



September 28, 2017

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 of the Pay Equity for All Act (H.R. 2418) and the Fair Pay Act (H.R. 2095). These bills would provide much-needed tools to battle the pervasive pay gap that affects so many women and people of color.

The gender pay gap is real, and it's not going away. It's not myth, it's math. While the gap has narrowed since the 1963 passage of the Equal Pay Act (EPA), progress has largely stalled in the 21st century. Women still only make an average of 80 cents on the white male dollar, 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 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>

The Pay Equity for All Act provides important solutions to address the pervasive pay gap that women and people of color experience. 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.

The Fair Pay Act offers an additional set of solutions aimed at curbing occupational segregation. By requiring employers to provide equal pay for work of equal value, whether or not the jobs are the same, this legislation addresses equal pay for women and men working in female-dominated jobs that are objectively rated equivalent to jobs traditionally dominated by men. The legislation would also ban retaliation, require employers to file wage information with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, eliminate the “gag rule” on wage disclosure, and prohibit 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. Both the Pay Equity for All Act and the Fair Pay Act are comprehensive and critical components to closing the gender pay

gap. I urge you to cosponsor the Pay Equity for All Act and the Fair Pay Act to take critical steps toward closing the pay gap. Cosponsorship and votes associated with this legislation may be scored in the AAUW Action Fund *Congressional Voting Record for the 115th Congress*. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 202/785-7724 or Kate Nielson, state policy manager, at 202/728-7617, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Anne Hedgepeth  
Interim Vice President of Public Policy and Government Relations

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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. (2017). *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).