



Business and
Professional
Women's
Foundation

For Immediate Release

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Working Women Cheer House Votes to Close Wage Gap
BPW/USA Lauds Support for Working Women and Their Families

January 9, 2009 -- Washington, DC -- Business and Professional Women/USA (BPW//USA) applauded the U.S. House of Representatives for passing today both the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act (HR 11) and the Pay Check Fairness Act (HR 12). "These two pieces of legislation provide a crucial one-two punch in the fight for equal pay for women and the passage today is an important step towards closing the persistent and sizable wage gap that remains between men and women," said BPW/USA CEO Deborah L. Frett.

"Passage of these bills in the first days of the 111th Congress is clear recognition that wage discrimination is still a very real problem in the United States," continued Frett. "This wage gap not only impacts the economic security of women working today, it also directly affects women's future economic security therefore, challenging the stability of the family as a whole."

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, women who work full time earn, on average, only 78 cents for every dollar men earn. The figures are even worse for women of color with Black women only earning 66 cents and Latinas 54 cents on the dollar.

Frett stated, "Women deserve equal pay for equal work and a fair shot at challenging pay discrimination. Pay discrimination costs women between \$400,000 to 2 million in lost wages over a lifetime; they retire with less money and endure economic instability throughout their lives. During a recession, women tend to be impacted most severely; it is the perfect time to protect their economic security."

The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act rights the wrongs done by the Supreme Court in *Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.*, reinstating previous rules protecting workers and ensuring people who have been discriminated against can seek vindication in a timely matter. The Paycheck Fairness Act is a comprehensive bill that would create stronger incentives for employers to follow the law as well as increase penalties for violations; strengthen federal outreach, education and enforcement efforts; and prohibit retaliation against workers who ask about employers' wage practices.

"BPW/USA members have worked tirelessly for passage of this legislation and they now call on the U.S Senate to follow the House's lead and quickly pass these crucial bills," Frett said. "American women are looking for concrete action to improve the economic security of working families and this legislation is an important first step."

Founded in 1919, BPW/USA is a multi-generational, nonpartisan membership organization with a mission to achieve equity for all women in the workplace through advocacy, education, and information. Established as the first organization to focus on issues of workingwomen, BPW/USA is historically a leader in grassroots activism, policy influence and advocacy for millions of workingwomen.

For more information on BPW/USA membership options and policies impacting women and families, visit www.bpwusa.org.