In 2018, median annual earnings in the U.S. for men working full time, year-round were $55,291, compared to just $45,097 for women, according to the most recent census data. That means women were paid just 82% percent of men’s earnings — a gap of 18 percent. The gap narrowed over the past half-century, but progress has stalled in recent years. Our federal equal pay laws need an update and agencies can do more to ensure women bring home the pay they have rightfully earned.

Pass federal bills advancing pay equity. Congress must take action to close the gender pay gap by passing legislation that will enable all women to take home a fair paycheck.
- The Paycheck Fairness Act would protect workers by updating and strengthening the Equal Pay Act of 1963.
- The Pay Equity for All Act would prohibit employers from seeking salary history during the hiring process.
- The Fair Pay Act would require employers to provide equal pay for work of equivalent value.

Implement and enforce agency actions. Agencies must take action to help identify and close gender and race-based pay gaps by implementing meaningful executive branch actions.
- Prohibit retaliation against employees of federal contractors who discuss or disclose their wages.
- Require employers to annually collect and report summary pay data by gender, race, and ethnicity.
- Ensure more salaried employees receive appropriate overtime pay.

Rhode Island: Tell your member of Congress you want fair pay!

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*The congressional districts are ranked from smallest wage gap to largest wage gap.
In 2018, median annual earnings for men in Rhode Island were $57,416 compared to $47,356 for women — an earnings ratio of just 83 percent, or 19th out of all states and the District of Columbia, according to the most recent census data. The gap is worse for most women of color and working mothers. With Congressional gridlock at the federal level, states are working to enact their own legislation. Check out which provisions Rhode Island still needs to pass to help close the gap.

To learn more, check out AAUW’s helpful resources at www.aauw.org/fairpay.