



AAUW-NM Fall *Roadrunner*

Mission: to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.



Helena Whyte, Co-President



Lynn Heffron, Co-President



REMEMBRANCES

AAUW Las Cruces has lost 2 very dedicated members.

Ruth Benjamins, AAUW-LC President from 2002-2004, died at age 95 in Henderson, NV in Sept. 2022. She also served as Treasurer for 3 years, Public Policy Chair for 6 years, and one year each as parliamentarian, academic chair and bylaws chair. She also served the AAUW NM board as Finance Chair for 5 years. She also actively participated in AAUW interest groups: Anything Goes, International Gourmet, Going Placed and bridge. When she moved to Nevada in 2017 she asked a contribution be made to Tech Trek as she strongly supported STEM for girls as she had received a M.S. degree from the Univ. of Michigan.

Dr. Mary Berry, coordinator of AAUW LC brach Teen Esteem, 1988-1990. She chaired the NM Legal Advocacy Fund 1993-1995 and served as AAUW NM President

1995-1997. She suffered a stroke in August 2023 and dies 4 days later at an El Paso hospital. She was Dean of Education at NM Adult Correctional System in Las Cruces 1984-1988; coordinator of secondary student teaching NMSU 1988-1990; administrative assistant to dean of the College of Education, 1990-1993; director of Public school administration internship program, 1994-1997; director vocational-technical in-service in the College of Agriculture and Home Economics, 1995-1996; director new student orientation, and Statistical analyst El Paso (Texas) C C., 1993-1995. Dr. Berry earned her PhD at New Mexico State University 1993. In addition, to her academic work, she served as Deputy voting registrar Dona Ana County, Las Cruces, and on the Board of directors of Butterfield Park Mutual Domestic Water Association. Mary was named Corrections Education Teacher of the Year, State of New Mexico, 1985, and Distinguished New Mexico Woman New Mexico Governor, Gary Johnson, in 1997.

CO-PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

**Our Next Leadership Team Meeting will be on
Sunday, Oct. 22, 2023 from 1:00-4:00 p.m.
via Zoom**

We participated on Sept. 18th with AAUW national's leadership on our Southwest Regional meeting via zoom.

We reviewed the many issues confronting many states on how to best restructure AAUW at both the state and branch levels. What is the state's key function, what best practices do branches exemplify, how often do boards and branches meet, do you have fundraising events, do you have interest groups, how do you recruit younger members, how do you get more applicants for leadership positions, and what age groups do branches appeal to: under 30, 30-50, over 50?

The AAUW NM Restructuring Task Force

followed the Regional meeting the next day. We met a second time on Sept. 19th to review these and all other recommendations we received from branches' input. We also agreed on a group of 4 to collate and prioritize all recommendations for further approval at our next large task force meeting. Final recommendations will be made to the AAUW NM membership at a later date for final approval and vote. Please know our task force has 17 active members from around the state which includes Lynn and Helena and Kathie Davis who takes diligent notes on our meetings.

Banned Books

We have noted that the assault on books is an ongoing battle in many states and that AAUW CA is holding seminars on this issue. We took a look at our own history in NM; here's a short list. In May 1968, The Catcher in the Rye by

J.D. Salinger, was asked to be banned in an Albuquerque public high school by a church pastor, but the school board did not honor his request. In 1982, the Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary was removed from Carlsbad classrooms because it defines “obscene” words. Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone by J. K. Rowling, was burned in Alamogordo, NM in 2001 outside Christ Community Church because the Potter series is “a masterpiece of Satanic deception.” (In 2003 in Arkansas, the school board's decision to restrict access to the Harry Potter books was found to violate the First Amendment). In 2022-23, Florida removed 300 titles from schools and libraries. You can find the 12-page list of these online. In April 2023, Rio Rancho residents pleaded with the city council to ban books that they find offensive from the public library. At least three of the titles dealt with LGBTQ+ themes and conservatives argued against children’s access to books about sexuality. After weeks of public debate, where speakers mostly denounced book banning and supported the libraries, the city council passed a resolution in support of the Library and Information Services Department. Thus to date, no books banned there.

Honoring Women

On October 2, 2023, the United States Postal Service will release a new Forever stamp commemorating the legacy of the late **Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg** and celebrating her groundbreaking contributions to justice, gender equality and the rule of law. The USPS noted Ginsburg's legacy of fighting for equal rights, including her "important majority opinions advancing equality and strong dissents on socially controversial rulings."

The American Women Quarters Program is a four-year program started in 2022 that celebrates the accomplishments and contributions made by women of the United States by featuring their head on the US quarter opposite the George Washington side. Featured are women from a variety of fields, including, civil rights, abolition, government, humanities, science, space, and the arts. The women honored will be from ethnically, racially, and geographically diverse backgrounds. NM suffrage leader **Nina Otero-Warren** was honored in 2022. **Jovita Idar**, Mexican-American journalist, activist, teacher, and suffragist was born in 1885 and honored Sept. 15th, 2023.

Branch Project Grants

Aid your branch in advancing the goals of AAUW!

Please submit a narrative application for Branch Project Grants up to \$200 per branch per year.

Proposal should include: project summary; grant amount being requested; simplified budget of project costs; and list of contributors/supporters, if any.

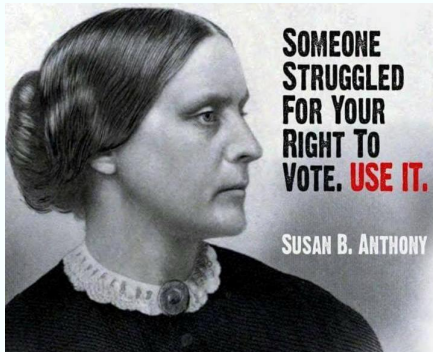
<https://aauw-nm.aauw.net/about/branch-project-grants/>

Grant requests should be submitted to Sylvia Fink [sjsfink@gmail.com] between July 1 to October 1, 2023. Electronic submission is preferable; however, applications may also be mailed to: Sylvia Fink, 5108 Marcadas Rd. NW, Albuquerque, NM 87114-4367

Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

Verify Your Branch Members before September 30

Act now to ensure your branch members remain in good standing! The grace period ends September 30 for non-renewing members whose AAUW membership expired June 30, 2023. Please check your records for those who paid your branch directly and renew their memberships in the Community Hub. If you've submitted free memberships via the Shape the Future campaign and members have not yet been updated by our team, please contact connect@aauw.org.



AAUW State News

Election Time!

USE the [Vote411.org](https://www.vote411.org) Resource

New Mexico's Local Election candidates have filed.

Ballot questions have been determined.
Early voting begins on October 10. Election Day is November 7.

This year, the League of Women Voters of New Mexico is sending invitations to all candidates across the state to participate in [Vote411.org](https://www.vote411.org). This major effort should make it extremely easy for voters to check who is on their customized ballots and what they stand for. New Mexico just enacted laws to close schools each Election Day and to expand voter registration, absentee voting, and polling options. The site also links to voter registration information and other information of every Secretary of State. Spread the word and help make sure that voting becomes a habit here each November and across the land each general election cycle in even-numbered years. Go to <https://www.vote411.org/> after early October and see for yourself. Also, please check <https://www.lwvnm.org/> and link to the local Leagues to see what candidate forums for city races, school boards, some public college boards, and other positions are being over boards.

AAUW-NM PUBLIC POLICY REPORT

What a difference it makes to live in a state that has good civil rights protections and ample financial, environmental, and human

resources! As I work with other State Public Policy Chairs across the country, I frequently and proudly share our legislation and judicial successes. However, we still have enormous challenges to overcome in order to advance equity and opportunity and to improve our quality of life.



In terms of the budget and the makeup of our government officials, there has never been a better time to advocate for AAUW priorities. In 2023, our legislature accomplished amazing feats, thanks in large part to the leadership of women, who are in the majority in our House and in key positions in our

Senate. They are courageous, collaborative, community-minded, and committed and work well with our governor. NM had the largest state and federal revenues ever, and our female legislators authored and passed many measures aligned with our major priorities.

Educational Improvements

In other columns, you have heard about the Opportunity Scholarships, free meals in schools, money for early childhood education and childcare, scholarships and loans for service in high need areas. We will cover these initiatives, structured literacy, and much more in future issues. This time I want to focus on our successful advocacy for financial literacy and a promising response to our call to action about our students' lack of math and science proficiency.

In 2021 and 2022, AAUW-NM participated in the updating of PED's revised social studies academic and content performance standards. For years, we pushed for financial literacy to be a graduation requirement. While a stand-alone course was not adopted, we are pleased to see that there are now 33 distinct personal financial literacy standards included in the final version of the new social studies standards (6.29.11 NMAC). The financial literacy standards are embedded into performance standards of social studies courses across all grades, and educators are being trained on how to teach personal financial literacy academic content and how to access free high-quality classroom resources.

At long last, New Mexico is committed to improving math and science achievement. PED and the LESC are partnering with other organizations on strategies to improve math and science teacher education and instructional support for students. Part of the urgency stems from the fact that the state has not made enough progress fulfilling the requirements of the 2017 Yazzie-Martinez court decree. We are last or close to last in math and science achievement, which we know are essential to accessing career opportunities in STEM and other fields. With NM Attorney General, Raul Torrez taking over the management of the Yazzie-Martinez suit, we hope to see state and local agencies make better progress than they have in the past five years.

Gun Violence Prevention and Mental Health Advocacy

AAUW is a member of the newly formed Alliance for Gun Violence Solutions, a group of individuals who are deeply concerned about the heavy burdens gun deaths and injuries impose on our communities, families, workplaces, and schools. We are looking at the alarming statistics and the legislative policies needed to address the economic, mental, and physical difficulties for survivors and the impact on state resources. Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham included some of these statistics in her proclamation declaring June 2023 Gun AwarenessMonth:<https://www.nmhealth.org/publication/view/general/8304/>

This spring, AAUW helped to advocate successfully for the passage of the **Bennie Hargrove Gun Safety Act sponsored by Representative Pamela Herndon**, my esteemed predecessor as AAUW State Public Policy Chair. Sadly since the law requiring safe storage and imposing criminal penalties went into effect, there have been quite a few gun deaths of children. She wants to conduct town halls around the state to increase public awareness of the issues and compliance with the law. The Alliance is planning a town hall in mid-

October in Santa Fe. Please contact her directly at pamelya.herndon@nmlegis.gov to help to arrange a town hall in your community.

Please ask your representative and senator to support gun legislation in 2024 and subsequent sessions. It will take years to overcome pro-gun lobbyists and the industry. There is a lot of misinformation to dispel along with providing the facts about gun violence and the associated costs. Few people realize that 63% of gun deaths in New Mexico are suicides, for instance. Incidental deaths of innocent victims have increased tremendously in the past few years. Homicides are happening almost daily.

Data shows that gun deaths will decrease if our state can delay by even seven days the date between an attempted purchase and possession by individual approved in accordance with our laws regarding background checks. Contrast New Mexico's gun laws with those in California, Colorado, Connecticut, and elsewhere.

See <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-laws/browse-state-gun-laws/?filter0=228>, **NM Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research** <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/researchbsph>

One of the major partners of the Alliance is New Mexicans to Prevent Gun Violence, a non-profit organization that works with community members and stakeholders to reduce firearm violence through education and public awareness, working with law enforcement, and legislative advocacy. Learn more about free gun locks, safe storage of guns including separating them from ammunition, the Student Pledge for Gun Safety, implementing Extreme Risk Protection Orders, and much more

<https://www.newmexicanstopreventgunviolence.org/>

Also, **please help reduce suicide fatalities** by spreading the word to anyone who is at risk of harming themselves or wants more information on suicide prevention about the 24/7, free and confidential **National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline available by calling or texting 988.**

Modernizing the Legislature

AAUW continues to work in a very committed coalition to improve our legislature. Efforts to pass two constitutional amendments in the 2023 legislative session failed will proceed in slightly different form in the 2024 session. The goal is to get these amendments on the 2024 General Election ballot for voters to approve. One constitutional amendment will propose to increase the length of sessions to 60 days every year; the other constitutional amendment will propose to create a commission to determine fair legislative salaries. New Mexico is the only state that does not pay its legislators. It's possible that voters could approve increasing session length and not approve paying legislators in the future. If voters approve having the Ethics Commission or another group determine salaries, legislation would need to pass in 2025 and be signed in order for legislators to receive pay in 2025 or later. Meanwhile the Legislative Council Services is considering other ways to provide some staff support and perhaps district offices for legislators. The coalition is working on additional ways to improve efficiency, quality, and transparency in our legislature. Common Cause is currently managing the coalition. Other members include the League of Women Voters of New Mexico, 350.org, Ethics Watch, New Mexico First, the Center for Civic Policy, and others.

Paid Family & Medical Leave

Southwest Women's Law continues to lead a coalition to ensure economic security for New Mexicans. This legislative session we will try again to pass the Paid Family & Medical Leave Act (PFMLA). Legislative sponsors and advocates have had promising signs from the governor that she will put this legislation on her call for the short session. The legislation proposes the creation of a program, administered by the state of New Mexico, to provide up to 12 weeks of paid leave for eligible employees to care for a new child, a family member with a serious health concern, or their own medical condition. The act would establish the Paid Family & Medical Leave Fund, administered by the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS). Individuals who need to take a longer period of time away from work to manage certain kinds of medical and family issues could apply to NMDWS to receive a percentage of their salary. The Fund would be paid for through employee and employer contributions. For every \$1000 earned, a worker will pay \$5 into the PFML Fund. For a full-time minimum wage employee, that will be about \$2.30 per week. Employers with more than five employees would add \$4 to the Fund. Employers with fewer than five employees will not be required to pay into the PFML fund. PFML will be especially helpful for small businesses that don't have the resources to provide paid leave to employees who may need to take up to 12 weeks away from work due to specific life events. With PFML an employee approved for leave receives funds from NMDWS, so the employer can use the savings to pay overtime, hire a temps, or reinvest in their business. Find out more at <https://nmpfml.org/>.

Meredith Machen, AAUW-NM Public Policy Chair

Legislative Calendar 2024

January 2-January 12: Legislation may be pre-filed
Saturday, January 6: LWVNM Advocacy Workshop (10am to noon) Zoom
Tuesday, January 16: Opening day at the Legislature (noon)
Wednesday, January 31: Deadline for introduction of bills
Thursday, February 15: Session ends at noon
Wednesday, March 6: Legislation not acted upon by governor is pocket vetoed

The voices of AAUW make a difference!

Public Policy Priorities 2023-2025

Strengthening Education at All Levels

1. Ensuring quality programs through funding, professional training, and student support.
2. Promoting access to both academic programs and personal development.
3. Enhancing career opportunities through training, scholarships, and fellowships.

Improving Economic Security and Healthy Lifestyles

1. Supporting funding for affordable housing, social services, quality childcare, and food.
2. Advocating for affordable, accessible healthcare, reproductive rights, and behavioral health.

3. Promoting fair economic policies including student loan debt relief, tax credits, and pay equity.
4. Addressing income stress and retirement security.

Fostering Quality Work Experiences

1. Promoting improved compensation and professional advancement opportunities.
2. Advocating for Paid Family and Medical Leave and flexible, family-friendly work conditions.

Promoting Safe, Just, Sustainable Communities

1. Advancing gender equity and sexism; addressing gun violence; reducing trauma and domestic abuse; treating alcohol and substance abuse.
2. Advocating for social justice and civil rights.
3. Protecting our environment and natural resources.

Improving Government Accountability and Access

1. Modernizing legislative practices; advocating for compensation to ensure diverse representation.
2. Promoting collaborative problem solving and reducing partisanship.
3. Fostering respectful dialogue about critical issues.
4. Protecting voting rights and fair elections.
5. Embracing inclusive practices and policies.

<https://aauw-nm.aauw.net/explore-issues/>

AAUW's national and international priorities include many items not included in our state priorities list.

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/policy/aauw-public-policy-priorities/>

Please send comments to meredith.machen@gmail.com and please consider joining the Advocacy Team (A-Team).

Learn what's involved at **<https://aauw-nm.aauw.net/publicpolicy/>** and feel free to call Meredith at 505 577-6337. The voices of AAUW make a difference!

Meredith Machen, AAUW-NM Public Policy Chair

**New Mexico
ratified the
Nineteenth
Amendment
on February 21, 1920.**



THE LAS CRUCES BRANCH CENTENNIAL will be celebrating on Saturday, October 14th. We will be having a Tea Party to honor our founding members who first met in their homes for tea and volunteer work. We will be celebrating at the Double Eagle Restaurant which was a private home 100 years ago. Besides tea, we will have fun, treats, and surprises for all.

We would like to welcome any members from any other state branch to join us. Please contact Anne Chase at achase202@gmail.com if you would like further details.

Anne Chase & Donna Yargosz, Co-Presidents

THE SILVER CITY BRANCH continues efforts toward “STEM Roadshows” for area girls. The first event will be held at Western New Mexico University on November 11, with several morning workshops for girls in the Silver City area. In support of the events, we are holding planning meetings via Zoom and will be having a “party” in mid-October to fill take-home backpacks with STEM activities for the attendees. We are planning additional Roadshows for surrounding areas, most likely including Columbus, Deming and Reserve.

Karen Love & Mikki Jemin, Co-Presidents

This November **THE AAUW ONLINE BRANCH** celebrates 14 years as a vibrant, successful virtual AAUW Branch. Our then state co-president, Helena Whyte, was founding mother and first branch president. We are 23 members strong and meet four times each year with at least one of our meetings in person at the AAUW state convention.

Our most recent meeting, featured Dr. Anna Llobet, an explosives scientist, at Los Alamos National Laboratory and member of the J. Robert Oppenheimer Memorial Committee. She entertained us with insider tidbits from the movie *Oppenheimer*, stories of women scientists working on the Manhattan Project and her own experiences as a woman scientist.

Other speakers have updated us on activities at the NM Legislature, (Kristina Fisher, Think NM; Meredith Machen, our own AAUW-NM Public Policy Chair; and Dist. 43 Rep. Christine Chandler) and the Realities and Politics of the Permian Basin Oil Boom by Kayley Shoup from Carlsbad. To encourage girls to study STEM fields we send a note of congratulations and gift card to every young woman winning at the senior level of the annual NM Science Fair.

We meet on Sunday afternoons and include members from all over the state and several friends who have moved out-of-state. We are a bargain with dues of \$0 after paying national and state dues. Just email our Membership Chair, Carol Ann Council, kk-ca_council@msn.com, or go to aauw.org, sign onto your individual profile on the Community Hub (membership database) and add AAUW-NM Online to your profile. It's that easy! We welcome all members to join our fun and fellowship.

Mary Sandford & Nina Thayer, Co-Presidents

AAUW advances gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy. AAUW's Public Policy Priorities provide a basis for members' participation in governmental decision-making. We are firmly nonpartisan, committed to being fact-based, and act with integrity in the public interest.

We believe that gender, socio-economic, and ethnic/racial equality is fundamental to our democracy and the key to improving the quality of life for all. We respect the civil and human rights of all individuals in our diverse, global society. We strive to be inclusive, and we collaborate with other like-minded, non-partisan organizations.

In society at large, we advocate for:

- *Protection of the civil, constitutional, and equal rights laws guaranteed by the U.S. and New Mexico Constitutions and statutes.
- *Separation of church and state.
- *A fair, balanced, and independent judiciary.
- *Expansion of voting rights and fair, accessible elections; campaign finance reform; and an Independent Redistricting Commission.
- *Safe, livable, affordable housing and healthy, clean, and sustainable environments.
- *Universal access to quality, affordable health care and comprehensive family planning services, including self-determination of one's reproductive and end-of-life decisions.
- *Freedom from harassment, bullying, discrimination, and hate crimes.
- *Recognition of gun violence as a health issue.
- *Guarantee civil rights for all family structures, gender orientations, and identities.
- *Respect for the civil and human rights of all immigrants.
- *Guarantee civil rights and equal treatment for all family structures, gender orientations, and identities.
- *Access to well-regulated, quality eldercare, childcare, and dependent care.
- * Federal adoption of the Equal Rights Amendment.
- * Support at home and international programs that address human rights, girls'/women's access to education and careers, and the full range of health care services without interference in personal reproductive decisions.

In the workforce, we advocate for

- *Pay equity, fair compensation, and policies that promote work-life balance and ensure economic security.
- *Equitable access to advancement in employment and freedom from sexual or gender harassment.
- *Workplaces free from personal and employment discrimination.
- *Leadership opportunities for women to close the gender, ethnic, racial, and socio-economic gaps.
- *Greater access to benefits, including paid family, medical, and sick leave.
- *Strengthening retirement programs and protecting Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid from privatization and benefit cuts.

In PreK-12 education, we advocate for

- *A well-funded, high-quality, culturally and linguistically responsive, multicultural public education system that promotes gender and racial equality and addresses the barriers and biases that hinder the advancement

Elected positions:

Co-President:

Lynn Heffron

lgheffron@gmail.com

Co-President

Helena Whyte

mozden08@aol.com

VP Programs

Judy Prono

djprono@msn.com

VP-Membership

Cassie Marrs

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Finance Chair

Nicole Olsson-Dail

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Secretary

Kathie Davis

kadkathryn@gmail.com

Academic Chair

Mary Sandford

M_sandford47@hotmail.com

Public Policy Chair

Meredith Machen

meredith.machen@gmail.com

Past President

Sylvia Fink

sjsfink@gmail.com

Nominations Chair

Appointed positions:

Branch Projects Grants Chair

Sylvia Fink

sjsfink@gmail.com

Governance Chair

Phyllis Ludi

pcludi@cybermesa.com

Diversity/Inclusion Chair

College/University Chair

Rebecca Reiss

rebecca.reiss@nmt.edu

Historian

Newsletter Editor

Judy McGuire

judymcguire2@gmail.com

Parliamentarian

Phyllis Ludi

pcludi@cybermesa.com

International Interest Chair

Tracy Lassiter

tlasiter@unm.edu

*Policies and efforts to close the persistent achievement gap that disproportionately affects low-income, Black, Hispanic, Native American, and other students of color; girls; and students with disabilities.

*Vigorous enforcement of Title IX and all other civil rights laws pertaining to educational accountability.

*Programs that meet the needs of girls, including strong promotion of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) and career development skills.

*Comprehensive health programs, including effective sex education, social and emotional wellness, and prevention (teen pregnancy, substance abuse, dropout, bullying, harassment, gun violence, and suicide).

*Programs to improve post-secondary access, civic participation, and job success.

*Financial management to improve savings, earnings, and economic security.

In public post-secondary education, we advocate for

*High-quality academic programs that meet the needs and professional goals of women, including Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM).

*Programs that support social-emotional and physical health; academic success; career preparation, training, and development.

*Scholarships and grants to improve access to and completion of programs by women, impacted people of color, and those who are economically disadvantaged.

*Programs that prepare women with skills and training for career success, including in non-traditional occupations, entrepreneurship, internship opportunities, and work experiences.

For further information, visit [AAUW-New Mexico](#). Meredith Machen, AAUW-NM Public Policy Chair, meredith.machen@gmail.com, 505 577-6337

Website Manager

Cheri Burch

ctburch@aol.com

Registered Agent

Phyllis Ludi

pcludi@cybermesa.com

Vacant appointments:

Diversity Chair

International Interest Chair

Media Relations Chair

AAUW Funds Chair

Nominations Chair

AAUW

Founded in 1923

Mission:

To advance gender equity
for women and girls
through research,
education, and advocacy

AAUW-NM Focus:

"Empowering Women to
change their lives"

**The Bennie Hargrove Gun
Safety Act sponsored by
Representative Pamela
Herndon Passed in
2023 But we must continue
to fight to end violence in
our homes, our schools,
our stores, our state.**



