

The Chicago Edition



February 2026

Volume 102, Edition 5



Saturday, February 21, 2026
1:00pm in person and via zoom
Senate Forum at Operation Push
930 E 50th St, Chicago, IL 60615
Street parking or public transportation

The Promote the Vote Alliance is a growing coalition of non-profit organizations working to protect the vote, amplify the importance of voting, and explore ongoing issues that impact women and families. Simone Alicea, Executive Producer of City Cast Chicago, will moderate the panel discussion among the candidates.

Primaries tend to have low voting turn out, and we want to change that. We want voters to understand how important our Senate election is in Illinois and to be fully informed about each candidate's positions on these issues so that they can follow through at the ballot box to vote!

The PTV Alliance is inviting all primary candidates running for Senator Durbin's senate seat to participate in the Senate Forum, regardless of their party affiliation. The Forum provides a unique opportunity for candidates to inform us about how they will address the issues that are of concern to women and families, including safety and well-being, housing, healthcare, employment, education, civil rights, and more.

This nonpartisan event will be hybrid, and you can watch it live on YouTube or attend in person.

We are very excited to hold this Forum sponsored by the following organizations: AAUW, Chicago Votes, Chicago Urban League, Chicago Women Take Action, Courts Matter Illinois, Illinois NOW, JCUA, NCJW Chicago North Shore, NCJW South Cook, Rainbow PUSH, Reform for Illinois, SEIU Illinois, Women Employed, and Working Women's History Project.

President's Message

2026! We are into a new year and all that comes with it. The Chicago branch is not slowing down, and we have programs planned for the upcoming months. I hope to see you and hope you can spread the word about AAUW.

Thank you to Paula Purdue and Megan Moser for planning and organizing the January program. It was attended by Chicago branch members as well as members from around the state. It was also recorded if you missed the program.

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/Ky8BgmjONuFCtS-8LUrMP1Yx3Wjg2RaTLw11u2L3obmxPEyD3Uqjm3Bza-_F-dpg.fywlUczAw9KKS3_M

In February we are partnering with Chicago Women Take Action and other like-minded organization for a Senate Forum for the individuals running for the open Senate position left by Dick Durbin. The non-partisan event will be held at Operation Push, and the branch is a co-sponsor. The event will be held in person, and it will also be live streamed.

Save the date for Equal Pay Day 2026 on March 4th. Details will be coming soon.

We have an open position on our board. Charlaine Reynolds stepped down from her position as Membership Chair last year. I would like to thank Charlaine for her help over the past year and a half welcoming new members and continuing to maintain our branch membership. Please let me know if you are interested in helping and welcoming new and potential members.

Thank you to the members who have donated our 18th Annual No Dinner Dinner. The money donated goes to National AAUW for the greatest need fund. We had half our members donate this year and we raised \$100 more than last year. Thank you for your generosity and support of AAUW and equity for women and girls.

Best – Lori Switzer

Chicago Branch Admin

Meeting/Activities Dates and Topics

February 21	Senate Forum location: Operation Push
March 4	Equal Pay Day Rally – time/location TBD
March 28	Honoring Marty Goddard, Pioneer in Combating Sexual Violence Panel – Sexual Trauma with WWHP at Hull House 10:30am
April 24-25	AAUW-IL State Convention Rockford, Illinois

Thank you

Thank you to Public Policy Chairs Paula Purdue and Megan Moser for presenting the January 10th meeting on the History of the ERA in Illinois. Paula presented the program and lead the discussion on her work on the passage of the ERA in Illinois from 1976 to 2017 when it finally passed. Thank you to Megan Moser for hosting the zoom. The program was recorded is available to watch if you missed the program.

Open Board Position

We have an open position on the Branch board for a VP of Membership. The position will go until June 30, 2026. The membership chair is a voice on the board as well as welcoming new and potential members to the branch. Please contact Lori Switzer if you are interested in the position.

Chicagoaauw@hotmail.com

Treasurer Report – Megan Moser

As of January 15, 2026

Checking account: \$2,798.92

Fidelity account: \$14,690.23

Branch Steering Committee Meeting – February 9, 2026

We will meet on Monday, February 9 at 6:30pm via Zoom. All are welcome to attend. We are looking for more members to join our steering committee. You can be as involved as your schedule allows. We meet on the second Monday of each month. We will be focusing on planning the programs for the rest of the year.

The next meeting will be on February 9. Please join the next meeting or email Lori
chicagoaauw@hotmail.com

Here is the zoom meeting link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87287617695?pwd=ds2raDpbQHARbOX2Zblw2pSB1whYso.1>

Daytime Book Club next meeting – Wed. January 21

Do you like to read? If so, join us for the daytime book club on **Wed. January 21 via Zoom** at 1:00pm. We will be discussing ***Grace and Grit: My Fight for Equal Pay and Fairness at Goodyear and Beyond* by Lilly Ledbetter**

Here is the Zoom link for the January 21 Book Club meeting. No need to register in advance.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81351738193?pwd=0hnbNlKy84FC4m9hbwYkbKYrRmbDag.1>

Upcoming Books:

February 18 - *Remarkably Bright Creatures: A Novel* by Shelby Van Pelt

March 18 – *Who is Government? The Untold Story of Public Service* by Michael Lewis

Feel free to attend online even if you don't have time to read and bring some suggestions for future books. Any questions, please contact our chair, Lori at chicagoaauw@hotmail.com

18th Annual No Dinner Dinner Fundraiser

Thank you to everyone who donated to the Chicago branch 18th Annual No Dinner Dinner fundraiser. We raised over \$2300- for the AAUW National Greatest Needs Fund. We had 25 members donated to the AAUW National Greatest Need Fund. Donations ranged from \$25 to

\$300. Thank you to each member for taking the time to donate. It is appreciated by the branch and national. Also, this fundraiser adds to the national 5-Star program, and it helps our branch receive a star for advancement.

Upcoming Event with Working Women History Project

On Saturday, Jan 31 at 2 p.m., WWHP's event. Join Elizabeth Todd Breland speaking on the book she co-authored with Karen Lewis; ***I Didn't Come Here to Lie***. Karen was a legendary labor leader, president of Chicago Teachers Union from 2010 to 2018 who came to her union leadership in an interesting way. Event is at Call & Response Books, 1390 E. Hyde Park Blvd, Madison Park Apartments. Please pre-register. You can find the RSVP link [here!](#)

Upcoming programs from National and AAUW-IL

- **January 20 at 7:00pm** - AAUW-IL public policy zoom with Ken and Karen
Calling all members interested in what's going on in the Policy Arena and what we can do now and in the coming days. It will be an opportunity to get to know each other, ask questions, and share what our Branches are doing. We'll be ready to discuss what is going on in state and national politics, share what AAUW is doing, including information on our State Lobby Day, and discuss how we can encourage informed participation in upcoming elections
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81882328768?pwd=NF66hp7Z8IHRddyyJiDsCnr21JDND.1>
- **January 29 at 2:00pm Central - Advocacy in an Election Year zoom**
AAUW's strength comes from our nonpartisan, issues-first approach to advancing equity. As we look to the 2026 midterm elections, it's critical to make our voices heard. Wondering how to speak out while staying nonpartisan? Join us to hear from experts from the Alliance for Justice and leave empowered with the tools to engage in nonpartisan advocacy and stand up for AAUW values. In this session, you will learn how to: Engage in advocacy during an election year while staying squarely within nonpartisan guidelines. Plan and carry out voter education and registration efforts that align with AAUW's mission. Support or oppose ballot measures appropriately in ways that are values-driven and nonpartisan.

Advocacy in an Election Year: Staying Nonpartisan While Taking Real Action

- **March 25** AAUW-IL Springfield lobby day March 25 The lobby day will be held in conjunction with the Women Employed Time to Care Coalition Lobby Day. All members are invited to attend. More details will be coming in the AAUW-IL connection newsletter
- **April 24-25** AAUW-IL state convention Rockford Hilton Garden Inn- Hotel reservations start in January.

AAUW National Art Contest – We are thrilled to announce the opening of the [2026 AAUW Annual Art Contest!](#) This is your opportunity to showcase your artistic talents and have your work

featured in our annual notecard collection, distributed to members nationwide.

How the Art Contest Works: AAUW members can submit up to two entries featuring their photography or a digital photo of their painting, drawing, sculpture, collage or other form of art through our Contest page. Sign-up is easy and only requires your email address or AAUW member ID! [Entries are open now through January 30, 2026.](#)