

WASHINGTON, DC – In recognition of the 42nd anniversary of the signing of the Equal Pay Amendment in 1963, Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) today released the following statement:

“Following in the spirit of the 19th amendment, 42 years ago today the Equal Pay Amendment was signed, expressing an ongoing commitment toward ensuring women’s equal pay in the work force. The 19th amendment, ratified in 1920, belatedly endowed women with the right to vote, but also empowered women to demand better jobs and better pay. The Equal Pay Amendment, as the first legislation designed specifically to ensure women equal pay, furthered the spirit of liberty and equality held so dear by our nation.

“We are aware of the tremendous strides women have made in the workforce since then. Not only are women entering the workforce at a faster pace than ever before, women strive every day to dispel stereotypes and surpass expectations. The Center for Women’s Business Research reports that this year there are an estimated 197,631 privately-held women-owned firms in Maryland, accounting for 47.4% of all privately-held firms in the state.

“However, there is still much work to be done in the arena of equal pay. Women only earn 76 cents to the dollar earned by men. With a record 64 million women in the workforce, that kind of pay discrimination affects the majority of American families. Equal pay is not only a women’s issue. An enormous loss like that hurts fathers, husbands, and families who are depending on that income.

“Acknowledging the historical significance of today, as well as days such as Women’s Equality day on August 26 and Equal Pay Day on April 19, reaffirms our commitment to continue to fight toward gender equality in every arena, including the work place and pay scale. Working women in Maryland are farther along the road to equal pay than women in many states; however each of us still has work to do toward achieving the very important and realistic spirit of the Equal Pay Amendment.

“Action is required on the part of business owners and executives to advance corporate compensation practices with equal benefits. Action is required from policymakers to strengthen equal pay laws, and improve their enforcement. Finally, if our nation is to achieve the goals set in back in 1920 and 1963, it requires action and attention from citizens, refusing to allow obstacles or ignorance to impede the success of women in the work force.”

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