

## **Investing in Our Democratic Future: Non-Partisan Voter Education Around Proposition 50 in California**

By Sue Miller, Member AAUW California Public Policy Committee

We are currently seeing and experiencing creeping authoritarian efforts to undermine fair representation, trusted information, and democratic norms in our country. This unprecedented condition, paired with overwhelming federal encroachment, presents a significant threat to many of the things that we care about, including AAUW's mission of advancing equity for women and girls: although California continues to maintain strong protections for women and girls, marginalized peoples, free speech, accurate history, sound science, and democratic norms, we are still subject to the laws, rules, and enforcement actions of the federal government. As such, as part of this year's GOTV campaign, AAUW California will be providing information-centered messages on the potential benefits of Proposition 50 for all Californians.

The approval of [Proposition 50](#) by California voters in November 2025 will approve redistricting efforts in California for the next election cycles (until maps are redrawn after the next census in 2030). With the passage of Proposition 50, we will experience a short-term loss of state democratic and people-centered control of an important aspect of democracy: redistricting. This effort will also seemingly have partisan benefits.

However, a short term loss of people-centered redistricting can also be seen as an investment in a democratic future in the long term, one in which we can have more, not less, of the will of the people recognized - all of the people, regardless of who they are. Furthermore, partisanship may be seen as a reductive label when the choice has become one of supporting authoritarianism or preserving functional democracy.

Redistricting should be in the hands of the people. Gender equity should be a consistent priority so that the dreams of a pluralistic democracy are one step closer to being realized. None of this is possible if our state is operating in a federal system in which democracy is no longer functional, listing instead toward an authoritarian system that puts troops in our streets, that censors our speech, that erases historical facts, that does not rely on sound science in decision-making, that directly endangers the wellbeing of women and girls, and that dehumanizes important and valued members of our communities.

Our goal in this campaign is to provide reliable information as a trusted resource to voters in California, and the wider public, about the potential ramifications and potential benefits of Proposition 50's passage and dispel misinformation about partisanship and redistricting in this

political moment. We will also encourage and assist voters to go to the polls for this special election to vote as individuals on whether the proposed redistricting should be approved. Providing this encouragement to get out and vote and information about Proposition 50, including about potential benefits, is acting in alignment with our mission and our nonpartisan commitments, as we are advancing a pro-democracy message: we seek to support any and all efforts to preserve and advance democracy and our public policy priorities in the face of a growing authoritarian threat.

Let's all join in working together to advance our public policy priorities in moving California forward.