



Business and
Professional
Women's
Foundation

For Immediate Release

**Contact: Ayoka Blandford
202-293-1100, x 8933**

President Signs Bill Promoting Equal Pay for Equal Work
BPW/USA Attends Historic Bill Signing

[January 29, 2009, Washington, DC] – Business and Professional Women/USA (BPW/USA) CEO Deborah L. Frett joined leaders of women's, civil rights and human rights organizations at the White House to witness the historic signing of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act today. "It is significant that the first piece of legislation to be signed by President Obama is one we have fought so hard for - the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act." said Frett.

"Equal pay for women has long been one of BPW/USA's top legislative priorities and it is fitting that in our 90th year we can celebrate the signing of the first major equal pay bill since the 1963 Equal Pay Act," says BPW/USA president The Honorable Diane Polangin. BPW/USA leadership was also present at the 1963 White House signing.

"Passage of this bill clearly demonstrates that Congress and the President recognize 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 affects women's future economic security and therefore the economic stability of the whole family."

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. Women tend to be hurt first and worst during economic downturns and would benefit from an immediate "equity" economic stimulus."

The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act will ensure that women subject to wage discrimination will get their day in court and is an important step towards closing the persistent and sizable wage gap that remains between men and women. 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.

"BPW/USA urges Congress to continue the effort to ensure equal pay for equal work and take up the Paycheck Fairness Act, which gives teeth to the Equal Pay Act and is the next step in closing the wage gap between men and women." Frett said.

“Our work is not done!” declared Polangin. “We encourage all working women to use our e-advocacy center to contact their Senators and encourage passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act.”

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.

Access the advocacy center and get information on policies impacting women and families at www.bpwusa.org.