



**AAUW – Kentucky Policy Statement on Proposed
Legislation in the Kentucky General Assembly:
OPPOSE: [HB 9](#), [SB6](#), and [SB 93](#)**

January 31, 2024

SUMMARY: Eliminate mentioning, teaching, or practicing the “divisive concepts” of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belongingness in elementary & secondary education (SB 93) and higher education (HB 9 & SB 6) and permitting lawsuits against those in colleges and universities for causing student “discomfort” for up to \$100,000. (Provided by the League of Women Voters of Kentucky)

Since 1881, AAUW has supported a strong public education system that promotes gender fairness, equity, diversity, and inclusivity and addresses the barriers and implicit biases that hinder the advancement of women and girls, which ultimately hinder the advancement of everyone.

The proposed legislation, [HB 6](#), [HB 9](#), and [SB 93](#), is designed to derail Kentucky's progress toward preparing its students and, most importantly, its future leaders for a dynamic world represented by people from diverse perspectives.

Speaking out on these bills is not an academic exercise for me. It is personal. In 1993, I moved to Kentucky to work at the National Center for Diversity (NCFD) at Kentucky State University. For more than six years, our team provided training and educational resources to land grant university staff, including county Extension educators, to help them prepare to respond to population changes occurring in their communities and within their institutions. Our efforts were rewarded with the states and institutions taking responsibility for their own learning and development to meet the diverse needs and interests of their multicultural communities and workforce. And so our KSU center closed in 1999.

NCFD never advocated for preferential treatment of one group or ideology over another—quite the contrary. Its efforts were to help people see the individual and learn from their experiences to provide a beneficial educational outcome. And Kentucky and Kentucky State University was recognized as a leader in this work.

It is distressing and disturbing to AAUW and me that these bills intend to block the preparation of our future workforce from receiving programming that will increase their access to more education, career development, and earning potential. It is not a platitude to say diversity and inclusion are essential for a thriving business. Fortune 500 companies are quoted in Forbes magazine agreeing that ethnically diverse companies are 35% more likely to outperform, and gender-diverse companies are 15% more likely to do so. Kentucky must prepare its students in its public institutions to work for companies seeking to hire the best and the brightest. And be open to all.

AAUW Public Policy supports a strong system of high-quality public education with adequate and equitable funding for and access to quality public education, including early childhood education, for all students. This includes providing professional development and learning opportunities in the arena for DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion).

Understanding the complex ways people engage and interact within communities, organizations, institutions, and workplaces is required to be successful in today's environment. A prepared workforce is culturally competent, recognizes its civic responsibilities, and is ready to enter the global economy.

AAUW Kentucky opposes HB 9, SB6, and SB 93 and affirms its commitment to the state's educational and economic success.