



# LAF EXPRESS



December 2017

## Legal Advocacy in Action: AAUW Signs Onto Three Amicus Briefs

### [Lazar v. Kroncke](#)

Carolyn Lazar is a retired schoolteacher who claims that the retroactive application of Arizona’s revocation-on-divorce statute to nullify the beneficiary designation in an individual retirement account (IRA) violates the contracts clause of the U.S. Constitution. Revocation-on-divorce statutes automatically revoke the beneficiary status of one group, usually a former spouse, after a marriage is terminated. In this case, despite the existence of a contract designating Lazar as the beneficiary of her ex-husband’s IRA, the IRA was awarded to her son instead because of the revocation-on-divorce statute. Women’s economic security — including pay equity and retirement benefits — is a central focus of AAUW’s member-voted [Public Policy Priorities](#). AAUW signed onto the brief in November 2017.

[The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania v. Donald J. Trump et al.](#) and [the State of California, the State of Delaware, the State of Maryland, the State of New York, and the Commonwealth of Virginia v. Eric D. Hargan in his official capacity as acting secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services et al.](#)

In October, the Trump administration issued both the religious exemption rule and the moral exemption rule to the Affordable Care Act, allowing employers to refuse to provide their employees with contraceptive coverage “based on sincerely held moral convictions.” The plaintiffs of both of the above cases allege that the religious exemption rule significantly expands the scope of the health care law’s [original religious exemption](#) for certain religious employers and that the moral exemption rule is an “[illegal and unjustified attempt](#) to deny millions of women in Pennsylvania and across this country access to necessary preventive health care.” AAUW was the lead signatory on these briefs and [supports reproductive choice and increased access to health care and family planning services](#).

### What Is an Amicus Brief?

“Amicus curiae” is Latin for “friend of the court.”

Frequently a person or group not involved in a legal case but having a strong interest in the matter will petition the court for permission to submit a brief that may influence the court’s decision.

[Read past AAUW-signed amicus briefs.](#)

(Source: Legal Information Institute)

## Sexual Harassment Resources Reboot

Sexual harassment, which includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, violates [Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#). Title VII prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, and religion and also prohibits sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination. Even with Title VII's protections, many people across the country still face sexual harassment in their workplaces.

LAF's Know Your Rights resources help people navigate difficult situations at work and on campus. We recently expanded our [sexual harassment resources](#) to provide guides for employees, employers, and colleagues. These guides [provide employees with steps to take after being sexually harassed](#), [advise employers on how to create a safer office culture](#) and move beyond simply complying with Title VII, and give [guidance for colleagues who witness sexual harassment](#).

## More Than Money, More Than Words

Emotional and moral support are additional components of the LAF legal case support program. Our LAF committee and AAUW members become like family to LAF plaintiffs as they pursue costly and time-consuming litigation.

On December 12, 2017, AAUW members and LAF Program Manager Ebonee Avery-Washington, J.D., stood with [LAF plaintiff Aileen Rizo](#) at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit as her petition concerning the permissibility of using prior salary alone to calculate current wages under the Equal Pay Act was [reheard by the full panel of judges](#). During the hearing, the judges asked questions of both sets of counsel designed to determine what role, if any, prior salary should play in determining current salary.

Hearings like these are guided by civil procedure, which outlines the rules and traditions of American jurisprudence. In keeping with that tradition, AAUW has stood with many LAF plaintiffs throughout the years at critical stages in their cases. As we await a decision in the Rizo case, we will keep standing for the issues that affect these cases and for our brave plaintiffs.