

IT'S OUR VOTE LET'S BE HEARD!



**A campaign to
inform and motivate
women to register and vote in 2014**

**sponsored by the
American Association of University Women Ohio**

**Do you know how your state legislators
voted on issues important to women
in the Ohio General Assembly during the last biennium?**

This AAUW Ohio Voting Record scores their votes on:

**Public Education/Charters/Vouchers
Reproductive Choice/Health Care
Voting/individual Rights
Trafficking/Domestic Violence**



Ohio Legislative Voting Record

Members of the American Association of University Women (AAUW, [aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org)) have a long history of lobbying Congress and holding their legislators accountable for their votes on AAUW priority issues which are summarized at <http://www.aauw.org/what-we-do/public-policy/> and at: <http://www.aauw.org/what-we-do/public-policy/aauw-issues/>. Similarly, AAUW Ohio ([aauwoh.org](http://www.aauwoh.org)) follows state-level legislation and executive actions. The AAUW Ohio Voting Record provides information about how elected state officials performed through the votes they cast, bills they co-sponsored or signed, or executive edicts they issued on critical issues related to the AAUW Public Policy Program during the latest biennium, which began in January, 2013. The full AAUW Ohio Voting Record is posted at: <http://wp.me/pS1oT-1jh>. This document summarizes how legislators voted on AAUW issues that were particularly impacted by the state in the current biennium including public education/charters/vouchers, reproductive choice/health care, voting rights, trafficking/domestic violence, and pay equity.

How To Use This Voting Record

Use the AAUW Ohio Voting Record to inform yourself about how your legislators voted on the bills scored. Then either thank or express your opposition to both state executive and legislative officials for their positions. If you wish to email them to express your views:

- Locate legislators or bills at: <http://www.legislature.state.oh.us>.
- Contact the governor at: <http://www.governor.ohio.gov/Contact/ContacttheGovernor.aspx>.
- Contact Ohio Secretary of State John Husted at <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/>.

Inform friends locally or act in coalition with like-minded organizations to register women and encourage them to vote. Voter registration forms are available from your county board of elections or on-line at the secretary of state's site: <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/publications.aspx?vrf>. Voters who have moved can now update their address at that site as well.

Please make copies of this record for distribution in meetings, your neighborhood or church. You, your friends and coalition partners can use this information as a basis for letters to the editor informing citizens about what state government has been doing in the last biennium, much of which goes under the radar. By taking these actions, you help educate your community on issues of particular concern to many women and help elect state executive and legislative officials who support our positions.

To find your Senator or Representative, click on this link for the appropriate map, find your county and district, and then go to the spreadsheet to see which legislator serves your district.

- House: <http://www.ohiohouse.gov/members/district-map>
- Senate: <http://www.ohiosenate.gov/members/senate-district-map>

How To Read This Voting Record

The Ohio House and Senate bills AAUW Ohio scored are first summarized and the AAUW Ohio position is stated. Then our local legislator's votes or non-votes are summarized in a chart. A vote in accordance with AAUW's position is designated by a plus sign (+). A vote contrary to AAUW's position is designated by a zero (0). A notation of "nv" indicates no vote was cast. When a member co-sponsors a bill, it demonstrates initiative on and commitment to the issue and gives the bill momentum. Scoring co-sponsorships is another way to hold policy makers accountable to their constituents. This sponsorship or co-sponsorship is indicated by "/s".

Each legislator earns a percentage rating, although that rating does not indicate the full extent of her or his support of AAUW positions, since only a certain number of bills can be considered. Thus, the AAUW Ohio Voting Record is neither an endorsement nor condemnation of any member's overall record in the Ohio Legislature but rather is a look at a group of bills that AAUW considers especially important to women and girls.

AAUW Ohio Public Policy Priorities

Public Education

AAUW believes that quality public education is the foundation of a democratic society. We advocate for equitable climates free of harassment and bullying, academic freedom, civic education, protection from censorship, bias-free education, and responsible funding for all levels of education, including early childhood education.

To support a strong system of public education that promotes gender fairness, equity, and diversity,

AAUW advocates:

- adequate and equitable funding for quality public education for all students
- opposition to the use of public funds for nonpublic elementary and secondary education (vouchers) and to charter schools that do not adhere to the same civil rights and accountability standards as required of other public schools
- protection of programs that meet the needs of girls and women in elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education, including vigorous enforcement of Title IX and all other civil rights laws pertaining to education
- increased support for and access to higher education for women and disadvantaged populations
- increased support for programs that break through barriers for women and girls in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields

<http://www.aauw.org/resource/aauws-position-on-charter-schools/>

<http://www.aauw.org/resource/aauws-position-on-school-vouchers/>

Reproductive Choice/Health Care

AAUW believes in the right to privacy, freedom from violence, and choice in the determination of one's reproductive life. We firmly believe in the separation of church and state.

AAUW also supports as essential to the well-being of all persons quality affordable and accessible health care and access to family planning services.

<http://www.aauw.org/resource/aauws-position-on-reproductive-rights/>

Voting/Individual Rights

Basic to all of AAUW's public policy efforts is the understanding that true equity requires a balance between the rights of the individual and the needs of the community. AAUW opposes all forms of discrimination and supports constitutional protection for the civil rights of all individuals. We support meaningful campaign finance reform and voter education efforts that will promote equitable political participation and representation in appointed and elected office.

We believe that global interdependence requires national and international policies against human trafficking and that promote peace, justice, human rights, sustainable development, and mutual security for all people. One of AAUW's biennial action priorities is to advocate for pay equity and fairness in compensation so that all women may achieve economic self-sufficiency.

AAUW advocates for freedom from violence and fear of violence, including hate crimes, in homes, schools, workplaces and communities.

Bill Descriptions

NOTE: Bills marked with an asterisk (*) have been enacted.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

***HB 59— 2013-14 Ohio Budget:** The budget continued Ohio's gubernatorial and legislative policy of limiting public school funding and increasing charter and voucher funding. Most objectionably, the budget was used in lieu of passing separate bills on topics that violate several of AAUW's public education policy planks and that otherwise would have met with widespread opposition, as outlined below:

- **Funding:** While funding to districts was increased by \$830 million, it remained \$607 million below what it was in fiscal years 2010-11 meaning that three in four schools now must operate with less than they had four years ago. Consequently, a plethora of new property and income tax levies have appeared on local ballots signaling a reprehensible transfer of responsibility for supporting public education from the Constitutionally-mandated state level to the local level. Funds were not available to adequately fund public education because of voucher and charter transfers as well as new tax breaks for businesses that gave the top one percent a large tax cut, middle income taxpayers an almost negligible cut, and low income citizens an increase. Additionally, the 10% and 2.5% rollbacks (reductions) were eliminated for new and replacement local school levies passed in November 2013 and beyond. This provision increases the local tax burden on public schools.
- **Charter Schools:** Their funding in the budget is based on the cost of educating children in traditional schools although traditional schools have many expenses that charters do not. This formula results in charters receiving from the state more than twice as much per pupil as traditional public schools despite the fact that Ohio Department of Education data show that the local school districts generally outperform charter schools.
- **Vouchers:** Ignoring widespread public criticism of a huge expansion in the voucher program first proposed in the previous biennium in HB 136, the legislature and governor enacted it by placing it in the budget, where it cannot be subject to referendum. The new approach dramatically changes the purpose of the voucher program, which was originally sold as offering poor children the opportunity to escape from failing public schools, by allowing children—kindergartners only in the first year—to apply for a voucher in any school district *even those deemed successful* and by allowing parents who earn 200% of poverty (about \$45,000, which is over the median income and not usually defined as poverty level) or less to apply. Outrageously, in subsequent years, the family income can rise to 400% of poverty (about \$90,000) and still qualify for some level of voucher aid.

The governor did not line-item veto any of these provisions and signed the budget into law.

A vote for this bill is designated with a zero (0).

***HB 362— STEM Schools and Teacher Evaluations:** This bill now has two parts—first, it allows charter (community) schools and chartered non-public schools to be designated as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) school equivalents. The designation would enable the schools to share resources with nonprofit organizations and higher education entities. This does not mean that designated schools are eligible for state funding, but it does mean that they can accept grants from STEM networks, private entities, or foundations. They must follow the same guidelines as traditional public schools designated as STEM schools. This part of the bill was not controversial.

The second part of the bill, addressing teacher evaluations, essentially incorporates the original Senate Bill 229, which had been added and then removed from the Mid-Biennium Review (MBR). HB 487, and subsequently attached to HB 362. SB 229 had been significantly revised in the House, but the final version is closer to the original, which was a document that had been developed with input from several education organizations. A key sticking point had been the weight assigned to the assessment of student progress. The final result gives school districts the flexibility they wanted in conducting teacher evaluations.

A vote for this bill is designated with a plus (+).

Bill Descriptions

***HB 483— Mid-Budget Review (MBR) Operation of State Programs:** This mid-biennial review bill dealt primarily with tax policy and also increased the funding for several human services programs. While the increase in funding was welcomed, other aspects of the bill dipped into education policy with funding not in line with AAUW positions. (See other education policy changes in HB 487.)

A pilot program with \$5 million in funding for dropout recovery, limited to 1,000 students, is aimed at 22 to 29-year-old dropouts to be served by school districts, colleges and community schools. Dropout recovery charter schools were added to the bill for this additional funding in conference committee, even though they have a documented dismal graduation rate. Although charters are public schools, private management companies have made huge profits at taxpayer expense without the promised return on investment.

A vote for this bill is designated by a zero (0).

***HB 487—Mid-Budget Review (MBR) K-12 Education Programs:** This wide-ranging mid-biennium education bill is a mixed bag in terms of content. It is helpful to students in that it includes numerous provisions relating to earning college credits while enrolled in high school through the College Credit Plus program, and provides for all high school juniors to take the ACT at no cost to them, to assess their readiness for college.

The bill addresses concerns about the implementation of common core standards by requiring parental advisory committees to review curriculum, with control for selection of texts and other instructional materials residing in local school districts. Language in the bill gives the state sole control over the development, adoption or revision of academic content standards. Local districts are kept from entering into agreements to receive federal grants if the grants are predicated on the adoption of federally sanctioned standards. Previously, there had been no provisions in Ohio law protecting the privacy of student information, which had been a major concern of common core critics, and this bill rectifies that.

While acknowledging that this bill has several positive provisions, AAUW has several concerns:

- The common core standards provision will be problematical for those districts involved in Race to the Top or other federal grant programs. It may also make it difficult to adopt science and social studies standards developed as a part of the common core by science educators in other states
- Expansion of the EdChoice voucher program drains taxpayer dollars from public schools; the program will expand in the Cleveland schools if the number of applicants exceeds the number of available scholarships. The bill also allows for expansion of the voucher program to high school students who would attend a school that received a D or F for its graduation rate for two out of the three most recent years
- Students enrolled in community schools will now have access to extracurricular activities, including sports, in their districts, without concern for their eligibility or the cost of their participation, which strains the capacity of the traditional schools to provide for these activities
- The limitations placed on the reopening of community schools that have closed due to poor performance and are reopening at the same location appear to be less stringent than necessary to improve performance and accountability. They allow at least half of the failed school's administrators and teachers to continue, although there must be a different sponsor and a different chief administrator. Also, they do not address the financial liability of the failed school
- More transparency and accountability in reference to governing boards and financial controls is needed. Nepotism on governing boards is not addressed

A vote for this bill is designated by a zero (0).

Bill Descriptions

REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE/HEALTH CARE

***HB 59—2013-14 Ohio Budget:** Rather than risk introducing individual contentious bills, Ohio legislators used the budget to impose countless restrictions on women's health services, which include far more than abortion and are used by many poor women. Thirteen pages were required to summarize them in the analysis done by the Ohio Legislative Services Commission (pp 302-315). Read it at: <http://www.lsc.state.oh.us/>. Most of these regulations create unfair hoops that are impossible for clinics to jump through and have, therefore, resulted in the closing of several clinics that provide many vital women's health services other than abortion. The budget:

- Defunded Planned Parenthood via the development of a formula that reprioritizes who can receive funding. Those that now have higher priority in general do not offer comprehensive women's health services; thus reducing service to mostly poor women. This provision also directly attacks contraception by defunding four independent family planning providers who do not provide abortion and serve women in nine counties: Lake, Ashtabula, Geauga, Lorain, Jefferson, Licking, Fairfield, Perry and Muskingum. International internet polling company YouGov found that 60% of women have a positive impression of Planned Parenthood.
- Required clinics that do abortions to have transfer agreements with a nearby hospital in case of complications, which occur in 0.2 percent of abortions; but make it against the law for publicly funded hospitals to enter into such agreements. Many of the remaining hospitals are Catholic. These agreements are a disingenuous, medically unnecessary tactic because hospital emergency rooms are required by law to treat any patient who comes in.
- Interfered with the doctor-patient relationship by requiring doctors to do medically unnecessary ultrasounds in search of a fetal heartbeat and report specious information about what that indicates in terms of the viability of the fetus. Doctors who fail to do so are subject to civil action or disciplinary action by the state medical board.
- Prohibited rape crisis centers that receive state funding from even mentioning abortion.

None of these restrictions is subject to the referendum because they were inserted in the budget. The American Civil Liberties Union Ohio has sued the state to eliminate the provisions that are not related to appropriations including the transfer agreement, fetal heartbeat, and the rape crisis center provisions based on the One-Subject Rule, arguing that anything inserted in the budget should be related to appropriations.

The governor did not line-item veto any of these provisions and signed the budget into law.

A vote for this bill is designated with a zero (0).

VOTING/INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

***SB 205—Restrictions on Absentee Voting:** This new law changes the rules for mailing absentee ballots in a way that unfairly restricts the vote by:

- Requiring that absentee ballots can only be sent when the General Assembly appropriates funds for that purpose.
- Banning any public official other than the secretary of state from mailing unsolicited applications for an absentee ballot; heavily populated counties have in the past frequently funded the mailing of absentee ballots as part of an effort to reduce long lines
- Allowing the mailing of absentee ballot applications only in even-numbered years.
- Prohibiting election workers from assisting voters trying to fill out an absentee ballot in person unless they are disabled or illiterate.

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- Establishing a number of restrictive, detailed provisions that make it more likely that an absentee ballot will be rejected for minor paperwork errors.

A vote for this bill is designated with a zero (0).

***SB 238—Reduction of Early Voting and Elimination of Golden Week:** This bill eliminates the week during which voters can both register and vote by in-person absentee ballot, often called “Golden Week.” This week has been the first week in the 35-day early voting period that preceded our Ohio election. In 2012, 59,000 Ohio voters took advantage of this six-day period to register and cast a ballot—mostly people with limited transportation who find it especially difficult to make more than one visit to the polls. These included seniors, homeless, college students and working poor among others. While supporters say they seek to eliminate voter fraud, there is almost no evidence that such fraud exists making the claim disingenuous.

This bill in combination with Secretary of State John Husted’s unilateral elimination of Sunday voting and significant reduction in Saturday and evening voting hours will have a disproportionate impact on minority voting, for example, by eliminating the well known “Souls to the Polls” voting excursions African American churches sponsor after church on Sundays prior to the election.

A vote for this bill is designated with a zero (0).

NOTE: Voters should be aware of two legal challenges to changes in Ohio voting laws. One was a case brought by the Obama campaign in 2012 that had remained open until a federal district judge in Cincinnati issued a ruling in June restoring early, in-person voting on the three days before Election Day—Saturday through Monday. A second legal challenge was filed more recently by the ACLU, the League of Women Voters of Ohio, and the NAACP in federal district court alleging that the reduction in early voting via HB 238 and Secretary of State fiat denies voters equal protection under the 14th Amendment of the US Constitution and is a violation of the Voting Rights Act. On July 15, US Attorney General Eric Holder joined this lawsuit. Read about the lawsuit at: <http://www.acluohio.org/cases/naacp-et-al-v-husted-et-al>. More recently, this coalition filed a motion for a stay of the law for this election, which would mean the voting regulations in effect for the May primary would be in effect for the fall election. The stay was granted on September 4, essentially rolling back the restrictions in SB 238 by restoring “Golden Week” and requiring that evening hours be set for early in-person voting for the weeks beginning October 20 and October 27, as well as hours for multiple Sundays.

NOTE: The following two bills affecting voters’ rights have been introduced and passed. AAUW has not taken a policy position on them and these bills are primarily common-sense housekeeping. Therefore, we have not scored them here.

***SB -200—Voting Modernization Bill:** This bill makes modifications to Ohio’s provisional ballot process by allowing the secretary of state to prescribe by rule the format in which the boards of elections must send voter registration records to the Secretary of State. It also requires a Bureau of Motor Vehicles deputy registrar that receives a completed paper voter registration application or voter registration update form to send the forms to the board of elections of the county in which the deputy registrar is located within five days after accepting the application or other form.

***SB 216—Modifications to Provisional Ballots Bill:** This bill makes modifications to Ohio’s provisional ballot process. The bill reflects recent court decisions requiring ballots be counted that are cast in the correct polling location, but the incorrect precinct, due to poll worker error. Beyond this correction, the bill shifts responsibility to the voter, not the poll worker, to complete all parts of the provisional ballot affirmation form, unless the voter is disabled. Further this bill removes provisions that allow voters to cast provisional ballots if they are unable or decline to provide the required ID or the last four digits of their Social Security number. It also alters the provisional ballot affirmation form to now require a voter’s current address and date of birth. Further it adds language on the provisional ballot that requires a voter to declare that they have lived in the state for the 30

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days immediately preceding the election and decreases from ten to seven the number of days a provisional voter is given to confirm their identity to the Board of Elections. Finally it allows voters who have changed their name to cast a regular ballot, instead of a provisional ballot as in current law, if they are able to provide proof by showing certain legal documents.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

***HB 130—End Demand Act:** This bill is designed to reduce consumer demand for sex trafficking. Key provisions include increasing penalties for the solicitation of minors, no longer needing to prove that a minor was compelled to engage in prostitution, increasing the statute of limitations, and terminating parental rights of parents who have trafficked their children. The bill, a rare example of bi-partisanship, expands on two previous bills passed in recent years to reduce sex trafficking in Ohio, where the practice had become rampant.

A vote for this bill is designated with a plus (+).

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

***HB 129—Workplace Stalking:** This bill expanded existing stalking and harassment statutes to include generalized threats against a company or group of employees; also, protection orders can now be obtained for generalized threats (not just for an individual).

A vote for this bill is designated with a plus (+).

OTHER BILLS IMPACTING AAUW POLICIES WE ARE FOLLOWING

Three bills relating to equal pay have been introduced; each has had one hearing for sponsor testimony only.

HB 456—Discriminatory Compensation Decision (Ohio’s Equal Pay Act): This bill would bring the provisions of the federal Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act into Ohio civil rights laws, so that individuals who are discriminated against in their pay can file for relief in a more accessible state court. Back pay may be recovered for up to two years preceding the filing of the charge.

HB 120—Gender Pay Disparity Task Force: This bill would create a task force to determine the extent of pay disparity between men and women in Ohio; identify the causes of that disparity, develop recommendations to remedy the disparity and share them with the governor, the president of the Senate, and the speaker of the House.

SB 92—Fair and Acceptable Income Required (FAIR) Act: This bill would add sexual orientation and gender identity to the classifications for which wage discrimination is not allowed; enforcement authority is transferred to the Ohio Civil Rights Commission. Exceptions to an equal wage rate may be based on education, training or experience. Compensatory damages are capped.

American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC)

ALEC is a 501(c)(3) organization that has operated behind closed doors for decades with the purpose of allowing corporations to hand state legislators the changes to the law they desire that directly benefit their bottom line. Corporate members underwrite the bulk of expenses for operating ALEC while legislative members pay minimal dues. While the organization lists itself as nonpartisan, its legislative members are almost exclusively conservatives and its causes are those espoused by conservatives. ALEC boasts that its members introduce over 1,000 bills every year with one in five enacted into law. ALEC is behind the move to privatize public education, suppress the vote and weaken unions among others. For more information about ALEC go to:

<http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/ALEC> or

http://www.alecexposed.org/wiki/ALEC_Exposed

To read "ALEC in Ohio: The Corporate Special Interests that Help Write Ohio's Laws," go to: <http://site.pfaw.org/pdf/ALEC-in-Ohio.pdf>. Between January and October of 2011, 33 bills were introduced in the Ohio Legislature that are identical to or contain elements from different ALEC "model" proposals. Nine of these bills, containing elements from 33 pieces of ALEC legislation, have been signed into law. ALEC's internal talking points praise Governor John Kasich as someone who helped ALEC in its formative years. For these reasons, AAUW/Ohio believes that voters deserve to know whether their legislator is affiliated with ALEC. Membership is indicated with an asterisk after their name.

We also call to your attention that Ohio Governor John Kasich is a member of ALEC as is Ohio Representative and Speaker of the US House John Boehner. Ohio State Senator Bill Seitz is a member of ALEC's Board of Directors and former Ohio State Representative John P. Adams is Ohio's ALEC state chairman.

Information about the 2014 Election

How to Register and Vote: Register by October 6, 2014, to vote on Tuesday, November 4, 2014.

Registration forms are available in many places, including your county Board of Elections, libraries, high schools or vocational schools, deputy registrar offices, and many state service agencies. You may also ask the Secretary of State or the County Board of Elections to mail you an application. For more information, go to: <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/sos/elections/Voters/FAQ/genFAQs.aspx>. If you are already registered, the Secretary of State has already mailed you an application for an absentee ballot.

If you do not know your voting precinct, call your county Board of Elections or go online: <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/pollinglocation.aspx?page=361>. Forms of ID currently accepted in Ohio include: driver's license, military card, bank statement, and a utility bill that includes your name and current address.

Ohio residents may vote absentee for any reason. Absentee voting begins 28 days before the election, as the result of a U.S. Supreme Court ruling. Voters who might have difficulty getting to the polls during open hours should consult this webpage for more information about how to absentee vote: <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/sos/elections/Voters/FAQ/AbsenteeFAQs.aspx>.

The League of Women Voters maintains a page with complete voting information at: <http://www.lwvohio.org>.

AAUW Branches in Ohio: You can learn more about AAUW at www.aauw.org or about AAUW Ohio at <http://www.aauwoh.org>. You can also link to contact information and websites that some of these branches maintain at <http://aauwoh.org/aauwoh/member-center/join/find-a-branch/>.

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

Thanks

Many thanks to Jan Bowden of the Heights-Hillcrest-Lyndhurst Branch, AAUW, which is located in Northeast Ohio, for her extensive work on this Voting Record Project. Without her contribution, it would not have become a reality. We hope it inspires all who read it to help get out the vote with the result of achieving a legislature that will pass bills that comply with our AAUW Public Policy Program.

Jackie Evangelista and Karen Rainey
AAUW Ohio Public Policy Co-Chairs