



## **BETHESDA-CHEVY CHASE BRANCH NEWSLETTER**

**December 2023**

**Website: <https://bcc-md.aauw.net/>**

**President**

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**FOX HILL**

**8300 Burdette Road**

**Bethesda, MD 20817**

**Handicapped accessible. Plenty of parking.**

**GUESTS WELCOME!**

**Saturday, December 9, 2023**

**11:00 a.m.**

## **Maryland's Secretary of State: What I Have Learned**

### **Maryland Secretary of State Susan Lee**

Susan C. Lee is a AAUW member of both the Bethesda-Chevy Chase and Kensington-Rockville branches and AAUW Maryland's Woman of Distinction for 2023. She has consistently been the state's strongest advocate for women's issues in her elected roles and was appointed as Maryland's 72nd Secretary of State on Jan. 18, 2023. She previously served over 20 years in the Maryland General Assembly, having been elected to the Senate in 2014 and to the House of Delegates in 2002 representing District 16.



Lee, an attorney, is the first Asian American to serve as Maryland's Secretary of State and elected to the Senate and Chinese American to the General Assembly. She was a leader in the General Assembly on cyber security and innovation, identity theft, online

fraud, consumer protection, pay equity, and gun safety and laws to fight domestic violence, sexual assault, human and labor trafficking, child and senior abuse, and hate crimes. Lee also led efforts to promote bioscience, nanobiotechnology, telehealth, IT, and emerging technologies.

She graduated from the University of Maryland, College Park and the University of San Francisco School of Law. Having served in both the public and private sectors, Lee was an attorney with the US Commission on Civil Rights and the US Patent and Trademark Office and Of Counsel with Gebhardt & Associates. She was appointed to serve on the United States Patent and Trademark Advisory Board during the Clinton Administration.

## Upcoming Programs

**January 13**

**Facts and Falsehoods about Islam and Muslims: A Woman's Perspective**

**Dr. Sahar Khamis**



Dr. Sahar Khamis is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Maryland, College Park. Dr. Khamis is a media commentator and analyst, a public speaker, a human rights commissioner in the Human Rights Commission in Montgomery County, Maryland, and a radio host, who presents a monthly radio show on “U.S. Arab Radio” (the first Arab-American radio station broadcasting in the U.S. and Canada). Dr. Sahar Khamis is an expert on Arab and Muslim media, and the former Head of the Mass Communication and Information Science Department in Qatar University. She is a former Mellon Islamic Studies Initiative Visiting Professor at the University of Chicago.

Other monthly meetings – speakers to be announced – all at 11:00 a.m. at Fox Hill:

**February 10**

**March 9**

**April 13**

**May 18**

## President's Letter

Dear Bethesda-Chevy Chase AAUW Friends,

The Equal Rights Amendment, introduced more than 100 years ago, is simple in its statement: ***Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.*** Maryland AAUW is working with the Maryland legislature to affirm the federal Equal Right Amendment as the 28th Amendment to the US Constitution (ERA-Affirming Resolution).

Are you in favor of equal rights for all Americans?

- Are you aware that the Equal Rights Amendment has met all requirements for a constitutional amendment, finally guaranteeing all Americans equal rights regardless of sex?

- Are you aware that for three years the federal government has sidestepped certifying the Equal Rights Amendment and publishing it as part of the U.S. Constitution?

Although the ERA has met all requirements for a constitutional amendment, the Trump Administration declared the final three state ratifications invalid because they came after the time limit that was contained in the preamble to the ERA. To date, neither the Trump nor Biden Administration has directed the Archivist of the U.S. to certify and publish the ERA as part of the U.S. Constitution. President Biden has asked Congress to officially affirm the ERA is valid and remove the time limit for ratification, and he has indicated once this is done he will direct the Archivist to certify and publish it. Maryland NOW is confident Marylanders can unite to increase public awareness and urge Congress to meet the President's request.

### ***Why do we still need the ERA?***

- The ERA ensures the U.S. Constitution includes a **clear expectation of sex equality in all aspects of life.**
- For decades, women have found legal recourse for sex discrimination under protections in the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment. However, **in 2022 the Supreme Court assumed a more rigid interpretation of 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment protections asserting they do not apply to issues of sex discrimination, contraception, or same-sex marriage.** The ERA not only restores these protections, but strengthens them.
- The ERA gives Congress greater **power to enact laws that provide stronger protections against sexual assault and domestic violence.**
- ***Without the ERA ... victims of sex discrimination have a harder time seeking legal recourse*** because courts are not required to apply the same high standards of scrutiny in sex discrimination cases as the U.S. Constitution requires for discrimination based on race, national origin, or religion.
- ***Without the ERA ... state and federal legislation advancing sex equality can be readily repealed or replaced*** and state-level amendments guaranteeing sex equality (such as Maryland's ERA) can be overridden.
- ***Without the ERA ... the United States has fallen out of the top third of countries internationally when ranked by gender equality, and the U.S. is ranked as the 10th most dangerous country in the world for women.***

Our Bethesda-Chevy Chase Branch learned about these issues at our September meeting and we are committed to working with our fellow AAUW branches and the state organization, along with NOW and other women's organizations, to get over this final hurdle to enactment and inclusion as an amendment to the US Constitution. We will keep you informed about what you can do to help as we look toward the upcoming legislative session.

Special thanks to NOW for providing leadership and useful information.

*Pat*

# MEMBERSHIP DUES – 2023-2024

## Join or Renew Now!

**Dues:**

**\$98**

**Includes \$72 for national AAUW  
\$10 for AAUW Maryland, and  
\$16 for Bethesda-Chevy Chase AAUW Branch**

**\$69 is TAX DEDUCTIBLE**

Note: AAUW national membership dues are \$72, of which \$69 is tax deductible as a charitable contribution. The remaining \$3 is not tax deductible because it supports the AAUW Action Fund's section 501(c)(4) Capitol Hill Lobby Corps and get-out-the-vote activities

**Honorary Life members pay no dues.**

**Life members of AAUW pay \$26 in state and branch dues.**

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

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**PREFERRED PHONE** \_\_\_\_\_

**EMAIL** \_\_\_\_\_

**DEGREE(S) & COLLEGE/UNIV** \_\_\_\_\_

**YEAR(S) OF GRADUATION** \_\_\_\_\_

To renew by check: Make your check for \$98 payable to B-CC AAUW, complete the enclosed form above and mail it to our branch treasurer:

**Karen Braun** - 9707 Old Georgetown Road, Apt. 1302, Bethesda, MD 20814

For questions, you can reach Karen at: [karen.braun@verizon.net](mailto:karen.braun@verizon.net)

## Bethesda-Chevy Chase Officers 2022-23

President	Pat Stocker
Vice President	Patty Howie
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Secretary	Carol Whitley
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Public Policy	Carol Starr
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**AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.**

***AAUW Vision Statement: AAUW will be a powerful advocate and visible leader in equity and education through research, philanthropy, and measurable change in critical areas impacting the lives of women and girls.***

**AAUW has been empowering women as individuals and as a community since 1881. For more than 135 years, we have worked together as a national grassroots organization to improve the lives of millions of women and their families.**

**In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks an inclusive membership, workforce, leadership team, and board of directors. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization based on age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, geographical location, national origin, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.**