

CLUW NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE COALITION
OF LABOR UNION WOMEN

Spring 2006

CLUW LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT—AND EXTEND— FAMILY LEAVE

Big business tried to keep the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) from becoming law in 1993. Now the business lobby is trying to dismantle one of this era's most family-friendly reforms.

More than 50 million workers have taken advantage of the FMLA by taking unpaid leave to care for themselves or their loved ones—with the guarantee that their job would be waiting for them when they return. CLUW is alerting all of its members that business groups are pushing hard to restrict the ability of workers to take time off and even to end the job guarantee. In the face of this campaign to weaken the law, we instead advocate expanding the FMLA to allow leave to more people for more reasons—and to mandate paid leave.

Although it took an act of Congress to create the FMLA, *its provisions could be undone without any action on Capitol Hill.* The Department of Labor has the authority to make revisions, following a public comment period. Since the Department has placed changes to the FMLA on its list of regulatory priorities, action could come at any time.

But CLUW believes the FMLA must not only be protected, it should be extended. CLUW's National Executive Board launched an FMLA campaign at its Reno meeting on March 25 with 5,000 postcards (printed courtesy of IAM) urging members of Congress and President Bush to "fight against any attempts to dismantle" the FMLA. The message then points out that millions more working families could benefit from the Act in the future if it called for *paid* leave. NEB members distributed the postcards to CLUW members and unionists in their local communities.

FMLA needs to be expanded because so many workers are left behind. Two in five employees are not covered at all under the Act, whose mandate is restricted to companies with 50 or more employees and workers employed at the company for at least a year.

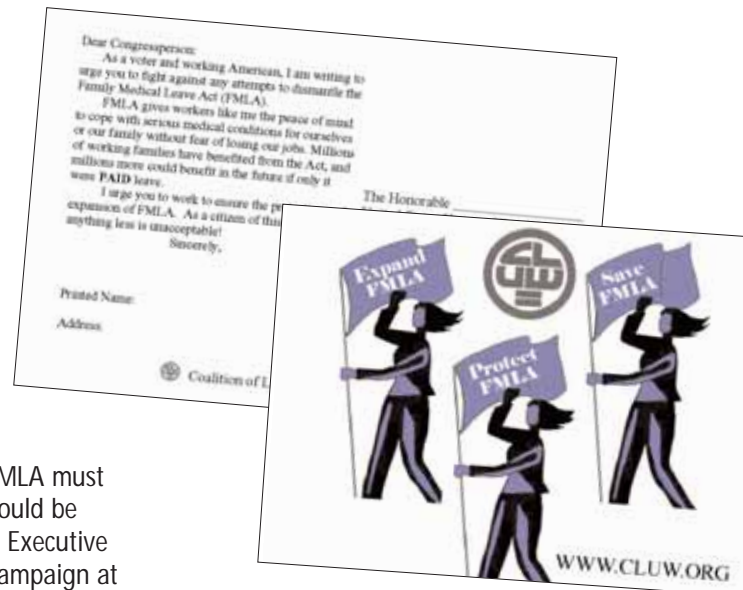
FMLA supporters propose extending the law to allow workers to take leave

for additional family needs—such as parent-teacher conferences, taking an elderly parent to the doctor or staying home with a child who has the flu. As Americans live longer, they are spending more years as caretakers of their children, their aging parents or both—increasing the need for time off to tend to their medical requirements.

In addition, too many workers don't take advantage of the FMLA because they can't afford to take unpaid leave. CLUW supports paying for family leave.

Congressional supporters of the Family and Medical Leave Act have sent letters to the Department of Labor stating their opposition to significant changes in the Act. Your union can do the same.

For more on FMLA, see www.cluw.org.



Sign up to be a CLUW e-Activist:

www.cluw.org



SAVE THE DATES!

Upcoming 2006 National Executive Board Meetings:

June 15-17: Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington, DC
Sept. 21-23: Sheraton Music City Hotel, Nashville, TN

The **Committee on Work and Family Issues** and the **Task Force on Women Against Violence** have merged. You are invited to join this new committee at a **planning session on June 17 at 11:30 am** in conjunction with the NEB meeting in Washington. At this session the group will create a name for the new joint committee and write a mission statement.

CLUW NEWS

Published quarterly by the
Coalition of Labor Union Women
815 16th St. NW, 2nd floor south
Washington, DC 20006
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Volume 33, No. 1, Spring 2006
ISSN No. 0199-8919

Annual rates: \$1.50 of membership
dues for *CLUW News*. Dues are \$50
for working members, \$15 for retirees.

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Periodical postage paid
at Washington, DC
USPS #335-670

Postmaster send change of address
to: CLUW News
815 16th St. NW, 2nd Floor South
Washington, DC 20006

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Quality universal health care— the right prescription for America!



Marsha Zakowski, CLUW National President

In the past four years the number of uninsured Americans rose by 6 million people. Over 45 million Americans have no health insurance, including 11 million children. Another 40 million Americans are under-insured. Nearly half of all Americans forced to file for bankruptcy do so because of medical bills. Three-quarters of them had health insurance. Some 18,000 people die each year because they are without health insurance.

Women have lower rates of early detection screening tests for breast cancer and other medical conditions because they cannot afford the costs of the tests. They are risking their lives by delaying care.

Almost 100 years have passed since the first discussion of national health insurance in America. The time is long overdue to change our inefficient, inequitable, and costly fragmented health care system.

Universal health insurance systems work well for the major industrial nations in the world. Why is the U.S. the only industrialized nation that does not provide its citizens with national health care? The Bush Administration says, "A government-run health care system is the wrong prescription [for America]." Yet, Article 30, Paragraph 1 of the new Iraqi constitution—that the U.S. helped write—states: "The state guarantees social and health insurance, the basics for a free and honorable life for the individual and the family..."

In our "Healthcare Coverage for All" resolution adopted at the 13th Biennial Convention, CLUW pledged to increase our efforts to advocate for universal health care coverage; support any of our unions when they are in disputes with their employers over the costs of health care; and raise awareness of the health care crisis and advocate real solutions to the health care problems in our nation.

If we keep the status quo on health care, how many more thousands of Americans will join the numbers of the uninsured? There are national and state "grass-roots movements" calling for health care reform. Some of our CLUW chapters are participating in local and state initiatives to bring public awareness to the need for quality universal health care and supporting legislative efforts that will provide health care for all citizens.

All CLUW members and union activists are urged to take action for quality universal health care—it is the right prescription for America!

Name _____
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Let us know your change of address. Send this coupon to the National CLUW office.

Moving?



EXECUTIVE BOARD CHARTS CLUW's PATH FOR COMING YEAR

National Executive Board delegates and guests converged on Reno, Nevada on March 23-25 for CLUW's first National Executive Board meeting in 2006. They participated in a Leadership Development Conference and set the course for CLUW through NEB business.

The March 24 Leadership Development Conference was designed to engage NEB leaders to think about how to build CLUW and to evaluate what leadership skills we bring—or need to bring—in order to demonstrate CLUW's unique role in the labor movement.

In the morning Ida Torres (pictured), president of Local 3 RWDSU/UFCW, and Dorothy Fortier (IBEW) and Tammie Botelho (USW)—co-chairs of CLUW's Women in Union



Leadership Committee—introduced conference participants to a survey helping to better define “What Is a Leader?” and more specifically what makes a CLUW leader. CLUW is in the process of compiling the responses to evaluate a plan of action.

Afternoon offerings included the opportunity to attend interactive workshops on building membership, energizing chapters and working with the media.

At Saturday's plenary session, President Marsha Zakowski stressed the importance of solidarity and activism to counter the assault on workers' rights. “With all the challenges before us—an adversary Administration that wants to weaken unions, civil rights, the FMLA—we as union women ... will face them head-on,

as we always have, with commitment, determination, persistence and perseverance,” she told the delegates. “Let's go out and let union women and working women and men know that there's a CLUW ... the only national organization for union women.”

The delegates took into consideration Zakowski's remarks, launching a campaign to protect and strengthen the FMLA (see *postcard initiative on page 1*) based on a resolution adopted at CLUW's 13th Biennial Convention in September.

The NEB also addressed CLUW's future by endorsing numerous resolutions that put CLUW out front in areas of importance to working women. Among the NEB-approved resolutions is one supporting the efforts of Puerto Rican registered nurses to be employed as licensed registered nurses in the US mainland—a move that would help fill the need for bicultural nurses. Another resolution supports the efforts of exotic dancers to be organized, noting they are subject to unsafe working conditions including non-payment of wages, economic coercion and sexual assault.

Other endorsed resolutions include:

- Encouraging CLUW chapters to support the right of women to breastfeed or express breast milk in a clean and private place near their work area;
- Educating the community on the critical need to restore workers' freedom to form unions;
- Appointing a representative in each chapter to serve as liaison with the NEB's Young Women Workers Committee;
- Working to preserve affirmative action and eliminate the exploitation and degradation of the rights of women, workers and minorities;

■ Continuing to advocate for women's health, including reproductive health services and preventive health care;

■ Working to remove the waiting period between receipt of the first Social Security disability check and entitlement to Medicare;

■ Encouraging participation in activities sponsored by their unions and the AFL-CIO on International Human Rights Day

■ Supporting the Work and Family Bill of Rights.

See the CLUW website for the complete text of all approved resolutions.

2005-2009 State Vice Presidents and Alternates

The following CLUW State Vice Presidents and Alternates were elected last year in their respective states or appointed by the National Officers Council.

CA:	SVP - Dorothy Fortier (IBEW)
CT:	State Coordinator - Helene Shay (AFSCME)
DC:	SVP - Bonnie Oakes (OPEIU)
	ASVP - Susan Holleran (AFSCME)
IL:	SVP - Delores R. Wasmund (AFSCME)
IN:	SVP - Karen Treat (UAW)
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MD:	SVP - Wanda Shelton-Martin (OPEIU)
MI:	SVP - Tanya Fitzpatrick (UAW)
	ASVP - Barbara J. Young (UAW)
MN:	SVP - Lonna-Jean Schmidt (MNA)
MO:	SVP - Stephanie Lloyd-Agnew (IAM)
	ASVP - Sandra Henderson (IAM)
NY:	SVP - Dolores Young (APWU)
OH:	SVP - JoAnn Johntony (AFSCME)
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PA:	SVP - Barbara Barnes (UA)
	ASVP - Janet Ryder (AFT)
TX:	SVP - Tawn MacDonald (CWA)
	ASVP - Ellen Wakefield (CWA)
VA:	SVP - Marjorie Brotherton (APWU)
WA:	SVP - Verlene Jones (OPEIU)
	ASVP - Dee Wakenight (ATU)

LOCAL NEWS

CLUW MEMBERS MARK BLACK HISTORY MONTH

During February, Black History Month, CLUW helped bring national attention to the heritage, culture and contributions of African Americans with informational displays and public presentations.

In Pittsburgh, CLUW members were involved in the United Steelworkers Headquarters exhibit showcasing eight great American women: Dr. Maya Angelou, Shirley Chisholm, Dr. Dorothy Height, Alexis Herman, Barbara Jordan, Rosa Parks, Cicely Tyson and Gloria T. Johnson, CLUW president from 1993 until 2004. CLUW members at United Steelworkers' Nashville headquarters commemorated Black History Month by posting biographical sketches about "Black Women in Our History."



"The activities in Pittsburgh and Nashville brought USW and CLUW members together as they honored the significant contributions of black women and union members throughout history," said CLUW President Marsha Zakowski (USW).

Pictured at the Pittsburgh exhibit are (from l.) William Eakin, Mary Moore, Kim Miller, Maxine Carter, Marsha Zakowski, Janet Hill and Dan Bosh.

New York

"AIDS is still a problem that cries out for a solution," said New York City Chapter CLUW members Carolyn Parker (CWA) and Arlene Tuff (AFSCME) as they staffed an information table on World AIDS Day. For the past 18 years the Women's Committee of AFSCME DC37 has used December 1 to promote AIDS education, providing literature in many languages, red ribbons and brightly colored condoms in the lobby of union headquarters.

Worldwide, the pandemic has cost 28 million lives and United Nations officials estimate there will be 45 million new infections by 2010.

Under the leadership of President Karen E. Mickel, CLUW's Greater Georgia Chapter has been lobbying the state legislature on behalf of HB 230, the Time for Schools Act, which would prohibit employers from penalizing parents who take time off for school functions (up to eight hours annually). The chapter's Legislative Team is pictured here attending Legislative Lobbying 101, taught by the AFL-CIO's Debra Scott and Charlie Flemming, president of the Atlanta - North Georgia Labor Council. Seated (from left) are Beatrice Andrews, Kris Adkins, Phil Adkins, Larry Courtoy, Jane Donohue and David Sokolow, director of the Atlanta Electrical Contractors Assn.



Metro-Detroit OPEIU/CLUW members wore red on February 3 in observance of the American Heart Association's "Go Red for Women Campaign." Metro-Detroit CLUW President Millie Hall, who serves on the Executive Leadership Committee for Heart Disease, noted that heart disease is the number one killer of women, claiming the lives of half a million women each year.



Pennsylvania

It was at CLUW's 2005 Convention in Detroit that Barbara Barnes (UA) learned about the Sister Study. The research project, which follows sisters of women who have had breast cancer, is a national study to learn how environment and genes affect the chances of getting breast cancer.

Barbara's sister Susan succumbed to breast cancer in 1994 at age 39, so the retired union sprinkler pipefitter signed on immediately. She is now helping the organization recruit additional study participants. Any woman between the ages of 35 and 74 whose sister has or had breast cancer is eligible, provided she herself has never been diagnosed with the disease.

For more information, see the Sister Study website at www.sisterstudy.org or call toll-free 877-474-7837.

PA AFL-CIO Convention

The Pennsylvania AFL-CIO Convention passed two CLUW-sponsored resolutions in April, reports CLUW State Vice President Barbara Barnes, vice president to the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO Executive Board.

Pittsburgh CLUW Secretary Janet Hill (USW) spoke in favor of the resolution endorsing HR 676, a bill that would implement a single payer health care system in the U.S. by expanding the Medicare system to every resident. The resolution was submitted by the Pittsburgh CLUW Chapter which, along with Philadelphia CLUW, had earlier endorsed HR 676.

Barnes spoke for the resolution titled FMLA: Present Threats and Future Goals, and passed out CLUW postcards about the FMLA. (See pg. 1 about CLUW's FMLA campaign.)

CLUW is saddened to announce that long-time IBEW Local 1245 Executive Board member and CLUW National Executive Board member, activist **Kathy Tindall**, died on April 18. The family has advised that anyone wishing to make a memorial donation may direct it to one of the foundations fighting breast cancer.





Middle Tennessee

Middle Tennessee is home to the nation's newest CLUW chapter, thanks to the efforts of Flo Sak (above, holding charter), chapter president. On hand for the charter-signing ceremony at the USW Nashville headquarters was CLUW National President Marsha Zakowski. Tennessee AFL-CIO President Jerry Lee welcomed the group into the state labor federation and promised the support of Tennessee's labor community. In turn, Sak and Zakowski assured members that the newest CLUW chapter would be full participants in activities and events in Tennessee, especially those promoting affirmative action in the workplace and strengthening the role of women in unions.

Orange County, CA

In March, Orange County, CA CLUW supported the fourth annual "Women Who Make a Difference in Orange County" awards ceremony. The evening featured a performance of the original play "Speaking Up," a look at the contributions of women throughout American history. The event was part of the Orange County Community Forum's Women's History Month celebration.



Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm and Metro-Detroit CLUW President Millie Hall at a Martin Luther King Jr. Day observance and rally. CLUW was one of the endorsers of the event.



Tammie Botelho (USW), in her third term on CLUW's National Executive Board and co-chair of its Women In Leadership Committee, was elected to serve on the board of the Connecticut AFL-CIO for the 2005-2007 term. She is pictured flanked by state federation President John Olsen and Secretary-Treasurer Lori Pelletier. "The labor movement desperately needs members with Tammie's dedication and abilities to step forward and help us lead in the critical days and years ahead," Olsen said at her installation.



Chicago CLUW President Katie Jordan (UNITE HERE) received the Working Women's History Project's 2006 Mother Jones Award for her lifelong fight for working women's rights. Jordan, who as a tailor and Amalgamated Clothing Workers shop steward in 1977 fought and won a battle for equal pay for the women fitters, was honored at a gala at Roosevelt University on March 22.

CLUW Membership Application

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Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

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E-mail _____

Intl Union _____

Local Union _____

Enclosed are my CLUW dues: \$ _____

Type of membership: _____

I am a member of a bona fide collective bargaining organization.

Signature _____

please copy or clip and return!

CLUW DUES

- Regular Membership: \$50
- Associate Membership: \$50
- New Member: \$35 for the first year
- Retired/Student/Unemployed: \$15
- Contributing Member: \$75
- Supporting Member: \$100
- Sustaining Member: \$150
- Lifetime Member: \$1,000 (one-time fee).

THANK YOU!

CLUW wishes to thank the following Lifetime (\$1,000), Sustaining (\$150), Supporting (\$100) and Contributing (\$75) members. To become a special member of CLUW, please make your check payable to CLUW and mail to National Treasurer Judy Beard at the CLUW office. Your contribution will help empower women through the labor movement.

LIFETIME MEMBERS

Dina Beaumont	CWA
Jerol D. Lackey	UAW

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Robert Roach, Jr.	IAM
Melissa Nelson	TNG/CWA
Peggy Olstein	TWU

CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS

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Mary Kay Henry	SEIU
Charlotte Sund	IAM
Joan E. Schrader	IBT
William Danny Givens	IAM
Eleanor G. Bailey	APWU
Charlie LaChance	UFCW
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Florence Tripi	AFSCME
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Brigid O'Farrell	UAW
Larry Willis	BCTGM
John Howard	BCTGM
Debbie Goldman	CWA
Judy Bonior	ASSOCIATE
Jay A. Bormann	IAM
James Rodehorst	IAM
Rob Minnich	IAM
Joseph Greaser	IAM
Amy Gallo	IAM
David Eastburn	IAM
Earl Evans	IAM
Christine Thompson	AFSCME
Lynn Tucker, Jr.	IAM



Rallying for immigrant rights

Shown at the April 10 National Day of Action on Immigrant Rights event in Washington, DC are CLUW members and friends (from left) Danielle Shillam (of APWU), Naazima Ali of the Labor Heritage Foundation, Connie Cordovilla (AFT), Elise Bryant (CWA), Carol Rosenblatt (CLUW Executive Director) and Judy Beard (APWU-CLUW National Treasurer). CLUW members across the country participated in rallies that day to urge Congress to pursue comprehensive immigration reform legislation that provides a clear path to permanent residency for those hard-working immigrant families already here, respects human and worker rights and rejects harsh measures that criminalize individuals who come to this country to work.

EQUAL PAY DAY (continued from p. 8)

On Equal Pay Day and beyond, CLUW chapters also have a legislative goal: the passage in Congress of the Fair Pay Act and the Paycheck Fairness Act. The first bill would prohibit wage discrimination for work in “equivalent jobs” while requiring some employers to disclose their general job classifications and overall pay statistics. The other proposal would strengthen the Equal Pay Act of 1963 by allowing tougher penalties and making it easier to file class action lawsuits in sex discrimination cases. Contact your lawmakers to get their support for the Fair Pay Act (S840/HR1697) and the Paycheck Fairness Act (S841/HR1687)—both introduced last year on Equal Pay Day.



CLUW President Marsha Zakowski received the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO Union Woman of the Year award on April 6 at the Work and Family Breakfast held during the state labor federation's convention. Presenting the award are PA AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Bloomington (r.), the officer liaison with the Work and Family Committee, and President William George, who announced that CLUW will have representation at all levels of the AFL-CIO within the state and that he and President Zakowski will work together to build CLUW chapters within the regions of the Area Labor Federations.

IN MEMORIAM

CLUW PAYS TRIBUTE TO DEDICATED FIGHTERS IN THE BATTLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Over the past half-year, America has lost three women who were among this era's greatest activists on behalf of social justice. The actions of Rosa Parks sparked the modern civil rights movement. Coretta Scott King helped build that movement, then kept it on track following the assassination of her husband, Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Betty Friedan wrote one of feminism's most influential books, then helped found such important advocacy groups as the National Organization for Women and the National Women's Political Caucus.

Rosa Parks died last October, nearly 50 years after she was arrested for defying laws that mandated racial segregation. Her refusal to yield her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama bus led to a year-long bus boycott—which she helped organize along with Martin Luther King and E.D. Nixon, a leader from the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Maids. In fact, in her six decades as a community leader and activist, trade unionists had prominent roles in many of the struggles in which she played such a courageous part.

Coretta Scott King—who passed away in January—was the matriarch of the civil rights movement. While her husband was alive, she worked closely with him, organizing marches and sit-ins while raising their four children. After his assassination in 1968, she founded the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change to help make his dream a reality. She also rallied the nation to establish a national holiday in honor of her husband. Workers' rights and women's equality were always high on her agenda. Just four days after Dr. King's murder, she led a march of 50,000 people through Memphis in support of a strike of sanitation workers. She often spoke out in favor of full employment and was a strong advocate of economic justice for women.

More than four decades before she died in February, **Betty Friedan** launched the women's liberation movement by writing *The Feminine Mystique*, making the case that “American women are kept from growing to their full human capacities,” thus taking a toll on their physical and mental health. Three years later, she worked to found “an NAACP for women,” establishing the National Organization for Women and becoming its first president. In what she called the movement's “second stage,” she encouraged women to work with men to support strong families through such reforms as flexible work schedules and parental leave and developed the concept of “equal pay for work of comparable value.”

TEST PREDICTS PRE-TERM LABOR

Working during pregnancy can be healthy and rewarding. But it can also be a source of anxiety, especially if a woman is at risk for preterm birth. Usually pregnancy lasts an average of 40 weeks. Babies born before 37 weeks are considered "preterm."

A woman can find out if she is at risk of giving birth prematurely through the Fetal Fibronectin Test. The test can be a valuable asset in planning for one's health needs and level of activity during a pregnancy.

Fetal fibronectin is a protein substance that binds fetal membranes to the uterus. The protein can be found in the vagina when a woman's body gets ready to give birth. A sterile swab is used to collect a sample of the secretions which is sent to a lab. A negative (normal) test result means the woman can be assured she is not at risk for giving birth within the next two weeks. This can be a great relief to a woman who wants to be active but fears she may have to stay in bed or restrict her activities unnecessarily.

According to Adeza, the company that provides the test, women who test negative at the 24th week of pregnancy have 99.8% assurance that they will not deliver in the next four weeks. On the other hand, women who tested positive were nearly 60 times more likely to deliver within four weeks. These women were urged to follow closely the instructions of their doctor or nurse-midwife to help the pregnancy continue.

The Fetal Fibronectin Test is FDA-approved for use in women from 22 to 35 weeks of pregnancy. The test can be repeated every one or two weeks if risk factors are present. Check with your health insurer to see if it covers this test.

—Helen Ramirez-Odell, RN

CLUW applauds Michigan's effort on contraceptive equity

When Sen. Martha Scott introduced two bills in the Michigan State Senate in February that would require health insurance plans to include coverage for prescribed contraceptive drugs and devices, CLUW responded with enthusiastic support.

In a letter endorsing Michigan Senate Bills 431 and 432, National CLUW President Marsha Zakowski told Sen. Scott that "CLUW has been on record in support of Contraceptive Equity since 1997. As a result of CLUW's work on this issue, the National AFL-CIO endorsed contraceptive equity in 2001 and subsequently amended its insurance plan to include it."

President Zakowski added that CLUW works with states such as Michigan that do not have state mandates supporting contraceptive equity to adopt them.

Using women's health issues to mobilize workers

Tamika Felder addressed the 3rd Annual NJ WILD (Women in Leadership Development) Conference, whose co-sponsors include the NJ AFL-CIO and CLUW. Tamika, a member of AFSCME in Washington, DC, where she is an award-winning television producer, was diagnosed with cervical cancer in May 2001 at the age of 25. After beating this deadly disease, Tamika has used her experience to help educate other women about ways to prevent it.

In January 2005, the CLUW member created Tamika and Friends (www.tamikaandfriends.org), a nonprofit organization designed to raise awareness about cervical cancer and its link to the human papillomavirus. She travels the country on her mission of HPV and cervical cancer awareness, which she shared with these women union leaders. CLUW's Cervical Cancer

Prevention Works Director Carolyn Jacobson also spoke at that session, titled "Mobilizing Around Women's Health Issues."



One member taking action benefits 6,800

Robin Llewellyn, a member of the Masters, Mates and Pilots

Union, was unaware of CLUW when she discovered her health plan did not cover prescription contraception drugs. Tired of paying \$200 a year out of pocket for birth control, Robin pursued a legal strategy. About 10 days before she was to appear before the MM&P health plan board of trustees, she contacted CLUW—which was able, through its personal union contacts, to have a union colleague speak to the union president. He must have been convinced, because three days before the meeting, Robin was informed that her union added contraception to its prescription drug coverage. (For more about CLUW's Contraceptive Equity Project, see our website at www.cluw.org/contraceptive.html.)



2006 SUMMER SCHOOLS FOR UNION WOMEN: see www.cluw.org

■ EQUAL PAY DAY

ACTIVISTS VOW TO END UNDERVALUING OF WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

America's union women are in the forefront of the fight to close the gender gap in wages. So, as this edition of *CLUW News* went to press, CLUW chapters were preparing for a day of activism on Equal Pay Day, Tuesday, April 25.

Why that date? Well, to get the same pay that men earned on average last year, women had to work nearly four additional months—to April 25. In other words, in 2005 women workers were paid only 77 cents for every dollar a man received.

This year, Equal Pay Day marks the kick-off of a new initiative dedicated to closing the wage gap. CLUW has always worked in close collaboration with the National Committee on Pay Equity—and now NCPE is combining with Business and Professional

Women/USA and other national organizations to launch the WAGE Project (the acronym stands for Women Are Getting Even). Across the country, WAGE Clubs are being formed to mobilize women to raise the issue and turn indignation into action.

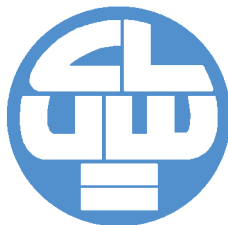
These clubs provide CLUW members with an excellent opportunity to work together with allies in their local communities to address pay inequity. According to economist and WAGE Project President Evelyn Murphy, the wage gap costs the average American full-time woman worker between \$700,000 and \$2 million over the course of her lifetime.

The wage gap persists partly because so many women have jobs that have historically been undervalued as “women’s work.” Simple dis-

crimination is another major cause, abetted by “wage secrecy” that allows women to be underpaid without knowing it. While differences in education, experience or time in the workforce contribute to the gender gap, research published by the Council of Economic Advisors estimated that as much as one third of the gap cannot be explained by such factors.

Another way to raise women’s pay is to recruit them into unions. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports dramatic differences in the compensation of women with full-time, salaried positions depending on whether they are union members. In 2005, union women earned 31 percent more than their non-union counterparts. For Latinas, the contrast was even sharper.

(continued on page 6)



**Coalition of
Labor Union Women**

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