



March 19, 2026

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and our members and supporters nationwide, we write to urge you to take proactive, comprehensive action to advance pay equity. As we recognize **Equal Pay Day on March 26**, Congress has an important opportunity not only to recognize the persistent gender pay gap, but also to take meaningful steps to help close it.

AAUW has long been a champion for pay equity. In addition to advocating for strong policy solutions, we also empower women directly through free salary negotiation and financial literacy trainings that help build economic security. However, individual actions to address pay inequity can only go so far. Only strong policy decisions can close the gap and create equitable workplaces for women that appropriately value their contributions to the economy and society.

The latest Census data shows that women working full-time, year-round earn **81 cents for every dollar paid to men**. But women's working lives do not fit neatly into one box. Many women work part-time or seasonally, often because caregiving responsibilities, unpredictable schedules, or limited transportation make full-time work harder to sustain. When we look at all working women, the reality is even more stark: women earn just **76 cents to the dollar**. AAUW also provides pay gap data by congressional district through *The Not So Simple Truth*, available at: **[act.aauw.org/thesimpletruth](http://act.aauw.org/thesimpletruth)**.

This is not about one paycheck or one individual choice. The pay gap is a sign of broader pay inequity and must be addressed through a comprehensive approach. **AAUW urges Congress to advance the following priorities:**

- **Strengthen and fully enforce the Equal Pay Act.** Modernizing the law through measures such as the Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 17) would close loopholes, strengthen remedies, and ensure workers can effectively challenge pay discrimination.
- **Protect and expand pay data collection and transparency.** Robust employer pay data reporting — including by gender, race, and ethnicity — is essential to identifying systemic inequities and enforcing civil rights laws. Congress should use its oversight authority to help ensure the EEOC maintains the strong pay data collection needed for enforcement, transparency, and accountability. Congress should also advance transparency policies, such as the Salary Transparency Act (H.R. 2007), to curb pay secrecy and help workers identify inequities sooner.
- **Require equal pay for jobs of equivalent value.** Moving beyond a narrow “equal work” standard to one that recognizes comparable skill, effort, and responsibility is necessary to address occupational segregation and the chronic undervaluation of work performed



primarily by women.

- **Raise the wage floor and eliminate subminimum wages.** Increasing the federal minimum wage and ending subminimum wage systems — especially the tipped minimum wage and disability subminimum wage — would lift wages for millions of women, particularly women of color and workers with disabilities.
- **Strengthen anti-harassment and anti-discrimination protections.** Congress should advance strong, enforceable protections against workplace harassment and discrimination, including legislation such as the BE HEARD in the Workplace Act (H.R. 7583), because safe and equitable workplaces are essential to achieving pay equity.

These steps are mutually reinforcing and reflect what the evidence shows: the gender pay gap is driven by a combination of discrimination, occupational segregation, caregiving penalties, and workplace practices that suppress wages and limit advancement.

The gender pay gap is not just a matter of fairness — it is a matter of economic security for women and their families, and a measure of whether our economy works for everyone. Congress has the tools to make meaningful progress, but action is urgently needed.

We ask that you raise awareness of the pay gap within your congressional district on **March 26, Equal Pay Day**, and continue working on legislation that strengthens pay equity nationwide. Co-sponsorship or votes on these bills may be scored in the AAUW Action Fund's *Congressional Voting Record* for the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-728-3300 or [kissellm@aauw.org](mailto:kissellm@aauw.org) with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Meghan Kissell".

Meghan Kissell, MSW  
Senior Director, Policy & Member Advocacy