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# 2024 Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act Anniversary

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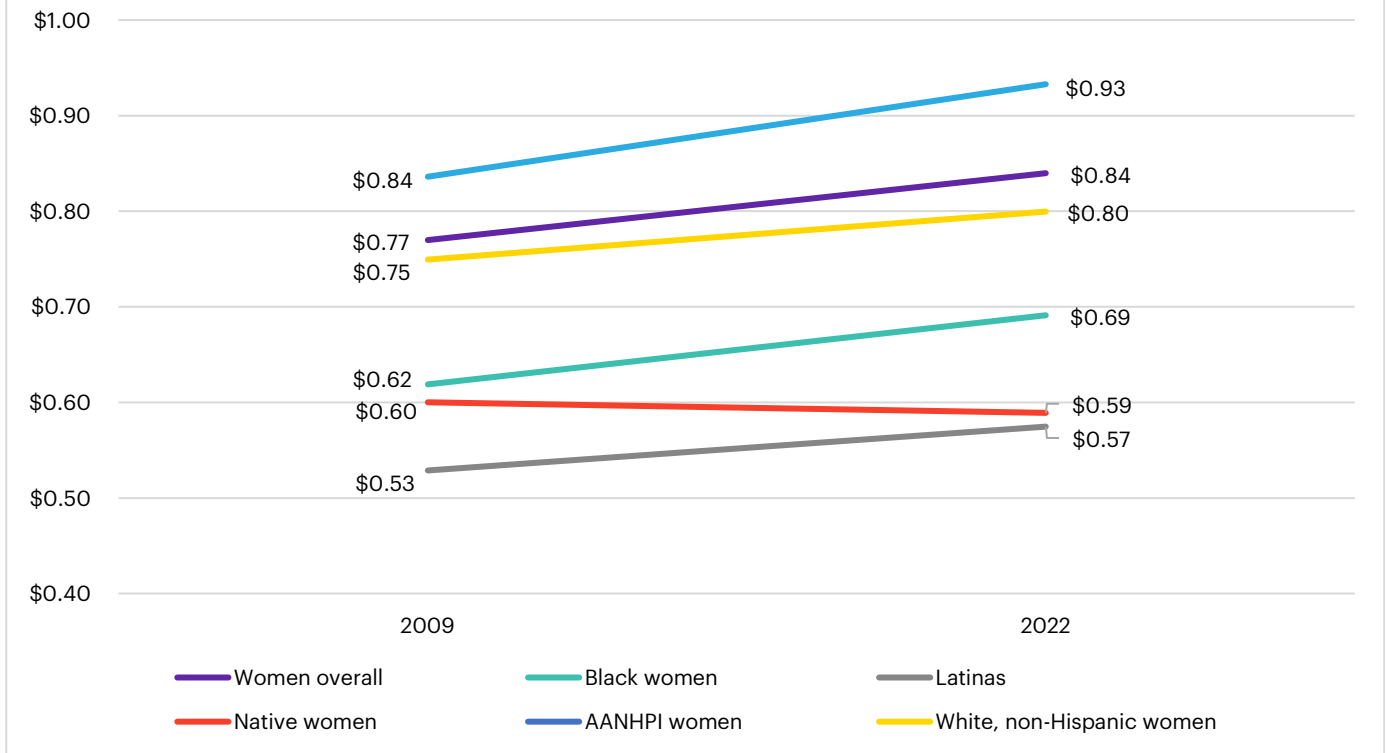
It has been 15 years since the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act became law, making it possible for workers to challenge long-standing pay disparities. Since then, the gender wage gap for all women working full-time year-round has narrowed by 7 cents. Still, the wage gap is too wide, and is not closing fast enough, especially for women of color who lose tens of thousands of dollars to the gender wage gap each year.<sup>1</sup> Additional policy solutions are needed to close the gap.

The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act helps ensure that workers experiencing illegal pay discrimination can assert their rights under federal anti-discrimination law. Under the Act, workers who experience ongoing pay discrimination can bring a challenge in court within 180 days of each discriminatory paycheck, rather than just within 180 days of the original discriminatory pay decision, or their first paycheck. The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act represented an important step forward in the fight against pay discrimination by eliminating the incentive for employers to discriminate believing they could not be held accountable after 180 days. Because of this Act, workers who were initially unaware that they were unlawfully paid less than they deserve are still able to legally challenge their discriminatory pay when they discover it. Pay discrimination is a major contributor to the wage gap, but in the 15 years since the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act was enacted, the gender wage gap has narrowed, showing that policy solutions that promote transparency and accountability are important tools for achieving equal pay.

Despite some progress, more needs to be done. The gender wage gap continues to persist and rob women of thousands of dollars each year, with women of color continuing to face drastically wider wage gaps.<sup>2</sup>

In the past 15 years since 2009, the gender wage gap for full-time, year-round workers has only closed by 7 cents from 77 cents in 2009<sup>3</sup> to 84 cents in 2022.<sup>4</sup> The wage gap has closed even less for many women of color. The gender wage gap among full-time, year-round workers has closed by 9 cents for AANHPI women,<sup>5</sup> 7 cents for Black women, and 4 cents for Latinas.<sup>6</sup> The gender wage gap for Native women has not budged at all in the past 15 years, widening by 1 cent compared to 2009.<sup>7</sup> Progress on closing the wage gap has been painfully slow, particularly for Latinas and Native women who in 2022 were typically only paid 57 cents and 59 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.

## Gender Wage Gap in 2009 and 2022 for Full Time, Year-Round Workers by Selected Demographics



Source: National Women's Law Center (NWLC) calculations for women overall, white, non-Hispanic women, Black women, and Latinas' wage gap based on U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement. NWLC calculations for Native women's and AANHPI women's wage gap based on U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS). Refer to endnotes for more information.

Closing the gender wage gap is crucial to the economic security and well-being of workers. Policymakers must do more to address these pay disparities by strengthening our equal pay laws, increasing pay transparency, raising the minimum wage, and ensuring necessary support for workers, such as paid family and medical leave, access to reproductive health care, affordable child care, and more. To read more about the gender wage gap and its solutions, refer to this [factsheet](#).

- 1 Sarah Javaid, "A Window Into the Wage Gap: What's Behind It and How to Close It," (January 22, 2024), <https://nwlc.org/resource/wage-gap-explainer/>.
- 2 See Sarah Javaid, "A Window Into the Wage Gap: What's Behind It and How to Close It."
- 3 National Women's Law Center (NWLC) 2009 wage gap calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Table P-38, (Washington, DC: Jan 8, 2024), <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-income-people.html>.
- 4 See Sarah Javaid, "A Window Into the Wage Gap: What's Behind It and How to Close It."
- 5 NWLC AANHPI wage gap calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 and 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) microdata, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/microdata.html>.
- 6 For 2022 wage gap for Black women and Latinas see Sarah Javaid "A Window Into the Wage Gap: What's Behind It and How to Close It." NWLC calculations for 2009 wage gap for Black women and Latinas based on U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Table P-38, (Washington, DC: Jan 8, 2024), <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-income-people.html>.
- 7 For 2022 wage gap for Native women see Sarah Javaid "A Window Into the Wage Gap: What's Behind It and How to Close It." NWLC calculations for 2009 wage gap for Native women based on 2009 ACS microdata, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/microdata.html>.