

AAUW: Advancing Gender Equity



By Ardith Talbott,
President of AAUW Doylestown

What do paid family leave, reproductive rights, and career and technical education (CTE) have in common? They share a crucial commonality: their collective impact on women's economic opportunity and equality. These are also some of the things that AAUW (American Association of University Women) actively advocates for in pursuit of its mission to advance gender equity for women and girls.

AAUW is a national organization with about 1,000 branches across the country, including the local AAUW Doylestown branch. Our branch members are like-minded women who enjoy gathering throughout the year, both in small interest groups for fun and to stay informed and advocate for gender equity. Several programs each year, including the October and November programs, are open to the community.

On Wednesday, October 22, Dr. Michael Herrera, Executive Director of the Upper Bucks County Career and Technical School, will speak at an AAUW program about the role of career and technical education (CTE) in preparing young people for today's workplace. Pennsylvania has a workforce shortage in fields like healthcare, manufacturing, and skilled trades. Encouraging girls and boys to pursue these fields is good for the economy in multiple ways. Dr. Herrera will share impressive success stories of girls in these non-traditional fields of work, highlighting how CTE programs are crucial for closing the gender gap and promoting economic self-sufficiency. Given the expense of higher education and the changing interests of students, CTE is something both students and parents should consider. AAUW believes that women deserve equitable access to careers, and we support CTE training opportunities in male-dominated fields, such as mechanics and construction. Dr. Herrera's presentation will focus on the tangible benefits of CTE, demonstrating how students acquire skills that directly lead to high-paying jobs.

In reflecting on this work, Dr. Herrera shared: "As Executive Director of UBCTS, I have seen

firsthand the life-changing opportunities that career and technical education provides to young women who might not otherwise envision themselves in these roles. When we give the students access to rigorous training, mentorship, and real-world experiences, they not only develop skills but also gain confidence and independence. By encouraging more girls to explore non-traditional pathways, we're not just filling workforce shortages—we're ensuring they have a seat at

the table in industries that shape our communities. UBCTS is committed to continuing this mission alongside AAUW and other partners dedicated to advancing gender equity."

AAUW Doylestown has also recently partnered with the Women's Law Project, Planned Parenthood, Children First PA, and other organizations to offer informative programs and advocacy opportunities about reproductive rights in Pennsylvania, as well as the proposed Family Care Act which would provide access to paid family and medical leave to all workers in Pennsylvania.

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AAUW Doylestown welcomes new members! Visit the local website at <https://doylestown-pa.aauw.net/> or email aauwdoylestownpa@gmail.com for more information about upcoming programs and AAUW membership. Visit the national AAUW website at <https://www.aauw.org/> to learn about AAUW's overall strategic priorities and initiatives.

Ardith Talbott has been a member of AAUW for 10 years and served on the board for 4 years. She has been a long-time advocate for equity, most recently through her work with AAUW. Previously she served as the Bucks County coordinator for Fair Districts PA which advocates for redistricting reforms to end gerrymandering. As she reflects back on her 40-year career, equity for women runs deep. After graduating from a women's college (Goucher College), her first job was with the Girl Scouts of the USA.

**The October 22 meeting
will be at the
Bucks County Intermediate Unit, 705
N Shady Retreat Rd, Doylestown.
Please send email
AAUWDoylestownPA@gmail.com
for information and to RSVP.**