

Dear Member of Congress:

This is a critical moment for protecting our progress towards advancing gender and racial justice and safeguarding against attacks that will undermine rights, opportunities, and equity for women, girls, and gender-expansive people in this country. The **Gender Equity Coalition (GEC)** holds firm to our shared vision of a future where every person, regardless of gender, race, age, immigration status, or other identities, can thrive. This moment demands that gender equity champions be ready to fight back against harmful policies that move us further from our goal of ensuring a stronger and inclusive democracy—one that uplifts families, creates equitable workplaces, vibrant communities, and thriving economies for everyone.

The **Gender Equity Coalition convenes over 115 leading national organizations**, each driving progress on issues at the forefront of gender policy. Collectively, our organizations reach millions of members, organizers, advocates, and everyday people across the United States. Here is what we, as a collective, know to be true: women and girls have faced persistent barriers to equity. These barriers are compounded for women and girls of color, Indigenous women and girls, those with disabilities, those from immigrant communities, those who are part of religious minorities, and those who are LGBTQIA+ or gender expansive. Gender discrimination perpetuates norms that create harm and impede progress—for *all people*.

Our coalition has worked for nearly a decade to coordinate strategies to advance gender policy—and with champions across the federal government and in Congress, we have made progress. We know that our efforts to advance gender justice will be acutely challenging in the years ahead if elected leaders fail to prioritize gender equity and justice and continue to allow attacks on reproductive health care, Title IX, and LGBTQIA+ rights, and policies targeting immigrant communities to persist. Already, we have seen the Trump Administration take action with new executive orders that narrowly define sex, target transgender, nonbinary, and intersex individuals, eliminate diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, and impose cruel immigration policies signed on day one. This is only the beginning of regressive laws that threaten the rights and humanity of the communities our coalition serves. Despite the challenge of this moment, **we can't back down**. Strong gender equity policies are critical now more than ever.

We come together—united and prepared. Our coalition aims to protect our communities, push for our shared vision of gender justice, and support policies that will make this country better, stronger, and fairer for people of all genders.

As we work to advance gender equity, we must advance policies that allow every person, regardless of gender or any other identity, to thrive. As a coalition, we **support** policies that dismantle barriers, reduce harm, address structural inequities, combat discrimination, and promote safety, equity, opportunity, and access for all communities. As a coalition, we also unite firmly against the policies that will hold us back.

- We reject policies that impede people's ability to access comprehensive, low cost health care and education, dignified jobs, safe communities and public spaces, equitable systems, and economically secure futures.
- We reject policies explicitly meant to marginalize and ostracize people on the basis of their identity, origin, how they worship, or who they love.
- We reject the use of hate-fueled language and political tactics meant to instill fear, divide us, target us, or alienate any community on the basis of any identity.

THE GENDER EQUITY COALITION

Now is the time for champions for gender equity to unite firmly with us. At this critical moment, we are ready to work with lawmakers—continuing to build support for policies that will advance gender justice and safeguard against policies that will compound barriers. President Biden recently declared the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) the law of the land, recognizing it as the 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The Equal Rights Amendment protects against discrimination on the basis of sex, providing crucial protections for women, girls, LGBTQIA+, and gender-expansive people. For women of color, this protection is particularly critical, as their experience with sex discrimination is magnified by the intersection of discrimination based on race and ethnicity. We call on gender equality champions to fulfill the promise of justice for all and strengthen our democracy by also affirming the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) as the 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

At this moment, we call on our advocates, champions, supporters, and Members of Congress to step up to protect our communities and work to ensure that the rights of all people are protected. This includes working to:

1. Advance Women's Economic Security by:

- Championing a budget for women, parents, and young families—one that reflects our country's values and includes strong investments in the well-being and future success of women and families.
- Fighting for a tax code that generates revenue for long-overdue investments in women, families, and communities, including through rejecting more tax cuts for the wealthiest and big corporations, expanding tax credits like the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit in ways that support families with low and moderate incomes, and ensuring that immigration status is not a barrier to tax relief.
- Working to close gender and race wage gaps, combating gender discrimination in the workplace, and ensuring that every person is able to make a livable wage from their employer and access safe, accessible, and affordable housing.
- Ensuring that every family has equitable access to a publicly funded child care and early learning system that provides infant, toddler, pre-kindergarten programs, and school-age care in a comprehensive way.
- Expanding and protecting access to and funding for aging and disability care that supports aging in place and enables disabled people and older adults to live and age with dignity and independence.
- Passing a permanent, accessible, universal, and inclusive national paid family, medical, and safe leave program.
- Safeguarding against cuts to safety net programs, including Social Security, Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and housing, and working to improve benefits that advance the health and economic security of women, people of color, and others who face systemic discrimination.

2. Advance Reproductive Health and Rights and Protecting Against Attacks to Bodily Autonomy and Against Criminalization by:

- Expanding and protecting rights and access to abortion, contraception, fertility care, and gender-affirming care.
- Defending against legislation to ban or restrict abortion or gender-affirming care.
- Stopping attacks on access to qualified sexual and reproductive health care providers and providers of transgender health care, and ensuring that everyone has affordable access to the provider of their choice.

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- Advancing and enforcing policy to protect and defend abortion providers, gender-affirming care providers, and patients.
- Addressing our maternal health crisis, including addressing social determinants of health, increasing funding for doulas and midwifery care in federal healthcare programs, and requiring states to extend comprehensive postpartum maternity care.
- Advancing comprehensive sexual health education so that every person has the right to accurate, accessible, and inclusive sexual and reproductive health education.
- Defending against the criminalization of abortion care, which disproportionately harms marginalized communities, including immigrant women and gender-expansive individuals, by creating additional barriers to accessing essential health services.

3. End Gender-Based Violence by:

- Enhancing protections and services for all survivors through robust federal funding that serves victims of domestic and sexual violence, including harassment and exploitation against children.
- Advancing methods, mechanisms, and strategies to prevent gender-based violence and all forms of interpersonal violence, including sexual violence, domestic violence, technology-facilitated gender-based violence, and child abuse.
- Prioritizing investments in trauma-informed, non-carceral community safety policies by using public health interventions and moving away from the use of policing and prisons, including immigration detention—which separate families and disproportionately impacts women with disabilities, mental health conditions, and survivors of gender-based violence and trafficking.

We will work urgently to advance these priority policy areas for the Gender Equity Coalition, while also working alongside cross-movement partners to protect equity and advance justice for everyone. This includes:

- **Defending immigrant and refugee rights and communities** by supporting a path to citizenship as part of permanent relief; prioritizing immigrants' safety, healing, and human rights; welcoming and assisting refugees in resettling and attaining stability; and rejecting policies that seek to promote mass round-ups and mass incarceration of immigrant communities. Immigrant women and gender-expansive individuals bear the weight of these draconian policies, which destabilize families, reduce access to critical health and social services, and perpetuate cycles of poverty and marginalization.
- **Ensuring educational and gender equity for all students.**
- **Promoting and protecting the freedom to vote** by ensuring every eligible voice can be heard at the ballot box; protecting and expanding our freedom to vote; advancing a transparent voting process; and supporting increased voter education.
- **Addressing the pandemic of mental, emotional, and behavioral health needs** through increased funding for racial- and gender-specific research and support on mental health.

We are ready to engage, inform, educate, and hold the line for the progress we have made. We ask members of Congress to act with urgency and accountability and to do everything within their power to advance these priorities and protect our futures. We recognize the challenges of realizing these priorities, given the political dynamics and divisiveness in Congress. While many of our priorities may not become law in the immediate term, the 119th Congress **must** make progress in advancing them and continue to underscore their importance to lay the groundwork for a future in which people of all genders and their families have the full opportunity to thrive in our country.

THE GENDER EQUITY COALITION

Sincerely,

The Gender Equity Coalition

The Undersigned Members of the Gender Equity Coalition:

9to5

All Above All*

Alliance for Girls

American Association of People with Disabilities

American Association of University Women (AAUW)

Better Life Lab at New America

Black Women's Health Imperative

Care in Action

Center for Policing Equity

Doctors for America

End Rape On Campus

Equal Rights Advocates

ERA Coalition

Family Values @ Work

Gender Liberation Movement

Girls for Gender Equity

Guttmacher Institute

If/When/How

In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda

Institute for Women's Policy Research

It's On Us

Jewish Women International

Just Solutions

Justice and Joy National Collaborative

Justice for Migrant Women

Legal Momentum, The Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund

me too. International

MomsRising

Mujeres Latinas en Acción

National Abortion Federation

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum

National Council of Jewish Women

National Domestic Workers Alliance

National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association

National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice

National Organization for Women

National Partnership for Women & Families

National Women's Law Center

National Women's Political Caucus

One Fair Wage

Paid Leave for All

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Physicians for Reproductive Health
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Poderistas
Power to Decide
Sexual Violence Prevention Association (SVPA)
South Asian SOAR
Supermajority
Transgender Law Center
True North Research/Court Accountability
UltraViolet
Women's Foundation California
Women's March