CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—HOUSE

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WOMEN DESERVE EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. BACA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, when President John Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act into law on June 19, 1963, women on the average earned 61 cents for each dollar earned by a man.

Today, working women earn 73 cents for every dollar earned by a man, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

President Kennedy told his fellow citizens that he was taking the first step in addressing the unconscionable practice of paying female employees less wages than male employees for the same job.

While progress has been made, still much needs to be done. If Congress acts this year, more can be achieved; and I say more can be achieved and will be achieved if we come together.

In my State of California, families lose a staggering $21 billion of income annually to the wage gap. If women in California received equal pay, poverty and single-mom households would go from 19.2 percent to 9.2 percent.

Women in the Inland Empire, for example, lose an average of $4,000 every year because of unequal pay, and I state because of unequal pay they lose that much; that is $4,000. This is money that cannot buy groceries, housing, child care, clothing for their families, and we must realize how important and critical it is when someone has to budget their dollars based on the amount of monies that they get paid.

I ask my colleagues to support H.R. 781, the Paycheck Fairness Act, and the Fair Pay Act legislation currently pending in Congress that is designed to help eliminate the wage gap that still exists between men and women.

Many working women lack the basic benefits they need in order to care for their families. They are our grandmothers, our mothers, our wives, our sisters, our daughters, and our colleagues. They are doctors, lawyers, teachers, caregivers, and leaders.

Women lawyers earn $3,000 less than a male attorney, and a lot of people are surprised and they think that they earn an equal amount of pay and they do not.

Female doctors make $5,000 less than male colleagues.

Wages for female nurses, where 95 percent are women, earn $30 less each week than male nurses who make up 5 percent. Can one imagine, only 5 percent are male and the majority, which is 95 percent female, earn less money. That is not fair.

Wives’ weekly earnings are $50 less than waiters’ earnings.

The situation is even worse for women of color. African American women earn only 67 cents and Latinos