

Pay Equity and Intimate Partner Violence

Throughout its history, NCJW has worked for laws, policies, programs, and services that protect every woman from all forms of abuse, exploitation, harassment, and violence. Economic security is critical to women's safety and autonomy. Fair pay is particularly important to women facing intimate partner violence (IPV), who need all the resources to which they are entitled to keep themselves and their children safe.

- **The wage gap persists.** In 2011, the Census Bureau reported that women working full time earned on average 23 percent less than their male counterparts. Thus, for every dollar earned by a man, a woman working just as hard earned only 77 cents. This paycheck discrimination means that women earn **\$11,000 less per year**, on average, than men for doing the same work.¹ The wage gap is worse for women of color: African American women earned 70 cents (African American men make 74 cents) and Hispanic women earned 60 cents (Hispanic men make almost 66 cents) to every dollar earned by Caucasian men.
- **Current laws do not go far enough.** The Equal Pay Act of 1963 and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 are supposed to ensure that employers do not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, religion, and other traits, but work remains in order to make sure that all people are paid fairly for their labor. In the fifty years since passage of the Equal Pay Act, the wage gap has closed only 18 cents; furthermore, some employees, such as domestic workers, are excluded from the protection of most labor laws.²
- **Survivors of IPV experience severe financial strain.** One of the most common reasons women stay in abusive relationships is lack of financial resources or housing to leave their partners.³ In addition, IPV survivors lose nearly 8 million days of paid work each year,⁴ and between 25 and 50 percent of all survivors report that they have lost a job, at least in part, due to IPV.⁵ Women need to earn fair pay for the time

¹ National Women's Law Center. (2013). www.mywagegap.org.

² National Women's Law Center. (2013). "The Wage Gap Over Time." www.nwlc.org.

³ Shobe, Marcia A. and Jacqueline Dienemann. (2008). "Intimate Partner Violence in the United States: An Ecological Approach to Prevention and Treatment." *Social Policy and Society* 7.2: 185-195.

⁴ National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. (2003). "Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States." Atlanta (GA): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

⁵ Zink, T. and Sill, M. (2004). Intimate Partner Violence and Job Instability. *Journal of the American Women's Medical Association*. 59(1):32-5.

they do work to make up for a portion of these lost wages. Approximately one-third of women who are the single head of household—as women fleeing IPV often are—live in poverty, an unacceptable situation made possible, in part, by the wage gap.⁶

- **Support NCJW and the Paycheck Fairness Act.** Throughout its history, NCJW has been a staunch advocate for laws, policies, and employment practices that promote equal pay for work of comparable worth. NCJW is working to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act, which strengthens the Equal Pay Act by taking meaningful steps to create incentives for employers to follow the law and strengthens federal outreach and enforcement efforts. You can take action on the Paycheck Fairness Act by contacting your senators and representative through the Capitol Switchboard (202-224-3121).

⁶ National Center for Law and Economic Justice. (2012). "Poverty in the United States: A snapshot."
<http://www.nclj.org/poverty-in-the-us.php>