

2009 AAUW National Convention  
**Breaking through Barriers**  
June 26-28, 2009  
St. Louis



**AAUW Ohio**  
**Report of AAUW Ohio President Diane Regan**  
**July 18, 2009**

**A special occasion**

AAUW conventions are, as expected, special occasions: They bring educated women from across this nation together to learn, educate and advocate for those issues that we care about—issues that have the potential to change people’s lives. Congressional representative Rosa De Lauro of Connecticut, may have said it best: “AAUW is an indisputable force in shaping the debate on issues we care about.” What are those issues? It’s about establishing “public policy that supports women and the work they do in our society.”

**The story of Lilly Ledbetter and pay equity**

For those of us who followed the [Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act](#) as it worked its way through Congress, it was incredibly exciting and humbling to hear her speak at Convention! Such a simple heartbreaking story—underpaid for years and no recourse through the U.S. judicial system. But that lack of judicial redress did lead to the legislative action named after her.

Rosa De Lauro noted that we should “never underestimate the power of big ideas whose time has come.” And so we continue watching the Hill for action on the more important piece of pay equity: the Paycheck Fairness Act for which De Lauro has been the lead on the House side and for which Christopher Dobb serves on the Senate side. We were all urged to call our Senators who were not currently co-sponsors of the bill and whose support is unclear. This includes Senator Voinovich who voted against the Ledbetter Act and doesn’t favor the [Paycheck Fairness Act](#) either. It’s still not too late to contact him at 202-224-3353.

**About the bylaws**

Of course, the bylaws votes were of great interest and importance to the future. Several proposals were amended and the major issue of changing our membership criteria was defeated. 1400 ballots cast on a multiple-card vote that struck down the proposal to open up AAUW membership to anyone who supports the AAUW mission. As in the past, and for now, membership is extended only to those individuals who have an appropriate educational credential. In other business, we voted to raise then number of elected directors-at-large from seven to 10 while reducing the number of appointed officers and directors from six to three. The amended board composition will go into effect with the 2011-2013 biennium.

### **New AAUW officers**

New AAUW officers are Carolyn Garfein, President, Gail Nordmoe, Vice President, and Directors at Large, Kathleen Cha, Alicia Hetman, Connie Hildebrand, Patricia Ho, Jackie Littleton, Betsy McDowell, and Linda Tozier. From listening to their nomination acceptance speeches, I think the organization is going to be well-served by this new and dynamic team. They are certainly all passionate about AAUW and the work we do.

Another critical action taken was the approval of the one-member, one-vote proposal that provides every member the right and opportunity to have a personal voice in all future AAUW actions.

### **AAUW's new public policy agenda**

The [Public Policy Program](#) priority agenda for the next biennium 2009-2011 was also approved and is available on the Association Web site. This information should be shared with all branches because it is the underpinning of what AAUW is.

I was able to attend a documentary film screening on one of my personal heroines, House Representative Patsy Mink of Hawaii who was an AAUW member and the women who brought Title IX legislation through the House! The film, *Patsy Mink: Ahead of the Majority*, certainly demonstrated the filmmaker's aim: to create a story that "captures the spirit of a generation of trailblazing women and show that one person—armed with a vision, drive and perseverance—can make a difference." Mink did that with no doubt. The DVD can be ordered by visiting [www.aheadofthemajority.com](http://www.aheadofthemajority.com). I would suggest that AAUW/Ohio order a copy and make it available to branches for a programming opportunity.

### **\$tart \$mart Program**

I also attended a wonderful workshop on the [\\$tart \\$mart Program](#) and met Annie Houle, the college campus lead for the program and the person who will be at OWU for our Leadership Workshop on August 15 to train those AAUW members and non-members who have signed up to become facilitators on campuses in Ohio.

Carol Virostok, AAUW president of Connecticut, lead the second workshop I attended on "Making Connections on Campus." I know the \$tart \$mart Program will give AAUW a presence on campuses which is critical to the future health of our organization. One idea we might wish to think about for our state convention to attract younger women to attend from the Columbus area is to offer Campaign College, an AAUW training session intended to teach women how to run more effectively for office on college campuses. This training helps female students hone their leadership skills! Often campus leaders end up running for political office in later years, and wouldn't it be nice if AAUW/Ohio helped some young women on that career path?

It was recommended that AAUW state budgets have a line for campus outreach, which we do here in Ohio for the National College Student Leadership Conference as well as \$tart \$mart. Another important piece of information from this C/U workshop is that ALL students at partner C/U schools have a FREE membership in AAUW! They can sign up

electronically as affiliates, something we surely need to communicate to all of our colleges and universities already supporting us! Another avenue to ideas on increasing our C/U membership is to look at what is deemed the “best” C/U website, that of New York AAUW: [www.aauw-nys.org](http://www.aauw-nys.org). Once on the homepage, click on C/U at the top horizontal menu bar.

I know that other Ohio delegation members attended competing sessions and hopefully, they can share what they learned as well.

### **Next AAUW Convention**

The next AAUW Convention is set for June 16-19, 2011, for Washington, D.C. and we should begin now to think about going.

One of my strongest impressions from Association Convention this year is that AAUW at the national level is an organization on the move! It has reached a level of sophistication in advocacy and communication that is admirable from such a small staff. Lisa Maatz is tireless in her work as Director of Public Policy and Governmental Relations! As I look at our branch activities compared to the programming and activity at the Association level, I see a real disparity. How much can be done to bring branches into the “new AAUW” mode is a big question in my mind, and I challenge current and future AAUW/Ohio Board members to think hard about this in the coming months and years.

### **Let’s make ourselves heard**

So, energized and with renewed passion for AAUW, as we enter this new AAUW year, let’s do what De Lauro’s mother said back in 1933 before she could vote, “Come on, girls; let’s make ourselves heard!”