

The AAUW Voting Record 100TH Congress

☆ AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN ☆

The American Association of University Women's *Voting Record* has been compiled to inform AAUW members of positions taken by members of the 100th Congress on the Association's federal legislative priorities. Issues included in this *Voting Record* were selected on the basis of the 1987-1989 AAUW Legislative Program Action Priorities and Public Policy Principles adopted by delegates to the Association Convention in June 1987. They include top priority issues in which AAUW members have been actively involved, and on which AAUW has extensively communicated its position to Congress.

The *Voting Record* is neither an endorsement nor a condemnation of any member of Congress. It is a way to inform AAUW members of key votes cast by their elected officials on AAUW issues. Although many key decisions are made by Congressional committees and other means

short of floor votes, the *Voting Record* reflects only roll-call votes that were recorded on the floor of the Senate or House of Representatives. And not every measure was voted on by both chambers. For example, the Constitution grants only to the Senate the power to ratify treaties and the responsibility to offer its "advice and consent" on U.S. Supreme Court nominations such as that of Robert Bork in 1987.

The *Voting Record* includes several votes on the Civil Rights Restoration Act (CRRA). For nearly four years, the CRRA was AAUW's top legislative priority. Included here are votes on two crucial Senate amendments against which AAUW fought vigorously for nearly three years. The House, unlike the Senate, did not vote separately on comparable amendments. Also included are the votes to override President Reagan's veto of the bill—votes where AAUW's staunchest allies are

more easily identified than on the earlier lopsided votes for passage of the bill.

Why Is the *Voting Record* Important to AAUW Members?

The *Voting Record* provides significant information about elected federal officials through the votes they cast on 1987-1989 AAUW Action Priorities. These Action Priorities include preservation of a strong system of public education, preparation of women and girls for the 21st century, affirmation of individual rights, and achievement of women's worth and economic self-sufficiency.

Ten million more women than men are expected to vote in the 1988 elections. In the 1984 and 1986 elections, exit poll data showed 28 states in which women voted significantly differently than men in statewide races, and 14 states in which women's votes were the

margin of victory in at least one race. In 1986, women's votes made the difference in the election of nine new U.S. Senators. AAUW members can use the *Voting Record* to promote accountability among elected officials on issues important to them and to their communities.

The women's vote is rooted in issues such as child care, jobs, decent wages, health care, the threat of war, family leave, and retirement, as women increasingly struggle to achieve economic security and independence for themselves and their families. In publishing and using the *Voting Record*, AAUW members continue a century of responsible public participation at the local, state, national, and international levels with increased involvement in citizen advocacy and voter and candidate education.

100th Congress: A Lot of Talk, Too Little Action

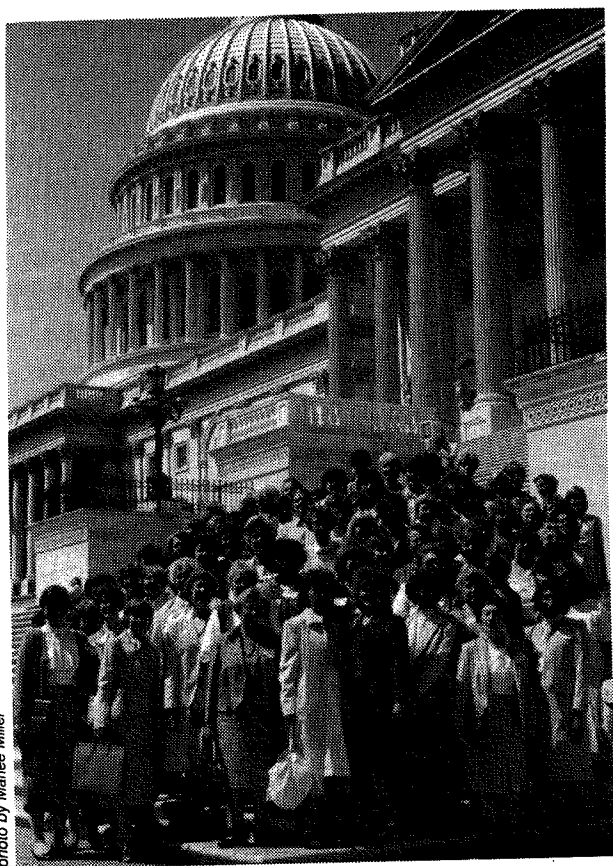
The *Voting Record* is an extremely helpful guide for citizen activists. But it tells another important story—that many AAUW priority issues *did not* receive full consideration by both chambers in the 100th Congress.

At press time, neither the House nor Senate had voted on three of AAUW's top legislative priorities: family and medical leave, child care, and pay equity.

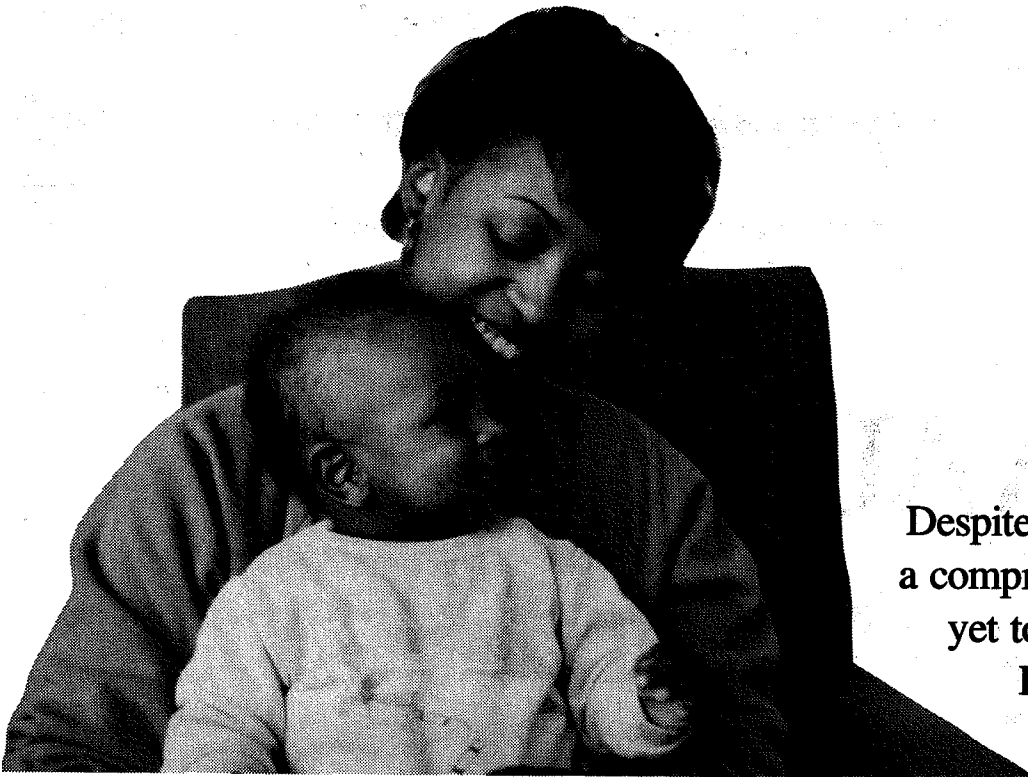
Family and medical leave legislation, which guarantees the right of job return for female and male workers who take unpaid leave to care for newborn, newly adopted, or seriously ill children or for their own serious illness, has had strong political momentum and bipartisan support in the House. However, despite compromises made to gain broader support, House leaders still have not made this issue a priority in this session of Congress.

Legislators in both chambers and candidates from all parties are paying a great deal of lip service to our nation's child care crisis, but a com-

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Despite a great deal of lip service, a comprehensive child care bill has yet to emerge from either the House or the Senate.

prehensive child care bill has yet to emerge from either the House or Senate. Action on the Act For Better Child Care, the only Congressional child care initiative that AAUW supports, is uncertain in the remaining weeks of the 100th Congress.

AAUW has been a strong supporter of a federal pay equity study to determine if wage disparities exist due to sex and/or racial discrimination in the federal work force. Despite a cosponsor list of 43 Senators, this modest bill has been held up by eight Senators for more than four months. The House has twice passed similar legislation since 1984, but has failed to move swiftly in past months to secure its responsible action again during this Congress.

How AAUW Members Can Use the Voting Record

The quick-reference format of the *Voting Record* lists members of Congress by state in two sections, the Senate and the House, along with their recorded positions in six Senate and four House votes. Vote descriptions preceding each section outline the bills, their significance, AAUW's position, and congressional action on them. For the purposes of this document, a vote in accordance with an AAUW position is a + vote; a vote contrary to an AAUW position is a - vote.

Based on these votes, a percentage rating of each legislator's support for AAUW priorities is also provided. This rating does not indicate the full extent of legislators' sup-

port for or opposition to AAUW positions as exhibited, for example, in important committee or conference votes. Nor does it demonstrate their leadership for or against AAUW issues. (AAUW's monthly legislative newsletter, *Action Alert*, often provides more detailed information on these matters as each session of Congress proceeds.) When communicating with members of Congress, it is important to consider the full range of their work.

Every member of Congress receives the *Voting Record*. In the interest of fairness, AAUW does not record votes on bills on which we have not communicated AAUW's positions to Congress nor encouraged our members to be active. AAUW members should feel free to discuss the *Voting Record* with their members of Congress.

AAUW members should use the AAUW ratings of legislators as a guide for their efforts as citizen lobbyists. Smart advocates prioritize not only their issues, but the objects of their lobbying, generally focusing their strongest efforts on those legislators whose ratings fall in the middle of the range. These are the legislators who need more information, more letters, more phone calls, more visits, and more visible, public encouragement from AAUW members.

It is essential to place legislators' AAUW ratings in the context of their communities: in conservative communities, for example, legislators who earn 50 percent AAUW ratings may be on the leading edge in support of AAUW issues. By empha-

zing legislators' + votes, AAUW members can operate from a position of strength in encouraging legislators to maintain working relationships with AAUW (both in Washington and at the grassroots level), to understand our positions on issues, and to vote with AAUW as often as they can.

By the same token, AAUW members should never write off legislators with low AAUW ratings or fail to express appreciation for legislators with consistently high AAUW ratings. AAUW's objective with all members of Congress is to increase their support of AAUW issues, to keep them accountable to the electorate, and to constantly seek and reinforce common concerns. This is an ongoing process, not one that is limited to a single *Voting Record* or Congressional cycle.

Using the *Voting Record* wisely and with discretion, AAUW members can enhance public awareness of AAUW issues and further its 107-year-old mission of promoting equity for women, lifelong learning, and positive societal change. An active and aware constituency is the best incentive for legislators to be more responsive to AAUW's issues. Thus the *Voting Record* is a tool that enables AAUW members to be informed participants in the sometimes turbulent process that we proudly call democracy.

The American Association of University Women is a non-partisan organization and does not endorse candidates for partisan elective office.

★ Vote Descriptions

A. SENATE VOTES

1. EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES FUNDING: FISCAL YEAR 1988 APPROPRIATIONS BILL FOR THE DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS), EDUCATION AND RELATED AGENCIES. This bill (HR 3058) provides funds for federal education programs including student financial assistance and vocational and adult education, as well as for most of the nation's domestic health and social services programs. The annual appropriations process generally provokes heated debate, and this year, after hours of debate over a controversial AIDS education amendment, the Senate passed a \$129.4 billion appropriation to the above departments for Fiscal Year 1988.

AAUW had begun work early in 1987 to ensure that our priorities of responsible funding for public education and human services were addressed in the provisions of the bill. Our work was rewarded, as education programs received \$21.3 billion and HHS programs received \$86.9 billion, increases of 9 percent and 9.7 percent, respectively, over FY 1987. AAUW also supported an amendment offered by Sen. Lowell Weicker (R-CN) to block proposed regulations that would bar from par-

