



April 10, 2018

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the more than 170,000 bipartisan members and supporters of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), I urge you to cosponsor the Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 1869), the Pay Equity for All Act (H.R. 2418), and the Fair Pay Act (H.R. 2095). Together, this package of bills would take steps toward closing the gender pay gap by providing women and workers of color the tools to battle the pervasive pay gap and challenge discrimination. It also provides employers with effective incentives and technical assistance to comply with the law.

The gender pay gap is real, and it's not going away. While the gap has narrowed since the 1963 passage of the Equal Pay Act, progress has largely stalled in the 21st century. Women still only make an average of 80 cents on the dollar as compared to white men, and it's even worse for moms and women of color.<sup>i</sup> The gender pay gap develops early in women's careers and then compounds through retirement. Controlling for factors known to affect earnings such as education and training, marital status, and hours worked, research found that college-educated women still earn 7 percent less than men just one year out of college – even when they have the same major and occupation as their male counterparts.<sup>ii</sup> Over time, the gap compounds and widens. Women 20-24 years of age take home, on average, 96 percent of what their male counterparts make on a weekly basis. By the time we compare 55-64 year olds, women take home only 74 percent of the wages of their male counterparts.<sup>iii</sup>

This is why we urge you to cosponsor the Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 1869). This important bill updates and strengthens the Equal Pay Act of 1963 to ensure that it will provide effective protection against sex-based pay discrimination in a 21st century workplace. The Paycheck Fairness Act 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 a business necessity that is related to the job. It also ensures women can receive the same robust remedies for sex-based pay discrimination that are currently available to those subjected to discrimination based on race and ethnicity. This bill prohibits employers from relying on salary history in determining future pay, so that pay discrimination doesn't follow workers from job to job. And it also provides much needed training and technical assistance as well as wage data collection and research.

We also urge you to co-sponsor two other important pay equity bills that provide additional tools to help close the pay gap. The Pay Equity for All Act (H.R. 2418) provides important solutions to address prior discrimination in wages that might be carried forward from one job to another. The bill would protect job seekers from having to disclose their salary history in order to be interviewed, to be considered for a job offer, or as a condition of employment, and from being retaliated against for refusing to disclose their prior salary. In turn, the bill encourages employers to pay employees based on job requirements and prior experience, rather than arbitrary prior wages.

Finally, the Fair Pay Act (H.R. 2095) offers an additional set of solutions aimed at curbing the financial impact of occupational segregation for women and workers of color. This legislation would ban paying workers less based on their sex or race than they do workers in equivalent jobs that are predominately filled by workers of a different sex or race. The legislation would also ban discrimination for bringing or participating in a claim, require employers to file wage information with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, prohibit discrimination for discussing or disclosing wages, and stop employers from reducing the wages of higher earners (typically men) to comply with pay equity requirements.

The pay gap is persistent but can only be addressed 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. AAUW continues to advocate for strong pay equity legislation, regulation, and enforcement to protect employees and assist employers. The provisions outlined in these three bills, the Paycheck Fairness Act, the Pay Equity for All Act, and the Fair Pay Act, together serve as comprehensive and critical components to closing gender and raced-based pay gaps.

I urge you to take a critical step towards pay equity through cosponsorship of the Paycheck Fairness Act, Pay Equity for All Act, and Fair Pay Act. Cosponsorship and votes associated with these bills may be scored in the AAUW Action Fund *Congressional Voting Record for the 115th Congress*.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at 202/785-7720 or Anne Hedgepeth, interim vice president of public policy and government relations at 202/785-7724, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Deborah J. Vagins  
Senior Vice President, Public Policy and Research

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<sup>i</sup> AAUW. (2017). Women in U.S. now have to wait till 2119 for equal pay. <http://www.aauw.org/article/pay-gap-remains-at-20-cents/>.

<sup>ii</sup> AAUW. (2012). *Graduating to a Pay Gap*. [www.aauw.org/resource/graduating-to-a-pay-gap](http://www.aauw.org/resource/graduating-to-a-pay-gap).

<sup>iii</sup> AAUW. (2018). *The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap*. [www.aauw.org/resource/the-simple-truth-about-the-gender-pay-gap](http://www.aauw.org/resource/the-simple-truth-about-the-gender-pay-gap).