

an OPEN LETTER TO ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

A Call for #ReelEquity: Combat Gender Pay Bias in Hollywood

With pay equity and sexual harassment dominating the news, from the momentum of the #MeToo movement and the launch of TimesUp, to winning major concessions on closing the pay gap in state legislatures and corporate boardrooms, the time has come to take a hard look at how our industry compensates the many thousands of people who work below the line and insist on meaningful changes.

Background

In 2016, the California Fair Pay Act took effect, changing state law to prohibit employers from paying women less than they pay men for “substantially similar work.” Nonetheless, a recent study commissioned by IATSE Local 871, a union representing over 2,500 production employees found that significant gender-based wage disparities continue to exist among workers in below-the-line occupations. The study identifies gender stereotyping, job segregation, and sexual harassment as factors contributing to gender pay inequality for below-the-line employees.

Additionally, an astonishing 52% of women surveyed said they had witnessed or experienced sexual harassment at work in the last three years alone. Significantly, even though this data was compiled before the explosion of revelations about sexual harassment in the industry that began in late 2017, it shines a light on the deep connection between the gender pay gap and other forms of workplace injustice facing women in Hollywood and beyond.

It is time for real change. It is no longer acceptable for employees in traditionally female dominated classifications - like Art Department Coordinators and Assistant Production Coordinators - to be stuck with low wages that oftentimes make it difficult to make ends meet, especially in expensive cities like Los Angeles. Nor is it acceptable that – despite the recent changes in state law aimed at closing the wage gap - women (and men) employed in other historically female crafts earn significantly less than their predominantly male counterparts, such as 2nd Second Assistant Directors, while performing substantially similar work.

Finally, it is neither fair nor acceptable that the industry continues using discriminatory wage structures that consistently undervalue the work done by hard-working women (and men) employed in historically female classifications, such as Script Supervisors, ignoring the crucial role that they play in production, especially in light of technological changes that continue to make these jobs more complex. Moreover, by reducing women’s economic security and power, the persistent gender pay gap in our industry makes it harder for women to challenge the harassing and abusive behavior that the #MeToo movement and the launch of Times Up have brought to public light.

Action Now

It's time for the Entertainment Industry to take a hard look at its pay and compensation practices above and below the line to make sure all productions meet the legal -- and moral -- requirement to pay fairly without discrimination.

We urge the Entertainment Industry to address the pay inequality facing women today in historically female-dominated positions in production by:

1. Committing to conduct a comprehensive study of gender disparities in wages that would also examine other measures of diversity, inclusion and equity in the industry with the goal of implementing changes to address the inequities and gaps identified,
2. Applying an Equity Yardstick to make sure the wages on individual productions are fair to women and to other underrepresented groups across crafts and departments, based on parity between substantially similar positions and proportionality within/across departments,
3. Calling on talent and directors to request Equity Riders, similar to Inclusion Riders, that commit productions to pay equity both above and below the line.

The time is now! We must work together to end gender pay bias and sexual harassment in the Entertainment Industry.

Initial Signers:

ORGANIZATIONS

ACLU

ACLU Southern California

American Association of University Women

ARRAY Alliance

Equal Pay Today!

Equal Rights Advocates

Free the Bid

IATSE Local 871

National Partnership for Women and Families

National Women's Law Center

The Representation Project
Women and Hollywood
Women in Film
Women in Media

INDIVIDUALS

Adam Belanoff	Producer/Writer
Doug Boney	Production Coordinator, Vice President, IATSE, Local 871
Stacey K. Black	Director/Writer/Producer/Singer-Songwriter
Pamela Brown	Production Coordinator, Board Member, IATSE Local 871
Don Cheadle	Actor
Miranda Cristofani	Art Department Coordinator, Art Director, Board Member, IATSE Local 871
Sean Crouch	Showrunner/EP, The Exorcist on Fox, Lore on Amazon
Teri Cusumano	Background Painter, Chair, Color Stylist Committee, Animation Guild, IATSE Local 839
Marjorie David	Producer
Emily Deschanel	Actress, Director, Producer
Ed Decter	Writer, Producer
Ava DuVernay	Producer, Director, Writer
Rick Famuyiwa	Director
Preston Fischer	UPM, Producer, The Client List, Lucifer
Sandra Fleck	Script Supervisor, Secretary, IATSE Local 871
Toby Forlenza	Script Supervisor, IATSE Local 871
Carla Gardini	Executive VP, Harpo Films
Leo Geter	Producer
Dawn Gilliam	Script Supervisor, President, IATSE Local 871
Laurence Gilliard, Jr.	Actor, Writer
Alma Harel	Director, Founder, Free the Bid
Tommy Harper	Executive Producer
Dorian Harris	Chair, Women's Steering Committee, Editor's Guild, IATSE Local 700
Amy Hill	Actor
Erin Hill	Author, "Never Done: A History of Women's Work in Media Production"
R. Kyle Himienz	Production Coordinator, Board Member, IATSE Local 871
Winnie Holzman	Writer, Producer
RJ Hume	Production Coordinator, Board Member, IATSE Local 871
Paul Jackson	Producer, Director
Nina Jacobson	Principal, Color Force

Karen C. Johnson	President, Animation Guild, IATSE Local 839
Marta Kauffman	Producer
Shannon Kenny	Script Supervisor, Member, IATSE Local 871
Carol Kiefer	Art Department Coordinator, Board Member, IATSE Local 871
Jeanette Moreno King	Vice President, Animation Guild, IATSE Local 871
Lauren Lungerich	Writer, Producer, Director
Lesli Lytle	Script Supervisor, Board Member, IATSE Local 871
Matt McGorry	Actor
Jen McGowan	Founder, Film Powered
Alfred Molina	Actor
Rachel Morrison	Cinematographer
Hailie Overton	Producer, Writer, Author
Brett Paesel	Consulting Producer, Transparent
Elisa Phillips	Character Designer and Color Stylist, Committee Spokesperson, Animation Guild Women's Committee, IATSE Local 839
Rhona Rubio	Script Supervisor, Board Member, IATSE Local 871
Liz Ryan	Unit Production Manager, DGA Board of Directors
Marisa Shipley	Art Department Coordinator, Member, IATSE Local 871
Dee Schuka	Assistant Production Accountant, Board Member, IATSE Local 871
Nzingha Stewart	Director, Writer, Producer
Rick Wallace	Producer/Director
Charlene Wallis	Teleprompter Operator, Board Member, IATSE Local 871
Diane Weiss	Script Supervisor, Member, IATSE Local 871
Michael Williams	Payroll Accountant, Treasurer, IATSE Local 871
Lizz Wolf	Costume Designer