

**Coalition of Labor Union Women
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WOMEN NEED PAYCHECK FAIRNESS WITH NO PAY GAP

Almost fifty years after Congress passed the Equal Pay Act and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, women and minorities continue to suffer the consequences of inequitable pay differentials. According to the U.S. Census Bureau Statistics, year-round, full-time working women earned only 77% of the earnings of year round full-time working men, indicating little change in progress on pay equity.

While the wage gap is 80 cents for Caucasian women, it is even larger for many women of color, with African-American women making only 62 cents, and Hispanic women only 53 cents, for every dollar earned by white, non-Hispanic men.

In 2011 women and men still tend to work in different kinds of jobs; this segregation of occupations is a major factor behind the pay gap. Among the 108 occupations for which the Bureau of Labor Statistics collects data that allows for valid comparison, women's earnings are higher than men's in only three - counselors, combined food preparation and serving workers (including fast food), and stock clerks and order fillers.

Just one year out of college, working women generally earn less than their male colleagues in the same field and with the same degree. Over a working lifetime, this wage disparity costs the average American woman and her family \$700,000 to \$2 million in lost wages, and also impacts social security benefits and pensions.

In the current recession, a female-headed household, which makes up 85% of single parent families, have been particularly hard hit with an unemployment rate of 11.3 percent. Minority women are also often in precarious wage circumstances in the present economy, since they are more likely to be in jobs that pay less than men and more likely to experience slower wage growth.

Many employers do not disclose pay rates for job categories and forbid workers to discuss their pay information with co-workers and others under penalty of dismissal, making inequities very difficult to discover. This helps to continue the inequities as well as create workplace fear and intimidation.

The 2011 Supreme Court ruling in the *Wal-Mart vs. Duke* gender discrimination case blocked the biggest potential class-action lawsuit in history, prohibiting 1.5 million women from filing suit together in gender discrimination charges against Wal-Mart. The devastating ruling highlights the importance of the Paycheck Fairness Act, which was reintroduced this year by Senator Barbara Mikulski and Representative Rosa DeLauro.

Congress took an important step in passing the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009. This vital law reverses the Supreme Court's decision in *Ledbetter vs. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co*, and helps to ensure that individuals subject to unlawful compensation discrimination are able to effectively assert their rights under the federal anti-discrimination laws. But the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, critical as it is, is just one of the many tools needed to address unfair wage disparities.

The Paycheck Fairness Act updates and strengthens the Equal Pay Act of 1963 to ensure that it will provide effective protections against sex-based pay discrimination. Toward that end, the comprehensive bill bars retaliation against workers who voluntarily discuss their wages. It allows women to receive the same remedies for sex based pay discrimination that are currently available to those subject to discrimination based on race and ethnicity.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

The Coalition of Labor Union Women will vigorously support the prompt passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act (S.797/H.R. 1519) which will:

- Allow employees to disclose salary information to co-workers despite workplace rules;
- Allow class action lawsuits to be filed and provide for compensatory and punitive damages;
- Call for a study of data collected by the EEOC and propose voluntary guidelines to show employers how to evaluate jobs.

The Coalition of Labor Union Women will urge its members and chapters to educate their union brothers and sisters on the importance of the Paycheck Fairness Act and make its passage a top priority in their legislative agenda.

CLUW will urge members of Congress to co-sponsor the Paycheck Fairness Act and encourage their support.

CLUW will continue to work with the National Committee on Pay Equity and the Paycheck Fairness Act Coalition to end wage discrimination.

CLUW will continue to be a vigilant voice within the labor movement by bringing to the attention of our union co-workers and national/international unions the continued existence of the gender pay gap and the need for its elimination NOW.