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. This wage disparity is not simply a result of women’s education levels or life choices. 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).

---


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.  
USAAction  
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
AAUW of Kansas
AAUW of Kentucky
AAUW of Louisiana
AAUW of Maine
AAUW of Maryland
AAUW of Massachusetts
AAUW of Michigan
AAUW of Minnesota
AAUW of Mississippi
AAUW of Missouri
AAUW of Montana
AAUW of Nebraska
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