



# AAUW Gaithersburg Branch

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

NEWSLETTER

Dec. 2023-Jan.2024

## December 2023—January 2024

Gaithersburg AAUW

Annual Holiday Gathering and Potluck Lunch

December 9, 2023

Conley Hall (basement of the Trott Building)

12:00 – 2pm

All members are welcome to attend. Bring your family, friends, and potential members to enjoy a smorgasbord of favorite and new foods and celebrate our various holiday traditions.

January 2024 VIRTUAL BRANCH MEETING!

Tuesday, January 16, 2024

Log in to Zoom meeting: 7:00pm

Presentation begins: 7:15pm

**PRESENTATION:**

A Guide to Ranked Choice Voting

Speaker:

Dr. Brianna A. Smith

Assistant Professor of Political Science at the United States Naval Academy

Dr. Smith will provide a presentation on the process and benefits of Ranked Choice Voting or RCV. RCV is currently used in some local jurisdictions including Takoma Park, MD, as well as several states and countries. Please join the zoom meeting on January 16 to find out more about this up-and-coming election system that is endorsed by Rep. Jamie Raskin, among others.

### Board Meeting

**NO DECEMBER Board Meeting**

**JANUARY BOARD MEETING**

Tuesday, January 9, 2024, at 7 p.m.

Zoom

The AAUW Gaithersburg Branch Board of Directors will meet on Tuesday, January 9, 2024 at 7 p.m. via Zoom. The Zoom code will be sent by email. These meetings are open to all branch members.

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## Presidents Message

### - Edie Allison

As you have probably heard, AAUW in Maryland and other states have been campaigning to get the Equal Rights Amendment, ERA, enshrined in the U.S. Constitution as we honor the 100th anniversary of the ERA's introduction for consideration by Congress. Members of the Gaithersburg branch can aid the campaign being spearheaded by AAUW Maryland and Maryland NOW (National Organization for Women). The 2024 elections are an opportunity to increase the number of senators and representatives that would support legislation to move the ERA to active status in the U.S. Constitution. This would require passing a bill to remove the 1982 limit on ratification now that the required 38th state ratified the amendment in 2020.

This is more important than ever; the 2020 Global Gender Gap Report from the World Economic Forum ranked the U.S. 70th out of 135 countries in gender equality related to health and survival and 86th with regards to political power. The Maryland congressional delegation is expected to continue supporting the ERA, but legislators from other parts of the country may not be as sympathetic. You can expand support for the ERA across the county by encouraging family and friends in other states to ask their legislators to support the ERA.

The ERA guarantees equal rights under the law for all, regardless of sex – this is not currently guaranteed in the US Constitution. The ERA was proposed in 1923 and passed by Congress in 1972. In 2020, Virginia became the 38th state to ratify the ERA, but it did so after a 1982 deadline had passed. The signing deadline was not part of the amendment but added to the language presenting the amendment and can be overturned by a simple majority vote of the House and Senate.

AAUW Maryland and the Gaithersburg branch plan additional programs in support of the amendment. In the meantime, a few facts about the ERA and its importance are listed below.

In the past many advocates for women's equality have assumed that the 14th amendment to the Constitution provided legal recourse for sex dis-

crimination. However, the U.S. Supreme Court 2020 Dobbs ruling overturning the right to an abortion, maintained that the 14th Amendment does not apply to sex discrimination, contraception, or same-sex marriage. The current Supreme Court often bases its decisions on the customs and procedures common at the time the Constitution or various amendments were passed, times when women were barred from entering into contracts or owning property. It is also detrimental that women are not mentioned in the Constitution.



NOW's Maryland Equal Rights Amendment Task Force points out that without the ERA: Victims of sex discrimination have a harder time seeking legal recourse because courts are not required to apply the same high standards of scrutiny in sex discrimination cases as the U.S. Constitution requires for discrimination based on race, national origin, or religion. State and federal laws guaranteeing equal rights regardless of sex can be weakened, repealed, replaced, or improperly interpreted by the courts. This would include state-level amendments guaranteeing sex equality (such as Maryland's ERA) can be overridden.

If you want more information about the Equal Rights Amendment and actions you can take, visit <https://marylandnow.org/take-action-for-the-era/>

## MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR WOMEN



Eighteen legislative proposals for the upcoming 2024 session of the Maryland General Assembly were presented and discussed at the November MLAW fall conference. MLAW will soon send a ballot for members to vote on the preferred six to eight of the proposals for active support during the legislative session.

To join MLAW, visit <https://mdlegagendaforwomen.org/>.

AAUW Maryland, a voting member, will solicit input from members of Gaithersburg and other branches to guide the state's vote. I will send an email to Gaithersburg members asking for your vote on the proposals so that I can compile a branch tally. You can review the proposal packet at <https://en.files.wordpress.com/2023/11/2023-mlaw-proposal-packet.pdf>.

## GREAT DECISIONS DEC 15, 2:30 pm meeting

- **Mary Wykes, Coordinator**



We will meet Friday, December 15, 2023 at 2:30 to discuss Climate Change, Topic 8 of the 2023 Great Decisions Study Guide led by Edie Allison.

New members are always welcome. If interested, please contact Coordi-

nator Mary Wykes for Zoom link and copy of study guide material. 301-717-1040 or Mary[dot]wykes[at]aol[dot]com

### 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.*

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## GREAT DECISIONS JANUARY 19, 2:30 PM MEETING

- **Mary Wykes, Coordinator**



We will meet Friday, January 19, 2024 at 2:30 to consider Political Trends in Latin America, Topic 5 in the 2023 Study Guide. 2024 Study Guides will be distributed, and assignments made.

New members are always welcome. If interested, please contact Coordi-

nator 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, JANUARY 13, 2 pm in-person meeting

- **Maria Roberts, Coordinator**

HerStory will not meet in December. Please mark Saturday, January 13, 2 pm in the Parkview Club Room on your calendar. Aileen Murck will make our presentation that day.

Please email [meroberts27700\[at\]cs\[dot\]com](mailto:meroberts27700[at]cs[dot]com) or call (301) 987-6986 if you need directions.



# **AAUW GAITHERSBURG CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

Holiday Gathering & Potluck Lunch	Saturday, December 9 – Noon
Great Decisions	Friday, December 15—2:30 p.m.
<b>January 2024 Events</b>	
Board Meeting – Zoom	Tuesday, January 9 - 7:00 p.m.
HerStory – In person	Saturday, January 13 - 2:00 p.m.
Branch Program	Tuesday, January 16 – 7:00 p.m.
Great Decisions – Zoom	Friday, January 19 - 2:30 p.m.

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Gaithersburg Branch  
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