

## Coalition Update: Covenant with North Carolina's Children

The AAUW NC Board received an up-front and personal update from its coalition partner during the fall meeting, when state president Joanne Hill introduced Crystal Hopson, intern with the Covenant with North Carolina's Children. Hopson reviewed the legislative progress which the Covenant has made this year in North Carolina, especially on legislation which protects children from the dangers of ATVs and meth labs.

She reviewed the process which the Covenant undergoes to identify and prioritize issues for which they lobby. Currently, eight work groups recommend legislative priorities to the Board, which in turn presents these ideas to the general membership, which then adopts two issues/priorities for a particular legislative session. The work groups are: Child Welfare and Protection, Early Childhood, Economic Security, Education, Health, Juvenile Justice, Mental Health/Development Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services, and Safety. Hopson urged AAUW NC, as a member of the Covenant, to become involved in this process. Barbara Ann Hughes, AAUW NC state public policy coordinator, is the AAUW NC liaison to the Covenant.

A handout provided by the Covenant shows that 12 bills addressing child welfare, early childhood, and education remain in both House and Senate committees, as well as one on safety in the House: H1104 Ban Cell Phone Use While Driving. No action has been taken on any of them.

Bills on economic security (minimum wage), juvenile justice (street gang prevention; expunge) and safety (instructions/information to protect newborns) have passed the house and are in Senate committees.

Bills that have passed both levels of the Legislature include child welfare (meth lab

prevention act), health (cigarette tax; children 0-5 years old and 200% of poverty moved to Medicaid and now budgeted).

Gang prevention was passed in the budget but does not have an accompanying law. Alternatives to commitment was funded \$250,000 recurring in the budget. The ATV bill was signed into law by the Governor in August. T.E.A.C.H. was funded 2.6 million recurring in the budget. The Mental Health Trust Fund was funded \$10 million recurring in the budget.

Visit [www.nccovenant.org](http://www.nccovenant.org) or call 919.649.2449 to learn more about the Covenant.

## AAUW Action Network at Forefront of Issues

From July 1 to November 16, the AAUW Action Network released 33 alerts. The items ranged from FDA Dr. Susan Wood quitting over the delay on Plan B, Supreme Court appointments, Katrina response, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), Patriot Act reauthorization, women's health issues, budget reconciliation, social security privatization, school vouchers, national security, education, and most importantly – successes of the AAUW Action Network.

Very few of these issues show up in *Tar Heel News* because of the time frame required for action. For this reason, we encourage all AAUW members to either subscribe to the Action Network e-mail alerts, which have a convenient "take action" link to contact members of Congress and sometimes the President, or visit [www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org) and click on "Issue Advocacy" at the top of the page, for all of the information you need - alerts, position papers, and links - to make your voice heard. Do it today!

## Viewing Diversity

The subject of diversity came up during the fall board meeting on more than one occasion and in different contexts:

- Queen Thompson, AAUW NC diversity chair, challenged board members to ask what their branches are doing to embrace all issues of diversity. She questioned whether AAUW NC should be conducting a study of diversity issues impacting women. She noted that Charlotte Branch had worked in cooperation with an educational television station in her area to study issues of African American students in public schools. She asked the board to define three to five diversity issues which AAUW NC could study.
- In the context of a recognition program: The board agreed that diversity should be the focus of continued efforts at the state level. The motion that "Queen Thompson and the Diversity Committee will work on developing a statewide diversity initiative which will be presented to the membership at the 2006 AAUW NC Convention as an item of business" was offered, seconded and approved. The committee is to meet by February 15.
- 3) Strategic planning goals and strategies: Lola Jackson summarized some of the ideas which came out of discussions in the summer. These included a "sisterhood" pin as a fund-raiser, graduate schools promoting AAUW membership, a videotape, and public service announcements. The board agreed that these ideas could be folded into the statewide diversity initiative which the Diversity Committee will be developing.
- The board agreed to support the N.C. Board of Education in its efforts to require diversity training for school counselors and social workers (story on page five).

## Timely News: EdEqChange

*EdEqChange* is the bi-weekly leader memo published by AAUW. Subscribers receive e-mail alerts with links to download the pdf bulletins. A sampling of recent topics include:

- **Oct. 5, #4** - Membership resources.
- **Oct. 21, #5** - Association Convention dates and locations through 2013.
- PDFs and hardcopies of the new membership brochure are available.
- See [www.letsreadmath.com](http://www.letsreadmath.com) for a Foundation-supported web site encouraging "Read good children's books with math themes, then do fun math activities related to the book."
- Check out the new movie "North Country" and note that EF's *Harassment-Free Hallways* program is listed as a resource on a web site related to the film. [Any branches planning movie nights?]
- **Nov. 2 #6** - Rosa Parks.
- Clarification of the AAUW status with IFUW.
- Public Policy updates on the Senate's passage of an amendment to ensure that the Bureau of Labor Statistics continues to collect "Women Workers" data and information on an amendment to the Labor-HHS appropriations bill that has Title IX implications.
- **Nov. 18 #7** - AAUW Strategic Plan Key Messages - a *must read* for all members at every level, these are the seeds that can bear bountiful fruit for our organization if we plant and nurture them!

See [www.aauw.org/member\\_center/leader\\_corner/EdEqChange/EdEqChange.cfm](http://www.aauw.org/member_center/leader_corner/EdEqChange/EdEqChange.cfm) to read past issues (member number needed) or ask a member in your branch to share her copies!

## Women's Reproductive Rights – Controversy on Morning After Pill Continues

### Women Speak; FDA Scrambles

Women who heard the news in September that the Food and Drug Administration appointed a veterinarian, Dr. Norris Alderson, to head the Office of Women's Health, following the resignation of Dr. Susan Wood, were outraged.

As reported by Marc Kaufman, *Washington Post* staff writer (September 20, 2005; Page A21) "The Office of Women's Health serves as a liaison with women's health groups and as an advocate on women's issues; critics said that a man with a primarily veterinary background could not properly fill the role."

Wood's resignation protested of the agency's unwillingness to decide whether to emergency contraception should be more easily available.

Kaufman went on to say, "Three days after the Alderson announcement, the FDA main press office sent out a very different announcement... that 20-year FDA veteran Theresa A. Toigo would be the new acting director of the women's health office, and that she would be a champion for women's health... [Alderson's name and the announcement of his appointment was never mentioned] and "FDA spokeswoman Suzanne Trevino, who said that Alderson had never been appointed acting director," also said "There was no official decision made until we announced Theresa Toigo's appointment."

There's more to this story, because a number of women's groups did receive an e-mail press release about Alderson's appointment. See: [www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/09/19/AR2005091901576.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/09/19/AR2005091901576.html).

### Leslie Stahl Looks "Behind the Scenes"

Forwarded from the NC Women United List

When "The Morning After Pill," known as Plan B, was put on the market in 1999, it was described as an emergency contraceptive that prevents a pregnancy in cases of rape or accidents like condom breaks. It's only available by prescription, but because women need to take it within 72 hours, the drug's manufacturer applied to the Food and Drug Administration two years ago for permission to sell Plan B over-the-counter at local drugstores. The drug is considered totally safe, so the request was seen as a slam dunk. But then Plan B became the target of anti-abortion-rights groups and part of the wider controversy over whether religious beliefs are encroaching on scientific decision-making.

Lesley Stahl looked at Plan B and what was behind the FDA's decision on *60 MINUTES*, Sunday, Nov. 27, on CBS. To learn more, see [www.ncwu.org/2004/ecer](http://www.ncwu.org/2004/ecer).

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