



NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON PAY EQUITY

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April 24, 2007

Dear Member of Congress:

Over the past three decades, we have made tremendous strides in closing the wage gap between women and men. But we can't stop now. Despite remarkable changes in women's labor force participation and earning more degrees, women continue to unfairly earn lower wages compared to men. We the undersigned organizations, a coalition of grassroots organizations working to close the wage gap, urge you to support legislation that would help women achieve pay parity. Today marks Equal Pay Day, a national grassroots event held annually in April to signify the point into a year that a woman must work to earn what a man made the previous year.

We hope that the 110th Congress will be focused on issues impacting families, especially with wages and economic security. Closing the wage gap is a key component to helping families, in particular low wage earners, improve their financial security. Today in most families both parents must work in order to give their children adequate education and opportunities. When women do not receive fair wages, this impacts not only their children's well being, but their retirement savings.

President John F. Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act on June 10th of 1963. Yet, four decades after its passage, equal pay is not a fact of life for American women and minorities. According to the 2006 Census Bureau, women still earn only 77 cents for every dollar earned by her male counterpart. Minority women suffer a greater disparity. African American women make 72 cents for every dollar compared to the highest earners, while Hispanic women make only 56 cents. Even though women's wages and educational attainment has been rising, there is still a sizeable gender wage gap.

According to a 2003 study by the Government Accounting Office (GAO), only a portion of the difference in pay can be explained by women taking time out of the workforce, care giving, experience, or other qualifications. The study looked at 18 years of data, and indicated that women still earn 80 cents even when accounting for factors such as occupation, industry, race, marital status and job tenure. Therefore discrimination does play a role in the wage gap, which is why we need to pass legislation that will address these issues and encourage employers to pay fairly.

Two bills seek to address the wage gap. The Paycheck Fairness Act will strengthen the Equal Pay Act of 1963 (EPA) by providing more effective remedies to victims of sex discrimination in the payment of wages while the Fair Pay Act seeks equal pay for women working in jobs with equivalent skills, effort, responsibility and working conditions as jobs dominated by men. Since the Paycheck Fairness Act and Fair Pay Act have been introduced many years ago, there has not been a committee hearing to discuss pay equity and these two bills.

Pay equity is a family issue, not just a women's issue. By eradicating unfair treatment in the labor market we can help families gain the resources they need to ensure that their children have access to a better future in the 21st century. Please support legislation that will help remedy an important economic issue facing all working women.

Sincerely,

National Committee on Pay Equity
AFL-CIO
Alliance for Retired Americans
A. Philip Randolph Institute
American Association of University Professors
American Association of University Women
American Federation of Govt Employees
American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees
American Federation of Teachers
American Library Association
American Physical Therapy Association
Asian Pacific-American Labor Alliance
Boca Massage & Day Spa
Business and Professional Women/USA
Buying Influence Inc.
Center for Policy Alternatives
Civil Service Employees Association, Inc.
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Coalition for Equal Pay
Coalition of Black Trade Unionists
Coalition of Labor Union Women
Communications Workers of America
Dialogue on Diversity
DuPage County NOW
Equal Rights Advocates
The Feminist Vox of West Los Angeles College
Financial Women International
Gender Action
Hadassah, Women's Zionist Org. of America
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
Legal Momentum
MANA: A National Latina Organization
NAACP
National Assn of Commissions for Women
National Capital Area Union Retirees
National Council of Women's Organizations
National Education Association
National Treasury Employees Union
National Women's Law Center
9to5, National Association of Working Women
Office & Professional Employees Intl Union
OWL, The Voice of Midlife and Older Women
Pride At Work
Religious Action Center
Soroptimist International of the Americas, Inc.
United Auto Workers
United Auto Workers L.1853 Women's Comm.
United Food & Commercial Workers Union
Washington Public Emp. Assn/UFCW L.365
Woman's National Democratic Club
Women Employed
Women on the Job
The Women's Center of Shippensburg Univ.
Women's Sports Foundation
Women Work! The National Network for Women's Employment
YWCA of the USA