

CAPITOL REPORT

December 8, 2024

By AAUWMI Government Relations Coordinator Mary Pollock

ADVOCACY IS ONE METHOD TO ACHIEVE AAUW'S MISSION

AAUW's mission is to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy as stated in the national, member-adopted AAUW Public Policy Priorities. The 2023-2025 Biennial Action Priorities are:

- To support and strengthen a high-quality system of public education that promotes gender fairness, equity, diversity and inclusivity, and to address the barriers and implicit biases that hinder the advancement of women and girls;
- To achieve economic security for all women;
- To guarantee equality, individual rights, and social justice for a diverse and inclusive society.

AAUW is **non-partisan** meaning it does not endorse candidates or political parties, or urge its members or the public to vote for or against candidates or political parties. But AAUW is political – it does support and endorse **ISSUES** based on AAUWMI adopted Public Policy Priorities and Biennial Action Priorities - and advocates for their advancement or defeat.

ELECTION RESULTS

Turnout –Michigan voters cast a **record-breaking 5.67 million votes** in the November election — 100,000 more votes than the previous record, which was set in 2020; 79 of the 83 counties topped their 2020 vote totals.

More than 2 million people voted in-person on Election Day and about 3.4 million people took advantage of new early voting options by either voting in-person before Election Day or submitting an absentee ballot. Nearly 21,700 people registered to vote through same-day voter registration – in comparison to the 3,600 same-day registrations in the 2022 midterms.

Federal Offices - Former President **Donald Trump** was elected as the 47th President of the United States. He had a 1.42-percentage-point victory in Michigan. Democratic nominee Vice President Kamala Harris made history as the first Black and South Asian woman to secure a major political party's nomination for President. Trump was able to secure both a win in the rurally weighted Electoral College and the national popular vote this time. He won all seven battleground swing states. Trump received 157,000 more Michigan votes this election than he did in 2020, while Kamala Harris collected 74,000 fewer votes than Joe Biden in 2020.

In Congressional races, Michigan elected Congresswoman **Elissa Slotkin** (D-Holly) to a narrow victory over former Congressman **Mike Rogers** by just over 19,000 votes to replace retiring **U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow**. However, the U.S. Senate itself flipped from Democratic majority control to Republican control.

Seven Michigan Republicans and six Democrats won their races for Michigan's 13 U.S. House seats. Former State Senator **Tom Barrett** (R-Grand Ledge) flipped his district by defeating former State Senator **Curtis Hertel** (D-East Lansing) in the open 7th Congressional District in mid-Michigan to replace Democrat Elissa Slotkin who ran for the open U.S. Senate seat. State Senator **Kristen McDonald Rivet** (D-Bay City) won her race against Republican **Paul Junge** in the open 8th U. S.

House District that includes Flint, Saginaw, Midland, and Bay City currently held by retiring **U.S. Congressman Dan Kildee**. All other incumbent Members of Congress from Michigan won their races. Republicans will hold a narrow majority in the U.S. House 220 - 215. With the intention of President-elect Trump to appoint several U.S. Representatives to several posts within his administration, the Republican U.S. House majority will be even narrower until special elections can be held.

Michigan House – In addition to national election success, Republicans will take back control of the Michigan House, winning 58 of the 110 seats. The current Michigan House Democratic margin until sine die at the end of December 2024 is 56-54. Michigan is the only state that saw a legislative chamber change partisan hands in the November election based on information from the National Conference of State Legislatures.

To win the House majority, Republicans flipped 4 State House seats and re-elected all their incumbents despite a large cash advantage by Democrats. Losses were in the 58th House District (Rep. Nate Shannon, D-Sterling Heights), the 27th House District (Rep. Jaime Churches, D-Wyandotte), the 44th House District (Rep. Jim Haadsma, D-Battle Creek) covering parts of Calhoun County, including Battle Creek, and the 109th House District (Rep. Jenn Hill, D-Marquette) in the Upper Peninsula.

The 38-member State Senate was not on the ballot this year. However, State Senate Democrats will go for at least part of 2025 with a slim 19-18 majority with the departure of State Senator Kristen McDonald Rivet to Congress in early 2025. The Constitution requires the Governor to call a special election following a legislator's formal departure. The Lt. Governor who presides over the State Senate can break ties if one should occur.

Michigan Supreme Court - In the Michigan Supreme Court race, incumbent **Justice Kyra Harris Bolden** and University of Michigan professor **Kimberly Ann Thomas** won open seats, growing the Democratic nominated majority on the high court to 5-2. While Supreme Court seats are technically nonpartisan, candidates are nominated at political party conventions, and Democratic nominees have held a 4-3 majority since 2020. Bolden's victory is the first time a Black woman has won a state-wide race in Michigan.

Michigan Education Boards - For the four Michigan Education Boards, 6 of the 8 seats will be taken by Republicans. Only Democrats **Denise Illitch** (University of Michigan) and **Rebecca Bahar-Cook** (Michigan State University) bucked the general Republican tide.

Michigan legislators will take their oaths of office at noon on January 1, 2025.

State House leadership changes – On November 7, Republican members of the newly elected 103rd Legislature elected **State Representative Matt Hall** (R-Kalamazoo) to lead their caucus in the 2025-26 legislative term and he will serve as the **next Speaker of the House** after the formal election by the entire Michigan House at its opening session in January. House Republican leadership includes **Speaker Pro Tempore Rachelle Smit** (R-Shelbyville) and **Majority Floor Leader Bryan Posthumus** (R-Cannon Township). The majority party controls committee chair and committee appointments, the budget for House members, the daily agenda of bills that will move to the full House for consideration, and much more.

Democratic members have elected **Ranjeev Puri** (D-Canton) to serve as Democratic minority leader during the 2025-26 term. They elected **John Fitzgerald** (D- Wyoming) as minority floor leader.

Counties - Among Michigan's 83 county commissions, Republicans netted 22 more seats, flipped five county commissions and won a majority in two more. Democrats flipped one commission, according to election numbers gathered by *MIRS*.

Republicans flipped Bay County (from 4-3 Dem to 6-1 GOP), Gogebic (from 6-1 Dem to 4-3 GOP), Kalamazoo (6-3 Dem to 5-4 GOP), Keweenaw (3-1-1 Dem to 3-1-1 GOP), Muskegon (4-3 Dem to 6-1 GOP). Republicans also took a majority in Ogemaw County. Prior to the election, it was 2-2 with one vacancy. Now it's 5-0 Republican. It was a similar dynamic in Presque Isle County. It was 2-2 with one independent. Now it's 4-0 with one independent.

Democrats lost the majority in Ontonagon County. They had a 3-1-1 majority prior to the election. Now, it's split 2-2 with one independent. The Democrats won a 6-1 majority in Leelanau County. Prior to the election, it was 3-3 with one vacancy.

BOSC certifies November 5 election – The bi-partisan Board of State Canvassers received and certified unanimously all 83 county election results on November 22 with only three commenters raising questions about the news that a non-citizen was allowed to vote in Ann Arbor. In the 2020 election cycle, many Michigan Republicans were upset about the outcome of the presidential election, and numerous lawsuits were filed. One member of the board, Republican Norm Shinkle, abstained on the certification vote following weeks of claims from some Republicans that fraud had tipped Michigan to now-President Joe Biden, who won the state by 154,000 votes.

Bureau of Elections Director Jonathan Brater commended the dedicated efforts of thousands of clerks, election staffers, canvassers and inspectors who administered a "successful" election. "Officials faced the challenge of implementing numerous major changes to our election system made by amendments to our state Constitution passed by voters in 2022, as well as laws enacted by our Legislature the last two years," Brater said. "Election officials got started early last year to prepare for statewide elections in 2024, while also administering local elections in 2023 and their other responsibilities. We had many new initiatives that in a typical year would be significant projects on their own."

Presidential electors meet - Michigan's Republican presidential electors selected at their party conventions will convene at 2 p.m. in the Michigan Senate chamber on December 17 to formally cast their votes for President-elect Trump and Vice President-elect Vance. These will be sent to the Archivist of the U.S. for transmission to Congress. On January 6, Congress will meet in a joint session to tally the Electoral College votes. Vice President Kamala Harris will serve as the presiding officer.

This final step in determining the winner of the presidential election received little attention until 2021, when supporters of former President Donald Trump stormed the Capitol, trying to stop Congress from certifying the results showing that Joe Biden won the presidential race. It was a violent day that broke a long tradition of the peaceful transition of presidential power in the U.S. So far, this looks like a more peaceful transition.

LAME DUCK SESSION

There is little time before the close of the year for the 102nd Legislature to address an avalanche of bills. All bills not approved by the end of session in December will have to be reintroduced in the 103rd Legislature after January 1, 2025.

The Michigan House is scheduled to meet Tuesday – Thursday until December 19 (except no session on December 17 when the presidential electors are meeting in the Senate chambers). The Michigan Senate is meeting the same days, and recently added December 23 to its schedule. During this time the Democrats will still have the trifecta they won in 2022. However, the House Democratic majority of 56-54 is having difficulty with full attendance, so it has been taking up only non-controversial bi-partisan bills on days when there aren't all 56 Democrats present for one reason or another.

Governor Whitmer’s highest priority in the last days of the 102nd Legislature is reportedly making annual funding of the Strategic Outreach and Attraction Fund (SOAR) into a 10-year commitment. Speaker-elect Matt Hall says he’d like that money to go to road improvements rather than speculative economic development projects. Many trade associations and advocates want the Democrats to move their high priority bills during lame duck session.

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

At this writing before the close of Michigan’s 102nd Legislature, **1,198 Senate Bills** and **2,259 House bills** have been introduced. The Michigan Senate has proposed 11 constitutional amendments, and the Michigan House has proposed 21 constitutional amendments. None have garnered the necessary super majority to put them on the ballot.

Of all bills introduced in the 102nd Legislature, I am tracking for AAUWMI 1,043 bills related to our AAUWMI and AAUW Public Policy Priorities in these categories:

2023-2025 Biennial Action Priority Category	Number of bills
Economic security for women	190
Education, sex equity in education	160
Equality, individual rights, and social justice	
Domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking	115
Family	126
Firearms	144
LGBT rights	26
Reproductive justice	215
Voting rights, campaign finance, ethics, lobbying	205

Slowdown - For the first five months of 2024, the House Democrats were down two votes due to two Democratic members succeeding in their November 2023 mayoral campaigns, leaving the House split 54-54. Therefore, bills proposed and only supported by Democrats were not brought up on the floor of the House. Special elections to fill the vacancies resulted in two Democrats joining the majority and a quicker pace of business ensued in late April including passage of the state budget in June 2024. Summer recess in July and August was followed by very few House sessions in the fall election season when all State House seats were up for election. As a result, there is a logjam of 170 Senate passed bills waiting for House consideration and impatience by Democrats to move big issue bills during lame duck before they lose their majority.

AAUW supported new laws - Since my last Capitol Report in late May 2024, the following bills supported in Committee by AAUWMI have passed both chambers and been signed by the Governor:

- **HB 4718** (PA 87) Sexual Orientation Discrimination ([Pohutsky](#)) Prohibits sexual orientation or gender identity of a victim as a defense to a crime.
- **SB 603** (PA 74) Election Recounts ([Chang](#)) Modifies recount process and recount filing fees and modifies the ballot canvassing deadlines under certain circumstances and require an expedited ballot canvass under certain circumstances.
- **SB 604** (PA 75) Election Recounts ([Moss](#)) Modifies sentencing guidelines for certain Michigan election law violations dealing with recounts.
- **SB 788** (PA 150) Special Interest License Plates ([Santana](#)) Provides special registration plates for women veterans.
- **SB 841** (PA 78) Criminal Sexual Conduct ([Klinefelt](#)) Provides penalties for sexual conduct with a corpse or involving a corpse.
- **SB 842** (PA 80) Criminal Sexual Conduct ([Klinefelt](#)) Creates sentencing guidelines for sexual conduct with a corpse or involving a corpse
- **SB 843** (PA 66) Criminal Sexual Conduct ([Klinefelt](#)) Requires registration of individual convicted of sexual contact or sexual penetration with dead human body.
- **SB 928** (PA 136) Medical Expenses ([Anthony](#)) Modifies medical expenses related to birth of a child born out of wedlock paid by Medicaid.

Pay equity bill moves - The first hearing on a pay equity bill in decades happened on December 5 when a Pay Transparency bill, ([House Bill 4406](#)), was reported out of the Michigan House Labor Committee. I submitted [written testimony](#) on our behalf, posted action alerts on the AAUWMI Lobby Corps Facebook group, triggered an action alert to the Michigan Equal Pay Coalition email list, and sent an email Action Alert to 300 AAUWMI members.

[HB 4406](#) promotes pay transparency by allowing an employee to acquire from the employer compensation information about similarly situated employees at the workplace together with their gender and seniority for the last three years. With this information an employee can advocate for fair pay, or use it to file a sex-based wage discrimination civil rights complaint if there appears to be unresolved sex-based pay disparities.

If [HB 4406](#) is adopted, it will help with pay transparency everywhere but predominantly in private sector, non-unionized settings, a large majority of all Michigan workplaces.

AAUWMI supported bills - A sampling of bills AAUWMI has supported in committee hearings since my last report in late May:

- **SB 973** (Sen. Mary Cavanagh) Insurance: health insurers; coverage for certain contraception; require.
- **SB 974** (Sen. Jeff Irwin) Human services: medical services; coverage for contraception and emergency contraception; require.
- **SB 987** (Sen. Mallory McMorrow) Insurance: health insurers; coverage for inpatient long-acting reversible contraceptives; require.
- **SB 988** (Sen. Mallory McMorrow) Human services: medical services; coverage for immediate postpartum intrauterine devices and contraceptive implants and associated anesthesia services; provide for.
- **SB 1006** (Sen. Mallory McMorrow) Health facilities: hospitals; hospitals stocking intrauterine devices; require and require hospitals to offer intrauterine devices to certain patients.
- **HB 5013** (Rep. Rogers) Insurance; health insurers; coverage for the dispensing of a 12-month supply of birth control; require.

- **HB 5569** (Rep. Tsernoglou) Civil procedure; civil actions; cause of action for media that falsely depicts an individual engaging in sexual conduct.
- **HB 5570** (Rep. Bierlein) Criminal procedure; sentencing guidelines; guidelines for dissemination of deep fake sexual images; enact.
- **HB 4062** (Rep. Conlin) Civil rights; housing discrimination; housing discrimination based on source of income; prohibit.
- **HB 4063** (Rep. Morgan) Civil rights; housing discrimination; housing discrimination based on source of income; prohibit.
- **SB 205** (Sen. Cavanagh) Civil rights; housing discrimination; housing discrimination based on source of income; prohibit.
- **SB 206** (Sen. Bayer) SB 206 (Sen. Bayer) Civil rights; housing discrimination; housing discrimination based on source of income; prohibit.
- **SB 207** (Sen. Irwin) Civil rights; housing discrimination; housing discrimination based on source of income; prohibit.
- **HB 5389** (Rep. Brixie) Courts; other; filing fee for name change; modify under certain circumstances.
- **SB 351** (Sen. Irwin) Civil rights; other; public breastfeeding antidiscrimination act; expand to protect public expression of human milk.

Meet and contact your legislators – Advocacy means acting on our political knowledge. AAUW is non-partisan, meaning we do not endorse or support candidates for elective public office or political parties. However, we are not values-neutral. We advocate for or oppose legislative or ballot issues based on our values as expressed in the national AAUW and AAUWMI Public Policy Priorities (PPP).

Sign up for your legislator’s newsletters and attend their in-district meetings to express AAUW’s public policy priorities. Contact your legislator by phone or email and let them know you are an AAUW member and what your position is on the bills discussed above.

Find your State House member [here](#).

Find your State Senator [here](#)

Your voice matters. Legislative staff picking up the call or reading the email for the legislator keep track of what the caller supports or opposes and reports to the legislator what communications are coming in.

The best free source of Michigan legislative information is at www.legislature.mi.gov .

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