PAYCHECK EQUITY EQUAL PAY DAY

HON. MIKE HONDA
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, April 3, 2001

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, today is a significant day for American families. On one hand, it represents injustice, marking the amount of time required for a woman to earn the same pay as a man: an additional three months into the next year. On the other hand, this day marks the continuation of an ongoing struggle, the battle for an American ideal: Equality.

Today, I stand in support of working women and the American family. Today, I stand in support of equal pay for equal work.

On Equal Pay Day, we are reminded of the facts in the contemporary American workplace:
- The average working woman working full time earns about 76 cents for each dollar earned by the average man.
- The median wages of female college graduates fall behind those of male college graduates by $14,685.
- This pay disparity applies for all age groups. For example, women ages 35–44 earned about 72 cents per dollar and women ages 45–54 earned about 70 cents per dollar, compared to men.
- The inequality in pay is not just morally wrong; it renders real harm on American families and our national economy. This gender wage gap means $4,000 less per American family and over $200 billion less in the American economy.

We need to act now, and that is why I support H.R. 781, “The Paycheck Fairness Act,” authored by my distinguished colleague, the distinguished gentle lady from Connecticut, ROSA DELAUR. This bill creates stronger enforcement, greater measurement, and better incentives against discrimination in wages based on gender.

These are the facts, and they challenge our national integrity. They challenge our commitment to equal rights and equal treatment. They challenge us to action. The majority of Americans support equal pay for equal work. It is time for Congress and the President to finally hold our nation accountable to the promise and ideals embedded in our Constitution.

EQUAL PAY PROTECTION

HON. JOE BACA
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, April 3, 2001

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, when President John F. Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act into law on June 10, 1963, women on average earned 61 cents for each dollar earned by a man.

Today, working women only earn 73 cents for every dollar earned by men, 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 more needs to be done and, if Congress acts this year, more can be achieved.

In my state of California, families lose a staggering 21 billion dollars of income annually to the wage gap.

If women in California received equal pay, poverty in single mom households would go from 19.2 percent to 9.2 percent.

Women in the Inland Empire for example lose on average 4 thousand dollars every year because of unequal pay.

This is money that can’t buy groceries, housing, child care, clothing for their families.

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, mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, and colleagues.

They are our doctors, lawyers, teachers, caregivers, and leaders.

Women lawyers earn $300 less than male attorneys.

Female doctors make $500 less than their male colleagues.

Wages for female nurses, where 95 percent are women, are $30 less each week than male nurses who only make up 5 percent.

Waitresses 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 Latinas 58 cents for every dollar that men earn.

The wage gap impacts women’s retirement also. Women have less to save for their futures and will earn smaller pensions than men.

We need to recognize working women and we need to pay them equally.

On the job, working women are looking for higher pay, better benefits and, most of all, the three “Rs”: Respect, Recognition and Reward for a job well done.

Half of all older women receive a private pension in 1998 got less than $3,486 per year, compared with $7,020 per year for older men.

Before the end of this year, let’s pass this legislation to finally make the work of America’s women valued, fair, equitable and just.

Let’s work to bring equal pay to every woman in America.

They deserve it and their families deserve it. Let’s get the job done.

TRIBUTE TO JASON WILLIAMS

HON. MICHAEL FERGUSON
OF NEW JERSEY
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, April 3, 2001

Mr. FERGUSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Plainfield, New Jersey’s own star, Jason Williams. Jason, who is an All-American basketball player for Duke University, lead his team in their 82–72 NCAA National Championship victory over Arizona on Monday night, April 2, 2001.

Mr. Speaker, Jason Williams is a hometown hero, a hometown celebrity and to advance the cause of equality and social change, particularly for migrant farm workers.

At an early age, young Cesar and his family were forced from their ranch because of an unscrupulous land deal. They went to work in the fields. Cesar traveled throughout California and followed the season’s work and attended 37 schools before dropping out after the Eighth grade in a great sacrifice to his father, who was injured in an accident, and his mother, whom he didn’t want to work in the fields.