

Talking Points

Equal Pay

NCJW Message

NCJW has long supported equal pay, from working to pass the 1963 Equal Pay Act, to advocating for the 2009 Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, to supporting current legislation. The Paycheck Fairness Act (S 270/HR 7), introduced by Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) and Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) in January 2019, would deter wage discrimination by updating and strengthening the Equal Pay Act. **Lawmakers should pass the Paycheck Fairness Act to close the gender wage gap.**

Talking Points

- **The wage gap affects all women, especially women of color.** On average, women earn only 80 cents for every dollar earned by white, non-Hispanic men. It's worse for women of color — African American women are paid 61 cents, Native American women are paid 58 cents, and Latinas are paid 53 cents. Women of color are more likely than white women to hold low-paying, hourly jobs, lead single-parent households, and experience substantial caregiving burdens, making pay inequality particularly devastating. If the gender wage gap was eliminated, women and families would be able to afford an additional 18 months of food, 14 months of child care, 10 months of rent, or 7 months of mortgage payments.
- **Laws have been passed to promote equal pay, but further action is needed to close the wage gap.** In 1963, President Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act into law, requiring men and women to be paid equally for equal work. The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act became law in 2009, and made it easier for employees to seek legal action to remedy unequal pay. But more must be done, including protecting employees who discuss compensation, prohibiting prospective employees from using past salary to determine future salary, and collecting pay data at the federal level by gender, race, and ethnicity to better identify pay discrimination.
- **Eliminating the wage gap is good for women, families, and the economy.** Research by the National Partnership for Women and Families reveals that women forego more than \$10,000 per year due to the wage gap. This adds up to more than \$400,000 over the course of a lifetime — an amount which more than doubles for women of color. Women are the primary earners in nearly 15 million families, yet mothers earn only 71 cents for every dollar paid to men. Closing the wage gap would ensure families have greater financial security as well as boost our nation's economy, making up for more than \$900 billion lost annually in spending on goods and services.