

Are we all collectively breathing a sigh of relief that the election is over — regardless of which way you voted? I know I am. This Update will be brief. Here's the Agenda for our State Public Policy Update:

- 1. Increased OR Department of Education funding for Title IX / sexual harassment/gender discrimination? We made a difference!!**
- 2. AAUW of OR positions regarding the Oregon Ballot Measure positions prevailed**
- 3. Update: OR Law Commission's Workgroup on Sexual Harassment at the Capitol**

- 1. Increased OR Department of Education funding for Title IX / sexual harassment /gender discrimination? We made a difference!!**

As many of you know, Representative Andrea Salinas (Lake Oswego) has agreed to champion a bill in the 21019 Legislative Session that would increase OR Department of Education funding in order for ODE to have two FTE's, rather than one one-quarter FTE, working on Title IX compliance and enforcement, sexual bullying and harassment and gender discrimination in our K - 12 schools. A preliminary draft of that bill has been completed. As if that isn't enough good news — I understand that the Joint Committee on Student Success, which was formed at the end of the 2018 Session, may also include this proposal in its report to the House and Senate. Needless to say, if this does take place, our chances of actually getting this legislation across the finish line are greatly increased.

But more important for AAUW of OR is the reason why our proposal will likely be supported in the Joint Committee on Student Success Report — which is because a number of our members made the effort the effort to attend the Joint Committee Listening Tour hearings in their area and talk about why Title IX enforcement is so important. By the time the Committee had held 3 hearings, you could almost see the heads nod in approval when an AAUW of OR member stepped up to give testimony. This is public policy at its best.

Thank you Marge Biggers (Redmond), Gayle Clason (Medford), Trish Garner (Beaverton), Robi Ingram-Rich (Lake Oswego), Sharon Keating (Redmond), Dolores Milnarczyk (Salem), Sharron Noone (Portland), Barbara Paulson (Medford), Wanda Rafferty (Baker), Sherry Schroeder (Medford), Pat Squire (Lake Oswego), Barbara Ternus (Hillsboro-Forest Grove), and Joyce Zook (Salem). Thank you !!

More thanks are also due to Lucy Baker (Portland) and Marge Biggers (Bend) who laid the groundwork for our efforts in this area by meeting in 2017 with then Superintendent of ODE, Governor Brown's Education Policy Advisor Lindsey Capps and myself. We got the ball rolling, so to speak, but we wouldn't find ourselves here without such positive start.

- 2. AAUW of OR positions regarding the Oregon Ballot Measure positions prevailed**
We should all be thankful that Oregonians appeared to have genuinely read and learned about what the recent Ballot Measures were all about, and then voted. Thanks to all of you for paying attention to AAUW of OR's positions and I hope that our explanation of the Measures was helpful.
- 3. Update: OR Law Commission's Workgroup on Sexual Harassment at the Capitol**
The Oregon Law Commission's Workgroup on Sexual Harassment at the Capitol is nearing completion of its report. It looks as if a preliminary draft will be available on

December 17th. There will also be public hearings but I am not sure when they will take place.

At its essence the Workgroup is creating a Capitol workplace harassment policy from the ground up. It will likely recommend that an Equity Office be constituted and funded to receive, process and investigate harassment claims. This process is complicated by the fact that there are different categories of persons who interact at the Capitol - the public, staff (whether partisan or not), lobbyists and legislators. For example, staff matters can be overseen by Capitol Employee Services, but that department does not regulate lobbyists nor legislators. The Oregon Ethics Commission regulates lobbyists, but not legislators. Of course, neither Employee Services nor the Ethics Commission is currently set up to deal with harassment allegations. The Workgroup has also defined the need to have a confidential reporting process, a nonconfidential reporting process and a nonconfidential complaint process. The latter type of complaint triggers an investigation. The fact that the Capitol is a quintessentially political institution complicates many of issues the Workgroup is charged to consider. For example, given the First Amendment and the necessity for free political discourse, can a lobbyist or a legislator be prevented from coming into the Capitol Building if an investigation has revealed they have committed harassment? Who makes that decision? Should the Equity Office hire its own independent investigators or do investigations itself? What time lines should be adopted for an investigation? Is there a process for an appeal or challenge of a decision — whether it be in favor of the complainant or respondent? What can or should be done with any records that have been made in the course of an investigation, particularly as the documents and their release may be politically charged? How long does a complainant have to make a claim of sexual harassment?

Even after the Report is filed, there will be a significant amount of work that needs to be done before a Capitol workplace harassment policy is adopted and put into concrete action. The next meeting of the Workgroup will be focused on what steps can be taken in the interim to address sexual harassment.

Trish Garner
State Public Policy Chair, AAUW of OR
Member National Public Policy Committee, AAUW