

Cosponsor (H.R. 2019) the Fair Pay Act Help Make Pay Discrimination History



April 26, 2007

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 100,000 bipartisan members of the American Association of University Women, we urge you to cosponsor of the **Fair Pay Act** (H.R. 2019), introduced by Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton. During this year's "Equal Pay Day" celebration, AAUW urges you to support this legislation—because it's past time that we made pay discrimination a thing of the past.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, women, on average, who work full time still earn about 77 cents for every dollar men earn.¹ The figures are even worse for women of color. AAUW believes that equal pay for equal work is a simple matter of justice. At every stage in her adult life, a working woman is deeply impacted by this gap:

- **Early in her career:** According to the recent AAUW report, *Behind the Pay Gap*, 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 5 percent less than men one year out of college and 12 percent less than men 10 years out of college – an explained gap that can be attributed to discrimination.
- **Providing for her family:** Women spend more time in the workforce than ever before. In fact, 57 percent of women with children under the age of three and 78 percent of mothers with school-age children remain in the workforce. Time spent out of the workforce is not enough to account for the persistent wage gap that most women experience.²
- **Security in retirement:** 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.

Wage inequalities are not simply a result of women's qualifications or choices. Wage discrimination persists despite the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and other improvements in women's economic status. Enactment of the provisions in the **Fair Pay Act** would provide equal pay for work of equal value, regardless of whether the jobs are the same, and eliminate the "gag rule" on wage disclosure thereby prohibiting employers from punishing employees who discuss their wages with a co-worker.

AAUW has been fighting for equal pay for American women since 1913, and we will continue until women receive the equal pay they deserve. We urge you to contact Rep. Norton's office to become a cosponsor of the Fair Pay Act (H.R. 2019). If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 202/785-7720, or Tracy Sherman, government relations manager, at 202/785-7730.

Sincerely,



Lisa M. Maatz
Director, Public Policy and Government Relations

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