



January 6, 2009

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the more than 14,000 members of Business and Professional Women/USA in all 50 states and 4 U.S. territories, we strongly urge you to **support the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act and the Paycheck Fairness Act, and to oppose any motion to recommit that may be offered.** These two pieces of legislation provide a crucial one-two punch in the fight for equal pay for women.

Wage discrimination is still a very real problem in the United States. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, women who work full time, earn, on average, only 78 cents for every dollar men earn.<sup>1</sup> The figures are even worse for women of color. This persistent wage gap not only impacts the economic security of women and their families today; it also directly affects women's retirement security down the road.

Women tend to be hurt first and worst during economic downturns and would benefit from an immediate economic stimulus. Any effort to stimulate the economy must include pay equity for women.

Pay equity is good for business and good for women's economic security. Paying women equal pay for equal work creates a positive work environment, which can help increase productivity and reduce absenteeism.

BPW/USA opposes a small business exemption to the Paycheck Fairness Act. The Equal Pay Act currently applies to businesses of any size, as would the provisions of the Paycheck Fairness Act. Women should not completely forfeit protections against pay discrimination simply because they work for a small employer. Wages are the fundamental reason why people work. Why should women who happen to work for small businesses suffer wage discrimination without opportunities to seek justice? Furthermore, it should be easier for small businesses to ensure that pay inequities don't exist by virtue of their small size and the lack of bureaucracy that might exist in larger companies.

Passing both bills, in tandem, is critical to the overall goal of achieving pay equity for all: the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act rights the wrongs done by the Supreme Court in *Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.*, regaining ground we have lost and ensuring people who have been discriminated against can seek vindication in a timely matter. The Paycheck Fairness Act is a comprehensive bill that would create stronger incentives for employers to follow the law as well as increase penalties for violations; strengthen federal outreach, education and enforcement efforts; and prohibit retaliation against workers who ask about employers' wage practices.

American women are looking for concrete action to improve the economic security of working families. **We urge you to support the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act and the Paycheck Fairness Act** as important steps towards closing the persistent and sizable wage gap that remains between men and women.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diane Polangin', written over a horizontal line.

The Honorable Diane Polangin  
President  
Business and Professional Women/USA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deborah L. Frett', written over a horizontal line.

Deborah L. Frett  
CEO  
Business and Professional Women/USA

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. (August 2008). *Annual Demographic Survey*. Retrieved August 27, 2008, from [http://pubdb3.census.gov/macro/032008/perinc/new05\\_000.htm](http://pubdb3.census.gov/macro/032008/perinc/new05_000.htm).