



# AAUW Gaithersburg Branch

NEWSLETTER

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

October 2023

## October 2023

### VIRTUAL BRANCH MEETING!

Tuesday, October 17, 2023

Log in to Zoom meeting: 7:00pm

Presentation begins: 7:15pm

### PRESENTATION:

Wonderbook – AAUW Gaithersburg Book Sale Partner

We will hear from Chuck Roberts, long-time owner of Wonderbook on how his business has grown, his excursions to international book festivals, how his company keeps millions of books out of the trash and how he identifies special and rare books.

### Board Meeting

Tuesday, October 10, 2023, at 7 p.m.

Zoom

The AAUW Gaithersburg Branch Board of Directors will meet on Tuesday, October 10 at 7 p.m. via Zoom. The Zoom code will be sent by email. These meetings are open to all branch members.

### INSIDE

<i>October 2023 Event</i>	1
<i>President's Message</i>	2
<i>MLAW's Annual Fall Conference</i>	3
<i>Great Decisions</i>	4
<i>HerStory Interest Group</i>	4
<i>Calendar</i>	5

## Presidents Message

- **Edie Allison**

Fall brings cooler weather, colorful leaves and increased interest and action on legislation at the state and national level. MLAW, Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women and the AAUW Lobby Corps have open invitations for you to get involved. Before I talk about these two great programs that the Gaithersburg branch supports, I have a little interesting news on equity for women.

U.S. News and World Report magazine has ranked Maryland as the number 1 best state for gender equality. Maryland scored best in the nation for education, reflecting lower gender disparities in 8th grade math and reading scores and public college graduation rates. The review noted that a major driver for this success may be that Maryland has prioritized K-12 education under both the most recent Republican and Democrat governors, when other states have scaled back funding. The state also ranks highest in having a high proportion of women in elected office and managerial positions. In spite of the top score over two of the five categories, Maryland women ranked in 7th place in the economy category, which included earnings and labor force participation. Maine, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Illinois fill out the top five states for gender equality.

Members of MLAW, the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women will meet on November 4 to hear presentations on about a dozen bills dealing with women's and family issues that are expected to be introduced in the Maryland General Assembly in the 2024 session. MLAW members, including AAUW Maryland and many AAUW members, will vote to select 6 to 8 of the bills for support, which includes in-person testimony and visits as well as email communication with legislators. Everyone in the Gaithersburg branch will be invited to vote for AAUW Maryland's preferences. All the MLAW-supported bills passed the 2023 General Assembly and became law, including legislation authorizing a November ballot measure to enshrine fundamental right to reproductive freedom in the Maryland Constitu-

tion. MLAW-supported bills also increased access and funding for early childhood development scholarships and repealed marriage as a defense of spousal rape. The announcement and registration for the MLAW fall conference is elsewhere in the newsletter.



AAUW Lobby Corps is a decades-old monthly gathering of AAUW members from branches located close to Washington, DC, and the US Congress. Each month that Congress is in session AAUW policy staff provide a briefing on legislation important to women and girls as well as guidance on how to effectively discuss the legislation with Senators or Representatives that are important to the legislation. Lobby Corps restarted this fall after a lengthy Covid-driven absence. In spite of the apparent lack of congressional activity reported in the news, hundreds of members of Congress are working to develop legislation to fund government agencies and programs important to citizens. The September 21 Lobby Corps Day briefed Senator Appropriation committee members on the importance of FY24 Labor-HHS-Education funding which invests in programs that increase access to higher education, including Pell Grants and Federal Work Study Programs. If you would like additional information about Lobby Corps contact Kalina Majercak, Policy Associate at AAUW, majercakk[at]aauw[dot]org or Becky Gaul, Acting Lobby Corps chair, beckygaul[at]verizon.net.

## MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR WOMEN – FALL CONFERENCE



MLAW's Annual Fall Conference, Eyes on the Prize: When Women Vote, We All Win, on November 4, is where we hear from legislators and advocates on upcoming bills in the Maryland General Assembly. This year it will be held from 9am to 1 pm at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) in the Engineering Arts Building. The location may not be as close as past meetings, but UMBC is only a 40-minute drive from Gaithersburg.

The Conference will provide information and strategies to activate and energize participants

to successfully advocate for legislation impacting women and families during the 2024 Maryland General Assembly Session. Advocates and legislators will be presenting 2024 legislative proposals.

2023 MLAW legislative-proposal advocacy contributed to passage of bills bringing reproductive freedom constitutional amendment to a vote in November, repealing the spousal defense for sex crimes against one's spouse, and prevents criminalizing of child victims of sex trafficking for acts committed as a result of their trafficking.

For more details and to register visit <https://mdlegagendaforwomen.org/>.

## GREAT DECISIONS SEPTEMBER 15, 2:30 pm MEETING

- **Mary Wykes, Coordinator**



The Great Decisions Foreign Policy Assn. Interest Group will meet via zoom to discuss Topic 5 of our 2023 Study Guide— Political Trends in Latin America, authored by Jorge Castañeda, a political scientist and prolific author who is currently the Global Distinguished Professor of political Science and Latin American Studies at New York University.

We will meet Friday, October 20 at 2:30. New members are always welcome. If interested, please contact Coordinator Mary Wykes for Zoom link and copy of study guide material. 301-717-1040 or Mary [dot]wykes[at]aol[dot]com

## AAUW HerStory: Saturday, OCTOBER 14, 2 pm In-Person Meeting

- **Maria Roberts, Coordinator**

Herstory Interest Group will meet on Saturday, October 14, at 2 pm in the Park View Club Room at Asbury Methodist Village. Please email meroberts27700[at]cs[dot]com or call (301) 987-6986 if you need directions.

Edie Allison will be introducing the discussion of the month's mystery woman. Here is a hint about the subject of our discussion: Her contributions to science and jurisprudence after her death exceeded

those during her life. At the start of the meeting there will be a chance to guess her identity. A prize goes to the person with the correct guess!



### AAUW GAITHERSBURG BRANCH

**Website:** gaithersburg-md.aauw.net

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

#### **President**

Edie Allison

Edieallison[at]comcast[dot]net

#### **Vice President for Membership**

Heather Reichardt

hjr1234[at]gmail[dot]com

#### **Treasurer**

Ellen Teague

Ellensteague[at]gmail[dot]com

#### **Secretary**

Vacant

#### **Appointed Member of the Board**

Liz Hessel

Liz[at]meral[dot]com

#### **Newsletter Editor**

Qing Jiang

Qjmailbox[at]gmail[dot]com

#### **Newsletter Managing Editor**

## **AAUW GAITHERSBURG CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

Board Meeting – Zoom	Tuesday, October 10, 2023 - 7:00 p.m.
HerStory – In person	Saturday, October 14 - 2:00 p.m.
Branch Program	Tuesday, October 17 – 7:00 p.m.
Great Decisions – Zoom	Friday, October 20 - 2:30 p.m.

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