



February, 2024

Volume 46, Number 5

<https://bradenton-fl.aauw.net>

<https://www.facebook.com/AAUW>

-Bradenton-Branch-

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**Branching Out** is published monthly by the Bradenton Branch of the [American Association of University Women](#), P. O. Box 14009, Bradenton, FL 34280-4099.

*Best Viewed on Full Screen.*

## President's Post

**February 1, 2024**

### **Building Bridges**

Dear Members,

It was a great meeting in January! Our speakers from the **Guardian Ad Litem Program** were very impressed with our members and accomplishments . They were also happy to have members who were interested in supporting child advocacy in Manatee County.

A special thank you to **Marianne Harrison** for her ability to introduce our speakers and make them feel comfortable in our setting. I continue to appreciate and thank **President Elect, Mary Schmidt**, for providing us with the documents needed for our Board and Branch meetings.

This is a major cost savings for us!

As we approach the **March 16th Fundraiser**, we still have details to iron out. **Mary Schmidt** and **Linda Guilfoyle** will serve as runners for the silent auction. They will take their cues from **Vicki Waters** who is the major organizer for these items ( THANK YOU VICKI!). Given your feedback, it appears that some of our members will be creating their own baskets and/or donating items for baskets which can be delivered at our February 20th Branch meeting or delivered to Barb by March 1st. I will set a "Basket Creation" date at our February meeting. Working with the Manatee Branch has been a pleasure. It is great that they have taken the lead in this event!

Please weigh in on the **National AAUW Bylaw changes**. It is important to make your voice heard.

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/governance-tools/national-election/2024-aauw-proposed-bylaws-changes/>

Hope to see you soon!

**Barb Coolahan**

**Bradenton Branch President of AAUW**

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**Next Meeting - CHANGE OF VENUE!**

**Tuesday, February 20**

**11:30 AM**

**Manatee Community Foundation in the Community Room**

**BRAING A BAG LUNCH!**

**Marianne Harrison will bring iced tea**

**BRING YOUUR BASKET ITEMS FOR THE FUNDRAISER, TOO!**

**PROGRAM:**

**Christi Haley**

**Pace Center for Girls**

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

Be sure to **RSVP** when you receive the Evite.



## CALENDAR 2023-2024

<b>Dates:</b>	<b>Time:</b>	<b>Topics:</b>	<b>Location:</b>
Feb. 20, 2024	11:30 AM	Christi Haley/Pace Center for Girls	AMOB
March 16, 2024	11:30 AM	FUNDRAISER	Palm Aire Country Club*
		Cyn McCullough	

Women's Issues in the Workplace\*

**50th and 75th Anniversary Celebration**

April 4, 2024	10:00 AM	Southwest Regional Conference	Venice Art Center
April 16, 2024	5:30 PM	LWV Deb Mazzaferro /Floridians for National Popular Vote Election of Officers for 2024-2025	AMOB
May 21, 2024	5:30 PM	Installation/plan for 2024-25	AMOB

\* Joint Meetings with Manatee Branch

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**AAUW FLORIDA**

**Senator Jones / Representative Hart**

**SB 100 / HB 237 Pregnant Women in Custody**

**2024 Florida Session**

**Purpose:** Citing this act as "Ava's Law"; requiring that, upon her request, every female arrested and not released on bond within 72 hours after arrest be administered a pregnancy test within a specified timeframe; requiring each municipal detention facility or county detention facility to notify each arrested female upon booking at the facility of her right to request a pregnancy test. It would also allow pregnant women sentenced to prison to petition a judge to delay their imprisonment during their pregnancy and up to 12 weeks after they've given birth, or the pregnancy ends - to receive prenatal care and address postpartum related issues.

**Background:** The bill was initially filed in response to the arrest of 25-year-old Erica Thompson in 2021. When in Alachua County Jail, she went into labor and delivered Ava three months prematurely. Ava died after Thompson was transported to the hospital. Thompson said her continued screams for help went unanswered. The bill's proponents believe the conditions in the prison pregnancy wards are not suitable for childbirth and

this law  
will prioritize the well-being of mothers throughout the state.

Research indicates pregnancies among incarcerated women are often considered high risk and have poor outcomes. According to the National Institute of Health, pregnant prisoners, when compared with women in the general population, are more likely to have risk factors associated with poor perinatal outcomes, including preterm and small-for-gestational-age infants. These outcomes are likely a result of exposure to a combination of risk factors, including lack of access or failure to attend prenatal care, substance use, toxic stress, domestic violence, poor nutrition, and sexually transmitted infections. In addition, African American, Native American, and Hispanic women are disproportionately represented in the prison system, three groups that are also at greatest risk for poor birth outcomes.

**Summary:** Access to medical care and overincarceration of pregnant women are issues of major concern. Whether an incarcerated woman decides to carry her pregnancy to term or have an abortion, she has a right to obtain quality healthcare. Prison is not a good place for pregnant women; however, that does not mean that pregnancy provides immunity from wrongdoing and incarceration. It does mean that there should be a strong public policy interest in promoting healthy pregnancies and good birth outcomes for incarcerated women who choose to continue their pregnancies. Care needs to be focused on mothers just as much as the children. According to the CDC, maternal mortality rates rose nationwide about 9 percentage points between 2020 and 2021.

Reproductive rights for all women do not end with birth; we must also uphold the right of a competent parent to raise her own children. A woman's incarceration status alone does not indicate incompetence. Incarcerated women continue to have these rights violated. Many incarcerated mothers and newborns are separated after delivery, which most often results in the permanent termination of parental rights. This separation is traumatic for both mother and child, which often leads to psychological issues for both and recidivism for the mother.

**Relationship to AAUW Mission: The passage of SB 100/HB 237 supports AAUW's commitment to: Access to Quality Healthcare, Reproductive & Civil Rights, and Equity for ALL!**

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## **STATE AAUW Public Policy Updates for February 2024**

**There's a lot going on in Florida right now!**

## **National AAUW Public Policy Updates for February 2024**

While this is the busiest time for public policy at the state level, AAUW always has its eyes on federal policies and actions throughout the year. Here are some insights from the national level.

### **A message from Meghan Kissell**

#### **Senior Director, Policy & Member Advocacy:**

A huge win for closing the gender and racial pay gaps was announced last week: the White House is banning the use of current or past pay when determining the salaries of new federal employees. This means:

- The country's largest employer will halt a practice known to foster discriminatory pay and allow it to follow an individual throughout their career.
- Federal contractors may soon follow a similar rule in the future and may be required to post salary ranges in job listings, as proposed by the White House.
- Women's paychecks, and the respect for our value in the workplace, should be positively impacted.

These announcements came on the 15th anniversary of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay

Act. Lilly has been tenacious in her advocacy for the fight to reduce pay inequity. Her journey inspires our continued advocacy with the White House, Congress, and around the country to advance policies that address gender and racial inequity.

### **Suggestions for Action: Support Paid Leave for All**

For the more than three decades since the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) was signed into law on February 5, 1993, it has remained a cornerstone piece of legislation in efforts to create healthier and more equitable workplaces. While FMLA provides job-protected, unpaid leave, many people can't afford to take leave without pay. Nearly 40 percent workforce is not eligible for FMLA, with Black, Latina, and Native workers disproportionately impacted by this.

We all need access to paid leave, and the Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act, would do just that. Women continue to disproportionately bear the economic opportunity cost of providing care for children or elderly family members. Congress must do better for women and families.

This legislation builds on successful state programs, creating a national paid leave insurance program, to provide wage replacement and job protection. It expands the definition of "family" to cover more loved ones, cover care for military families, and support those experiencing domestic violence. Paid leave has broad bipartisan voter support. As we honor how FMLA has protected workers for the past 31 years, urge your members of Congress to take the next step and support the FAMILY Act (H.R. 3481) to support paid leave for all!

### **Other important Work to Share:**

- A slate of anti-abortion bills were recently introduced in the House of Representatives, including the Pregnant Students' Rights Act. AAUW joined coalition partners in voicing strong opposition to the bill, which fails to address key barriers to pregnant students' educational attainment. The White House also expressed opposition to the bill in its current form. The bill (H.R. 6914) passed the House in January and it faces an uncertain outcome in the Senate.



- In a positive step for student borrowers, the U.S. Department of Education responded to a call from AAUW and coalition partners, to hold a forth session of the negotiated rulemaking process to address student debt relief. The additional session will provide an opportunity to give more attention to the significant burden of student loan debt for Black and Hispanic women. The fourth session will be held on Feb. 22 and 23.
- As a result of sustained advocacy, in January, Congress reached a bipartisan agreement on a tax package that will temporarily expand the Child Tax Credit (CTC). AAUW joined over 350 organizations in urging Congress to prioritize this expansion which would benefit about 80% of the 19 million children who are currently left out of the full CTC or don't receive it at all because their parents' earnings are too low.
- The Bipartisan Workforce Pell Act (H.R. 6585) was advanced out of the House Education & Workforce Committee in December 2023. The bill would allow federal Pell Grants to be used for short-term education and job training programs. Higher education advocates have raised concerns over the inclusion of for-profit schools and how the bill is funded.
- AAUW joined a letter in opposition to the College Cost Reduction Act (H.R. 6951) due to concerns that the bill would repeal current Financial Value Transparency and Gainful Employment regulations which AAUW supports as a way of protecting students from unaffordable student loan debt.
- Last year, a bipartisan Paid Family Leave Working Group in Congress was established to explore federal paid family leave policies. In December 2023, the Working Group released a legislative framework that will serve as the basis for roundtable discussions later this year and is gathering input from stakeholders to inform their efforts to expand paid leave access in the United States.

We are always stronger working together!

*Submitted by **Marcia Hill**, Director of Public Policy*

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## AAUW Florida Bills for 2024 Florida Legislative Session

The American Association of University Women (AAUW), founded in 1881, promotes equity for women and for all. AAUW Of Florida has identified several bills to support in the current legislative session. Although ignored in recent lists of legislation to watch, they have been crafted to make the lives of women easier in Florida. Please make your legislators aware of:

- **ERA Bills: SCR142/H647:** The 14th Amendment to the US Constitution does not prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex in the same way it does for race or national origin. We need this protection now.
- **Pregnant Women in Custody: SB 100/HB 237:** After a pregnancy test on their request, every arrested female would be allowed to petition for a postponement, but not a reprieve, of incarceration. Jail is no place for healthy pregnancy and delivery.
- **Paid Parental Leave for State Career Service Employees: SB 127/HB 128:** This bill changes unpaid to paid leave for the over 80,000 employees of the State of Florida, who are paid an average of \$56,500 per year.
- **Pregnancy Support and Wellness Services: SB 256/HB 343:** This bill would improve the integrity of the state-supported, childbirth-only Pregnancy Support Centers by requiring that information presented be medically correct and requiring Department of Health inspections and annual audit reports.
- **Freedom to Learn Act (Education): SB1414 and HB1355:** Repealing or amending previous restrictions on materials on systematic racism in higher education, permitting only parents to object to library materials in K-12, permitting no objection based on partisan or doctrinal approval, and ceasing immediate removal of questioned material.
- **Employment and Curfew of Minors: HB49 and SB 1596** AAUW Florida opposes bills aiming to enable employers to hire 16-year-olds without time or job restrictions, because of the supreme importance of a good education in lifting people out of poverty.

For more information please see <https://aauwadvocacyflorida.blog>.

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**Spotlight on ...**

### ***Spotlight on You! For February?***

Wait a minute! Did the breaker trip? Did the bulb burn out? Did those darn squirrels in the attic chew through the wires again?

No friends, no electrician needs to be called. I must call on you!

We have no ***“Spotlight”*** this month because we need a member to accept the offer to step into the spotlight. If you haven't yet been featured, I hope you will consider it. I know several of you declined, and I respect your decision.

The process is simple: First, you agree to consider it. Next, I send you a brief set of questions to complete (you will know all the answers!) And lastly, you send your answers back to me. That's it for you! Easy enough, right?

I will use your answers to write the final piece. (I can make you appear to be a cross between Amelia Earhart and Hedy Lamar, or maybe Eleanor Roosevelt and Lucille Ball, or even Julia Childs and Rosa Parks. No? Okay, what about Mother Teresa and Taylor Swift?)

The result allows us all to learn more about each other to help us thrive working

together. If you would like to participate, email or text or call me.

[mshanerhill@gmail.com](mailto:mshanerhill@gmail.com) or 941-704-5381

Thank you,

*Submitted by* Marcia Hill (Keeper of the Spotlight)

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## **AAUW - Bradenton Branch Strategic Plan 2023-2024**

### **Mission**

**AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.**

### **Value Promise**

AAUW promotes programs and research to break through educational and economic barriers so that all women and girls have a fair chance.

### **Vision Statement**

AAUW empowers all women and girls to reach their highest potential.

### **Diversity Statement**

AAUW seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class.

### **Goals and Strategies**

**Goal 1 – Membership – Increase and sustain a diverse membership in the Bradenton Branch of AAUW.**

\*Increase media exposure of all Branch projects and activities.

\* Develop a marketing plan that includes outreach to other girls' and women's organizations, communities, schools, colleges and universities, sororities, etc.

**Goal 2 – Public Policy – Engage and support the Bradenton Branch in strengthening the AAUW efforts and initiatives.**

\*Increase participation in the 2 Minute Advocate.

\*Support Equal Pay Initiatives.

\*Collaborate with the League of Women's Voters on voter registration.

**Goal 3 – Branch Initiatives – Promote and increase engagement in the Bradenton Branch activities and initiatives.**

\*Sponsor Tech Trek STEM Camp for girls entering 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

\* Provide scholarships for deserving students.

\*Engage and support all Branch activities and initiatives

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**LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**Officers and Directors for Bradenton Branch\***

**2023-2024**

**President/Administrator**

**Barbara Coolahan**

**President-Elect/Director for Membership**

**Mary Schmidt**

**Treasurer/Director for Finance**

**Linda Lewis**

**Secretary/Director for Diversity**

**Judith Griffin**

**Director for Programs**

**Marianne Harrison**

**Director for Public Policy**

**Marcia Hill**

**Director for Communications/Webmaster**

**Margaret (Meg) Newsome**

**President Scholarship Foundation/College University Relations**

**Sandra Stone**

**Treasurer Scholarship Foundation/AAUW Funds**

**Linda Guilfoyle**

**Tech Trek Chair/STEM**

**Linda Guilfoyle**

\* Contact information is included only on this newsletter.  
On the website, the contact information will not appear.

Website: <http://bradenton-fl.aauw.net>

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/AAUW-Bradenton-Branch-103388217778483>

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### **Committee Members**

#### **Tech Trek**

Linda Guilfoyle, Marianne Harrison, Patty Benson (Manatee Branch), Marlene Yarnelli (Manatee Branch)

#### **Scholarship**

Linda Guilfoyle, Sandra Stone, Sue Hauck, Marcia Hill, Doreen Colkert

#### **Communications**

FaceBook ( Marcia Hill), AAUW site (Barb Coolahan), Evites and Newsletter (Meg Newsome)

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*AAUW promotes equity for women, education and self-development over the life span, and positive societal change. AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. Founded in 1881, membership is open to all graduates who hold an Associate or equivalent or higher degree.*



## Important to Know

*National AAUW*

<http://www.aauw.org/>

*Florida AAUW*

<http://aauwfl.aauw.net/>

# About AAUW

We are tenacious and trailblazing — advocating for women and girls since 1881 and into the future!







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