

March 7, 2024

Act – *Take action on the most pressing policies*

Equal Pay Day—March 12—is used to raise awareness around the gender pay gap and take action to combat pay inequities. It is appalling that women working full time still only make 84 cents per dollar paid to men—a pay gap that is significantly worse for many women of color and for women working part-time or seasonally. The Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 17/S. 728) would address several components of pay equity including ending use of salary history to determine wages, pay data collection, and retaliation protections for discussing wages.

Help us urge Congress to support the Paycheck Fairness Act:

- [Contact your members of Congress](#)
- [Write a Letter to the Editor](#)
- [Engage online](#) (*Join the social media storm on March 12 at 2 p.m. ET*)

The gender pay gap impacts all women in nearly every profession, at all education levels, and worsens as we get older. This cannot be allowed to continue!

Learn – *Dig deeper into the issues that matter*

While the Equal Pay Act of 1963 made it illegal for employers to pay unequal wages to men and women who perform substantially equal work, there is still more to be done to address this and the uneven impact of the pay gap on women on color. On average, a Black woman working full-time, year-round earns only 69 cents for every dollar paid to a non-Hispanic white man. For Latinas, that number drops to 57 cents. (*Click [here](#) for additional data and a list of all the 2024 Equal Pay Days.*) While the reasons for the pay gap are complex – including gender and racial discrimination, workplace harassment, occupational segregation, and a lack of workplace policies that support family caregiving – there are steps that can be taken to eliminate it.

Pay transparency can help address gender and racial pay gaps by preventing both unconscious bias and outright discrimination that skews compensation. AAUW's analysis has shown that the gender wage gap tends to be narrower in job sectors where wages are transparent. As of December 2023, ten states, the District of Columbia and several cities have enacted salary transparency laws. The [Salary Transparency Act \(H.R. 1599\)](#) would require employers across the country to provide salary ranges for jobs to applicants and employees regardless of where they live.

The federal government recently implemented a new measure to reduce racial and gender pay inequities for federal employees by banning the use of current or past pay when determining the salaries of new federal employees. AAUW applauds the proposed rule to extend this practice to [federal contractors](#) along with a provision to post salary ranges in job listings.

The importance of having data to help identify and eliminate gender and racial pay discrimination cannot be understated. AAUW continues to urge the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to move quickly to reinstate the EEO-1 pay data collection as a way to help identify and eliminate pay discrimination and close the wage gap nationwide.

As we recognize Equal Pay Day on March 12, we must also recognize the need for a comprehensive policy approach at both the state and federal level in order to fully advance pay equity for all women.

Engage – *Share the important work we're doing*

From the moment women graduate from college, most face a gender pay gap — which widens as they age. This makes it even harder to pay off their larger share of student debt. AAUW advocates for policy solutions to help current and future borrowers pay off their debt and make attaining a college degree more affordable for all students.

- In response to a call from [AAUW and coalition partners](#), the U.S. Department of Education (ED) held a fourth negotiated rulemaking session on student debt relief on February 22 and 23. Before the session, ED released [proposed regulations](#) to provide critical relief for borrowers experiencing financial hardship. Final rules are expected in May 2024.
- The AAUW-endorsed Codifying SAVE Plan Act ([H.R. 6593](#)) would protect the Saving on a Valuable Education (SAVE) student loan repayment plan under federal law to prevent any future rollbacks of the program. The SAVE plan provides a more affordable income-driven repayment option, including a path to debt cancellation for eligible borrowers. On February 21, the Biden administration [announced](#) \$1.2 billion of student debt cancellation for over 150,000 borrowers enrolled in the SAVE repayment plan.
- AAUW and many education-focused organizations have opposed the Bipartisan Workforce Pell Act ([H.R. 6585](#)). While the bill would allow federal Pell Grants to be used for short-term education and job training programs, it lacks protections from potential abuse by for-profit program providers and risks supporting low-quality programs. AAUW and coalition partners sent a [letter to Congress](#) opposing the bill.

- AAUW joined fellow members of the Gender Equity Coalition in a letter to President Biden calling for commitments to gender justice issues—including women’s economic security, access to education, voting rights, reproductive freedom, and more—in the 2024 State of the Union address on March 7.
- Congress negotiated a third extension of funding for federal programs through March 8 and 22. AAUW joined coalition partners in a letter urging Congress to reject all policy riders in Fiscal Year 24 appropriations bills that would prohibit federal agencies from funding diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility programs.
- Join AAUW on March 20 at 2:30 p.m. ET for “[Busting Myths & Enhancing Support: Advancing Workplace Success for Women](#),” a virtual panel discussion of the critical importance of work-life policies and strategies to advance women’s economic security. This AAUW-led event is part of the 68th NGO Committee on the Status of Women Forum.