

Vote Yes on Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 1338)

July 30, 2008

Dear Representative:

On behalf of a broad coalition of organizations that promote economic opportunity for women, we strongly urge you to **support the Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 1338)**. We further urge you to reject any weakening amendments, and **to vote no on any motion to recommit**.

The Paycheck Fairness Act, **which currently has 231 co-sponsors**, will strengthen the Equal Pay Act of 1963. This bill would be an important step in addressing the persistent wage gap between men and women by updating the Equal Pay Act – passed more than 45 years ago – and as a result improve that law's effectiveness. The Paycheck Fairness Act would:

- Clarify acceptable reasons for differences in pay by requiring employers to demonstrate that wage gaps between men and women doing the same work are truly a result of factors other than sex.
- Deter wage discrimination by strengthening penalties for equal pay violations, and by prohibiting retaliation against workers who inquire about employers' wage practices or disclose their own wages. The bill's measured approach would ensure that women can obtain the same remedies for pay discrimination as those subject to discrimination on the basis of race or national origin. We would collectively oppose any efforts to weaken such remedies, such as adding artificial caps on damages.
- Provide women with a fair option to proceed in a class action suit under the Equal Pay Act, and allow women to receive punitive and compensatory damages for pay discrimination.
- Clarify the establishment provision under the Equal Pay Act, which would allow for reasonable comparisons between employees to determine fair wages.
- Authorize additional training for Equal Employment Opportunity Commission staff to better identify and handle wage disputes.
- Aid in the efficient and effective enforcement of federal anti-pay discrimination laws by requiring the EEOC to develop regulations directing employers to collect wage data, reported by the race, sex, and national origin of employees.
- Require the U.S. Department of Labor to reinstate activities that promote equal pay, such as: directing educational programs, providing technical assistance to employers, recognizing businesses that address the wage gap, collecting wage-related data, and conducting and promoting research about pay disparities between men and women.
- Establish a competitive grant program to develop salary negotiation training for women and girls.

Women currently make, on average, only 77 cents for every dollar earned by men; the gap for women of color is even wider.¹ This wage disparity is not simply a result of women's education levels² or life choices.³ Further, this persistent wage gap not only impacts the economic security of women and their families today; it also directly affects women's retirement security down the road. Now is the time for additional proactive measures to effectively address wage discrimination and eliminate loopholes that have hindered the Equal Pay Act's effectiveness. **Again, we urge you to vote yes on the Paycheck Fairness Act, and oppose any weakening amendments and a motion to recommit.**

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Lisa Maatz, Director of Public Policy and Government Relations at the American Association of University Women (202/785-7720) or Jocelyn Samuels, Vice President for Education and Employment, at the National Women's Law Center (202/588-5180).

¹ U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor and Statistics. August 2006. Annual Demographic Survey. http://pubdb3.census.gov/macro/032006/perinc/new05_000.htm Accessed January 16, 2007.

² U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. 1993/2003 Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study.

³ Bureau of Labor Statistics. Employment Status of Women by Presence and Age of Youngest Child, Marital Status, Race, and Hispanic of Latino Ethnicity, 2004. <http://www.bls.gov/cps/wlf-table6-2005.pdf> Accessed December 21, 2006.

Sincerely,

9to5, National Association of Working Women
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
American Civil Liberties Union
American Federation of Teachers
American Humanist Association
American Library Association
Association for Gender Equity Leadership in Education (AGELE)
Business and Professional Women/USA
Buying Influence, Inc.
Clearinghouse for Women's Issues
Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW)
Coalition of Religious Communities
Equal Rights Advocates
Equal Rights Alliance, Inc.
Feminist Majority Foundation
General Board of Church & Society, United Methodist Church
Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America
Hard Hatted Women
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)
Legal Momentum
MomsRising.org
Ms. Foundation for Women
National Association of Commissions for Women
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Committee on Pay Equity
National Council of Jewish Women, Inc.
National Council of Negro Women
National Council of Women's Organizations
National Education Association
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Law Center
National Women's Conference Committee
NEXT STEP
OWL The Voice of Midlife and Older Women
Project IRENE
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
The International Brotherhood of Teamsters
The WAGE Project, Inc.
USAction
U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce
Wider Opportunities for Women
Women at Work
Women Employed
Women Work! The National Network for Women's Employment
Women's Law Project
Women's Voices. Women Vote.
Women's Research & Education Institute (WREI)
Women's Sports Foundation
Women Under Forty PAC
YWCA USA

9to5 Atlanta
 9to5 Bay Area
 9to5 Colorado
 9to5 Los Angeles
 9to5 Milwaukee
 Alliance for the Status of Missouri Women
 AAUW of Alabama
 AAUW of Alaska
 AAUW of Arizona
 AAUW of Arkansas
 AAUW of California
 AAUW of Colorado
 AAUW of Connecticut
 AAUW of Delaware
 AAUW of District of Columbia
 AAUW of Florida
 AAUW of Georgia
 AAUW of Hawaii
 AAUW of Idaho
 AAUW of Illinois
 AAUW of Indiana
 AAUW of Iowa
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 AAUW of Nevada
 AAUW of New Hampshire
 AAUW of New Jersey
 AAUW of New Mexico
 AAUW of New York
 AAUW of North Carolina
 AAUW of North Dakota
 AAUW of Ohio
 AAUW of Oklahoma
 AAUW of Oregon
 AAUW of Pennsylvania
 AAUW of Rhode Island
 AAUW of South Carolina
 AAUW of South Dakota
 AAUW of Tennessee
 AAUW of Texas
 AAUW of Utah
 AAUW of Vermont
 AAUW of Virginia
 AAUW of Washington

AAUW of West Virginia
 AAUW of Wisconsin
 AAUW of Wyoming
 Arizona Advocacy Network
 Bell Policy Center
 Boston College Women's Law Center
 BPW/Arizona
 BPW/Colorado
 BPW/Florida
 BPW/Maryland
 BPW/Montana
 BPW/Montgomery County
 BPW/New Hampshire
 BPW/North Dakota
 BPW/Pennsylvania
 BPW/Wisconsin
 Alaska Federation of Business and Professional Women
 Business and Professional Women's Clubs of Rhode Island
 Hawaii Federation of Business and Professional Women
 Massachusetts Federation of Business and Professional Women
 Michigan Federation of Business and Professional Women
 Minnesota Federation of Business and Professional Women
 Nebraska Federation of Business and Professional Women
 New York Federation of Business and Professional Women's Organizations
 Oklahoma Federation of Business and Professional Women
 State Federation of Business and Professional Women of New Jersey
 Citizen Action/Illinois
 Citizen Action/Michigan
 Citizen Action/New Jersey
 Citizen Action/New York
 Citizen Action/Tennessee
 Citizen Action/Wisconsin
 Colorado Center on Law and Policy
 Colorado Progressive Action
 Colorado Public Employee Alliance-CWA
 Connecticut Citizen Action Group
 County and City of San Francisco, Department on the Status of Women
 Democratic Women's Forum of San Francisco
 Equal Pay Coalition NYC, a project of the New York Women's Agenda
 Equality Maine
 Florida Consumer Action Network
 Georgia Rural Urban Summit

Iowa Citizen Action Network
Iowa Commission on the Status of Women
Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center
Maine Civil Liberties Union
Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence
Maine People's Alliance
Maine Women's Lobby
Maine Women's Network
Mainely Girls
Missouri Progressive Vote Coalition
Montgomery County Commission for Women
National Association of Social Workers –
 Maine Chapter
National Council of Jewish Women – California
National Council of Jewish Women – Connecticut
National Council of Jewish Women – Virginia
New Hampshire Citizens Alliance
New Mexico Voices for Children
NDPeople.org
California, NOW
Detroit, NOW
Greater Bangor, NOW
Greater New Orleans Chapter of NOW
Iowa, NOW
Kansas, NOW
Los Angeles, NOW
Massachusetts, NOW
New York State, NOW
New York City, NOW
Northwest Suburban IL, NOW
Orange County, NOW
Oregon, NOW
Ventura-Oxnard, NOW
Vermont, NOW
Virginia, NOW
West Pinellas, NOW
West Suburban Milwaukee Chapter, NOW
Wisconsin, NOW
Ocean State Action (Rhode Island)
Oregon Action
PathWaysPA
Pay Equity Coalition of Minnesota
Progressive Maryland
Southwest Women's Law Center
United Vision for Idaho
Wage Project Maine
Washington Community Action Network
West Virginia Citizen Action Group
Wisconsin Women's Network
Women & Politics Institute, American University
Women's Law Center of Maryland, Inc.
Women's City Club of New York