



April 14, 2021

**Support the Paycheck Fairness Act, H.R. 7
Vote No on Harmful Amendments**

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AAJC

Interim President & CEO

Wade Henderson

Dear Representative:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 220 organizations to promote and protect the rights of all persons in the United States, **we urge you to vote for the Paycheck Fairness Act, H.R. 7, without amendments that limit its scope or undermine its critical protections.** The Paycheck Fairness Act is a priority of The Leadership Conference, and we will include your vote on final passage in our Voting Record for the 117th Congress.

Gender-based pay discrimination compromises the economic security of millions of women in the United States — and for women of color, the harm is exacerbated by their experience of both race- and gender-based wage disparities. Women working full-time, year-round in the United States are typically paid about 82 cents for every dollar paid to men, adding up to a loss of more than \$400,000 over a lifetime.ⁱ Black women are typically paid only 63 cents for every dollar paid to non-Hispanic white men, while Native American women are paid only 60 cents, Latinas are paid just 55 cents, and women in certain Asian American and Pacific Islander communities are paid as little as 52 cents.ⁱⁱ Research shows that the gender pay gap occurs across almost all occupations and industries,ⁱⁱⁱ develops very early in women's careers,^{iv} and grows over time.^v

Action to close the wage gap is long overdue, but in light of the current economic crisis, it is even more critical that Congress act now to strengthen protections against pay discrimination, both as a matter of economic security and fundamental fairness. The loss of income and savings from the wage gap has exacerbated the harmful effects of the COVID-19 pandemic for women of color and their families. Black and Brown women have been overrepresented in “frontline” jobs during the pandemic — many in low-paid jobs at high risk of exposure to COVID-19 and without benefits like paid leave and employer-sponsored health insurance — but they are paid less than non-Hispanic white men in the same jobs. Already struggling to make ends meet, women of color in low-pay jobs must also endure pay discrimination that artificially reduces their overall earnings, making it even less likely for women of color to amass the financial resources to withstand a health emergency and putting entire families at risk of economic insecurity. Almost 75 percent of Black mothers and more than 45 percent of Latina mothers were breadwinners in their families in 2018.^{vi} At the same time, Black and Brown women have faced staggering job losses during the pandemic. The unemployment rate for Black women reached 17.4

percent in May 2020, for example, and Latinas experienced the highest unemployment rate of any group during the pandemic, at more than 20 percent in April of last year. The unemployment rate for Black women and Latinas remains exceptionally high.^{vii}

The Paycheck Fairness Act would update and strengthen the Equal Pay Act of 1963 to provide more effective protection against sex-based pay discrimination. The Paycheck Fairness Act would:

- Prohibit retaliation against workers who discuss or disclose wages;
- Prevent employers from relying on salary history to determine future pay so that pay discrimination does not extend from job to job;
- Close loopholes in the Equal Pay Act that have allowed employers to pay women less than men for the same work without any business necessity related to the job;
- Ensure that women can obtain the same remedies for sex-based pay discrimination as those available to people subjected to discrimination based on race and ethnicity;
- Provide for much-needed training and technical assistance and require wage data collection.

Women and their families can no longer be shortchanged. **Given the importance of this bill, we urge representatives to pass H.R. 7 without amendments that limit the bill's scope or undermine its protections.** Please contact Gaylynn Burroughs, senior policy counsel, at burroughs@civilrights.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Wade Henderson
Interim President and CEO



LaShawn Warren
Executive Vice President for Government Affairs