



March 25, 2015

## Support Mikulski Amendment #362 on Paycheck Fairness

Dear Senator:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of over 200 national organizations to promote and protect the rights of all persons in the United States, we urge you to support Mikulski amendment #362 to the Budget Resolution. The Mikulski amendment, which is based on the Paycheck Fairness Act, would help ensure that women workers - particularly women of color, who experience the largest pay gap - are not shortchanged.

The Paycheck Fairness Act would update and strengthen the Equal Pay Act of 1963 (EPA), which made it illegal for employers to pay unequal wages to men and women who perform substantially the same work. It would allow for punitive damages, limit the “any other factor other than sex” to “business necessities,” improve data collection, and prevent retaliation against employees for sharing information.

While the EPA has helped to narrow the wage gap between men and women in our workforce, from 59 cents to 77 cents for every dollar men earn, these significant disparities needs to be addressed. This is especially critical for women of color. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, women who work full-time still earn, on average, only 77 cents for every dollar men earn. African-American women were paid only 64 cents, and Latinas only 54 cents, for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.<sup>1</sup>

The Leadership Conference recognizes that women’s wages are a critical component of working families’ struggle to make ends meet. The wage gap is particularly harmful for women who support families without a second earner. African American and Hispanic women are more likely than white, non-Hispanic women to be heads of households, thus leaving many of these women to support families on their own. For all women and their families, but especially for women of color, every dollar counts toward making ends meet.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2013 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Table PINC-05: Work Experience in 2012 – People 15 Years Old and Over by Total Money Earnings in 2012, Age, Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex, available at [http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032013/perinc/pinc05\\_000.htm](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032013/perinc/pinc05_000.htm) (last visited April 7, 2014).



We urge you to support economic security for working families by voting in favor the Mikulski budget amendment based on the Paycheck Fairness Act. Please contact June Zeitlin, Senior Counsel, at (202) 263-2852 or [zeitlin@civilrights.org](mailto:zeitlin@civilrights.org) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Wade Henderson  
President & CEO



Nancy Zirkin  
Executive Vice President