



# Auburn AAUW Connection

## A Note from the President

### It's time to renew your membership!

Annual membership for most of our members expires between May and June. Please help us keep your information up-to-date, your contact information accurate, and your name in the directory by renewing in May.

To make renewing as easy and as available as possible, we are providing a link to the [membership renewal form](#) and we are also sending it as an attachment in a separate email. Please note that National increased dues by \$2 for the year. Dues will be \$119 this year in total.

For membership questions, please contact Sandra Scott or Barbara Gerletti Weiss if you have questions.

### Events for May

The big event this month is the celebration of our scholarship winners, speech trek winner, and voting for the slate of officers on May 28 in the Pioneer Methodist Church off Lincoln Way from 6:30 to 8 pm. Officer installation will occur at our June 9 meeting - which features a talk on Cyber Security at the Pioneer Methodist Church off Lincoln Way.

Below is the slate of nominees for elected positions and then various appointed positions and committees. We would love volunteers! If something looks interesting, let us know. We can provide training and support. Join us!

#### **Nominated Slate of Officers:**

President Alexia Retallack  
President-Elect Julann Brown  
Program Co-Vice Presidents Edlene McKenzie, Sharon Watson-Hamilton,  
Barb Gerletti-Weiss  
Membership Vice President Mary Lambeth  
Secretary Gayla Hibbert  
Treasurer Julann Brown

#### **Appointed Officers:**

**AAUW Funds Chair Open**  
Communication Chair Barbara Gerletti-Weiss  
Newsletter Alexia Retallack  
Website Chair Marianna Petrovich  
Public Policy Susan Roughgarden  
Scholarship Chair Brandee Ambrosia  
Tech Trek/STEM Chair Rachel Kanowsky  
Speech Trek Chair Susan Roughgarden

### Standing Committees

Books for Books Susan Rushton

Directory Barbara Gerletti-Weiss

Elections Panel Bonnie Wilson

Interest Group Coordinator Susan Rushton

Mailings/Distributions Open

Marketing/Social Media Alexia Retallack

ACTV Sharon Watson-Hamilton

Telephone Tree Barbara Gerletti-Weiss

Voter Registration Forms Barbara Gerletti-Weiss

### Special Committees:

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Open

Nominations Open

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## Lobby Day 2025



*It was particularly fun to visit the office of Juan Carrillo (AD 39) and thank his staff for their strong support. Left to right are: Susan Roughgarden, Alexia Retallack, Assembly Fellow Ruby Areco, and Carol Roedder.*



*We gathered in Joe Patterson's office (AD 5) for a photo. From left to right: Susan Roughgarden, Carol Roedder, Alexia Retallack, and Legislative Director Chloe Bowman.*



*We were glad to be able to thank David Alvarez's staff (AD 80) for supporting AAUW public policies. Gathered here are Carol Roedder, Chief of Staff Travis Knowles, Alexia Retallack, and Susan Roughgarden.*

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## Local Legislators Ignored AAUW Auburn Lobby Day

AAUW empowers women and girls by championing their success in higher education and by advocating for policy solutions to create lasting change. Not only do we grant scholarships and encourage young women in their professional development, we also invest in the future of women and children through public policy.

For the last five years, our Auburn Branch has joined with the AAUW California Public Policy folks to express their views about bills in our California Legislature. Leading up to Lobby Day, the hundreds of bills introduced each year are scrutinized for their relevance to our mission. From the entire list, 30 bills are studied in depth, and three bills are selected to be discussed with our elected officials.

Representing AAUW Auburn on April 8 this year were Alexia Retallack, Carol Roedder, and Susan Roughgarden. This was an excellent opportunity to remind legislators about the goals and accomplishments of AAUW. It was also an excellent opportunity to get to know our legislators.

Unfortunately, as with previous years, neither Joe Patterson (Assembly District 5) nor Megan Dahle (Senate District 1) found time to meet with us. Repeated requests led to a meeting with Chloe Bowman, Legislative Director for Patterson, and Chloe graciously agreed to meet with us and take notes about our perspectives.

Since only one of our local legislators could make time to see us, AAUW's lobbyist, Kathy Von Osten, arranged meetings for us with two districts in Southern California. The legislators in these two districts were Juan Carrillo (AD 39) and David Alvarez (AD 80). Both these legislators have consistently voted in support of issues that concern AAUW, so we were thrilled to be able to express our gratitude. We also thanked them on behalf the AAUW members in their respective districts who could not afford to travel to Sacramento and meet them in person.

The three critical bills this year are:

### **Senate Bill 418**

Violence, threats, and intimidation targeting certain historically vulnerable populations – Jews, LGBTQ+ community member, women, immigrants, and people of color especially – are at historic highs and rising at record-shattering rates. Media platforms have announced dramatic retreats in screening and moderation practices to protect target populations. Some social media platforms, notably Meta, have not “failed” to provide safeguards, they have intentionally turned away from providing safeguards that they previously provided for targeted vulnerable communities.

This bill clarifies that a social media platform may be liable for civil penalty under existing law if and when its algorithms or AI aid or abet individual users who are engaging in already unlawful intimidation of others in online spaces. While hateful speech is problematic, it is not illegal. However, it can cross the line into illegal action. Proliferation of online hate has real-world consequences; as individuals are radicalized online and as hate speech proliferates, hate crimes in the real world increase as well. AAUW is a cosponsor of this bill.

Hateful speech is illegal when it threatens others. For instance, when hate speech is “brought to the doorstep” of marginalized communities, it is no longer protected speech, but unlawful intimidation, terrorism, and threat. This means that you can post flyers with anti-immigrant messages on our own physical door or electronic Facebook wall; however, it and when you maliciously post those same flyers on the physical doors of immigrant families, or on their virtual Facebook walls, you are now engaging in potentially intimidating and threatening behavior, which is unlawful.

Algorithms can be complicit in not only intensification of hateful beliefs, but also their proliferation across a given platform. When companies use AI to focus hate speech, thus facilitating delivery, they have crossed the line.

### **Assembly Bill 418**

This measure would prohibit a health plan or a health insurance provider from denying coverage or denying benefits to a person based upon their race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex – including sex characteristics such as intersex traits, pregnancy, and gender identity.

SB 418 protects coverage for gender affirming care, such as hormone therapy, cosmetic procedures, or psychological support. Under the current administration, these protections are at risk.

### **Assembly Bill 579**

This is one of the rare bills that we oppose. The purpose of this bill is to allow parents of LGBTQ+ children to refuse gender affirming care for their children. In other words, parental rights take precedence over a child who requests gender-affirming care. It would permit neglectful and abusive behavior on the part of parents.

## **Thank You Trivia Bee Volunteers - 2026 will be Creatures - Big and Small**

The 2025 Bee is behind us. Loving sports made this year so fun for me. I know all those involved worked long and hard to make the Bee a community event and a money raiser for our Auburn AAUW. Nice words have been written and thank you notes sent. There are many unsung heroes and I will not be able to mention them all, but to a few here are shout-outs: The Friday volunteers—the helpers who didn’t hesitate to jump in to stuff shred and popcorn in the centerpiece boxes, the one helper who said I can do numbers on the raffle bags as she used to be a first grade teacher, the heavy lifters of big boxes, the bar tender set-up folks, and all the hands for clean-up. And the usual hard workers Alexia, Pam, Carol, cannot be praised enough or often enough. Alexia is an energizer of strong work. Pam was behind the scenes putting together unimagined technical and infrastructure items. And Carol is a quiet, organized, and “get it done” presence.

We are a fortunate branch of AAUW.

Mark your calendars for March 28, 2026 and "Creatures-Big and Small"  
Sharon W-H

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## AAUW Auburn Groups News

### Hiking Group

Hikes twice a month. Contact Deb Sabo

### Bookends I

Meets 4th Wednesday of the month. Contact Susan  
Rushton **Bookends II**

Meets in the evening. Contact Sharon  
Watson-Hamilton at

### Bookmarks

Meets 3rd Friday at 2 pm. Contact Sue Dings:

### Booksters

Meets 4th Tuesday at 2 pm. Contact Carol Francis:

### Bridge Groups

One meets 2nd Wednesday and the other the 4th  
Wednesday at 1 pm.

## NEWS DEADLINES

The Auburn AAUW Connection will  
come out at the beginning of each  
month.

Deadline to submit news,  
information, photos, is the 25th of  
each month.



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