



AAUW Advocacy at the Federal and State Levels

Our common good and our shared future depend on what we do—individually and organizationally—today and every day. Let us fight the fear, polarization, and frustration that stifles progress in our diverse communities with advocacy and action that produces hope, justice, equality, and peace.

Federal Advocacy

The national office of AAUW monitors federal legislation and initiatives, sets, and tracks policy priorities, and provides support and resources through the system of State Public Policy (PP) chairs. State PP chairs, branch PP chairs, and members can use these resources to be effective advocates. AAUW’s Action Network informs members about federal legislation that related to our priorities. Sign up to receive e-mail notices when your advocacy is urgently needed. You will get messages about pressing issues you can send to your members of Congress as well as information you can use to write letters to the editor in your local newspapers and to your state legislators.

Two-Minute Activist: Sign up and recommend it to friends and colleagues:

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

Advocacy Toolkit: Find background information on policies and how-to guide

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/policy/advocacy-toolkit/>

Social Media: Follow AAUW on Twitter <http://www.twitter.com/aauw> and/or

Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/AAUW.National>

State Advocacy

A list of AAUW-NM’s Public Policy Priorities is provided to members in advance of legislative sessions and listed on our website. **Please see information about the Public Policy Committee and the job description for Public Policy Advocates on our website.** This important committee analyzes legislation that relates to our priorities as it is filed and proceeds. Please consider serving as an advocate along with your Branch Public Policy Chair or as a member at large.

See the “Guide to the NM Legislature’s Website” document for detailed information on how to follow legislation. In New Mexico, the legislature meets for 60 days in odd-numbered



years and for 30 days in even-numbered years. Legislation in 30-day sessions is limited to financial bills and issues specified by the governor. All types of legislation can be considered in 60-day sessions. Schedules are listed on **nmlegis.gov**.

Interim committees hold meetings between legislative sessions and may meet virtually and/or around the state on general policies, such as education, health and human services, and budgets. To comment on issues being discussed at an interim committee hearing, you will need to apply in advance to the committee chair.

Standing committees meet during legislative sessions on specific legislation that is ruled germane by legislative leaders. Legislation must be approved by two or more committees of one chamber before it can proceed to the House or Senate floor. If approved, it follows the same process in the other chamber. Except for joint resolutions proposing amendments to the NM Constitution, the governor has the authority to sign or veto legislation. Voters must approve Constitutional amendment proposals at the next general election for them to go into effect.

Standing committees meet in person at the Roundhouse, by Zoom, or in hybrid fashion. With committee hearings that are held in person, you are usually able to testify for 2-3 minutes on a specific piece of legislation. With Zoom, you may need to register in advance to testify. Other committees allow the public into the virtual hearing rooms to testify once the legislation has been presented by the sponsor(s). If the committee chair does not call on individuals to testify, he or she often calls on those in the audience to indicate their support or opposition to the legislation under consideration by a show of hands (real or/or virtual).

Check **nmlegis.gov** frequently to find the times of House committee meetings and floor sessions and the bills to be considered. The Senate generally abides by the committee schedules in the morning, but afternoon sessions are often delayed or cancelled especially when senators are on the floor. Towards the end of the session, when time runs short, the schedules are subject to last-minute changes.

Agendas for scheduled interim and standing committee meetings are linked on the website. Most standing committee hearings are webcast live these days. Most are also recorded, but the recordings are not indexed in any way, so you must know the specific date and time legislation was heard. Interim meetings are not webcast or recorded when held around the state in locations with limited broadband. More interim meetings are being held virtually or hybrid, however.

If an issue is clearly supported or opposed by AAUW, you can represent the position as a member of the organization but not speak on behalf of the organization itself, unless you are



trained and are authorized by AAUW-NM PP Committee. For message consistency, the PP Committee selects point people to speak on specific legislation and priority issues. If you feel strongly about an issue, but are not certain of the position of AAUW, you can advocate on your own behalf, without mentioning AAUW. The other option is to contact the AAUW-NM PP Chair, for advice.

Contact information for your two state legislators (your senator and your representative) and your legislative districts from a map provided on the legislature's website, nmlegis.gov. (Select Legislators, Find Your Legislator, and House or Senate.) Not only can you find the contact information that each legislator has provided, but you can also find current committee assignments and access legislation filed in current and previous sessions. Email and telephone calls are always possible. Face-to-face meetings are much more productive but more difficult to arrange. Some legislators may be willing to make an appointment to meet when the legislature is not in session; others are more difficult to pin down.

Engaged members make a world of difference.
Thank you!

For more information and to get involved, contact Meredith Machen, AAUW-NM Public Policy Chair, Meredith.machen@gmail.com, 505 577-6337, 10/27/21