



Dear Representative,

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice proudly endorses and urges a yes vote on the **Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 7)**. We enthusiastically support the Paycheck Fairness Act because it eliminates loopholes in existing legislation, helps break harmful patterns of pay discrimination, and strengthens workplace protections for women.

We know that just and equal pay is necessary to recognize the dignity of work. Almost six decades after the landmark Equal Pay Act was signed into law, the gender and racial pay gap persists and this legislation takes a necessary and immediate step towards ending this immoral reality. Founded by women religious in the 1970s, NETWORK Lobby carries their legacy today by advocating for policies that ensure all people have what they need to live dignified lives. We are proud to have over 100,000 supporters across the country who share our passion for justice. Our community calls on Congress to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act because we know the victories it achieves for working women across the country.

Women, especially women of color, have been carrying a devastating burden for decades. Equal pay cannot be up for debate. Women have been economically exploited and treated as second-class citizens since the inception of this country. Widespread wage discrimination continues that legacy today. The Paycheck Fairness Act takes a necessary step towards ending systemic wage theft and discriminatory practices against women.

The core of HR 7 is equal pay for equal work. Gender and racial wage gaps are actively hurting families across this country every day. On average, women who work full-time and year-round are paid only 82 cents for every dollar paid to men, resulting in a gap of \$10,157 each year. This discrimination is devastatingly worse for women of color. Latinas are typically paid 55 cents, Native American women 60 cents, Black women 63 cents, and Asian American and Pacific Islander women are paid as little as 52 cents for every dollar a white man earns.

Women are essential to the workforce and their family's ability to make ends meet. In just over half of U.S. households with children, mothers are the primary or sole breadwinners. As a group, the wage gap costs women who are employed full time in the United States more than \$956 billion every year. This is inexcusable and inexplicable to working families across the country who struggle each month to make ends meet.

The Paycheck Fairness Act takes concrete steps to fix this harsh reality of women in the workforce. For employees, the Paycheck Fairness Act would protect against retaliation for discussing salaries with colleagues and require employers to prove that pay disparities exist for legitimate, job-related reasons. It would prohibit



employers from screening job applicants based on their salary history or requiring salary history during the hiring process. Among other solutions, it provides plaintiffs who file sex-based wage discrimination claims under the Equal Pay Act with the same remedies available to plaintiffs who file race or ethnicity based wage discrimination claims under the Civil Rights Act.

For employers, the Paycheck Fairness Act would recognize excellence in pay practices and provide assistance to businesses of all sizes that need help with their equal pay practices.

Additionally, the Paycheck Fairness Act would help ensure the Department of Labor (DOL) uses a full range of investigatory tools to uncover wage discrimination. It directs the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to conduct a survey of available wage information to assist federal agencies in enforcing wage discrimination laws and creating a system to collect wage data. Finally, it instructs the DOL to conduct studies and review available research and data to provide information on how to identify, correct and eliminate illegal wage disparities.

The choice could not be clearer. Now is the time to support women. We strongly urge you to support the Paycheck Fairness Act.

Sincerely,

Gina Kelley
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice