

Co-Sponsor and Support the Paycheck Fairness Act (S \_\_ , H.R. \_\_)

April 4, 2017

Dear Member of Congress:

As members of a broad coalition of organizations that promote economic opportunity for women and full enforcement of antidiscrimination laws, we strongly urge you to support and co-sponsor the Paycheck Fairness Act. The Paycheck Fairness Act has twice passed the U.S. House of Representatives, and it fell just four votes short of a passage in a Senate vote on its merits in the 112th Congress.

Eight years ago, Congress took an important step in passing the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009. That vital law reverses the Supreme Court's decision in *Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.* and helps to ensure that individuals subjected to unlawful compensation discrimination are able to effectively assert their rights under the federal anti-discrimination 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.

The Paycheck Fairness Act updates and strengthens the Equal Pay Act (EPA) of 1963 to ensure that it will provide effective protection against sex-based pay discrimination. The 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 purpose related to the job. It ensures women can receive the same robust remedies for sex-based pay discrimination that are currently available to those subject to discrimination based on race and ethnicity, so that it doesn't pay to discriminate. It prohibits employers from relying on salary history in determining future pay, so that pay discrimination doesn't follow women from job to job. And it also provides much needed training and technical assistance as well as data collection and research.

Families today are counting on women's earnings. Discriminatory pay practices make things harder, especially for those families who rely solely on female earnings. Women continue to be paid, on average, only 80 cents for every dollar paid to men, and when we compare women of color to white, non-Hispanic men and moms to dads, the wage gaps are even larger. These persistent wage gaps can be addressed only if women are armed with the tools necessary to challenge discrimination against them, and employers are provided with effective incentives and technical assistance to comply with the law.

It's time to make real progress on equal pay. We urge you to co-sponsor and work to swiftly pass the Paycheck Fairness Act. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Lisa Maatz, Vice President of Government Relations and Advocacy at the American Association of University Women, at (202) 785-7720, Emily Martin, General Counsel and Vice President for Workplace Justice at the National Women's Law Center, at (202) 588-5180, and Vicki Shabo, Vice President at the National Partnership for Women and Families at (202) 238-4832.

Sincerely,