

AAUW CAPITOL HILL LOBBY CORPS
Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 1338)
6/12/08

I.SUMMARY

Message:

This election cycle, new polling shows that single women are looking for pay equity to be a key issue addressed. Further, among issues identified as important to all women, 90 percent say equal pay for equal work is a priority. Let us hold representatives accountable on issues of pay equity and take a vote on the Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 1338) – which already has overwhelming support!

Tuesday marked the anniversary of the passage of the Equal Pay Act in 1963. Wage discrimination still happens 45 years later, and still impacts the economic security of women and families today. This bill would help to address the problem of pay inequity by expanding upon the original scope of the Equal Pay Act, and as a result improve the law's effectiveness.

II. BACKGROUND

The American Association of University Women has long fought to end wage discrimination. As early as 1922, AAUW's legislative program called for a reclassification of the U.S. Civil Service and for a repeal of salary restrictions in the Women's Bureau. In 1955, AAUW supported a bill introduced by Reps. Edith Green (D-OR) and Edith Rogers (R-MA) requiring "equal pay for work of comparable value requiring comparable skills." Congress enacted the Equal Pay Act, a version of the 1955 bill, in 1963. AAUW's 2005-2007 Public Policy Program states that AAUW is committed to supporting "fairness in compensation, equitable access and advancement in employment, and vigorous enforcement of employment antidiscrimination statutes."

The Wage Gap Persists

According to the U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor statistics, women who work full time earn about 77 cents for every dollar men earn. Minority women face a larger wage gap. Compared to white men, African American women make 67 cents on the dollar (African American men make 75 cents); Hispanic women make almost 58 cents (Hispanic men make almost 66 cents).

Origins of the Wage Gap

One partial explanation for the wage gap is occupational segregation. According to AAUW research, women are still pigeonholed in "pink-collar" jobs, which tend to depress their wages. The AAUW Educational Foundation's 2003 report, *Women at Work*, found that women are still concentrated in traditionally female-

dominated professions, especially the health and education industries. The highest proportion of women with a college education work in traditionally female occupations: primary and secondary school teachers (8.7 percent) and registered nurses (6.9 percent).

Women's achievements in higher education during the past three decades are considered to be partly responsible for narrowing the wage gap. At every education level, however, women continue to earn less than similarly educated men. Educational gains have not yet translated into full equity for women in the workplace.

The Impact of Education on the Wage Gap

The impact of education levels on the wage gap is of particular importance to AAUW. Women with a college degree earn more than women without this credential. For example, on an hourly basis, women with a four-year college degree earned about 80 percent more than women with only a high school degree in 2001. Moreover, during the past two decades, this difference has grown. Men and women with college degrees enjoyed a real increase in the purchasing power of their earnings between 1973 and 2001. Women without these credentials saw little or no improvement, and men with a high school education or less saw a decline in the purchasing power of their earnings. Nevertheless, while women with a college education earn considerably more than women without this credential, women continue to earn less than men with similar educational backgrounds.

Wage inequalities are not simply a result of women's qualifications or choices. Wage discrimination persists despite women's increased educational attainment. The new report from AAUW released on April 23, 2007, *Behind the Pay Gap*, examines the gender pay gap for college graduates. One year out of college, women working full time earn only 80 percent as much as their male colleagues earn. Ten years after graduation, women fall farther behind, earning only 69 percent as much as men earn. Controlling for hours, occupation, parenthood, and other factors normally associated with pay, college-educated women still earn five percent less than men one year out of college and 12 percent less than men 10 years out of college.

Examples of Pay Inequity

According to a study done by National Association for Female Executives, women marketing and sales managers earned \$46,696 in 2004, compared with \$74,932 for men; women physicians and surgeons earned \$50,856, compared with \$97,448 for men; and women securities, commodities, and financial services sales agents earned \$33,853, compared to \$60,736 for their male counterparts.

The Wage Gap Has Real Consequences

With a record 69 million women in the workforce, wage discrimination hurts the majority of American families. In addition, wage discrimination lowers total

lifetime earnings, reducing women's benefits from Social Security and pension plans and inhibiting their ability to save not only for retirement but for other lifetime goals such as buying a home and paying for a college education.

Legislative Efforts to Close the Wage Gap

AAUW believes that equal pay for equal work is a simple matter of justice for women. But despite the Equal Pay Act and many improvements in women's economic status over the past 40 years, wage discrimination still persists and is attributable in part to the Equal Pay Act's limited scope:

- It fails to provide equal pay for jobs that are comparable but not identical.
- It fails to cover wage discrimination based on race (although Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act addresses this issue).
- It fails to cover part-time or contingent workers.
- It fails to allow groups of workers to file class action suits (again, Title VII does allow for this action; however its statute of limitations has a much shorter timeframe than that of the Equal Pay Act).

Although enforcement of the Equal Pay Act as well as other civil rights laws have helped to narrow the wage gap, significant disparities remain which need to be addressed. AAUW strongly supports the Paycheck Fairness Act and other initiatives to close the persistent and sizable wage gaps between men and women, and minorities as well.

III. **TALKING POINTS**

Current Wage Gap: According to the U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor statistics, women who work full time earn about 77 cents for every dollar men earn. AAUW has recently published updated state by state numbers on the pay gap. Please find them here:

http://www.aauw.org/research/statedata/upload/table_data.pdf.

Current Events: This past Tuesday was Equal Pay Day!

- Among issues identified as important to women, 90 percent say equal pay for equal work is a priority.
- With a record 70.2 million women in the workforce, wage discrimination hurts the majority of American families. In addition, wage discrimination lowers total lifetime earnings, thereby reducing women's benefits from Social Security and pension plans and inhibiting their ability to save not only for retirement but for other lifetime goals such as buying a home and paying for a college education.

- In 2006, college-educated women 25 and older earned 75 percent of what their male peers earned. This gap emerges within the first year after graduation and widens during the first ten years in the workforce.
- Wage discrimination persists despite women's increased educational attainment, greater level of experience in workforce, and decreased amount of time spent out of the workforce raising children, according to a study by the Government Accountability Office.
- While the Ledbetter Fair Pay Act has been an emphasis recently, the Paycheck Fairness Act would address other inadequacies in gender discrimination legislation. This bill has overwhelming, bipartisan support in the House of Representatives and should move.

WHAT THIS BILL WOULD ACCOMPLISH

The Paycheck Fairness Act would expand upon the original scope of the Equal Pay Act. It would also:

1. Allow individuals to sue for fair wages and to receive punitive and compensatory damages—beyond back pay alone.
2. Clarify acceptable reasons for differences in pay and close loopholes in the current law by affirmatively forcing employers to prove that wage gaps between men and women are caused by something other than sex.
3. Authorize additional training for Equal Employment Opportunity Commission staff to better identify and handle wage disputes.
4. Strengthen penalties that courts may impose for equal pay violations, and prohibit retaliation against workers who inquire about or disclose information about employers' wage practices.
5. Make it easier for an EPA lawsuit to proceed as a class action suit.
6. Require the EEOC to survey the current pay data and issue regulations within 18 months, requiring employers to submit any needed pay data identified by the race, sex, and national origin of employees.
7. Strengthen the provision under the current EPA that broadly states wage comparisons must be made between employees working at the same establishment, which allows for courts to interpret the clause to mean the same physical place of business.
8. Require the U.S. Department of Labor to reinstate equal pay activities and investigatory enforcement tools for cases of gender discrimination, which have been eliminated under the current administration.
9. Establish a competitive grant program to develop training for women and girls on compensation negotiations.

IV. STATUS

The Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 1338) was introduced by Rep. Rosa DeLauro on March 6, 2007 and has 228 bipartisan cosponsors. The Senate companion bill has 22 cosponsors.

[Rep Abercrombie, Neil](#) [HI-1] - 4/23/2007
[Rep Ackerman, Gary L.](#) [NY-5] - 6/22/2007
[Rep Allen, Thomas H.](#) [ME-1] - 3/6/2007
[Rep Altmire, Jason](#) [PA-4] - 6/27/2007
[Rep Andrews, Robert E.](#) [NJ-1] - 4/23/2007
[Rep Arcuri, Michael A.](#) [NY-24] - 6/22/2007
[Rep Baca, Joe](#) [CA-43] - 3/6/2007
[Rep Baird, Brian](#) [WA-3] - 6/11/2007
[Rep Baldwin, Tammy](#) [WI-2] - 3/29/2007
[Rep Barrow, John](#) [GA-12] - 6/27/2007
[Rep Becerra, Xavier](#) [CA-31] - 6/22/2007
[Rep Berkley, Shelley](#) [NV-1] - 3/6/2007
[Rep Berman, Howard L.](#) [CA-28] - 3/6/2007
[Rep Berry, Marion](#) [AR-1] - 6/7/2007
[Rep Bishop, Sanford D., Jr.](#) [GA-2] - 6/7/2007
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[Rep Cohen, Steve](#) [TN-9] - 5/1/2007
[Rep Conyers, John, Jr.](#) [MI-14] - 3/6/2007
[Rep Cooper, Jim](#) [TN-5] - 6/27/2007
[Rep Costello, Jerry F.](#) [IL-12] - 6/22/2007
[Rep Courtney, Joe](#) [CT-2] - 5/1/2007
[Rep Cramer, Robert E. \(Bud\), Jr.](#) [AL-5] - 6/7/2007

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V. **TARGETS**

Women D's, Remaining Non-sponsor D's, Ed and Labor Cosponsors

VI. **WHO TO ASK FOR:** Labor LAs