law program and John Dornan, an Education and Management consultant, on the impact of legislative actions on the educational system in NC.

Katy Munger of Progress NC gave an excellent presentation on the Seven Steps to Effective Messaging—Connecting to the Hearts and Minds of your audience. Entertainment at lunch was a performance by the “Raging Grannies” who have been entertaining and motivating attendees at the Moral Monday rallies in Raleigh.

After a morning spent listening to issues, the afternoon sessions focused on how to take action. Topics included building organizational coalitions, linking issues to the ballot box and how to get out the vote, including helping people without approved voter IDs to get them. The afternoon concluded with a motivational drumming performance that had all of the attendees involved.



Among the AAUW NC participants at the conference were (lt. to rt.) Millie Hoffier Foushee, Terry Wall, Judy Balsanek, Denny McGuire, Mary Fran Schickedantz and Mary Peterson. Denny McGuire wrote the report notes for this article.

President's Message

"Let's Accomplish our Vision"



My vision for NC women includes quality education, equality, economic security and the right to make our own reproductive choices. You might say this is what all AAUW women want and you'd probably be correct. Also if you followed issues in the 2013 session of the NC General

Congress, you probably know the following:

- NC public education from K through the University system had severe budget cuts and money diverted to private education.
- We are still working to get the ERA amendment ratified.
- The Pay Check Fairness Act has not been passed.
- Reproductive health restrictions were made for NC women.

If we are to see improvements for NC women, we need to look at the question, "What can **I do** to improve the quality of life for NC women?" Many of us have been contacting our legislators, voting, signing petitions, and being part of protests and still the legislation we were opposing has been passed.

Yes, it is frustrating but we can't just sit down and quit trying.

Let's look at some possible solutions.

- We all know it is hard to change someone's mind on an issue so we need to find and recruit candidates who agree with us on the issue. This applies to candidates for all levels of government: local, state and federal.
- It does take money to run for office, so we need to open our purses and write checks to support the candidates we like.
- Maybe we need to look at how we can help finance education at the local level for starters.
- Register voters and drive them to the polls.

These are just a few ideas, but I'm sure you see the picture. Join me in working with ideas that will help us accomplish our vision for all NC women and girls.

Mary

Public Education Takes Major Hits

Submitted by Susanne Rolland, Brevard Branch

Introduction

Those of us who set out to follow legislation for AAUW in North Carolina in January of this year soon found that we had far more than we had bargained for on our hands. We were not just up against a few bills we disapproved of but an onslaught of bills that sought to drastically change our state. But bills presented in Raleigh were not always written there. The close resemblance to measures passed in Wisconsin, Texas, Florida and elsewhere soon became apparent as did close ties between Radical Republican Lawmakers and ALEC, the corporate-sponsored bill writing enterprise that has provided the Tea Party agenda nationally.

The legislature failed to consider that what might be broken in another state might not be broken in NC. In no area was this more apparent than that of education. The 2013 legislative session included attacks on voting rights, abortion rights, Medicaid access, unemployment benefits, and the environment but in no other area did it galvanize as much opposition as with education.

North Carolina has taken education very seriously for decades, maintaining a higher tax rate than most other Southern states in order to fund education. It has long taken pride in its university system and seen education as the path to economic success for the state. At the very moment the Legislature is declaring public education broken, the state is graduating more high school students than ever in its history; 82% of the students who begin high school together graduate in four years.

Changes made by this legislative session in the area of public education are apparent by looking at the budget approved by both houses. Changes in philosophy and direction are also revealed in legislation passed that encourages the privatization of public education in North Carolina.

Budget Analysis

We are dependent for our discussion of the 2013-15 Fiscal Year Final Budget on the report on that budget made by Tazra Mitchell, Policy Analyst for the Budget and Tax Center of the NC Justice Center. Her analysis for the 2014 fiscal year reveals that the budget:

(continued on page 5)

NC Legislators' Report Card

Do We Need an AAUW Report Card?

Democracy North Carolina is one of the state's most respected sources of impartial data on the role of money in politics, voter participation and good government. One of the most useful tools documenting the voting records of legislators in Raleigh, entitled a **Sample Report Card**, was published this spring by Democracy North Carolina.

The **Sample Report Card** gave a grade to all NC legislators, based on whether they voted against **10 Bad Bills** which were chosen by Democracy NC. The bills were chosen, based on the impact of proposed legislation which would make voting harder, promote discrimination, increase poverty, defund public schools or threaten our health.

The higher the grade, the better! To see the **Sample Report Card** for all NC Senators and Representatives, go to www.democracy-nc.org.

Many AAUW NC members followed legislation which impacted women and girls, and the response of their elected officials to such legislation. The AAUW NC Public Policy Project alerted members of pending legislation on several issues throughout the long session using CQ StateTrack.

Now that NC General Assembly has concluded its long session, all legislators' votes are now on record. How did your representatives vote on issues most important to you?

The **Sample Report Card** is an excellent template for gathering information on issues central to our AAUW mission. AAUW NC (or a branch) could develop its own short list of bad bills, record the voting record of all legislators on those bills and then assign a grade/value to elected officials. Information from an AAUW NC Report Card could be used locally in press releases, in public information forums or in efforts to get out the vote among women in their communities.

Would your branch be interested in having an **AAUW NC Report Card** prior to the next election cycle in 2014? It's a great, short-term project for harnessing the energy which now appears to drive public discontent among many voters in NC.

The AAUW NC Report Card Project will be discussed at each of the regional meetings this fall. Plan to come and share your thoughts on this possible initiative.

AAUW NC Fall Regional Meetings

Sandra McLaurin, Branch Advocate Vice President

Fall is on its way and with it the AAUW NC Fall Regional Meetings. The dates are September 28 in Wilmington, October 1 in Asheville, and October 12 in Charlotte. These regional meetings are a way for branches to learn more about AAUW, AAUW NC and share information with other branches.

The meetings will run from 10:00am to 2:00pm. Check-in with coffee and a continental breakfast begins at 9:30am. Lunch will be provided.

Each branch is encouraged to send 2-5 members to one of the meetings, including the President and the public policy representative of each branch.

The meetings will have a common agenda. The main thrust of the meetings will be public policy and advocacy, resources available from national, and what's going on in the branches. Information on "how to advocate" and "how to recruit candidates that support AAUW issues" will be shared.

The AAUW NC new project, Report Card Project, will be introduced and discussed. Be ready with ideas and concerns. We will look at "Program in a Box" and other resources available from national.

There will be a brief report on the AAUW Convention held in New Orleans. Branch issues such as STEM, how to recruit new members, fundraising, will be discussed as time permits.

You may attend any of the regional meetings. The dates and contact information for each location are listed below. Register as soon as possible to help the host branch plan for these events. Check updates on the meetings at <http://www.aauwnc.org/events/2013-fall-regional-meetings/>

Eastern: Saturday, September 28
Place: Wilmington, NC
Contact: Sandra McLaurin 910-392-0395
scmlaurin@ec.rr.com

Western: Tuesday, October 1
Place: Asheville, NC
Contact: Catherine T. Battle 828-348-0505
catherinebattle@earthlink.net

Piedmont: Saturday, October 12
Place: Charlotte, NC
Contact: Diane Schneider, 704-598-6268
 704.451-1451 dmschneider@carolina.rr.com

Update on ERA Progress

Roberta Madden, Co-Director of RATIFY ERA-NC, reports that “we now have the best chance in 30 years to make ERA part of the Constitution, and we need your help.”

The only constitutional protection women now have is the right to vote. The ERA will provide a bedrock protection against discrimination. Without it, women will continue our piecemeal efforts for equal pay; for equal opportunities in the military, employment, education, and the justice system; and for other legal rights. For more information, please see our website: www.era-nc.org.

Legislation has been introduced in both houses of Congress to eliminate the deadline for ratification. Once these measures pass, only three more states need to ratify. **Senate Joint Resolution 15** and **House Joint Resolution 43** have been attracting numerous cosponsors from both political parties, including our own Senator Kay Hagan. But we need Senator Burr and our U.S. House representatives to sign on as cosponsors too.

Call this toll free number at the U.S. Capitol: **1-877-762-8762**. Ask for the office of Senator Richard Burr. Ask for Natasha Hickmar, his legislative director. If she's not available, leave a message on her voice mail, urging him to cosponsor SJR 15.

Call the number again and ask for the office of your U.S. representative. Urge him/her to cosponsor HJR 43.

Please send an email at www.era-nc.org to let Madden know the response from your legislators.

2013 AAUW National Convention “Leading Across Generations”

A total of 19 North Carolina AAUW members joined members from across the US in New Orleans June 9 – 12, 2013 to sharpen their skills, network and hear exemplary women speakers.

Members elected Patricia Fae Ho as **AAUW President** and Julia Brown as **AAUW Vice President**. In addition to selecting the new officers and directors, AAUW members voted to approve all the proposed changes to the AAUW Public Policy Program, as well as one change to the AAUW Bylaws.

Comments from New Orleans...

“The AAUW 2013 Convention was the first that I have attended. Being able to hear women such as Olympia Snow and Lilly Ledbetter speak was worth the trip. The speaker Robin Gerber, speaking on Eleanor Roosevelt, was the best speaker that I have ever heard. The workshops that I attended, Empowering Women, STEM, College connections, were all very educational. I was amazed by the things that AAUW women are doing.” *Sandra McClarin, Wilmington*

I attended the conference of State Presidents from 9 to 5 on June 9th. The theme was *Planting the Seeds of Leadership*. We did a lot of work in small groups and exchanged many ideas, best practices, and strategies.

The Opening Night Dinner was a gala affair with New Orleans jazz blues by a female musical group. Carol Virostek was honored with a named endowment for her work on AAUW’s popular campus leadership programs.

With all members now having a say in AAUW business under our One Member, One Vote system, this year’s convention had a rich spread of 30 workshops, skill building sessions and special interest group meetings.

We celebrated 125 years of AAUW fellowships and grants, the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Equal Pay Act, heard speakers that had inspiring messages and viewed the movie, *The Invisible War*. I thoroughly enjoyed Robin Gerber speaking about *Leadership the Eleanor Roosevelt Way*.

Of course, we enjoyed the wonderful New Orleans restaurants and connected with friends. As an AAUW member in five states, conventions are like reunions!
Mary Peterson, New Bern

Below (lt. to rt.) Mary Fran Schickedantz, Diane Schneider, Kathleen Hespelt and Kay White discuss the day’s highlights during dinner.



Public Education Takes Major Hits *(continued from page 2)*

- falls 2.2% short of what was needed to maintain current service levels for school children and college students, and does not make up for cuts in prior years.
- increases the teacher-to-student ratios, forcing school districts to cut positions or find other funding sources. The DPI estimates that this could result in 5,200 fewer teachers.
- cuts 21% of the funding for teacher assistants, which equates to 3,800 positions.
- reduces funding for textbooks by 25% of what the DPI determined is needed.
- includes \$7 million to create a controversial school safety program in elementary and middle schools that trains and employs security officers.
- cuts \$3.2 million from the National Board Certification Loan Program which provides loans to teachers pursuing certification to improve performance and achievement, and phases out the salary incentive for teachers/staff who earn advanced degrees
- replaces recurring funding for the NC Center for the Advancement of Teaching with one time funding, pending further review.
- phases out tenure; no salary increase for teachers.

Privatization

While the legislature seemed to express contempt for public teachers, indifference to public school excellence, and a lack of concern for the state's tradition of strong support for public education, they demonstrated some interest and enthusiasm about changing the direction of public education in North Carolina in the direction of privatization.

The number and power of charter schools was increased; they are expected to proliferate in the state in the coming

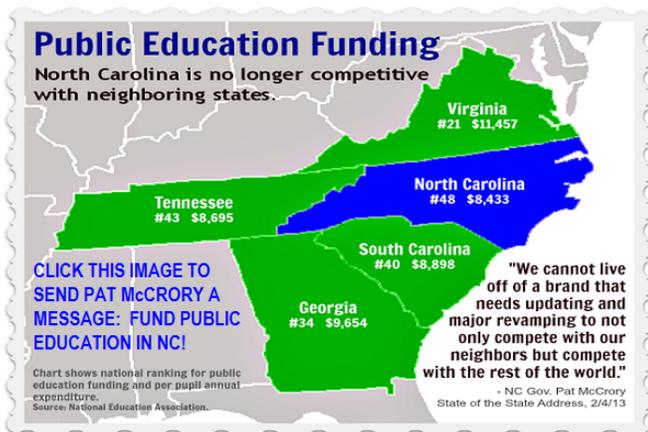
year. Charter schools can select their students; do not have to meet all the requirements that public schools; and do not have to provide transportation, free lunches, and services to students in need of both. Their teachers do not have to meet the educational requirements of public schools. There are already indications that some of the private schools founded to avoid school integration, frequently in the guise of religious schools, will remake themselves into charter schools.

A more controversial, aspect of the move toward privatization of public education is the introduction of a voucher program in North Carolina for the first time. Nationally, public school students are regularly outperforming voucher recipients in the school districts that have been using vouchers the longest.

New legislation provides \$10 million in the first year in the budget for the voucher program, expected to increase in size. Students can access up to \$4,200 a year in taxpayer funding to pay for tuition and expenses at private or religious schools, provided their families earn no more than 133% of the income threshold for the national school lunch program (\$57,945 for a family of four).

As we are all aware, there is considerable citizen outcry over new developments in education in North Carolina. Anyone who takes seriously the core AAUW principle that "quality public education is the foundation of a democratic society" and lives in North Carolina should consider if this is a moment to become an activist in North Carolina.

Editor's Note: Susanne Rolland, a member of the AAUW NC Public Policy Project leadership team, was responsible for monitoring education issues throughout the last NC General Assembly session. This article excerpts much of her research on that topic. A complete summary of her research paper can be found on our web site, www.aauwnc.org.



"Instead of investing adequate resources in schools, health care, public safety and the other building blocks of a strong and enduring economy, state lawmakers chose to make room for tax cuts for the wealthy and profitable businesses that will cost \$683.8 million in lost revenue over the next two years, and \$3.8 billion over the next five years.

**Tazra Mitchell, Policy Analyst
Budget and Tax Center of the NC Justice Center**



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When & Where!

Branch Regional Meetings

Wilmington September 28, 2013
 Asheville October 1, 2013
 Charlotte October 12, 2013

2014 Annual Meeting

March 28-29, 2014
 Burlington Country Inn & Suites

AAUW NC Tar Heel News

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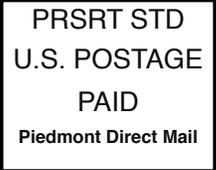
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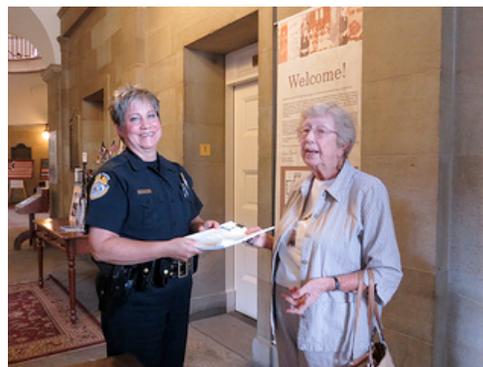
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Greensboro, NC

Peterson Delivers Petition to Governor

On July 22, AAUW North Carolina President Mary Peterson delivered a petition telling Gov. McCrory to veto bills that could force many women's health centers in the state to shut down and restrict access to services such as cancer screening and breast exams. Afterward, she and many other AAUW members joined advocates in a rally at the Capitol.



AAUW NC President Mary Peterson is greeted at the Capitol before heading to the Governor's Office with the petition.

The petition was signed by more than 500 AAUW members and allies.

Peterson reported that "AAUW NC stands with all NC women on issues of reproductive choice, education, and economy security. We are supporting each other and our voices will be heard. We won't stand down."