



# AAUW Gaithersburg Branch

NEWSLETTER

Advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education,  
philanthropy, and research.

October 2021

## October 2021

Tuesday, October 19, 2021

Log in to Zoom meeting: 6:50 pm

Presentation begins: 7:00 pm

### TOPIC:

*Student Updates from Our 2021 Scholarship Recipients*

Thanks to the generosity of many branch members, we were able to continue our branch tradition of providing scholarships for women students attending our local institutions of higher education: Montgomery College and Universities at Shady Grove. We look forward to hearing the personal stories and aspirations of several scholarship recipients at our next branch meeting. Please join us for this always fun and inspiring meeting.

### Virtual Board Meeting

Tuesday, October 12 at 7:00pm

Log in to Zoom meeting: 6:50pm

Board meetings are open to all members. If you plan to attend, please email Heather Reichardt, [hjr1234\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:hjr1234[at]gmail.com), to receive a Zoom meeting link email.

### INSIDE

<i>October Events</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>President's Message</i>	<i>2,3</i>
<i>Great Decisions</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>HerStory Interest Group</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>HerStory Snapshots</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Calendar</i>	<i>5</i>

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

- ***Edie Allison***

Opportunities for educational and economic equality for women and girls have taken some serious blows from the pandemic, but AAUW and other organizations are working to mitigate the impact. Another issue many women are concerned about is the growing attack on the constitutional right to an abortion and the conservative courts' tolerance of abortion bans.

Some proposed federal actions would mitigate the impact of repressive state laws. As the adage goes, your rights should not be determined by your zip code.

However, federal legislative action on abortion rights is unlikely to make any progress this year, and the Supreme Court's major case on abortion, regarding a restrictive Mississippi law, will not start until next year. But there are many other issues to address.

AAUW continues to use lobbying and grassroots efforts to push for policies that break through educational and economic barriers for women. Covid-19 restrictions have prevented meetings of AAUW staff and Lobby Corps with legislators. However, AAUW members may still take advantage of the Two-Minute Activist alerts to get the information necessary to send a letter to members of Congress. If you don't want to sign up for any more email, you can tap into AAUW's insights about women's issues and how to contact Congress by occasionally visiting the web page, <https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/>. In addition, you can expand your influence by inviting a friend or relative in another state to send an email. Your message counts. Congressional staff report every email and telephone call to their senator or representative.

Recently, AAUW joined with dozens of other organizations to urge Congressional members to enact universal, comprehensive paid family leave as part of the Build Back Better Act, the President's wide-ranging plan that would use the budget-reconciliation process to pass bills in the Senate with a simple majority.

Currently, only nine states and D.C. offer or will soon offer paid family and medical leave. The Maryland legislature failed to pass the 2121 Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program Act. The Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women, MLAW, is likely to support a 2022 version of this law. See the MLAW website, [mdlegagendaforwomen.org/](http://mdlegagendaforwomen.org/), for information on women's issues before the 2022 General Assembly.



In another national effort, AAUW joined a coalition of community, civil rights, labor, and student advocacy organizations to encourage the Secretary of Education to cancel student debt, as allowed by the Higher Education Act, and as previously done by presidents Trump and Biden. Those earlier repayment-forgiveness programs based on public service or low income can be expanded to benefit more borrowers. There are 44 million federal student loan borrowers and their families that could benefit. Proponents estimate that loan forgiveness could boost the U.S. economy (GDP) by over \$100 billion per year. Cancelling student debt would also decrease racial economic inequality. Twenty years after attending college, the median White borrower had paid off 95% of their debt, but the median Black borrower still owed 90% of their debt.

There are major local efforts to ease the financial burden of college. These efforts are significant but can't match the huge need. Montgomery College, in addition to awarding \$50 million in scholarships, is distributing federal funds received as part of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. These funds are made available to students to help cover emergency costs, including food, housing, health care, child care, tuition, or other school-related fees and expenses. This program is open to all students, including DACA recipients and undocumented students.

(Continued on page 3 )

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (Continued from page 2)**

Finally, as our branch works to rebuild member connections, I invite you to join me and others in the HerStory group, which has restarted after a year's absence. The October 9 meeting will discuss Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Ginsburg, as founder and leader of the Women's Rights Project of the American Civil Rights Union, ACLU, championed legislation that ended the practice of employers requiring women to certify they would not get pregnant in order to work. Another gave women

access to bank accounts and credit cards without a male cosigner. In 1979, Ginsburg argued for the Supreme Court decision that juries must include women. No assigned reading or reporting is required-- just join us to discuss leaders in women's rights, science, and other accomplishments.

## GREAT DECISIONS

- **Mary Wykes, Coordinator**



The Great Decisions interest group will meet via Zoom on Friday, October 15, at 2:30 p.m. The discussion topic will be "The World Health

Organization's Response to Covid 19." The author of the study guide article is Mara Pillinger, an associate at the O'Neill Institute for National

and Global Health Law, Global Health Policy and Politics Initiative. Ellen Teague will lead our discussion. Judy Sholes (jsshholes[at]yahoo.com) will send the Zoom link to anyone interested. New members are always welcome.

## HERSTORY INTEREST GROUP

- **Maria Roberts**

Anna Fraker will speak about former Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg at the Saturday, October 9, meeting of HerStory at 2 p.m. in

the Park View Building Club Room at Asbury Village.



## HERSTORY SNAPSHOTS

The U.S. Mint has announced the first five women to be honored in their American Women Quarters Program:

- Maya Angelou, writer, poet and civil rights activist.
- Dr. Sally Ride, first American woman in space.
- Wilma Mankiller, first female Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation and activist for Native American and women's rights.
- Adelina Otero-Warren, a leader in New Mexico's suffrage movement and first woman superintendent of Santa Fe public schools.

- Anna May Wong, first Chinese American film star in Hollywood.



The coins will appear in 2022 and will be on the reverse side of the quarter-dollar coin. The Mint will issue up to five of these commemorative coins each year through 2025 honoring trail-blazing American women.

### AAUW GAITHERSBURG BRANCH

**Website:** [gaithersburg-md.aauw.net](http://gaithersburg-md.aauw.net)

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

#### President

President

Edie Allison

[Edieallison\[at\]comcast.net](mailto:Edieallison[at]comcast.net)

#### Vice President for Program

Heather Reichardt

[hjr1234\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:hjr1234[at]gmail.com)

#### Co-Vice Presidents for Membership

Anna Fraker

[Acfeh2\[at\]starpower.net](mailto:Acfeh2[at]starpower.net)

Mary Wykes

[mary.wykes\[at\]aol.com](mailto:mary.wykes[at]aol.com)

#### Treasurer

Ellen Teague

[Ellensteague\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:Ellensteague[at]gmail.com)

#### Secretary

Averill Farrelly

[averill.farrelly1\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:averill.farrelly1[at]gmail.com)

#### Appointed Member of the Board

Liz Hessel

[Liz\[at\]jmeral.com](mailto:Liz[at]jmeral.com)

#### Newsletter Editor

Qing Jiang

[Qjmailbox\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:Qjmailbox[at]gmail.com)

#### Newsletter Managing Editor

Dorothy Camara

[D5camara\[at\]comcast.net](mailto:D5camara[at]comcast.net)

## **AAUW GAITHERSBURG CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

HerStory Group - In-Person

Saturday, October 9 - 2 p.m.

Board Meeting - Zoom

Tuesday, October 12 - 7:00 p.m.

Great Decisions - Zoom

Friday, October 15 - 2:30 p.m.

Branch Meeting - Zoom

Tuesday, October 19 - 7:00 p.m.

The American Association of University Women  
Gaithersburg Branch  
437 Fellowship Circle  
Gaithersburg, MD 20877