



## Support the Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 377)

January 28, 2013

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 150,000 bipartisan members and supporters of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), I urge you **to support and cosponsor the Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 377)**. The Act has a strong history of support, having twice passed the U.S. House of Representatives with bipartisan majorities in prior Congresses and falling just two votes shy of a Senate cloture vote in the 111th Congress. Additionally, the Act was voted on by both the House and Senate during the 112th Congress. **The same bill has been introduced this year.** The measure provides a much needed, first-ever update to the Equal Pay Act of 1963, bringing the law's principles and practices in line with the nation's other civil rights laws.

The Paycheck Fairness Act takes meaningful steps to create incentives for employers to follow the law, empower women to negotiate for equal pay, and strengthen federal outreach and enforcement efforts. The bill would also deter discrimination by strengthening penalties for equal pay violations and by prohibiting retaliation against workers who inquire about employers' wage practices or disclose their own wages.

The recovery of the American middle class begins and ends with good-paying jobs, but that cannot happen if women continue to earn less than they deserve. AAUW's 2012 report, *Graduating to a Pay Gap*, controlled for factors known to affect earnings such as education and training, parenthood, and hours worked, and found that college-educated women still earn 7 percent less than men just one year out of college – **even when they have the same major and occupation as their male counterparts.**<sup>1</sup>

Without the Paycheck Fairness Act, women will continue to be silenced in the workplace—prohibited from talking about wages with coworkers without the fear of being fired. This forced silence keeps women—like it kept Lilly Ledbetter—from discovering pay discrimination against them. The fear of being fired is strong enough to keep employees from even broaching the subject, especially in this economy.

There is no higher priority for the American public than rebuilding the economy and creating jobs, and working towards pay equity is a critical step in that direction. In fact, **84 percent of voters support “a new law that would provide women more tools to get fair pay in the workplace.”**<sup>2</sup> Women represent half of the paid workforce, and two-thirds of women are either the primary or co-bread winner for their families.<sup>3</sup> In other words, pay equity is not just a moral issue; it is an economic imperative with enormous implications not just for women but for working families, communities and the nation's recovery. In this economic climate, Congress cannot ignore such a critical issue.

Cosponsorship and votes associated with this legislation may be scored in the AAUW Action Fund *Congressional Voting Record* for the 113th Congress. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 202/785-7720, or Erin Prangle, associate director of government relations, at 202/785-7730, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Maatz  
Director, Public Policy and Government Relations

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<sup>1</sup> AAUW. (2012). *Graduating to a Pay Gap*. Retrieved January 25, 2013, from [www.aauw.org/GraduatetoaPayGap/upload/AAUWGraduatingtoPayGapReport.pdf](http://www.aauw.org/GraduatetoaPayGap/upload/AAUWGraduatingtoPayGapReport.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Paycheck Fairness Act Coalition. (June 9, 2010). *New Polling Data Shows Voters Overwhelmingly Support the Paycheck Fairness Act*. Retrieved May 31, 2012, from [www.nationalpartnership.org/site/DocServer/5-2010\\_Poll\\_Data\\_One\\_Pager\\_LL\\_2\\_.pdf?docID=6681](http://www.nationalpartnership.org/site/DocServer/5-2010_Poll_Data_One_Pager_LL_2_.pdf?docID=6681)

<sup>3</sup> Center for American Progress and Maria Shriver. (October 16, 2009). *A Woman's Nation Changes Everything: Executive Summary*. Retrieved May 31, 2012, from [www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/10/womans\\_nation.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/10/womans_nation.html)



## Support the Paycheck Fairness Act (S. 84)

January 28, 2013

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the 150,000 bipartisan members and supporters of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), I urge you **to support and cosponsor the Paycheck Fairness Act (S.84)**. The Act has a strong history of support, having twice passed the U.S. House of Representatives with bipartisan majorities in prior Congresses and falling just two votes shy of a Senate cloture vote in the 111th Congress. Additionally, the Act was voted on by both the House and Senate during the 112th Congress. **The same bill has been introduced this year.** The measure provides a much needed, first-ever update to the Equal Pay Act of 1963, bringing the law's principles and practices in line with the nation's other civil rights laws.

The Paycheck Fairness Act takes meaningful steps to create incentives for employers to follow the law, empower women to negotiate for equal pay, and strengthen federal outreach and enforcement efforts. The bill would also deter discrimination by strengthening penalties for equal pay violations and by prohibiting retaliation against workers who inquire about employers' wage practices or disclose their own wages.

The recovery of the American middle class begins and ends with good-paying jobs, but that cannot happen if women continue to earn less than they deserve. AAUW's 2012 report, *Graduating to a Pay Gap*, controlled for factors known to affect earnings such as education and training, parenthood, and hours worked, and found that college-educated women still earn 7 percent less than men just one year out of college – **even when they have the same major and occupation as their male counterparts.**<sup>1</sup>

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There is no higher priority for the American public than rebuilding the economy and creating jobs, and working towards pay equity is a critical step in that direction. In fact, **84 percent of voters support “a new law that would provide women more tools to get fair pay in the workplace.”**<sup>2</sup> Women represent half of the paid workforce, and two-thirds of women are either the primary or co-bread winner for their families.<sup>3</sup> In other words, pay equity is not just a moral issue; it is an economic imperative with enormous implications not just for women but for working families, communities and the nation's recovery. In this economic climate, Congress cannot ignore such a critical issue.

Cosponsorship and votes associated with this legislation may be scored in the AAUW Action Fund *Congressional Voting Record* for the 113th Congress. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 202/785-7720, or Erin Prangley, associate director of government relations, at 202/785-7730, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Maatz  
Director, Public Policy and Government Relations

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<sup>2</sup> Paycheck Fairness Act Coalition. (June 9, 2010). *New Polling Data Shows Voters Overwhelmingly Support the Paycheck Fairness Act*. Retrieved May 31, 2012, from [www.nationalpartnership.org/site/DocServer/5-2010\\_Poll\\_Data\\_One\\_Pager\\_LL\\_2\\_.pdf?docID=6681](http://www.nationalpartnership.org/site/DocServer/5-2010_Poll_Data_One_Pager_LL_2_.pdf?docID=6681)

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