

## CHAPTER EIGHT : VOTER EDUCATION AND GET-OUT-THE-VOTE (GOTV) TOOLS AND TIPS

- ◆ 2004 AAUW Voter Education Campaign Flier
- ◆ Building Coalitions for Voter Education  
And GOTV Activities
- ◆ AAUW Voter Guides
- ◆ Distributing AAUW Voter Guides
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**The Power of One  
Vote**

**AAUW Voter Education Campaign 2004**

**Why AAUW's Voter Education Campaign Is Critical**

Election Day 2004—Tuesday, Nov. 2—is just around the corner. And with your support, women's voices will again be heard through AAUW's Voter Education Campaign.

Since 1995 AAUW has conducted voter education and get-out-the-vote activities in almost every state. For the 2000 elections alone, AAUW members and their coalition partners reached 2 million drop-off women voters in 136 congressional districts and 14 Senate races.

The campaign has achieved success in educating women voters on the issues at stake as well as increasing women's activism nationwide, recruiting and retaining AAUW members, forging diverse partnerships, increasing visibility, and fostering leadership development.

**What You Can Do**

**Inform Women Voters**

While the make-up of Congress is somewhat different from when AAUW's campaign began in 1995, many issues remain at stake for women and families. The current congressional leadership jeopardizes women's rights—reproductive choice, equity in education and the



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workplace, health care, and more—at every turn. Inform women of the issues at stake. Join AAUW members and partners to get the word out.

- ☆ Keep women voters informed through *Get the Facts*. Distributed by the Women's Network for Change, a nationwide coalition, these fax and e-mail alerts let thousands of women know how the issues in Congress affect their lives.
- ☆ E-mail members of Congress with AAUW's Two-Minute Activist, located on the web at <http://capwiz.com/aauw/home/>
- ☆ Hold issue forums on social security reform, welfare reauthorization, Title IX, and judicial nominations, as part of the issue education program sponsored by AAUW.
- ☆ Organize letter-writing campaigns to members of Congress and editors of local and national media outlets.

**Get Out the Women's Vote**

As we near the 2004 elections, gear up to get out the women's vote.

- ☆ Mail and distribute AAUW's informative, nonpartisan voter guides.
- ☆ Hold public candidate forums.
- ☆ Organize phone banks to contact women and encourage them to vote.
- ☆ Use partnerships with diverse organizations to inform a broad cross-section of women on the issues at stake.

**Resources You Can Use**

Log onto AAUW's website at <http://www.aauw.org/takeaction/vec.cfm> for these resources. (Resources are free unless otherwise noted.)

- ☆ *Get the Facts* alerts, to share with colleagues and friends and disseminate in your community
- ☆ *Action Alert*, AAUW's monthly public policy newsletter (\$20/year or free to members on AAUW's website)
- ☆ Two-Minute Activist, where you can send e-mails to members of Congress
- ☆ Position papers on AAUW priority issues
- ☆ Voting records for your members of Congress
- ☆ AAUW Public Policy Program in English and in Spanish

For more information about the AAUW Voter Education Campaign, including how-to materials and voter guide templates, contact AAUW's Public Policy Department (800/608-5286, [votered@aauw.org](mailto:votered@aauw.org)) or complete, clip, and return this coupon to the address below.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

AAUW Member? Y N

Yes, sign me up for *Get the Facts* alerts!

Please send me the following information (check all that apply):

- How to join AAUW
- How to get out the vote
- Branches and activities in my community
- Other



## **Building Coalitions for Voter Education and Get-Out-the-Vote (GOTV) Activities**

Working in coalition with a wide range of diverse organizations on activities such as voter education efforts, candidate and issue forums, and disseminating voter guides allows you to take on larger projects, reach more members of your community, increase AAUW membership, and gain visibility. However, there are important legal guidelines to keep in mind when building coalitions for voter education and GOTV activities.

### **Building Voter Guide Coalitions—501 (c) ...what??**

Because non-profit organizations with different tax statuses are subject to different legal rules for voter education and GOTV activities, it is important to review AAUW's legal guidelines (available in the appendix of this manual or on the AAUW website Member Center at [www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org)).

**There are three main categories of non-profit tax status:**

1. 501 (c) (3) (organizations such as the AAUW Educational Foundation, for whom donations are tax-deductible).
2. 501 (c) (4) (tax status held by the Association).
3. 501 (c) (4) with political action committee (PAC) (some 501 (c) (4) organizations have PACs, through which they make financial donations to candidates).

### **Rules to Remember**

As stated in the AAUW Legal Guidelines, the only organizations that can legally participate in voter guide and GOTV activities are 501(c) (4) organizations that, like AAUW, do not coordinate with candidates, PACs, or political parties.

***AAUW can plan candidate or issue forums with organizations that have 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) tax status. But AAUW can build voter guide coalitions only with organizations that:***

- ✓ Have NOT endorsed candidates in the district;
- ✓ Have 501(c) (4) tax status; and
- ✓ Do NOT have a political action committee (PAC).

***Organizations that are classified as 501(c)(3) cannot participate in voter guide efforts.***

**Some examples of organizations and their tax status:**

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Tax Status</u>	<u>Local/National</u>
League of Women Voters	501(c)(4)	both
Interfaith Alliance	501(c)(3)	both
Pro-Choice Network	PAC	local
ACLU	501(c)(4) and PAC	both
National Council of Negro Women	501(c)(3)	both
MANA, (A Latina organization)	501(c)(3)	both
Retired Teacher's Association	501(c)(4)	both
Pro-Choice Network	501(c)(4) and PAC	local
AFL-CIO	501(c)(4)	both
NOW	501(c)(4) and PAC	both
Parent-Teacher Association	501(c)(3)	local
Gay and Lesbian Alliance	501(c)(4) and PAC	local
NAACP	501(c)(4) and PAC	both
YWCA	501(c)(3)	both
American Association of People With Disabilities (AAPD)	501(c)(3)	national



**When building your coalition, reach out to a broad range of organizations. Consider the following:**

- ✓ Local organizations that have no national affiliation.
- ✓ Any non-partisan organization that you know is doing voter education work.
- ✓ Organizations representing people of color.
- ✓ Organizations representing those with disabilities.
- ✓ Organizations working on AAUW priority issues—education, reproductive rights, civil rights, and workplace issues.

*If you have questions about coalition building or other aspects of AAUW's legal guidelines, contact the AAUW Public Policy Department at 800/608-5286 or [votered@aauw.org](mailto:votered@aauw.org).*

## AAUW Voter Guides

AAUW's voter guides provide non-partisan information about candidate positions on AAUW's priority issues. Issues important to women and families are very much at stake in the 2004 elections, therefore it is vital that women vote, and that they go to the polls knowing where the candidates stand on the issues such as education, Social Security and Medicare reform, and civil and reproductive rights.

AAUW will provide the materials and support you need to produce professional voter guides for federal elections in your state. The step-by-step information below will help you get started.

### **Step 1: Voter Guide Templates**



Each federal election year, AAUW creates templates that states and branches can use to create voter guides. The Public Policy Department identifies key AAUW priority issues that are the basis for the guides, and develops a template using these issues for specific congressional races upon member request. Although template issues are based on congressional votes, members can use them as a guide to create voter guides for state and local races as well.

### **Template Q&A**

***Q: How is the template sent to me?***

**A:** The Public Policy Department will mail the templates on a computer disk to those who request them, enabling AAUW members to add the positions of challengers electronically. The guides can then be printed at a local copy shop (see sample guide in the appendix of this manual).

***Q: Who researches the candidate positions?***

**A:** For congressional races, AAUW will fill in the incumbent's positions on the guide. Those requesting the guide are responsible for researching the positions of challengers. More information on research is included below.

***Q: When should I start my research?***

**A:** Although the templates are usually made available to SPPCs for distribution to branches in July or August of an election year, your research of candidate positions on AAUW priority issues can start as soon as candidates declare their candidacy.

### **Step 2: Build a team**



Find other AAUW members in your area who might be interested in helping with the voter guide project. Delegating work and establishing a network of members will make your voter guide project easier and more effective. Consider identifying one person in each congressional district who will read the paper and track other news sources for information on likely candidates for Congress and their positions on AAUW priority issues.

***See page 49-50 of this manual for detailed information on legal guidelines for working in coalition on voter guides.***

### **Step 3: Nuts and Bolts—Know the Rules**



**Be sure to review the information on the rules governing all AAUW voter education and GOTV activities.** Refer to the following documents, all of which are included in the appendix of this manual and available on the AAUW website Member Center.

AAUW Legal Guidelines for Election Activities  
AAUW Policy on Candidates for Office  
AAUW Guidelines for Candidates for Public Office  
AAUW Policy on Use of Name and Logo

If you have any questions about voter education activities or AAUW's policies, please contact AAUW Public Policy Staff at 1-800-608-5286 or [votered@aauw.org](mailto:votered@aauw.org).

### **Step 4: Do the Research**



According to the Federal Election Commission (FEC), voter guides **must use sources of information that are in the public domain.** For congressional races, public policy staff will document incumbent positions by looking at their votes in Congress, and will provide the record of those votes to the researcher in your district. The researcher's task, in coordination with other members and coalition partners, will be to document the positions of the challenger or non-incumbent candidate(s) on the issues listed in the voter guide.

According to the Federal Election Commission (FEC), voter guides like *What's at Stake for Women in 2004* **must use sources of information that are in the public domain** to document candidate positions.

#### **Public domain sources include:**

- ✓ Candidate advertisements
- ✓ Candidate speeches made at a public event
- ✓ Positions stated during public candidate forums
- ✓ Media (print or broadcast) stories that quote the candidates or their spokespersons
- ✓ Campaign position papers
- ✓ Candidate's website, letters, leaflets, brochures, or newsletters
- ✓ Candidate's votes on state or local legislation
- ✓ Information from trusted sources posted on the Internet (see examples on page 55 of this manual)

#### **Examples of non-public domain sources that may NOT be used to document a candidate position for AAUW voter guides include:**

Comments made by a candidate in a private setting (for example, at a private party or fundraising event not open to the public).

Comments made privately to you or another individual in a private *or* public setting.

Information obtained through direct and private contact with the candidate or his/her staff, *regardless of who initiates the contact.*

**Documentation.** It is not necessary to include the source of each position on the guide itself. However, it is important that you keep a record of the documentation for each position so that you are able to provide sources and answer any questions that might arise.

### **Step 5: Fill in the Blanks**



Once you have established positions for the candidates on your voter guide, complete the template by adding "support" or "oppose" where appropriate. If you were unable to locate one or even two positions for a candidate, it is permissible to list the candidate's position as "unknown."

### **Step 6: Distribute Voter Guides In Your Community**



AAUW's goal is to reach women who otherwise would not have access to information on the issues at stake. Once you have completed your voter guides, make sure that you distribute them, not just to AAUW members, but also to coalition partners and as many women as possible in your community. See page 54 of this manual for information on voter guide distribution.



#### **What About Questionnaires**

AAUW does not recommend that researchers create questionnaires to get information for voter guides because of stringent non-coordination guidelines and because they are often never returned by the candidates. In addition, when questionnaires are used, candidate responses must be printed in their entirety.

Positions from candidate questionnaires by other organizations may not be used in voter guides *unless* the questionnaire is "in the public domain." Thus, if the responses to a questionnaire conducted by another organization are published in the newspaper or on the Internet, they are considered "public" and may be used in voter guides.



## Distributing AAUW Voter Guides

**Getting the Word Out.** You requested your voter guide template; you and your voter education team researched the candidate positions; you have filled in the information and copied the guide; and now you are ready to distribute it in your community.

### **Step 1: Know Your Audience**

Don't just preach to the choir. AAUW's goal is to reach women who otherwise would not have access to information on the issues at stake. Once you have completed your voter guides, make sure that you distribute them, not just to AAUW members but also to coalition partners and women in your community.

### **Step 2: Reach Out to Women Voters**

There are many ways to distribute voter guides to women in your community:



**Post your voter guides in public places.** Public places such as child care centers, housing communities, work places, transit stations, hair salons, community centers, family planning clinics, and college campuses are great places to post your voter guide.



**Hold an open house.** Invite women in your community to join branch members for refreshments and a discussion of the issues. Hand out the voter guide. Don't forget to have a sign-in sheet at your event to identify prospective new members.



**Post the voter guide on your state or branch website.** Putting your voter guide on the web is an effective, inexpensive way to reach large numbers of women. If you do post the guide on your site, be sure to advertise it with messages on your state e-mail list and postings in public places in your community.



**Conduct literature drops.** Busy areas like campuses, office-building plazas during lunch hour, shopping centers, and transit stops are perfect places for distribution of voter guides. This is a great way to heighten voters' awareness of the coming election. Be sure to go to places that are frequented by women who would otherwise not have access to this information.



**Have your own speaker's bureau.** Organize teams or individuals to spend time speaking to other women and offering voter guides in places such as: community centers, community college or university government and women's studies classes, child care centers, grocery stores, or hair salons.



**Hold a media briefing.** Hold a press conference to brief members of the media about your Voter Education Campaign and let them know that you will be distributing voter guides in the community.



**Mail the guide.** If you are interested in mailing your voter guide to women in your community, contact the Public Policy Department at 800/608-5286 for ideas.





## Internet Resources for Voter Guide Research

### Federal Election Commission

<http://www.fec.gov>

The Federal Election Commission (FEC) website allows you to look up Political Action Committee (PAC) donations made to candidates. Donations from PACs with very specific and well-known issue stances such as the National Rifle Association (NRA), and the Women's Campaign Fund (pro-choice) can sometimes be used as position documentation.

### National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)

<http://www.ncsl.org/public/sitesleg.htm>

The NCSL site includes links to the websites of state legislatures. If the candidate you are researching currently holds or recently held office in your state legislature, you can often find information on the bills they sponsored, co-sponsored, or voted for or against in your state legislature's website.

### Your Local Paper

<http://newslink.org>

Many local newspapers are online and easily searchable. For lists of newspapers online in your state, visit Newslink at <http://newslink.org/>

### Project Vote Smart

<http://www.vote-smart.org/index.phtml>

Project Vote Smart (PVS) is a non-partisan, non-profit organization that conducts research on federal, state and some local candidates, and makes the information it gathers available on its website at no cost to the public. Visitors to the site can search information by candidate, office, or state. The best resource on the PVS site is the National Political Awareness Test (NPAT), a questionnaire covering a variety of issues that is sent to the candidates.

### Voters for Choice

<http://www.voters4choice.org/candidates>

Voters For Choice (VFC) is a non-profit, non-partisan political action committee that supports viable Democratic, Republican, and Independent pro-choice candidates through financial contributions, endorsements, and campaign services. VFC analyzes the voting records of Members of Congress to find out if they have voted pro-choice, mixed on choice, or anti-choice.

### The PBS Democracy Project

<http://www.pbs.org/democracy>

### The Washington Post

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/politics/elections/2004/>

### The New York Times

<http://www.nytimes.com/pages/politics/campaign/>

### Search Engines

#### Yahoo

[www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)

#### Google

[www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

#### Altavista

[www.altavista.com](http://www.altavista.com)

#### About.com

[www.about.com](http://www.about.com)