

June 19, 2025

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies.
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20514

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs Aderhold and Capito and Ranking Members DeLauro and Baldwin:

We, the undersigned organizations and individual tradeswomen and other trades workers from across the country, write to express our strong opposition to the proposed elimination of the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau and urge you to protect and fully fund this vital agency and the grant programs it administers.

The Trump Administration's Fiscal Year 2026 budget proposes to eliminate the Women's Bureau, deeming it "an ineffective policy office that is a relic of the past" and seeking to repeal foundational statutes that support women's access to higher-paid, nontraditional jobs. This deeply misguided proposal ignores both the Bureau's century-long legacy and the urgent, ongoing needs of women in the workforce.

Established by Congress in 1920, the Women's Bureau was founded with a clear mission: "*to formulate standards and policies which shall promote the welfare of wage-earning women, improve their working conditions, increase their efficiency, and advance their opportunities for profitable employment.*" For more than 100 years, the Bureau has fulfilled this charge through research, policy leadership, and grantmaking that directly benefit women workers and their families.

Despite progress, women—especially women of color—continue to face persistent barriers in the workplace, including discrimination, harassment, and significant pay inequities. On average, women earn just 75 cents for every dollar earned by men, with Black, Latina, Native, and Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander women experiencing even larger wage gaps. Women are also overwhelmingly concentrated in low-wage jobs, which further undermines their economic stability and that of their families.

The work of the Women's Bureau and the grants it administers—many of which are congressionally mandated—are critical to addressing these disparities. For over a century, The

Women's Bureau has conducted extensive research and analysis and documented issues impacting working women to inform policy and program reforms that better support women in the U.S. labor force. Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations (WANTO) grants have provided important support to workforce development programs that recruit and retain women in higher-paying, nontraditional jobs—such as those in construction and the skilled trades—where women remain severely underrepresented. These are careers that provide family-sustaining wages, benefits, and long-term financial stability. Yet, despite making up nearly half of our nation's workforce, women represent less than 4% of skilled trades workers. Having access to these jobs provides a pathway to economic security for women and families throughout the country. Fostering Access, Rights, and Equity (FARE) grants have funded essential efforts to combat harassment and create safer, more equitable work environments for women across industries, which ensures job retention necessary for economic stability.

As 50 percent of our population and nearly 50 percent of our wage, the future growth and strength of our country depends on women thriving in our economy. As a key lever focused on this sector, the Women's Bureau continues to play a critical part in building American excellence. Weakening or eliminating the Bureau it would not only dismantle a critical federal agency focused on the needs of working women—it would also send a clear message that women's economic security is not a national priority. At a time when women's rights and economic opportunities are under attack across the country, now is the time to strengthen, not abandon, our commitment to supporting women in the workforce.

We urge you to reject the proposed elimination of the Women's Bureau, safeguard the statutory authority that underpins its work, and ensure full and sustained funding for the Bureau, the WANTO grant program, and all efforts to promote economic opportunity and workplace equity for women.

If you have any questions, please contact Jessica Stender (jstender@equalrights.org).

Sincerely,

Organizations:

Alianza Nacional de Campesinas
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
American Civil Liberties Union
Black Women for Wellness Action Project
Center for Advancement of Public Policy
Central Florida Labor Council Chapter, Latin American Advancement
Chicago Jobs Council
Chicago Women in Trades
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto
Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence
End Child Poverty California powered by GRACE
Equality California

ERA Coalition
Family Values @ Work
Feminist Majority Foundation
Hope Renovations
Institute for Women's Policy Research
Jobs with Justice
Justice for Migrant Women
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition
La Raza Centro Legal
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA)
Los Angeles Chapter, Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
Legal Momentum, the Women's Legal Defense & Education Fund
Maryland Center for Construction Education & Innovation
Missouri Women In Trades
MomsRising
Montana Chapter of the National Organization for Women
Ms. Foundation for Women
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Employment Law Project
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Law Center Action Fund
NCBCP Black Women's Roundtable
Oregon Tradeswomen
Parent Voices, California
PowHer New York
Public Justice Center
Reproductive Freedom for All
Rhode Island Women in the Trades
Shriver Center on Poverty Law
South Florida Chapter, Labor Coalition for Latin American Advancement
The National Taskforce on Tradeswomen's Issues
Voices for Progress
Vermont Works for Women
Washington State Construction Center of Excellence
West Virginia Women Work
Women Employed
Women In Non Traditional Employment Roles (WINTER)
Women's Law Project
Women's Rights and Empowerment Network
WorkLife Law
Worksafe

Tradeswomen:

Delia Mary Alfich, Insulator
Connie Ashbrook, Elevator Constructor

Kristine Azzoli, Restoration Mason/Welder
Cristina Barillas-McEntee, Plumber
Alicia Berzinis, Glazier
Anita Bruno, Carpenter
Noreen Buckley, Electrician
Ashley Daigle, Operating Engineer
Janelle DeJan, Electrician
Lisa Dickenson, Electrician
Gina Gismondi, Electrician & Elevator Mechanic Apprentice
Megan Hiltz, Pipefitter
Alicia Johnson, Electrician
Cheyenne Karlson, Painter
Latisa Kindred, Electrician
Ashleigh Langford, Carpenter
Margaret Legue, Carpenter
Molly Martin, Electrician
Kimberly Mosley, Electrical Technology-Engineering
Tina J. Richard, Electrician
Deborah Rivera, Plumber
Jessenia Rivera, Operating Engineer
Dr. Lynn Shaw, Electrician
Rachel Shoemake, Electrician
Shea Smith, Sheet Metal Worker
Meg Vasey, Electrician
Felicia Wiseman, Electrician