



EMPOWERING WOMEN SINCE 1881

## INDEPENDENCE BRANCH

Empowering women since 1940

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AAUW advances gender equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy.

### President's Message January 2025



#### Welcome to 2025: Choose a Door

Today I saw a meme online for the new year by the political cartoonist Garth German. At the top of the picture was a sign that said, "Welcome to 2025: Choose a Door." Below the sign were two doors. On the first door was a sign that said, "Disengage and Hope It Turns Out OK for You." The second door said, "Fight for What's Right." There was a picture of a person opening and entering the second door.

The following is a comment about that meme from the social media community "Hell and Earth" that summarizes it better than I ever could:

"In 2025, will we choose to disengage and hope for the best, or take collective action to create a better world? Avoidance may seem easier, but it leaves injustice unchallenged and allows disinformation to spread, causing harm to persist. Progress requires stepping into discomfort and standing up for what's right. Speaking out, supporting others, rejecting complacency are how we shape the future. Every action, no matter how small, strengthens the collective effort for change. The world doesn't change on its own; it changes when we decide to fight for it."

Together in 2025, let's open and enter the second door.

Karol

## **Upcoming Events:**

### **January Meetings**

#### **AAUW Book Club**

January 14, 2025

“The Tide Between Us” by Olive Collins

Led by Jolene Cerveney

#### **Board Meeting**

January 14, 2025

6:00 PM First United Methodist Church, Fellowship Hall

#### **Branch Meeting**

January 28, 2025

6:30 PM Gather 7:00 PM Program

A representative from the Independence School District will speak on the ISD Academy programs, focusing on STEM

## **Additional AAUW Dates to remember:**

Jan 29 – National I & E Committee Webinar 6:00 pm Watch for the Registration Form.  
(Luna Mukherjee (KC Branch) and Karen Francis (Ballwin Chesterfield Branch) will be presenting)

Feb 19 – AAUW National Liaison Support Call 6:00 pm

Feb 22 – Legislative Briefing 9:00 – 12:00 (See page 4 of this newsletter)

April 28 – AAUW National Liaison Support Call 6:00 pm

Link to Join AAUW National Liaison Support Calls Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87646643179?pwd=yI6efBC159aap5wsg1hbdvQI8EfKLd.1>

Meeting ID: 876 4664 3179 Passcode: 122456

## **Invitation from the Kansas City Branch**

Please join us on January 19 at All Souls UU Church,  
4501 Walnut Street, Kansas City, MO 64111.  
2:00-2:30 pm Social Time; 2:30-3:30 pm Program and Q&A.

Jane McClain (KC Branch member) is presenting  
“The Road to Equality—The ERA, the Women Who Brought It This Far, and Where Do We Go Now?”  
She will also have “The Wall of Women’s Achievement” on display.

I plan to go, if you would like to carpool, let me know.  
Sue Shineman



This email from Shannon Wolfe was received on January 8 at 8:01 am.

Please make it a priority to read it and click on the links and comment on each section. I want you to especially respond to the third point on Membership and the proposed Dues Increase. It is important that National hears from each one of you. I encourage you to share your honest feedback.

As an AAUW member, your voice counts. We're asking for your feedback on:

1. Proposed dues changes
2. Proposed changes to the AAUW national bylaws
3. Proposed changes to the Public Policy Priorities

**Why it matters:** The Board of Directors is considering a change to AAUW member dues to help meet rising costs. AAUW member dues have not kept pace with the cost of supporting AAUW's membership and the Board will consider a \$5 per year increase in dues from 2025-2029. This dues change supports AAUW's commitment to financial sustainability, the financial strength of the national office and our ability to support branches and states.

Additionally, every AAUW member has the right to comment on proposed changes to the bylaws and Public Policy Priorities before they are put to the membership for a vote this spring.

**Comments can be submitted until January 29 at 4:00 pm CT.**

[Click here](#) to review and comment on the proposed bylaws amendments.

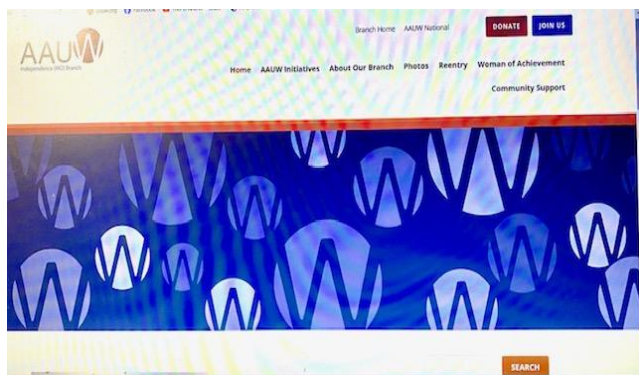
[Click here](#) to review and comment on the proposed changes to the Public Policy Priorities.

[Click here](#) to review and comment on the proposed changes to membership dues.

If you have questions, please review the [FAQ](#) or email me at [wolfes@aauw.org](mailto:wolfes@aauw.org). We look forward to your input!



In solidarity,  
Shannon Wolfe  
Managing Director & Chief of Staff



**AAUW MO State and Independence Branch Websites have a new look and feel!** Check them out! You will find it so much easier to use and find what you are looking for. The branch website also has a tab that takes you directly to the National Website. There are many valuable resources in both locations.

<https://independence-mo.aauw.net/> or  
<https://aauw-mo.aauw.net/>

## Federal Bill Tracker link

Use this site if you would like to find out the status of bills and their progress through both Houses, presentation to the President, if he signs the bill, and when the bill becomes a law, check out this fascinating website:

<https://www.congress.gov>.



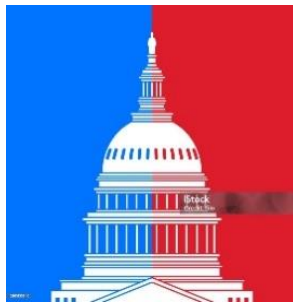
### Affirm the Equal Rights Amendment - Take Action Now!

We need President Biden to make this happen immediately. He must do this before he leaves office, as it is obvious that the incoming administration does not support women's rights.

Send a text message to President Biden at 3024040880.

The message is "Publish the ERA @from Missouri

It's been more than a century since the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was introduced. Without the ERA in the U.S. Constitution, advances in women's rights that we took for granted are being weakened or even reversed. Waiting a century for over half of the U.S. population to attain constitutional equality is long enough. Not one more week!



**The 2025 AAUW Missouri Legislative Briefing** will be held on Saturday, February 22, 2025, via Zoom from 9 am - 12 pm. Join with leaders from organizations with strong advocacy positions who are working to influence Missouri Legislative action.

The Legislative Briefing allows Missouri organizations with common missions to share their activities with others at this free public event. Leaders will briefly overview their organization and explain their main legislative priorities, along with bill numbers, titles, and authors they want us to monitor.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89911952509?pwd=DNL3tqU1O6SUEfPHjYjvKbt5UbKZFI.1>

Meeting ID: 899 1195 2509 Passcode: 126137



## **International Women’s Day – March 8, 2025, theme is “Accelerate Action”**

**Calling for urgency, inclusion, and transformative change** - It signals that equality cannot wait, and that all sectors of society must work together to quicken the pace of progress for women’s rights and empowerment.

**Inspiring momentum for change** - The campaign focus encourages activism and engagement at all levels—political, corporate, and grassroots—motivating individuals, governments, and organizations to take concrete steps toward gender equality. It empowers those who are already working toward gender justice and calls on those who have been passive to join the movement.

**Inclusivity and intersectionality** - Accelerating action means recognizing that gender inequality affects different women in different ways—whether due to race, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status or further aspects. The campaign focus emphasizes the need for an intersectional approach, ensuring that all women, particularly those most marginalized, benefit from the progress made.

Our branch will also partner with Independence First United Methodist Church. Please let me know of your willingness to serve on the IWD Committee. Planning is underway.

Sue Shineman

## **Become a 2-Minute Activist**

<https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/>

**You provide the voice. AAUW will provide the megaphone.**

This is absolutely the easiest way to support the advocacy work of AAUW. Please sign up if you have not already done so. Also share the link with your friends. You don’t have to be a member of AAUW to participate in this important work.

Send emails and texts to your legislators to fight for equal pay, family leave, stopping sexual harassment, equality in education and more. Sign up to get regular alerts to be able to take timely action.

AAUW provides all the tools you need to call or send messages to your members of Congress, contact your state legislators about pressing issues and more.

**AAUW Independence ~ Service in Action**, Sue Raymond program co-chair

3 o'clock Tuesday, December 17 opened our eyes to a new world of serving opportunities (Service in action) for AAUW independence Branch. We helped host the Christmas party for the residents and babies at Mothers Refuge.

You could find us holding babies, pouring hot chocolate, decorating cookies, helping write thank you notes; thoroughly enjoying ourselves.

Members in Attendance: Sue Raymond, Sue Shineman, Jan Keeler, Jane Campbell, Karol Palmer, Patty Chadwick, and Lisa Cox

Pictured Below: Patty Chadwick, Jan Keeler, and Buddy the Elf!



See the next page  
for an exciting announcement  
about our branch  
from Karol

Congratulations AAUW Independence on our Five Star Achievement  
Karol Palmer

AAUW Independence has received four out of five stars on the AAUW National Five Star Program for 2024. The following is the email I received from National on December 16, 2024, informing us of our achievements:

“It is with great pleasure that I share some exciting news—AAUW Independence (MO) Branch has achieved four stars in AAUW’s **FY24 Five Star Program!** Your branch attained the **Communications & External Relations, Programming, Governance & Sustainability and Public Policy & Advocacy** stars. This recognition is a testament to the dedication, hard work, and commitment of your branch members to advancing AAUW’s mission of gender equity for women and girls.

The Five Star Program is designed to honor branches that align their work with AAUW’s strategic priorities in areas such as Advancement, Public Policy & Advocacy, Governance & Sustainability, Programming, and Communications & External Relations. Earning four stars is an incredible accomplishment, and we are thrilled to celebrate this success with you.

While we will be updating the AAUW website soon to reflect all the branches that have earned stars this year, we wanted to ensure your branch received this good news first. Your achievement will be highlighted alongside other winning branches, showcasing your vital role in supporting AAUW’s mission both locally and nationally. State leadership will be informed in the coming days.

Congratulations again on this well-deserved recognition. Thank you for your continued leadership and dedication to creating a more equitable world. If you have any questions or would like additional resources to help your branch continue its progress in the Five Star Program, please don’t hesitate to reach out.”

Regards and Happy Holidays,  
Tremayne A. Parquet (he/him/his)  
Deputy Director of Advancement  
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