



AAUW Priorities for FY 2014 Appropriations

July 9, 2013

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chair, Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Room S 128
The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Room S 128
The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Mikulski and Shelby:

On behalf of the more than 165,000 bipartisan members and supporters of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), I **write to express AAUW's priorities for FY 2014 appropriations.** AAUW's member-adopted public policy principles support "public budgets that balance individual rights and responsibility to the community."¹ Since its founding in 1881, AAUW has been breaking through barriers for women and girls.

AAUW understands the need to pursue balanced deficit reduction policies. However, we are concerned that FY2014 appropriations have the potential to weaken critical programs that benefit millions of Americans. AAUW supports the Senate-passed budget allocations which would end the sequester and ensure that the burden of debt reduction is shared among defense and non-defense programs.

AAUW knows these are difficult times to prepare a federal budget. As Congress grapples with tough budgetary tradeoffs, it is vital that programs that promote education and economic security, defend civil rights, and protect women's health are not sacrificed by shortsighted, ideologically-driven budget cuts. AAUW believes that the best way to reduce the country's deficit is to create jobs, increase revenues, and close corporate tax loopholes while continuing the current tax rates for the middle class.

FY2014 Appropriations Should Promote Education and Economic Security

AAUW supports programs that allow Americans to improve their economic future, either through formal education or workforce training, and believes the federal government has a critical role to play in ensuring that our nation's K-12, postsecondary, and workforce training systems are robust, equitable, and open to all. Despite their profound impact on American health, educational and skills attainment, and productivity, these programs and services have been deeply cut since FY 2010. These and other discretionary programs have contributed \$1.5 trillion in spending cuts from the FY 2011 Continuing Resolution, the Budget Control Act, and the American Taxpayer Relief Act. Under sequestration, these programs have been cut even deeper. The FY 2013 cuts to these programs alone total almost \$9 billion. Quite simply, our nation's education and job training programs have been cut enough.

AAUW urges Congress to **fully fund the Pell grant program** and rescind recent cuts to program eligibility. Due to the recession, more students are seeking aid and additional people are returning to school to retool and retrain, making additional Pell grant investments crucial.² Yet despite their

importance, Pell grants are not immune from sequestration this coming year, and the House budget proposes eliminating all mandatory funding for the program entirely.³

Furthermore, Congress should **stop the increase in the interest rate on subsidized student loans**. This increase would impact 8 million students with these subsidized loans, imposing additional costs on struggling students and recent graduates.⁴ AAUW strongly believes that student loan programs should not be designed so that students are left paying down the national deficit. The program is designed to make college accessible, not to make students responsible for the country's deficit reduction.

Additionally, AAUW believes Congress should **oppose proposed cuts to the Department of Labor's Women's Bureau**. President Barack Obama's FY 2014 budget proposed cutting the Department of Labor Women's Bureau budget by approximately 25 percent.⁵ The Women's Bureau is the only federal agency devoted to needs of working women, and cutting its budget would hurt its education and outreach programs. Since its founding in 1920, the Women's Bureau has led the nation in representing and protecting the needs of women in the workforce. The vital programs of the Women's Bureau should not be abandoned or undermined while women still face substantial and systemic inequalities at work. Challenges such as the wage gap, balancing work and family obligations, and women's segregation into low-paying, "pink collar" service jobs are enormous obstacles to women's economic security. A strong, well-funded Women's Bureau that can continue to highlight the needs of working women at all economic levels is critical. Cutting the Women's Bureau budget would send an unfortunate signal about the priority Congress places on the concerns of working women.

AAUW urges Congress to **protect workforce training programs that help unemployed workers retrain and find new jobs**. As our economy slowly recovers from the recent recession, many workers will need training to upgrade their skills to fit new demands. AAUW believes that access to high-wage, high-skill jobs should be a right for women and girls from diverse racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, age, and disability backgrounds, including training for nontraditional jobs. AAUW is a strong supporter of the **Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations** program. Authorized at a modest \$1 million per year, WANTO grants support technical assistance to employers and labor union-sponsored apprenticeship programs to recruit, train and retain women in nontraditional occupations, defined as those in which women make up 25% or less of the current workforce. A 2011 Government Accountability Office report on 47 potentially duplicative programs concluded that WANTO is "one of three programs" providing specialized services to populations "not targeted by any other of the programs we surveyed."⁶

AAUW believes that Congress should **fully fund the Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA)**. WEEA provides incentives and assistance to educational institutions to help them fully implement Title IX. AAUW was instrumental in WEEA's most recent reauthorization as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and we believe the program is even more necessary today. WEEA was designed to give educators tools to eliminate barriers – such as sex stereotypes in classroom materials and curricula – that keep all students from full participation and success in all areas of education. Today, as colleges and universities face a growing number of Title IX complaints, it is apparent that WEEA is needed more than ever to provide incentives and assistance to educational institutions to help them fully implement Title IX.⁷ For example, recent high profile Office of Civil Rights settlements regarding failure to comply with Title IX in cases of bullying and sexual harassment show that Title IX coordinators are poorly trained to deal with Title IX issues outside of athletics

compliance.⁸ AAUW urges the Committee to ensure WEEA is strengthened as a viable program that can provide visible and effective ways to support gender equity in education.

FY2014 Appropriations Should Defend Civil Rights

AAUW opposes all forms of discrimination and supports constitutional protection for the civil rights of all individuals. AAUW because a key aspect of protecting civil rights is ensuring adequate enforcement of all civil rights laws through **sufficient funding and staffing of federal civil rights agencies**, such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Office of Federal Contractor Compliance Programs, and the civil rights divisions of various departments-especially the Departments of Education and Justice. In this economy, it is critical that the government make civil rights enforcement a priority because many workers may be too scared to speak up for themselves in the workplace.

Moreover, AAUW urges Congress to **protect government programs designed to promote gender diversity**. An example of this is the National Science Foundation's Research on Gender in Science and Engineering (GSE) program, which was slated to be consolidated into a larger NSF program starting in FY2012. Although this consolidation was postponed for the short-term, if enacted, NSF will have no program explicitly focused on gender at the K-16 education levels and no program funding research and practice for addressing women's underrepresentation in the STEM workforce.⁹ Yet the GSE program is still necessary – despite progress since the enactment of Title IX, women remain under-represented in scientific careers.¹⁰ Clearly, there is much work left to be done, and AAUW believes the GSE program has a part to play in this effort.

Additionally, AAUW urges Congress to **protect Violence Against Women Act programs from funding cuts**. These cuts would reach into the pockets of survivor service providers, harming their capacity to respond to their community's needs.

FY2014 Appropriations Should Protect Women's Health

AAUW is committed to promoting “choice in the determination of one's reproductive life, and increased access to health care and family planning services including expansion of patients' rights.”¹¹ AAUW supports programs that protect and promote women's health, and urges Congress to **protect funding for the Title X Family Planning program**. AAUW strongly supports the Title X Family Planning program, which is critical in providing reproductive services to low-income women, and believes it should not be cut in any way.

AAUW is committed to working for women and girls, and we look forward to working with Congress to develop and implement a budget that promotes job creation and economic security, defends the civil rights of Americans, and protects women's rights. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 202/785-7720, or Erin Prangley, associate director of government relations, at 202/785-7730, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Lisa M. Maatz
Vice President of Government Relations

cc: U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee

¹ American Association of University Women. (June 2013). *2013-15 AAUW Public Policy Program*. Retrieved July 5, 2013, from www.aauw.org/files/2013/07/Public-Policy-Program-Brochure-2013-2015.pdf

² *San Diego Union-Tribune*. (Nov. 3, 2008). *More Students Spring from Tough Times*. Retrieved March 21, 2012, from www.signonsandiego.com/news/education/20081103-9999-1m3train.html.

³ Association of Community College Trustees. (2013). *Factsheet – 2014 House Budget*. Retrieved July 5, 2013, from www.acct.org/files/Advocacy/Factsheets%20and%20Summaries/ACCT%20FACTSHEET%20house%20budget%20Resolution%202014%20-%20updated.pdf

⁴ *USA Today*. (June 18, 2013). *Student Loan Interest Rate Issue Could Affect Millions*. Retrieved June 25, 2013, from www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/06/18/student-loans-interest-rate-congress/2434217/

⁵ The White House. (2013). *Department of Labor: Employment and Training Administration*. Retrieved June 25, 2013, from www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2014/assets/lab.html

⁶ U.S. Government Accountability Office. (January 2011). *Multiple Employment and Training Programs: Providing Information on Colocating Services and Consolidating Administrative Structures Could Promote Efficiencies*. Retrieved June 25, 2013, from www.gao.gov/assets/320/314551.pdf

⁷ U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Title IX Enforcement Highlights, Washington, D.C., 2012. Retrieved June 7, 2013 from www2.ed.gov/documents/press-releases/title-ix-enforcement.pdf

⁸ See Consent Decree, Jane Doe, et al and United States of America v. Anoika Hennipin School District No. 11 et al (No. 11-cv-01999-JNE-SER, D. Minn., March 1, 2012). Retrieved June 10, 2013, from www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/investigations/05115901-d.pdf; Departments of Justice and Education. (May 9, 2013). *Settlement to Address and Prevent Sexual Assault and Harassment of Students at the University of Montana in Missoula*. Retrieved June 10, 2013, from www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/departments-justice-and-education-reach-settlement-address-and-prevent-sexual-as; Department of Education. (July 1, 2011). *Civil Rights Office Announces Settlement Agreement on Discrimination Investigation at Notre Dame*. Retrieved June 7, 2013 from www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/civil-rights-office-announces-settlement-agreement-discrimination-investigation.

⁹ National Science Foundation (November 2006). *Program Solicitation*. Retrieved March 14, 2012, from www.nsf.gov/pubs/2010/nsf10516/nsf10516.htm

¹⁰ National Science Foundation, Division of Science Resources Statistics. (2009) *Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering: 2009*. Retrieved March 14, 2012, from www.nsf.gov/statistics/wmpd/

¹¹ American Association of University Women. (June 2013). *2013-15 AAUW Public Policy Program*. Retrieved July 5, 2013, from www.aauw.org/files/2013/07/Public-Policy-Program-Brochure-2013-2015.pdf