

WASHINGTON, DC -U.S. Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) joined a large bipartisan majority in the U.S. House today in approving a comprehensive measure that will help end the discriminatory practice of paying a woman less than a man for performing the same job. The Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 1338), approved by a 247-178 vote, will strengthen the landmark Equal Pay Act and close the loopholes that have allowed some employers to avoid responsibility for discriminatory pay.

“Paying women less than their male counterparts is not just unacceptable, it is illegal - yet it still occurs,” stated Rep. Hoyer. “The law as it stands is not fully serving the intent of the Equal Pay Act to adequately protect women from wage discrimination and close the gender pay gap. The Paycheck Fairness Act closes the loopholes that have allowed employers to avoid responsibility for discriminatory pay and renews our commitment to the basic ideal of fairness: the value of work lies in a job well done, not in the gender of the worker.”

Although the wage gap between men and women has narrowed since the passage of the Equal Pay Act in 1963, gender-based wage discrimination remains a significant problem for women in the U.S. workforce. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, women only make 77 cents for every dollar earned by a man; women working in Maryland do slightly better with 81 cents per dollar. In addition, African American women only earn 66 cents on the dollar while Hispanic women earn 55 cents on the dollar compared to their male counterparts. The Institute of Women's Policy Research concluded that this wage disparity will cost a woman anywhere from \$400,000 to \$2 million over her lifetime in lost wages.

Among its provisions, the Paycheck Fairness Act amends the Equal Pay Act to bar retaliation against employees who share or inquire about pay information; strengthens sanctions against discriminatory employers, which have not been adjusted for 17 years; clarifies acceptable reasons for differences in pay related to factors other than sex; and authorizes additional training for Equal Employment Opportunity Commission staff to better identify and handle wage disputes.

In addition to the Paycheck Fair Act, the Democratic-led Congress acted last year to approve the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, legislation that rectifies a recent Supreme Court decision making it more difficult for workers to pursue pay discrimination claims.

For more information on the Paycheck Fairness Act, [click here](#).

House Authorizes New Protections Against Gender-Based Wage Discrimination

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