

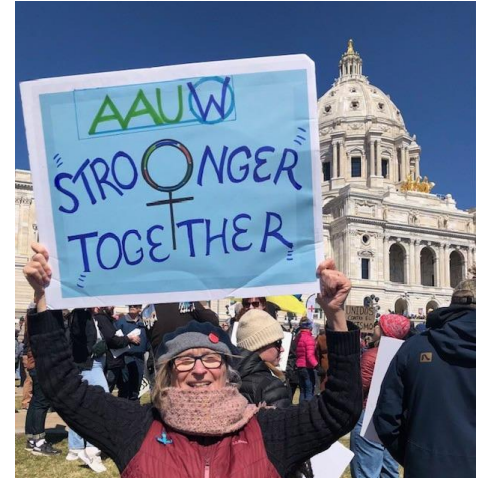


## AAUW Guidance for Public Demonstrations: Taking Action Safely and Strategically

Taking to the streets can be a powerful expression of solidarity and a way to create real, lasting change. For many, public demonstrations are not only a response to injustice but also a reminder of the strength we have when we act together.

Demonstrations can be energizing and transformative. They serve as a source of motivation and resolve to keep pushing for equity. AAUW members have long turned passion into purposeful, collective action—even when political forces attempt to reverse progress. But it's also important to acknowledge that while everyone has the right to public assembly—not everyone can or wants to protest in person.

If you are willing and able, this guide is here to help you show up strategically, safely, and in alignment with AAUW's mission.



### Before You Go

- **Understand the purpose.** Ask: *What is this event trying to achieve?* Is it focused on raising awareness about a specific policy issue or injustice? Is it a response to a current event or part of a long-term advocacy campaign? Protests are most impactful when they clearly communicate what their goal is. Knowing the purpose will help you determine whether and how to participate meaningfully.
- **Research the organizers.** Ensure the demonstration is nonpartisan and aligned with AAUW's mission, values, and public policy principles. Look for events that center the voices of those most impacted and are committed to nonviolence and safety.
- **Evaluate alignment.** Do you feel comfortable supporting the demands or messaging of the event? Do the organizers have a track record of inclusive, nonviolent & respectful action?

### Note for AAUW Branches and State Affiliates:

- Review AAUW's [Civility Matters](#) statement and help foster a respectful, inclusive environment as we advance gender equity through research, education, and advocacy.
- AAUW Branches and Affiliates should not endorse any activities or act in a manner that could imply AAUW approval or disapproval of a campaign candidate in a partisan election.
- Individuals attending partisan events must do so in a personal capacity—not as representatives of AAUW.



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### Preparing to Participate

- **Dress for comfort and weather.** Wear comfortable shoes—you may be walking or standing for long periods. Bring layers, sunscreen, or rain gear as needed.
- **Pack essentials.** Carry water, snacks, and a small first aid kit if possible.
- **Charge your phone.** Make sure it's fully charged, and bring a portable charger if you have one. Have emergency contacts written down in case your phone battery dies.
- **Bring your AAUW pride.** For nonpartisan demonstrations aligned with AAUW's mission, values, and public policy principles, you're encouraged to show your affiliation through signs, AAUW shirts or buttons. Send us your pictures at [advocacy@aauw.org](mailto:advocacy@aauw.org).
- **Respect others privacy.** Taking photos and videos at a demonstration can help spread a movement's message. But it's important to protect the privacy of fellow demonstrators by refraining from posting photos or videos in which others can be identified.

### Safety and Civility

- **Understand the risks.** Even peaceful demonstrations can become unpredictable. Your safety is your responsibility. AAUW is not liable for any consequences arising from participation.
- **Do not engage with counter-protesters.** Maintain distance and vigilance. If needed, alert event marshals or law enforcement to any threats.
- **Know your surroundings.** Identify exit routes, stay with a buddy, and have emergency contacts accessible.

### Keep the Momentum Going!

Demonstrating is one step on the path to change—but sustained progress takes long-term commitment. The fight for gender equity in education needs all of us, and there's always more you can do to deepen your impact.

- **Act.** Follow up with elected officials. Let them know why you showed up and what you want them to do. Use AAUW's Action Network to write, call, or attend local meetings. Your voice matters—keep using it.
- **Share.** Talk to friends, neighbors, and fellow members about the issues that moved you to act. Post on social media, write a letter to the editor, or host a community discussion. Change spreads when we speak out.
- **Join.** Become an active member of AAUW's Action Network. Sign up for an advocacy training as an individual or a branch to build your skills and confidence in becoming a more effective advocate and connect with other action-takers. Our trainings help members build skills—from storytelling to legislative strategy—that can strengthen their advocacy for years to come.
- **Give.** Your support fuels the work. Consider donating to AAUW's Public Policy Fund or our Defending Higher Education Fund to ensure we can keep training advocates, mobilizing members, and defending equity in every state and every classroom.

Together, we are building the long-term power it takes to defend and expand women's access to education and opportunity. Whether you march, organize, lobby, or give—every action helps move us forward.

