



THE SAGE HEN

A Quarterly Publication of the AAUW Nevada State Council

2025 - 2nd Quarter



Mission Statement: To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

A *Message* FROM THE PRESIDENT

On Saturday, April 26th, the Nevada State AAUW held its 2025 Annual Conference. The theme was “Life Transitions: Finding and Imparting Joy at Each Stage of Life.” The conference host was the Tahoe Nevada Branch. Co-President Peggy Poindexter provided community and school context for the work of the Branch. Tahoe Nevada prides itself on its fundraising efforts to support local girls through their renewable (up to four years) and one-time scholarships, as well as their Community Education Grants. Recently, they have embraced Career and Technical Education (CTE) by promoting these critical careers to high school girls.

Our first speaker was Mary Brabant, Director of Disability and Volunteer Programming at Goodwill Southern Nevada. Mary provided the rich history of Goodwill, which was started in 1902 by Methodist minister, Dr. Edgar J. Helms. The history set the stage for Mary to describe Goodwill’s multifaceted programs and partners to help people of different abilities transition throughout their lives. Goodwill starts early in life with programs to support school readiness. Transitioning into adulthood is challenging for everyone, but even more so for individuals with disabilities. Fortunately, Goodwill has employee partners who aid in the process. They don’t stop there. Programs for adults who are trying to navigate their senior years are also available. Overall, the presentation demonstrated the continued optimism begun by Dr. Helms over a hundred years ago.

Motivational Speaker, Shirley Bolden took us on her transition *journey* after retiring from the financial industry in Southern California before moving to Nevada. Finding herself at somewhat of a loss in retirement, she dug deeper into Pilates, which she started for her own health and well-being. Since then, she has become a Certified Pilates Instructor. Her most significant message however was her optimistic approach to life. For Shirley, setbacks are cause for learning and growing. Her presentation inspired all of us.

Special thanks go to the conference committee: Valerie McNay, Caroline Punches, Evelyn Thompson-Hilbert, Janet Usinger, and Jennifer Verive. The conference was videotaped; if you would like a copy, please contact Janet Usinger, usingerj@unr.edu



Janet Usinger, President
AAUW Nevada State

TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's Message	1
Public Policy	2-5
Branch News	5-12
State Council Information	13
Tahoe-Nevada Branch Flyer	14



A Season of Growth: Advancing Equity Across Nevada in Q2 2025

As we journey through the second quarter of 2025—**April, May, and June**—we enter a season rich with symbolism, reflection, and civic possibility. **April** invites us into awareness and renewal, marked by observances like Earth Day and Sexual Assault Awareness Month—reminding us of our responsibility to both people and planet. **May**, named for Maia, the Greek goddess of growth—later known in Roman mythology as Bona Dea—symbolizes fertility, transformation, and the power of women as creators and changemakers. **June**, home to both **Pride Month** and **Juneteenth**, calls us to honor freedom, justice, and the diverse communities that continue to shape our nation’s progress. Together, these months offer a window of opportunity—to plant, grow, and stand firm in our shared pursuit of equity.

Though many of our rights and freedoms feel increasingly under pressure, we are not without power. Like the generations before us, we can choose how we respond: with fear or with fierce determination. I choose the latter.

With just two months remaining in Nevada’s biennial legislative session, AAUW members across the state have voiced concern, passion, and a hunger for change. At the same time, we recognize that many Nevadans are still learning how to navigate the legislative process and engage meaningfully.

That’s where AAUW excels. Our legacy of advocacy—statewide and at every level—continues to be a driving force for gender equity and social justice.

This update highlights our collective efforts during this pivotal quarter and concludes with resources to support your engagement—from understanding NELIS (Nevada’s Electronic Legislative Information System) to strengthening collaborations with our statewide partners, including the **Nevada Women’s Lobby** and the **League of Women Voters of Nevada**.

Let this Spring be a time not only of awakening, but of action. Together, we are planting the seeds of progress—and ensuring they take root.

Here are remaining Important dates for the 2025 Nevada Legislature:



Source: Silver State Equity



Here's the **Nevada State Council Legislative Action Plan**. Although it was sent to all branches, we understand these emails can be easy to overlook.

Many of you have asked how to get involved beyond attending protests. Below are links to the March recordings and PowerPoint presentations hosted by the Las Vegas Chapter. They offer practical guidance on how to participate in the legislative process—whether in person, by phone, email, or through NELIS (Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System).

STATE

The following Legislative Communication Plan was emailed to the branches for immediate action. Please check your email for an extensive list. We aligned the top three Nevada Bills with AAUW's mission:



AAUW Nevada Campaign Overview: “Equity in Action: Nevada 2025”

⌚ Top 3 Legislative Priorities

Bill	Focus	Why It Matters to AAUW	Status
AB176	Reproductive Health Care	Ensures access to reproductive health services—a cornerstone of gender equity and bodily autonomy.	May 15, 2025 Amend, and do pass as amended https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/83rd2025/Committee/437/Overview (Work Session) NELIS link: https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/83rd2025/Bill/12130/Overview
AB250	Debt Collection from Economic Abuse	Addresses financial abuse, strengthening economic justice for survivors, especially women.	May 14, 2025 Amend, and do pass as amended. https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/83rd2025/Committee/440/Overview (Work Session) NELIS link: https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/83rd2025/Bill/12280/Overview
SB171	Shield Law for Transgender Protections	Upholds civil rights for transgender Nevadans, advancing inclusive protections.	May 16, 2025 https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/83rd2025/Committee/448/Overview (Work Session) NELIS link: https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/83rd2025/Bill/12189/Overview



Sample Member Email (Editable) - CALL TO ACTION

Subject: Take Action: 3 Bills That Impact Women and Girls in Nevada

Body: Dear AAUW Nevada Members,

This legislative session, we have a powerful opportunity to put our values into action by supporting three critical bills:

- **AB176:** Protects reproductive freedom and ensures access to essential care.
- **AB250:** Confronts economic abuse and gives survivors a fighting chance to reclaim their financial freedom.
- **SB171:** Shields transgender Nevadans from targeted legal action—because equity includes everyone.

Join us in amplifying our voices. Let's remind our lawmakers that gender equity is not optional—it's essential.

Click here to find your legislator:

<https://nvlcb.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/lookup/index.html?appid=0815e77623f04028993e9f3ec56174e>

In solidarity,

Evelyn Thompson-Hilbert, DPP [Your Name]

AAUW Nevada Public Policy Chair [Your AAUW Branch and title if you have one]

Social Media - CALL TO ACTION

Post on social media:

Hashtags: #EquityInActionNV #AAUWAdvocates #NevadaPolicy2025

Sample Posts:

- 1  *Nevada, it's time to act! Support #AB176 to ensure access to reproductive care for all. #EquityInActionNV #AAUWAdvocates*
- 2  *Economic abuse traps survivors. #AB250 helps them break free. Call your legislators today! #AAUWAdvocates*
- 3  *Trans rights are human rights. Help us pass #SB171 to protect our LGBTQ+ community from legal harm. #EquityForAll*



□ Talking Points for Advocacy

- **AB176:** “AAUW stands firmly for reproductive freedom. This bill protects access to care that allows women to make decisions about their bodies and futures.”
- **AB250:** “Economic abuse is a form of domestic violence. Protecting survivors’ credit and economic mobility is urgent.”
- **SB171:** “We cannot claim to advance gender equity without defending transgender rights. SB171 is a civil rights issue.”

📞 Phone Script for Legislator Calls

“Hello, my name is [Your Name] and I’m a member of AAUW Nevada. I’m calling to urge you to support [AB176/ AB250/SB171] because this bill is essential for gender equity in our state. These issues directly affect women, girls, and marginalized communities across Nevada. I hope we can count on your leadership. Thank you.”

NATIONAL

AAUW’s First 100 Days Fact Sheet highlights key actions and legislative priorities focused on advancing gender equity through education, economic security, and workplace protections during the early days of a new administration.

Use this link for a summary of AAUW-National’s:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1U1Bmw_szbCk9DPHMHDyXCD02etxGgY1ZAhG2wZ58yN0/edit?usp=sharing

Looking Ahead: Let’s Reflect, Mobilize, and Reimagine Together

As we move through the 2025 legislative session, my vision is for every AAUW chapter across Nevada to use this moment as a springboard—to **reflect on what’s worked, review what’s changed, and renew our strategies** as we prepare for 2027 and beyond.

I’ve been inspired by conversations with longtime members, returning Nevadans, and those newly joining our state—each bringing fresh perspectives and asking bold questions about how we move forward in these rapidly shifting times.

If you’ve ever felt even *remotely* curious about policy, advocacy, or the power of collective action, **now is the time to lean in**. Whether you’re new or seasoned, your voice matters. Let’s learn together how to mobilize from our own backyards, prepare for Nevada’s next legislative session, and powerfully align with National AAUW’s mission for equity and justice.

Have an idea? Want to get involved? Let’s connect. Your insight might be just what we need to shape our next chapter. Email me: evelyn.aauw@gmail.com





From the Boulder City Branch:

Erin Rider, Assistant Director of Faculty Development and Diversity at Nevada State University, spoke about women refugees who have found entrepreneurship to be a pathway of necessity and opportunity. Her presentation included a discussion of the context of forced migration and integration.

Boulder City Clerk, Tami McKay spoke at our meeting in April. McKay addressed the key functions of her office and how it serves the community. Questions were answered in an extremely professional manner.

Boulder City has a lunch out group that meets monthly. Sometimes we take a tour of a local, Las Vegas or Henderson site. Sometimes we group with the Las Vegas Branch to know what each other is doing. In Boulder City, we toured the St. Jude's Ranch for Children's new Healing Center for trafficked women. It was an amazing day, followed by lunch.

AAUW Boulder City's annual Wine and Chocolate Tasting was held April 26th, on the patio at the Boulder Dam Hotel. The event is one of two fundraisers for AAUW Boulder City Scholarships. The Branch has given \$12,000 in the past year to students working on Bachelors, Masters and Doctorates at three Nevada universities.

Pam Noonan introduced attendees to Laughter Yoga at our May meeting. Noonan is a Certified International Laughter Yoga Educator. She became a Laughter Yoga Leader and Reiki practitioner 13 years ago. She uses her skills to teach a free class on Tuesdays at the Bounder City Senior Center. Truly, laughter IS the best medicine!



Dr. Angel Ball, Incoming President, presents flowers to Linda Gardner, filling in for long-time outgoing President, Valerie McNay, currently in assisted living.



Migration Talk meeting



City Clerk, Tami McKay and listeners



From the Boulder City Branch (continued):



St. Jude's Ranch Healing Center Campus



Lunch out at St. Jude's Ranch Healing Center
(Director on left, and Locks of Love behind)



Wine and Chocolate Musicians



Member and Laughter Yoga
teacher, Pam Noonan



Wine and Chocolate Tasting
at Boulder Dam Hotel





From the Capital Branch:

Capital Branch has been busy fundraising these past months – with record-breaking pecan sales and a successful non-event virtual fundraiser. We raised nearly \$11,000 to support women and girls with two high school scholarships, one scholarship to a student at Western Nevada College, and our annual contribution to AAUW's Greatest Needs Fund. We celebrated our scholarship recipients at our annual Scholarship Luncheon held in May at the Governor's Mansion. Our regular program meetings this past quarter included deep dives into the influence of gender on computing history and the dozens of bills before the NV Legislature affecting gender equity. All this learning and fundraising while enjoying connecting and having fun in our Interest Groups – hiking, reading, cooking, and eating!



Capital Branch members at the April informal luncheon at Katie's in Minden, Nevada. From Left: Connie Atwood, Stacy Stewart, Sharon Orgain, and Bonnie Bertocchi





From the Fallon Branch:

Our yearly big fundraiser was quite a success this year. Since we hold it around St. Patrick's Day in March, we have been showing Irish films. This year we also had a bagpiper who was out front of the theater before the show and performed before and during intermission. We always serve hors d'oeuvre and Irish Coffee and have lots of raffle baskets. We were able to award three \$1,000 scholarships this year.

In April, we held our Scholarship luncheon and also awarded a Branch and Community Woman of the Year honor. We had to cancel our May program this year, and hopefully, will have it later this summer.



From the Las Vegas Branch:

Wendy Schweigart of Project Marilyn was our speaker in February. Project Marilyn's mission is to end period poverty. They assemble period kits to provide enough supplies to carry them through their entire cycle. They work with schools and other agencies in the community to make the kits easily accessible. Members also enjoyed out to lunch at Palette Tea Lounge and Dim Sum.



Wendy Schweigart from Project Marilyn with some AAUW members;
From left: Back row: Wendi Schweigart and Dr. Evelyn Thompson-Hilbert
Front row: Anne Green, Amber Burkett, and Ruth Johnson



Wendi Schweigart
from Project Marilyn



Janai McFarland
AAUW Las Vegas Scholarship Recipient

In March, we enjoyed hearing from one of our scholarship recipients, Janai McFarland. Janai has been active in our Branch for the last two years and is working toward a Bachelor's degree in nursing. She has been a Licensed Practical Nurse and is knowledgeable about health care in the community. In January, she participated in a medical mission to Mexico and spoke about the work done during that mission. We also offered a Legislative Bootcamp to our members this Spring, presented by Evelyn Thompson-Hilbert and Margo Tello.



From the Las Vegas Branch:

Our April meeting had Claudia Merrill, one of our members, speaking on the importance of the arts in education. Claudia is the Artistic Director and Founder of Grace City Opera and an American Soprano. Grace City Opera was opened in 2023 and was the first African American Opera Company to be led by a woman. A small group of us enjoyed lunch at Settebello Pizza.



Marilyn Zimmerman
Las Vegas Branch President



Claudia Merrill, American Soprano and Artistic Director
and Founder of Grace City Opera Theatre

We selected four young women to receive our \$1,000 scholarships this year. We were pleased with our decision to move our scholarship applications to the Public Education Foundation here in Clark County. We had thirty-nine applications this year, more than we have ever received in the past. The Foundation narrowed the applicants down to the ten most qualified from which we selected our four finalists. We are in the process of reaching out to the recipients and will be inviting them to our June meeting.



From the Reno Branch:

Happy Spring to you all, although in Reno, Mother Nature can't seem to make up her mind whether or not it is Spring or still Winter because she keeps bringing snow to us after 80-degree days.

We haven't been too busy this quarter, but some of us did participate in Grassroots Lobby Days. We managed to discuss our proposed bill with Senator Angie Taylor, who is in favor and will help us in the next session to get the draft to the correct Committee chair and into the proper channels on time. That was our best takeaway from the Lobby Days experience. In addition, we have finally acquired a Secretary (Terri Burroughs) and Public Policy Chair (Cody Phinney) for our Branch.

In March, several of us attended the Nevada Women's History Project 30-year Anniversary Celebration luncheon where we were treated to a comprehensive history of the process for getting the



From the Reno Branch: continued from Page 10

Sarah Winnemucca statue into the Washington Capitol building and other interesting information on Nevada women. <https://www.nevadawomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/March-newsletter-2025.pdf>

We continue having our Branch meetings via zoom, except for our June 14th picnic which will be an in-person gathering at the home of longtime-member, Arlene Summerhill. At that meeting, we will present a framed certificate to Helaine Greenberg for reaching her honorary 50-year membership. Congratulations Helaine!



From the Tahoe-Nevada Branch:

Career Technical Education (CTE) Career Speaker Series

We held two additional CTE events at Incline High School this year that were very well attended. This program is just getting off the ground and we are planning to continue the Career Speaker Series as well as participating in Career Fairs and other events to highlight technical education opportunities.

In February, Co-President Barb Ortiz shared her military experience and talked about career opportunities in the military, many that related directly to certificates and training that are directly transferrable to jobs in the civilian sector.





From the Tahoe-Nevada Branch: continued from Page 11

In March, we were fortunate to have Aimee Becker and Heather Schourup make a presentation on Construction to a room full of (mostly) girls! The students were very interested, especially in how much money there is to be made in the industry. It appears that the luncheons are a success, in no small part to the pizza and cupcakes that are provided.



Incline High School

15h

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AAUW of NEVADA
2024-2026 State Leadership Council Members and Branch Presidents

AAUW Nevada State Council Roster

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Peggy	Poindexter	Tahoe NV Co-Pres	president@tahoenvaauw.org

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presents a
Summer fundraiser

For more information:

Millie Szerman

775-833-3311 (landline) or
Fundraising@tahoenvaauw.org



BEFORE PETER PAN THERE WAS

PETER AND THE STARCATCHER

Tickets: \$ 95.00

includes: Appetizers, Desserts,
Wine/Beer, Non-Alcoholic Beverages

FRIDAY, AUGUST 15th, 2025

5:30 p.m.



Sand Harbor
Lake Tahoe, Nevada State Park

AAUW Tahoe Nevada
P.O. Box 5465
Incline Village, NV 89450

American Association of University Women Tahoe Nevada is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation formed in Nevada and registered with the Nevada Secretary of State (Federal Tax I.D. #943055754). Our purpose is the advancement of equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research.