

It's My Vote! 2026:

From Issues That Matter to Actions That Count

April 14, 2026



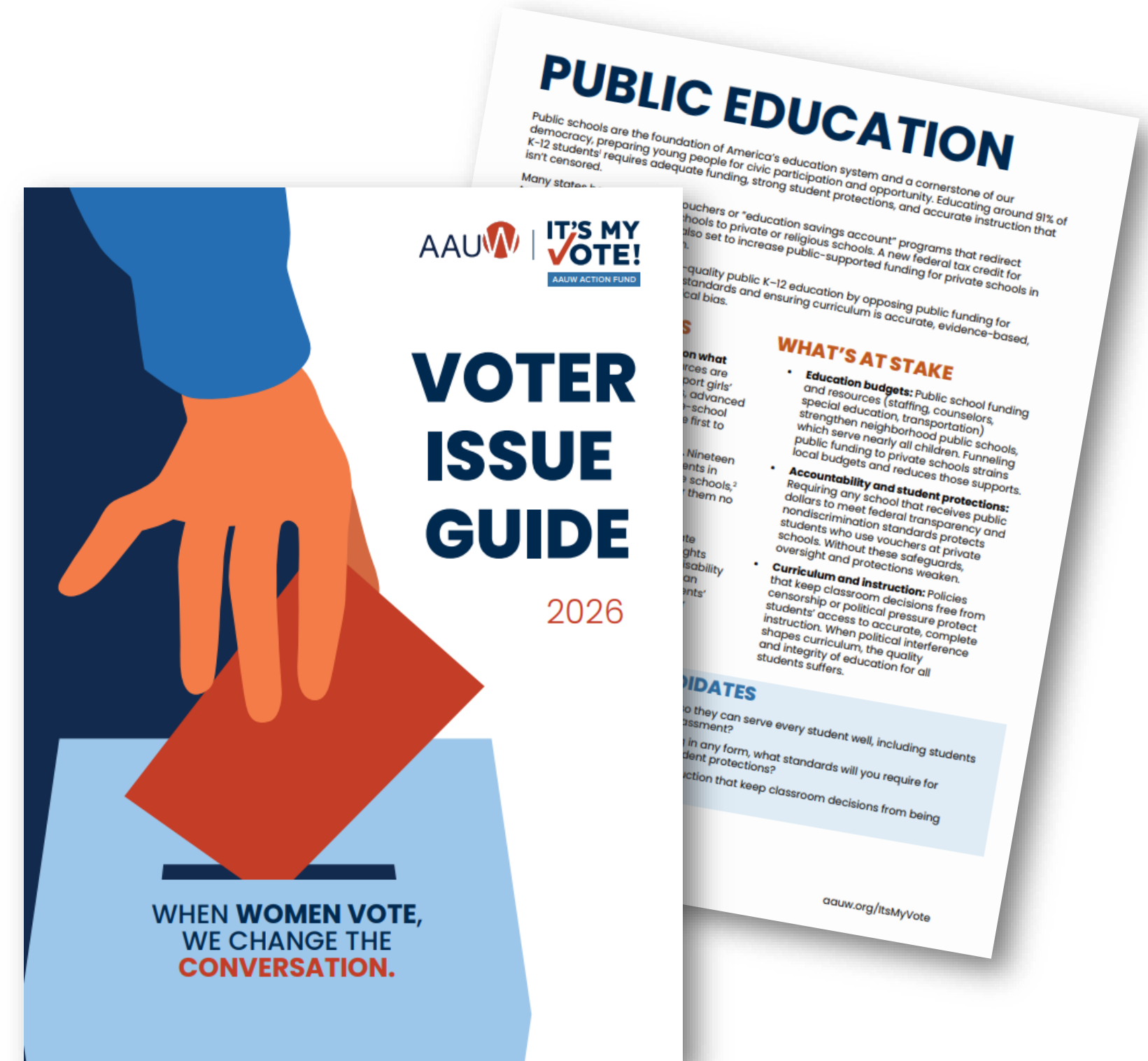
**IT'S MY
VOTE!**

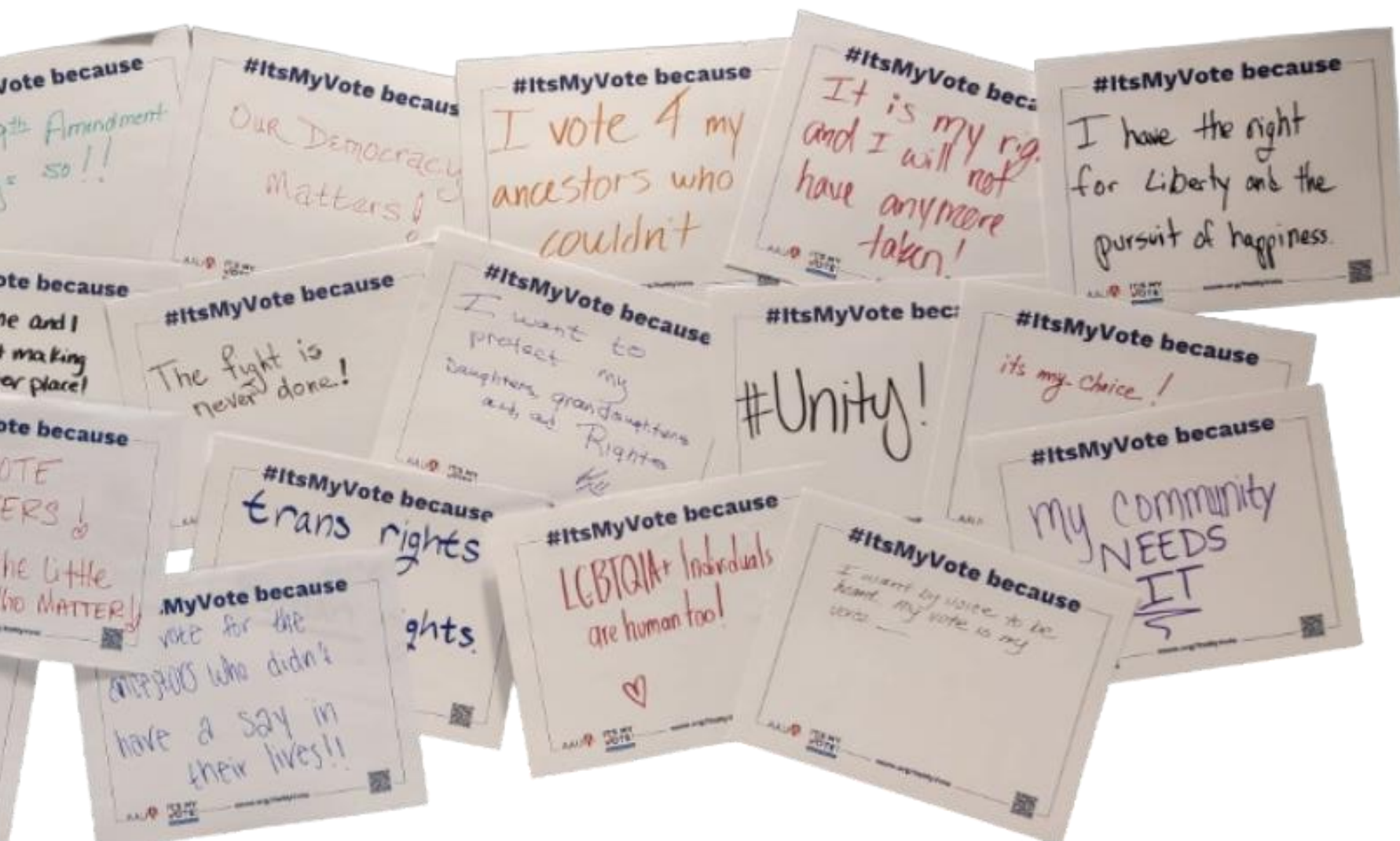
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Today's Agenda

- What AAUW Stands For
- What's At Stake
- What You Can Do
- Q&A





**Which issues matter
most to you going into
the 2026 elections?**

What AAUW Stands For



AAUW Stands for Education

- Public Education
- Higher Education Access, Affordability, & Completion
- Students' Rights & Equal Opportunity in Schools



AAUW Stands for Economic Security

- Pay Equity
- Paid Leave
- Contraception & Abortion Care Access
- Pregnancy & Parenting Protections



AAUW Stands for Civil Rights

- Freedom from Harassment & Violence
- Voting Rights
- Equal Rights Amendment & Constitutional Equality



What's At Stake

AAUW

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What's on the ballot in 2026?

- **435** U.S. House of Representatives
- **35** U.S. Senators
- **39** Governors (States & Territories)
- **30** Attorneys General
- **26** Secretaries of State
- **6,122** State Legislative seats
- **65** state supreme court seats (in 32 states)
- **90+** statewide ballot measures certified (*as of 4/12/26*)
- **95+** Mayoral elections
- **25,000+** School Board Seats

Real Lives, Real Impact



Former Blank Rome associate sues firm over alleged sexual assault by colleague

DAILY KOS

"I'm Voting Today": Texas Woman Refuses Silence After Voter Roll Removal Shock



A pregnant law school student asked to move her exams away from near her due date and was denied until her friends stepped in

What You Can Do



2026 Voter Issue Guide

STUDENTS' RIGHTS & EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN SCHOOLS

Strong civil rights laws and enforcement are essential to ensuring equal opportunity for every student. Key federal protections include Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (sex discrimination), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (race, color, national origin), Title IV of the Civil Rights Act (equal educational opportunity), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (disability). These protections matter most in how they are implemented and enforced in schools day-to-day.

AAUW stands for strengthened civil rights protections and enforcement in schools so all students can learn, play, and thrive in safe environments.

WHY THIS MATTERS

- **Safety and belonging affect learning.** One in three teenagers report being bullied each year — with women and girls, students of color, LGBTQ+ students, and students with disabilities facing higher rates than their peers.⁸ Harassment affects attendance, grades, and long-term opportunity.
- **Rules only matter if they're usable.** Inconsistent enforcement or weaponization of civil rights laws against schools with inclusive policies erode protections for all students, regardless of intent.
- **Enforcement gaps leave students without recourse.** Staffing instability doesn't just create backlogs — it means students are met with closed cases and no investigation. In 2025, half of the U.S. Department of Education's civil rights enforcement staff were barred from working, and the office dismissed 90% of the 9,000+ discrimination complaints it received.⁹

WHAT'S AT STAKE

- **Survivor-centered support:** Clear requirements for schools to respond promptly and fairly to sexual harassment and assault — including supportive measures and protection from retaliation — help students stay safe and stay on track. When policies are vague or support is limited, students may be left without clear, usable help.
- **Fair discipline:** Discipline policies with strong guardrails and oversight can reduce disproportionate punishment for girls of color and other students and keep them engaged in learning. Harsh or uneven practices can push students out of the classroom and widen inequities.
- **Explicit protections for LGBTQ+ students:** Enumerated protections that clearly cover sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression provide more consistent safeguards for LGBTQ+ students. When protections are not explicit, enforcement can vary widely across schools and districts.

QUESTIONS TO ASK CANDIDATES

- How will you make sure schools respond to sexual harassment and assault in ways that keep survivors safe and supported?
- What will you do to reduce disproportionate discipline for girls of color and keep students in class and learning?
- How will you support explicit school protections for LGBTQ+ students (on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression)?

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Educate Voters

- Help people make the connection between their lives and voting.
- Meet people where they are.
- Collaborate locally!



Navigate Difficult Conversations

Listen actively.

Lean into discomfort.

Speak from your own experience.

**The goal is not to agree — it is
to deepen understanding.**



Take Action in Your Community

- Hold a branch or community event
- Organize a candidate or issue forum
- Table in a high-traffic area
- Speak up at town halls
- Reach out to local groups



Write down one action you want to take in the next month.



Learn more

www.aauw.org/ItsMyVote
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