OPEN LETTER TO ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY
A Call for #ReelEquity: Combat Gender Pay Bias in Hollywood

With pay equity and sexual harassment dominating the news, from the momentum of the #MeToo movement and the launch of TimesUp, to winning major concessions on closing the pay gap in state legislatures and corporate boardrooms, the time has come to take a hard look at how our industry compensates the many thousands of people who work below the line and insist on meaningful changes.

Background
In 2016, the California Fair Pay Act took effect, changing state law to prohibit employers from paying women less than they pay men for “substantially similar work.” Nonetheless, a recent study commissioned by IATSE Local 871, a union representing over 2,500 production employees found that significant gender-based wage disparities continue to exist among workers in below-the-line occupations. The study identifies gender stereotyping, job segregation, and sexual harassment as factors contributing to gender pay inequality for below-the-line employees.

Additionally, an astonishing 52% of women surveyed said they had witnessed or experienced sexual harassment at work in the last three years alone. Significantly, even though this data was compiled before the explosion of revelations about sexual harassment in the industry that began in late 2017, it shines a light on the deep connection between the gender pay gap and other forms of workplace injustice facing women in Hollywood and beyond.

It is time for real change. It is no longer acceptable for employees in traditionally female dominated classifications - like Art Department Coordinators and Assistant Production Coordinators - to be stuck with low wages that oftentimes make it difficult to make ends meet, especially in expensive cities like Los Angeles. Nor is it acceptable that – despite the recent changes in state law aimed at closing the wage gap - women (and men) employed in other historically female crafts earn significantly less than their predominantly male counterparts, such as 2nd Second Assistant Directors, while performing substantially similar work.

Finally, it is neither fair nor acceptable that the industry continues using discriminatory wage structures that consistently undervalue the work done by hard-working women (and men) employed in historically female classifications, such as Script Supervisors, ignoring the crucial role that they play in production, especially in light of technological changes that continue to make these jobs more complex. Moreover, by reducing women’s economic security and power, the persistent gender pay gap in our industry makes it harder for women to challenge the harassing and abusive behavior that the #MeToo movement and the launch of Times Up have brought to public light.
Action Now
It’s time for the Entertainment Industry to take a hard look at its pay and compensation practices above and below the line to make sure all productions meet the legal -- and moral -- requirement to pay fairly without discrimination.

We urge the Entertainment Industry to address the pay inequality facing women today in historically female-dominated positions in production by:

1. Committing to conduct a comprehensive study of gender disparities in wages that would also examine other measures of diversity, inclusion and equity in the industry with the goal of implementing changes to address the inequities and gaps identified,

2. Applying an Equity Yardstick to make sure the wages on individual productions are fair to women and to other underrepresented groups across crafts and departments, based on parity between substantially similar positions and proportionality within/across departments,

3. Calling on talent and directors to request Equity Riders, similar to Inclusion Riders, that commit productions to pay equity both above and below the line.

The time is now! We must work together to end gender pay bias and sexual harassment in the Entertainment Industry.

Initial Signers:

ORGANIZATIONS

ACLU
ACLU Southern California
American Association of University Women
ARRAY Alliance
Equal Pay Today!
Equal Rights Advocates
Free the Bid
IATSE Local 871
National Partnership for Women and Families
National Women’s Law Center
The Representation Project
Women and Hollywood
Women in Film
Women in Media

INDIVIDUALS

Adam Belanoff  Producer/Writer
Doug Boney  Production Coordinator, Vice President, IATSE, Local 871
Stacey K. Black  Director/Writer/Producer/Singer-Songwriter
Pamela Brown  Production Coordinator, Board Member, IATSE Local 871
Don Cheadle  Actor
Miranda Cristofani  Art Department Coordinator, Art Director, Board Member, IATSE Local 871
Sean Crouch  Showrunner/EP, The Exorcist on Fox, Lore on Amazon
Teri Cusumano  Background Painter, Chair, Color Stylist Committee, Animation Guild, IATSE Local 839
Marjorie David  Producer
Emily Deschanel  Actress, Director, Producer
Ed Decter  Writer, Producer
Ava DuVernay  Producer, Director, Writer
Rick Famuyiwa  Director
Preston Fischer  UPM, Producer, The Client List, Lucifer
Sandra Fleck  Script Supervisor, Secretary, IATSE Local 871
Toby Forlenza  Script Supervisor, IATSE Local 871
Carla Gardini  Executive VP, Harpo Films
Leo Geter  Producer
Dawn Gilliam  Script Supervisor, President, IATSE Local 871
Laurence Gilliard, Jr.  Actor, Writer
Alma Harel  Director, Founder, Free the Bid
Tommy Harper  Executive Producer
Dorian Harris  Chair, Women’s Steering Committee, Editor’s Guild, IATSE Local 700
Amy Hill  Actor
Erin Hill  Author, “Never Done: A History of Women’s Work in Media Production”
R. Kyle Himienz  Production Coordinator, Board Member, IATSE Local 871
Winnie Holzman  Writer, Producer
RJ Hume  Production Coordinator, Board Member, IATSE Local 871
Paul Jackson  Producer, Director
Nina Jacobson  Principal, Color Force
Karen C. Johnson  President, Animation Guild, IATSE Local 839
Marta Kauffman  Producer
Shannon Kenny  Script Supervisor, Member, IATSE Local 871
Carol Kiefer  Art Department Coordinator, Board Member, IATSE Local 871
Jeanette Moreno King  Vice President, Animation Guild, IATSE Local 871
Lauren Lungerich  Writer, Producer, Director
Lesli Lytle  Script Supervisor, Board Member, IATSE Local 871
Matt McGorry  Actor
Jen McGowan  Founder, Film Powered
Alfred Molina  Actor
Rachel Morrison  Cinematographer
Hailie Overton  Producer, Writer, Author
Brett Paesel  Consulting Producer, Transparent
Elisa Phillips  Character Designer and Color Stylist, Committee Spokesperson, Animation Guild Women’s Committee, IATSE Local 839
Rhona Rubio  Script Supervisor, Board Member, IATSE Local 871
Liz Ryan  Unit Production Manager, DGA Board of Directors
Marisa Shipley  Art Department Coordinator, Member, IATSE Local 871
Dee Schuka  Assistant Production Accountant, Board Member, IATSE Local 871
Nzingha Stewart  Director, Writer, Producer
Rick Wallace  Producer/Director
Charlene Wallis  Teleprompter Operator, Board Member, IATSE Local 871
Diane Weiss  Script Supervisor, Member, IATSE Local 871
Michael Williams  Payroll Accountant, Treasurer, IATSE Local 871
Lizz Wolf  Costume Designer