

# AAUW California Public Policy “School Board Project”

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# Presented By:

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# What We Will Cover

1. What is the issue?
2. Why is AAUW California involved and what are we doing about it?
3. How can members help?
  - a. Advocating for qualified candidates
  - b. Being a presence at school board meetings
  - c. Talking points to present at school board meetings



# Issue #1 – Books are Being Banned

Book Bans by the Numbers:

**32** states

**110** school districts (and counting)

**1,648** books

Source: [Banned Book List: 1,648 Books in 2021-2022 - PEN America](#)

# Issue #2 – Curriculum is Being Censored

Curriculum Censorship by the Numbers:

**16** states with laws restricting education on race in classrooms or state agencies

**20** States considering bills or policies that would restrict race education in schools or state agencies

**3** states forbidding instruction on or discussion about gender identity

**3** states with similar laws pending

# Is it an issue in California?

What our members say:

80 Responses

65 Branches

95 School Districts

24 – This is or could be a problem in our district

37 – This will likely be an issue in the future in our district



# What the headlines say



Parents rally outside a Glendale Unified School District (GUSD) Board of Education meeting on June 20, 2023 in Glendale, California.

# **TEMECULA SCHOOL BOARD MEETING ERUPTS IN CHAOS FORCING LAW ENFORCEMENT TO STEP IN**

HITC, Disha Kandpal

Wed 14 June 2023

Temecula Valley's school board's recent meeting erupted in chaos with parents and teachers screaming while discussing the board's previous month's decision to ban a social studies book that talked about gay rights activist Harvey Milk.



# “Moms for Liberty” Starts First California Chapter in San Luis Obispo County

By [Contributed Article](#) | May 12, 2021

Since the group’s founding in Florida in 2020, its influence over local and national Republican politics has grown exponentially: It’s now a nation-wide movement with 260 chapters that claims to be a “grassroots” group working to protect students and defend parents’ rights. Its members are leading the charge on book-banning campaigns across the country and the group says **it has helped install 275 of its favored candidates on school boards in 2022 alone**, dozens of whom don’t have any children attending public schools in their districts.

VICE – David Gilbert, April 26, 2023



# Is it a local issue?

## San Ramon Unified School District

- Two current trustees who are up for re-election next year
  - One is being specifically targeted because she has a trans child and openly supports LGBTQ+ equality
  - Other one also supports gender equality and opposes book bans
- Religious right has stated they will target
- Local Moms 4 Liberty group is currently looking for the best candidates to recruit for the election



# Why is AAUW California Involved?

Approximately 41 percent of banned works feature LGBTQ themes, main characters, or significant supporting characters. Characters of color make up 40 percent of the main or significant secondary characters, while 21 percent of the titles deal with racial and racist topics.

“AAUW believes that high-quality public education is the foundation of a democratic society and the key to improving economic prosperity and gender equality... We support academic freedom, civic education, protection from censorship, [and] bias-free education...”

*from Introduction to AAUW Public Policy Priorities*

“The AAUW California Public Policy Program establishes policy directives that ... are consistent with our values of achieving fair and equitable opportunities for our diverse society ... [including] access to diverse staff and curriculum that represents historically accurate information.”

*from AAUW California Public Policy Priorities 2023-25*



# What are we doing about it?

- Established “The School Board Project” sub-committee within the AAUW California Public Policy Committee to gather data and coordinate efforts
- Collaborating with like-minded organizations to challenge the drive to elect regressive school board members
  - Equality California - <https://www.eqca.org>
  - The School Board Project - <https://www.schoolboardproject.com/>
- Developing scripts and talking points for members’ use
- Developing social media materials
- Tracking races and members’ efforts



# What is the authority for our involvement?

AAUW Policies and Procedures: 301 CANDIDATES FOR PUBLIC OFFICE

## II. Endorsement of Candidates for Nonpartisan Elective Office

A.

A nonpartisan elective office is an office for which party affiliation does not appear on the ballot next to the candidate's name.

B.

AAUW affiliates with 501(c)(4) status (the majority of affiliates) may recruit and/or endorse candidates for non-partisan elective offices.

1.

AAUW affiliates that have independently incorporated themselves as 501(c)(3) entities may not endorse candidates for any kind of elected office.



# What can members do about it?

- Complete the Survey: <https://forms.gle/fQj7JyBdiLLLwsTC6>
- Help us find good candidates to run for school board seats
  - Qualified – educational background/experience
  - Platform consistent with our values
  - Laura Bratt [lbratt@srvusd.net](mailto:lbratt@srvusd.net)
  - Shelley Clark [sclark@srvusd.net](mailto:sclark@srvusd.net)
- Help us get them elected
  - Branch endorsement
  - Help them get community exposure
    - Meet-and-greets
    - Community forums (must invite opponents)
    - Flyers
    - Social Media



# Attend School Board Meetings - Proposed Script

- My name is ( ) and I am a resident in this district. My children/grandchildren attended school in this district (if applicable).
- But today I am speaking on behalf of the **American Association of University Women of California**. AAUW CA supports academic freedom, protection from censorship and bias-free education, as well as access to curriculum that represents historically accurate information.
- According to the California Department of Education: “In California, the State Board of Education decides on the standards for all students...” I point this out to remind you that local school boards do not determine those standards.
- Keeping this in mind, I refer to **Ed. Code sect 51204.5**: requiring Social Science instruction to include the role and contributions of both men and women, members of various races/ethnic groups, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans, persons with disabilities, and members of other ethnic and cultural groups, to the economic, political, and social development of California and the nation.”
- Actions taken by this board would be construed as a violation of students’ first amendment rights as well as California’s constitutional guarantee of the right against discrimination.
- **We urge the Board to vote in favor of upholding those rights.**

