

National Organization for Women



Terry O'Neill
President

Bonnie Grabenhofer
Executive Vice President

Erin Matson
Action Vice President

Allendra Letsome
Membership Vice President

September 21, 2010

Honorable Member
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator:

Passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act (S. 182/H.R.12) will be the most important step that the U.S. Senate can take to help working families. On average, the pay gap costs women about \$11,000 each year in lower income, more than \$400,000 over a lifetime. Every month women lose nearly a full week's pay due to sex-based wage discrimination. Loss of that income may mean the difference between paying the mortgage or losing the family home. It often means that families do not have enough income saved to weather economic downturns, pay for children's college educations or sufficient funds to invest for a secure retirement.

Women are now half the paid workforce; two-thirds are the primary or partner bread winners for their families, bringing in a third of family income. Fair pay is the best means to strengthen the middle class and help lower-income earners move up.

The Paycheck Fairness Act is a well-studied, balanced approach to reaching the goal of equal pay. It updates the Equal Pay Act of 1963 by creating stronger incentives for employers to follow the law, helps women to effectively negotiate for equal pay, and improves federal outreach and enforcement efforts. The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act only clarified the period during which a wage discrimination claim could be made; it did not take the necessary next steps to strengthen the Equal Pay Act -- as you must do now.

The National Organization for Women, representing hundreds of chapters and a half million members and contributing supporters, urges you to take leadership in bringing about a speedy passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act. A recent poll found that 84 percent of registered voters crossing racial, gender, political and regional lines support efforts to strengthen equal pay laws. What better message to take to the electorate this season than to say the Senate is taking action to help all working women be paid what they deserve!

NOW activists in all 50 states and the District of Columbia will be watching closely the Senate debate and, hopefully, the successful adoption of the Paycheck Fairness Act.

Sincerely, .

Terry O'Neill, President

1100 H Street, NW • Suite 300 • Washington, DC 20005 • www.now.org
phone: 202.628.8669 • fax: 202.785.8576 • now@now.org