

Public Policy:

Lobby Days Were Here Again

By Jeanne Delp

I was an actual Lobby Day participant this year (April 8th and 9th)! And it was FUN, a feel-good experience, certainly educational and inspiring, and not at all the scary the "mission impossible" that I had imagined! I was scheduled to participate each of the past two years, but circumstance in Sacramento prevented my meetings from taking place. Disappointed, yes, somewhat relieved, yes, but determined to do my Citizen of California and AAUW duty, I registered again this year! And YOU should absolutely participate in 2026!

My team consisted of five AAUW members, three members from our Fremont Branch (me, Remy Parmar, and Diane Ross) with the other two representing neighboring branches. I was the contact person, so I sent emails to each team member with scripts concerning the three bills we would be presenting. Through emails we planned a ZOOM get together to acquaint ourselves with our preferred choice of script and plan our two individual presentations. We also made final meeting arrangements for our one zoom meeting on the morning of April 9, with Assemblymember Alex Lee, (District 24) and one zoom meeting in the afternoon with Assemblymember Liz Ortega, (District 20).

Four team members spoke to Alex Lee's Assembly Fellow who listened carefully and took notes about our information in support of Senate Bill 771, and Senate Bill 418, and a "NO" vote on Assembly Bill 579. She asked questions to clarify and indicated she felt Lee would be supportive of our wishes, but, of course, could not speak for him. All of this in 10-15 minutes!

In the afternoon we again presented our individual bills, BUT, we actually spoke to Assemblymember Liz Ortega. She was well informed about each bill and assured us her thinking matched that of AAUW's--support for SB771 and SB418, and a "NO" on AB 579. As leader, I introduced AAUW and the team and then closed the meetings.

A scheduling conflict of one of our team members necessitated a different team member presenting in the afternoon on AB 579. That was not a problem. Everyone was well prepared. We were a great team drawn together by our desire to advocate for ALL women and girls to be able to live in a healthy, supportive environment.

Again, I urge you to register for Lobby Days in 2026. It involves a few hours of your time, but scripts and facts for all presentations are made available for each of the chosen bills. You may actually READ the script if you choose. Our AAUW-CA Lobby Team has put together all the information you will need to participate (in LARGE PRINT, too!). I found there is no need for anxiety! To quote Lobby Days information: "RELAX! They're just people!"

WHEN you are a participant in 2026, you will reap the benefit of feeling as though you are fulfilling and furthering the goals of democracy. You will make our voice heard as a

member of AAUW CA and help inform the legislators of our mission: to advance equity for women and girls.

Quotes to be encouraged by:

- This from the League of Women Voters: "Democracy needs volunteers."
- And this from Jeannette Rankin (1880-1970) as the FIRST U.S. Congresswoman and the only woman to vote on giving women the right to vote. "Today as never before the Nation needs its women--needs the work of their hands and their hearts and their minds."