

May 4: Department of Education Celebrates 30th Anniversary

On May 4th, the Department of Education will celebrate its 30th Anniversary. The Department was originally created under the [Department of Education Organization Act](#), signed by President Jimmy Carter on October 17, 1979. The Department officially opened its doors on May 4, 1980 with an [executive order](#) issued by President Carter.

Researchers Evaluate Pay Gap Factors

According to a [study](#) released by the Universities of Maryland and California, a woman's salary is affected not simply by having children, but by the age at which she has them. Analyzing 35 years of data, researchers found that the wage gap only exists between childless women and working mothers when children were born to mothers younger than 26. In addition, higher earnings are [linked](#) to aggressive, "Machiavellian," personalities because they tend to negotiate more for wages and take greater professional risks.

AAUW has long fought to end wage discrimination and advocates for an increase in career and salary negotiation skills training for women.

April 20, 2009, Equal Pay – Indiana Connection

On April 20, AAUW State President Barb Kanning and State Co-Director for Program Andrea Tarbet were the guests of the Northeast Indiana NPR program, [Midday Matters Financial Focus](#). Deb Romary, an independent financial consultant and, not coincidentally, the other AAUW State Co-Director for Program, is the regular co-host of the program. When you have 30 minutes, please listen to the broadcast, which discusses not only Equal Pay Day, but also the worth of a college education, and the Start Smart Wage Negotiation workshops. [note: the discussion begins about 2:50 into the program, and goes to about 24:35].

For more on AAUW and Equal Pay Day, look at their new [state-by-state rankings](#), and [fact sheets for each state](#), developed in collaboration with the National Partnership for Women & Families, illustrating the human cost of wage discrimination.

Esther Duflo Awarded John Bates Clark Medal for Economists

This week, Esther Duflo became the second woman in history to [receive](#) the John Bates Clark Medal, which recognizes the year's most influential economist under the age of 40. A full-time professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and director of its Poverty Action Lab, [Duflo](#) is primarily known for her cutting-edge, randomized field experiments regarding international development and stopping the cycle of poverty. The Clark Medal is Duflo's second prestigious honor in less than a year, following the MacArthur Foundation "Genius" [grant](#) she received last September.

Graduating Students Face Uphill Battle

Students graduating this year will continue to face the high costs of college as well as a lack of access to health insurance. Although the House has been working to make college more affordable (most recently passing a [bill](#) to increase protection of college savings accounts), 53% of 2010 graduates from for-profit schools will [owe](#) more than \$30,500 in student loans. Additionally, the new health law, which allows young adults to stay on their parent's plan until age 26, will not be implemented until September; leaving many graduates at risk of losing insurance for up to six months. Children of federal workers will face a much [longer wait](#), with the expansion of coverage not expected to apply until the start of the new year. Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius did offer some reassurance with the recent [announcement](#) that certain private insurance companies will voluntarily initiate the policy on June 1st.

AAUW's **2009-11 Public Policy Program** affirms our commitment to "a strong system of public education that promotes gender fairness, equity, and diversity...and advocates increased support for and access to higher education for women and other disadvantaged populations."

Why So Few in Top Jobs on Capitol Hill

A review of House of Representatives compensation studies reveals a [minority](#) of women at high-level positions in congressional offices. Last year, only 41% of chiefs of staff were females; an increase of only 6% in the last five years. Many blame a lack of proper accommodations for working mothers as a key cause in the inadequate number of women in top positions. Over a quarter of House offices offer less than one month of paid maternity leave, while almost half refuse to offer any flexible time. Women who do serve in top level positions tend to work in the few offices that have instituted "family-friendly" policies. There is growing concern that the lack of [work-life balance](#) on the Hill could deter many young female staffers from future careers in politics.

AAUW believes that creating work environments that help employees balance the responsibilities of work and family is good public policy - good for workers, good for families, and good for business.

House Committee Passes Women in STEM Amendment

On Thursday, the House Committee on Science and Technology [approved](#) an amendment to the *America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010* that will advance the elimination of gender bias within STEM fields. If passed, the legislation is expected to improve data and transparency on faculty hiring and tenure practices and play a role in improving the United States' global competitiveness.

AAUW supports promoting and strengthening science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education, especially for girls and other underrepresented populations.

ENDA Support Lacking

With the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) of 2010 slated to include the protection of gender identity, many Republicans have expressed new opposition to the bill. Of the thirty-five House Republicans who voted for ENDA in 2007, outlawing discrimination on the basis of one's sexual orientation, 14 have withdrawn their support, with the remaining 21 suggesting they may [rescind support](#) for a bill that includes transgender protections. Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA), the lead sponsor of bill, however, says he is close to garnering the necessary support for the bill's passage and expects a [vote](#) this spring.

AAUW Launches "Elect Her" Initiative

AAUW's [Elect Her](#) initiative acknowledges the [necessity](#) to build the pipeline of women running for office to diminish the long-standing political leadership gender gap. This initiative consists of a full continuum of programming to empower women from high school onward to view themselves as political candidates. Learn more by reading the [Elect Her FAQ](#).

~Source: most of the above excerpted from AAUW Washington Update~