Support the Pay Equity for All Act

September 23, 2016

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 Pay Equity for All Act (H.R. 6030). This bill would provide a much-needed tool to battle the pervasive pay gap that affects so many women and people of color; it would prohibit employers from relying on the salary history of prospective employees when making hiring and pay decisions.

The gender pay gap is real, and it’s not going away. While the gap has narrowed since 1963’s 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 male dollar, and it’s even worse for moms and women of color. The gender pay gap develops early in women’s careers and then compounds. 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 seven percent less than men just one year out of college – even when they have the same major and occupation as their male counterparts. Over time, the gap widens. Women who are 20-24 years of age bring home, on average, 92 percent of what their male counterparts make on a weekly basis. By the time we compare 55-64 year olds, women take home only 76 percent of the wages of their male counterparts.

Many factors contribute to this dogged pay gap, but there are also many creative solutions to tackle it. The Pay Equity for All Act provides one of those solutions. We have already seen broad bipartisan support for a similar measure in Massachusetts, which enacted a bill in August 2016 containing a provision banning the use of salary history. The bill passed both chambers unanimously and received endorsements from several business groups such as the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce. Like that bill, the Pay Equity for All Act 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.

Eliminating the reliance on salary history in setting future wages would go a long way toward closing the pay gap. Since we know pay discrimination starts early in women’s careers, relying on prior salary as a marker for future pay only compounds the problem, hurting women and people of color. By banning the use of this practice, all workers will have the opportunity to take home a fairer paycheck based on the work they’re doing today rather than jobs they’ve held in the past.

To become a cosponsor of the Pay Equity for All Act in the 114th Congress, please contact Meagan Hatcher-Mays in Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton’s office at 225-8050. Cosponsorship and votes associated with this legislation may be scored in the AAUW Action Fund Congressional Voting Record for the 114th Congress. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 202/785-7720 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Maatz
Vice President for Government Relations