

2017 AAUW-NE Legislative Priorities Summary Report
By Liz Rea, AAUW-NE Public Policy Chair
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AAUW-NE prioritized seventeen pieces of proposed legislation introduced during the 2017 session of the Unicameral. From time to time during the session, members were asked to contact their state senators to urge them to support the AAUW-NE position. Thank you to everyone who took time to do this. A detailed description of each of the priorities appears on our state website as the “2017 AAUW-NE Legislative Priorities, 8/9/17”. Please refer to it.

In summary:

1. Eight of the priorities we supported were held in committee meaning no further action was taken on them during the 2017 session. These bills may be advanced out of committee for first round debate on the floor during the 2018 session. These include LB216, LB290, LB120, LB305, LB441, LB107, LB194, and LB354.
2. Bills we opposed that were held in committee with no further action taken during the 2017 session are LB608 and LB630. Let’s work to be sure these don’t get out of committee during the 2018 session.
3. LR1CA which we oppose was placed on General File for first round debate. We need to continue to oppose this unnecessary measure.
4. Two bills we support, LB173 and LB211, made it out of committee and were advanced to General File for first round debate on the floor. We need to continue to support these bills.
5. Four bills AAUW-NE supported were signed into law by Governor Pete Ricketts. LB280 and LB289 will do much to help the victims of pandering, human trafficking, and labor and sex trafficking. The new law also prohibits solicitation of a trafficking victim. LB289 provides for harsher penalties for anyone engaged in sex trafficking in a variety of circumstances. This is welcome news for those who have suffered from a crime that has been minimized for far too long. Governor Ricketts also signed into law LB427 with LB428 amended into it. It requires schools and the State Department of Education to adopt policies relating to pregnant and parenting students. The new policies will help students achieve a better work/life balance with the goal of keeping them in school to graduate with a high school diploma.

In conclusion, our public policy achievements this 2017 session are significant. Four bills we supported are now law and the other thirteen pieces we prioritized are in a position for us to continue lobbying our adopted positions. None of this would have happened without your involvement in our annual Legislative Day or without the contacts you made when requested to do so during crucial times in the legislative process. In the end, senators believe what we tell them as to our insights and experiences with the issue in question that a legislative proposal addresses. Thank you for everything you do to advance the cause for women, girls and families in Nebraska.

On a personal note, this is my last report as your state public policy chair. It has been my pleasure to serve in this position since 2004 with planning and organizing for our annual Legislative Day the high point of the work I’ve done. However, other commitments in my life have taken priority, and I really need to devote more time to them. Thank you for the honor of serving you. Good Luck in maintaining a strong public policy presence in our Unicameral. The 105th Legislature, second session, is scheduled to convene on January 3, 2018.