Co-Sponsor and Support Swift Passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act

February 3, 2021

Dear Member of Congress:

As members of a broad coalition of organizations that promote economic opportunity for women and vigorous enforcement of antidiscrimination laws, we strongly urge you to co-sponsor and push for swift passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act as a top priority of the 117th Congress. Despite federal and state equal pay laws, gender pay gaps persist, and earnings lost to these gaps are exacerbating the financial effects of COVID-19, falling particularly heavily on women of color and the families who depend on their income. This legislation offers a much needed update to the Equal Pay Act of 1963 by providing new tools to battle pervasive pay gaps and to challenge discrimination.

The COVID-19 pandemic and systemic racism have exposed how the work performed primarily by women, and particularly Black and brown women, has long been and continues to be undervalued and underpaid, even as the rest of the country is newly recognizing the essential nature of this work. Black women, Latinas, and other women of color are especially likely to be on the front lines of the crisis, risking their lives in jobs in health care, child care, and grocery stores; they are also being paid less than their male counterparts. At the same time, women in this country lost more than 5 million jobs in 2020; indeed, women accounted for 100% of the jobs lost in December 2020. The unemployment rate for Black women and Latinas remains exceptionally high. These high jobless numbers threaten to exacerbate gender wage gaps when women regain employment. We cannot build back an economy that works for everyone without ensuring that all women can work with equality, safety, and dignity, starting with pay equity.

There is no more fitting way to begin this session than by making real, concrete progress in ensuring all women receive fair pay. The Paycheck Fairness Act updates and strengthens the Equal Pay Act of 1963 to ensure that it provides robust protection against sex-based pay discrimination. Among other provisions, this comprehensive bill bars retaliation against workers who voluntarily discuss or disclose their wages. It closes loopholes that have allowed employers to pay women less than men for the same work without any important business justification related to the job. It ensures women can receive the same robust remedies for sex-based pay discrimination that are currently available to those subjected to discrimination based on race and ethnicity. It prohibits employers from relying on salary history in determining future pay, so that pay discrimination does not follow women from job to job. And it also provides much needed training and technical assistance, as well as data collection and research.

Women are increasingly the primary or co-breadwinner in their families and cannot afford to be shortchanged any longer. Women working full-time, year-round are typically paid only 82 cents for every dollar paid to men. But for every dollar paid to their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts, Black women only make 63 cents, Native women only 60 cents, and Latinas only 55 cents. While Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) women make 87 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men, women in many AAPI communities experience drastically wider pay gaps. Furthermore, moms are paid less than dads. And even when controlling for factors, such as education and experience, the pay gaps persist and start early in women’s careers and contribute to a wealth gap that follows them throughout their lifetimes. These pay gaps can be addressed only if workers have the legal tools necessary to challenge discrimination and employers are provided with effective incentives and technical assistance to comply with the law.

We recently commemorated the twelfth anniversary of the enactment of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. That vital law rectified the Supreme Court’s harmful decision in Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company. The law helps to ensure that individuals subjected to unlawful compensation discrimination are able to have their day in court and effectively assert their rights under federal antidiscrimination laws. But the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, critical as it is, is only one step on the path to ensuring women receive equal pay for equal work. It’s time to take the next step toward achieving equal pay. We urge you to prioritize the Paycheck Fairness Act in the 117th
Congress by co-sponsoring and urging swift passage of this legislation, taking up the cause of Lilly Ledbetter and all those who have fought for equal pay.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Kate Nielson, Director of Public Policy & Legal Advocacy at the American Association of University Women at 202.728.7617 or nielsonk@aauw.org, or Emily Martin, Vice President for Education & Workplace Justice at the National Women’s Law Center at 202.588.5180 or emartin@nwlc.org.

Sincerely,

9to5
A Better Balance
AFCPE (Association for Financial Counseling & Planning Education)
All-Options
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
   AAUW of Alabama
   AAUW of Alaska (AAUW Fairbanks (AK) Branch)
   AAUW of Arizona
   AAUW of Arkansas
   AAUW of California
   AAUW of Colorado
   AAUW of Connecticut
   AAUW of Delaware
   AAUW of District of Columbia (AAUW Washington (DC) Branch, AAUW Capitol Hill (DC) Branch)
   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 Puerto Rico
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
American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Unions (AFL-CIO)
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
American Federation of Teachers
AnitaB.org
Association of Flight Attendants-CWA
Bend the Arc Jewish Action
California Women's Law Center
Catalyst
Center for American Progress
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Center for LGBTQ Economic Advancement & Research
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Coalition of Labor Union Women
Philadelphia Coalition of Labor Union Women
Community Health Councils
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF)
Disciples Center for Public Witness
Equal Pay Today
Equal Rights Advocates
Every Texan
Family Forward Oregon
Family Values @ Work
Feminist Majority Foundation
Futures Without Violence
Gender Justice
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC
In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda
Indiana Institute for Working Families
Institute for Women's Policy Research
Justice for Migrant Women
KWH Law Center for Social Justice and Change
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
League of Women Voters of the United States
Legal Aid at Work
Legal Momentum, The Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund
Legal Voice
MANA, A National Latina Organization
Methodist Federation for Social Action
Mi Familila Vota
Michigan League for Public Policy
MomsRising
NAACP
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)
National Association of Social Workers
National Center for Law and Economic Justice
National Committee on Pay Equity
National Council of Jewish Women
National Domestic Violence Hotline
National Education Association
National Employment Law Project
National Employment Lawyers Association
    National Employment Lawyers Association – Eastern Pennsylvania
    National Employment Lawyers Association – Georgia
National Network to End Domestic Violence
National Organization for Women
    Florida NOW
    Illinois NOW
    Indiana NOW
    Jacksonville NOW
    Kanawha Valley NOW
    Maryland NOW
    Monroe County NOW
    Montana NOW
    Northwest Indiana NOW
    South Jersey NOW-Alice Paul chapter
National Partnership for Women & Families
National WIC Association
National Women's Law Center
National Women's Political Caucus
Native Women Lead
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
New Jersey Citizen Action
NewsGuild-CWA
New York Women's Foundation
North Carolina Justice Center
People For the American Way
PowHer New York
Prosperity Now
Reinventure Capital
Restaurant Opportunities Centers (ROC) United
Service Employees International Union
Shriver Center on Poverty Law
TIME'S UP Now
U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce
Union for Reform Judaism
United State of Women
WNY Women's Foundation
Women and Girls Foundation of Southwest Pennsylvania
Women Employed
Women of Reform Judaism
Women's Fund of Rhode Island
Women's Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation
Women's Law Project
Women's Media Center
Women's Rights and Empowerment Network
YWCA USA
  YWCA Allentown
  YWCA Arizona Metropolitan Phoenix
  YWCA Billings
  YWCA Butler
  YWCA Central Alabama
  YWCA Central Indiana
  YWCA Central Maine
  YWCA Central Virginia
  YWCA Dayton
  YWCA Duluth
  YWCA Elgin
  YWCA Genesee County
  YWCA Greater Austin
  YWCA Greater Baton Rouge
  YWCA Greater Cincinnati
  YWCA Greater Cleveland
  YWCA Greater Portland
  YWCA Greenwich
  YWCA Hartford Region
  YWCA Kalamazoo
  YWCA Kauai
  YWCA Kitsap County
  YWCA Knoxville and the Tennessee Valley
  YWCA Lower Cape Fear
  YWCA McLean County
  YWCA Metro Detroit - Interim House
  YWCA National Capital Area
  YWCA New Hampshire
  YWCA North Central Indiana
  YWCA Northern New Jersey
  YWCA Oahu
  YWCA Pierce County
  YWCA Princeton
  YWCA QUINCY
  YWCA Sauk Valley
  YWCA Seattle|King|Snohomish
  YWCA South Hampton Roads
  YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts
  YWCA Southern Arizona
  YWCA University of Illinois
  YWCA Utah
  YWCA Western New York
  YWCA Wheeling
  YWCA Yakima

Zonta USA Caucus