



June 12, 2025

Dear Senator,

On behalf of the members of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), we write to urge you to **oppose H.R. 1, the “One Big, Beautiful Bill” and to reject any Senate proposals that undermine women’s economic security, public and higher education, or access to health care.**

Since 1881, AAUW has been a champion in advancing equity for women and girls through advocating for better access and affordability to higher education, opportunities for economic prosperity, and protection of essential civil rights. We are the nation’s largest non-institutional funder of women’s graduate education, and we know firsthand how a college degree—and especially an advanced degree—can open doors to leadership and economic security for women.

We agree with the need to improve the higher education financing system—however the bill from the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee takes the wrong approach. The elimination of Grad PLUS loans and preventing graduate and professional students from receiving subsidized Stafford loans could make advanced degrees less accessible and increase debt loads for women who already graduate into a gender pay gap and take longer to repay loans.

Additionally, we have concerns about establishing Workforce Pell Grants through this bill without a full opportunity for the HELP Committee to discuss how to support high quality, short-term training programs while having strong provisions protecting the interests of students and the integrity of the Pell Grant program. The proposals in the HELP Committee bill could make it harder, not easier, for women to earn high-quality credentials or degrees that fuel upward mobility.

AAUW opposes the following provisions in H.R. 1:

- **Undermining Public Education Through a National Voucher Program** — H.R. 1 would divert \$5 billion in federal funds each year from public schools to create a nationwide private school voucher program—an initiative that has repeatedly failed to pass as a standalone bill due to broad public opposition. This backdoor attempt to pass the Educational Choice for Children Act (ECCA) would disproportionately harm students in underfunded and historically marginalized communities by stripping resources from the public schools they depend on. Private and religious schools receiving these funds would not be held to the same standards for civil rights, transparency, or serving students with disabilities, further deepening educational inequities and exacerbating achievement gaps.
- **Eroding the Child Tax Credit for Low-Income Families** — H.R. 1 proposes to increase the Child Tax Credit (CTC) to \$2,500 per child, but without fully restoring refundability, the lowest-income families—many led by single mothers—would still be left behind. One in four eligible children would not receive the full credit simply because their families earn too little. By capping refundability and narrowing eligibility, the bill undermines a proven anti-poverty tool that supports children’s health, education, and long-term stability. And while tax credits are helpful, they are not enough on their own — families with the lowest incomes need comprehensive support to raise their children with dignity and economic security.
- **Threats to Preventive Health Services** — H.R. 1 includes a Medicaid ban on providers that offer abortion care. This provision would block Planned Parenthood and other reproductive health care providers from receiving Medicaid funds solely because they provide abortion services. As a



result, it would strip reimbursement from the very clinics that deliver affordable birth control, cancer screenings, and testing for sexually transmitted infections to more than 2 million patients each year—disproportionately low-income women in rural or medically underserved areas.

- **Harmful Medicaid Cuts and Added Red Tape** — Medicaid is a lifeline for women, covering 19% of adult women, financing 41% of U.S. births, and supporting most nursing-home residents—many of whom are older women. Yet H.R. 1 would impose burdensome six-month eligibility checks, work-reporting requirements, and new out-of-pocket costs. It would also block the 2024 “Streamlining Medicaid & CHIP” rule, which was designed to simplify enrollment for seniors and people with disabilities. The Congressional Budget Office estimates these changes would push about 4.8 million people—disproportionately mothers, pregnant people, and low-wage women—off coverage, worsening health inequities and increasing the number of uninsured.

**AAUW urges you to reject H.R. 1 and any Senate proposals that threaten women’s access to education, health care, and economic security.** This bill would dismantle key pillars of opportunity: slashing Medicaid and restricting access to preventive care, limiting the Child Tax Credit for the lowest-income families, draining resources from public schools through a national private school voucher program, and undermining access to graduate education while fast-tracking unproven training programs. These provisions would disproportionately harm women—especially single mothers, caregivers, and women in low-wage jobs—by stripping away the supports they need to thrive.

As a nation, we should be creating pathways to opportunity and prosperity, not barriers that exacerbate inequity amongst the most vulnerable. We call on you to oppose H.R. 1 and reject any parallel efforts in the Senate that would widen inequality and weaken the systems that power women’s progress. Votes associated with this issue may be scored in the AAUW Action Fund *Congressional Voting Record* for the 119th Congress. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-728-3300 or [kissellm@aauw.org](mailto:kissellm@aauw.org) with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Meghan Kissell".

Meghan Kissell, MSW  
Senior Director, Policy & Member Advocacy