

**All state and branch AAUW Public Policy Objectives must focus on the mission of AAUW to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research. The Public Policy platform for AAUW New York State promotes and aligns with AAUW’s nonpartisan mission with a specific emphasis on issues affecting women and girls in New York state.**

**2023/2024 AAUW NY State Public Policy Priorities**

**A. Protection from censorship-book banning.**

The following two NY districts have already banned books. Book banning can happen in ANY state, including New York, depending on the composition of the school board.

**Banned Book**

**School District**

Me and White Supremacy	Saad, Layla	New York	Somers Central School District	November 2022
Gender Queer: A Memoir	Kobabe, Maia	New York	Washingtonville Central School District	September 2022

**Pen America a New York based advocacy group also noted the following books as banned because access is no longer freely available without a permission slip:**

**Marlboro Central School District**

- "Dear Martin" by Nic Stone, in the Marlboro Central School District.

- "The Poet X" by Elizabeth Acevedo in the Marlboro Central School District.

**Yorktown Central School District:**

- "All Boys Aren't Blue" by George M. Johnson
- "Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out" by Susan Kuklin
- "Jack of Hearts (and other parts)" by Rosen, L. C., "Lawn Boy" by Jonathan Evison
- "Looking for Alaska" by John Green
- "Out of Darkness" by Ashley Hope Pérez
- "The Bluest Eye" by Toni Morrison
- "The Hate U Give" by Angie Thomas

Moms for Liberty are also eyeing books to ban in these school districts: Hamburg, Orchard Park, West Seneca, Lancaster, Clarence, Cheektowaga, Williamsville, Amherst and Kenmore.

**Action : Contact school boards/ speak out at their meetings. Hold a public forum on the topic. Comment on social media/emails to state representatives.**

## **B. ERA New York Initiative/ ERA Federal /CEDAW**

### **ERA New York Initiative**

On January 24, 2023, the New York legislature passed the ERA-NY(equal Rights Amendment).

New Yorkers will vote on the ratification of this amendment on the 2024 ballot. Until the ratification, the only form of discrimination prohibited is based on a person's race and /or religion. This amendment prohibits discrimination by the government based on a person's ethnicity, national origin, age, disability and sex. Although this amendment's passage won't affect the federal ERA amendment, it will make a difference in the lives of New York Women.

**Action: Promote Get out the vote activities that emphasize the importance of the ratification of this amendment. Collaborate with other organizations such as League of Women Voters, PowHer ,NOW and New Yorkers for Equal Rights.**

## **ERA/Federal**

Kristin Gillibrand and Chuck Schumer point out that the time deadline for the ERA was set in the preamble rather than the body of the proposed ERA amendment. Legally, only what is contained in the body of the amendment is binding and therefore the time limit has no bearing on the passage of the amendment.

**Action: Collaborate with other organizations to keep the ERA in the forefront of legislative action and to promote ratification of the ERA. Initiate email/social media communications to our elected representatives encouraging them to continue the fight for ratification of the federal ERA. Collaborate with NGO CSW.**

## **CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women)**

CEDAW is the international treaty against discrimination against women that has not been ratified by the US. Even China ratified it but U.S. treaties require presidential support & a 2/3 vote of the Senate. Just like with the proposed ratification of the ERA, there is resistance.

**Action: Collaborate with other orgs such as UN Women and Cities for CEDAW to promote ratification of CEDAW by the United States and on a local level to encourage New York City and other NY Cities to adopt an Ordinance to make the principles of CEDAW law in**

**the New York area. Initiate an email/ social media campaign to engage our elected representatives in an effort to correct this neglectful inaction by the U.S. government.**

### **C. Human Trafficking**

New York ranks as the 4<sup>th</sup> highest state for reports of sexual exploitation. Corona, Queens has become a haven for prostitution & trafficking. AAUW New Jersey during a past Superbowl was part of a coalition that plastered the restrooms on the Jersey Turnpike with stickers with the sex trafficking helpline phone number.

**Action: Provide helpline stickers to businesses in targeted trafficking areas.**

### **D. Women in Leadership**

AAUW California developed a program titled Gov Trek. Junior/Senior High School girls participated in a virtual program to encourage them to pursue careers in public service and elected office. Over five two hour sessions, students engaged in interactive activities with exposure to women legislators, career options & the inner workings of a political campaign. The program culminates in a group competition to create a realistic campaign stimulation.

**Action: Reach out to school administrations to ascertain interest in developing similar programs in New York.**

### **E. Social Security**

The U.S borrowed 2.9 trillion dollars from the Social Security Fund. The Fund received treasuries for the cash. The U.S. pays 65 billion yearly in interest to the trust but still hasn't

**paid back the principal. The Fund must redeem a Treasury whenever there is a shortfall in contributions and it needs to fulfill its obligations to retirees. The fund's reserves will run out by 2033. This money was taken from the labors of American men and women. Women earn less than men throughout their lifetimes because of the gender pay gap. Since social security is based on your lifetime earnings women are most affected by this threat to their social security benefits. The proposed solutions to fix this crisis and to provide the benefits as they were originally promised looks grim. These are the proposed solutions:**

1. Raise Social Security's combined employer and employee payroll tax from 12.40% to 15.76% of the employee's pay.
2. Permanently cut promised benefits by 21-22% for all Social Security recipients in 2034. This action is what politicians have promised to Americans under current law.
3. Permanently cut benefits by 25% for those who starting to collect Social Security in 2021 or after.
4. Some combination of these approaches.

**Action: Encourage AAUW members to write their representatives in Congress & engage in a newspaper blitz to highlight the injustice of borrowing from Peter to pay Paul.**