



MEDIA RELEASE

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Contact: Erin Bennett, 303-601-9510 erin@9to5.org

Dozens Protest Pay Gap in Denver

50 years after the Equal Pay Act, Activists, Legislators, Businesses call for an end to unequal pay

DENVER, April 9, 2013 – In a sea of red, dozens of people flooded the State Capitol today to observe Equal Pay Day. Dressed in red, activists protested the pay gap that continues to shortchange American women and their families. Advocates, businesspeople, legislators, and working women and their families highlighted the pay gap that still exists for women and people of color, and advocated for fair policies like the federal Paycheck Fairness Act to end pay disparities.

It's been half a century since Congress passed the Equal Pay Act and made wage discrimination based on gender illegal. But a significant pay gap exists - and for the first time in many years is widening - for women and people of color at all levels of education and across all occupations. Nationally, women earned 77 cents for every dollar earned by men in 2011 annual earnings. For women of color the gap is even wider – African-American woman earned only 69 cents and Latinas just 60 cents for every dollar earned by all men in 2011.

"The typical woman loses \$431,000 in pay over a 40-year career," said 9to5 Colorado Organizer Margarita Gomez. "Over their careers, that means less money to make ends meet and achieve economic security for families today."

In today's economy, women are particularly vulnerable to economic hardship. Representing nearly two-thirds of workers who are paid minimum wage or less, women are most likely to live in poverty and rely on public assistance. Women face the effects of the pay gap from their first job until long after they have stopped working. The wage gap has long-term effects on the economic security of women and families.

Pay equity is good for the economy and working families – it reduces poverty, stimulates the economy and increases women's economic security. It reduces stress-related health problems and health care costs. There is a business case for pay equity. Providing pay equity and offering workplace flexibility helps employers recruit and retain the most qualified employees in their field, and is proven to increase productivity and profits. Fortune Magazine's "100 Best Companies to Work for in America" all have extensive workplace flexibility policies.

"Closing the pay gap for women is a key component of creating sustainable economic security," said Louise Atkinson, President and CEO of The Women's Foundation of Colorado. "The Women's Foundation of Colorado remains committed to advancing pay equality for women through our research and public policy work. We look forward to the day when wage discrimination is history."

The Federal Paycheck Fairness Act (S. 84/H.R. 377) would close loopholes in our existing equal pay laws, prohibit retaliation against workers who ask about or share wage information, and empower women to better negotiate salary and benefit increases. Equal work deserves equal pay.

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Background on Equal Pay Day: Tuesday April 9, 2013, is Equal Pay Day, the date we recognize and protest the wage gap that exists between working women and men and between workers of color and white workers across the country. Tuesday symbolizes how far into a second week a woman must work, on average, to earn as much as a man earned in the previous week. April represents how far into a new year women must work to earn what men earned just in the previous year. Protestors and advocates wear red to show that pay for women and people of color is still in the red.

About 9to5: With forty years' experience in winning justice for working women, 9to5 leads the way to create a powerful force for change on issues affecting low-wage women and their families. 9to5 organizes women to lead campaigns for family-supporting jobs with decent wages and paid sick days; stronger protections against workplace discrimination; and a strong safety net for low-income families. As one of the largest, most respected national membership organizations of working women in the U.S., we've won real changes since the hit song and movie based on 9to5 hit the charts. To learn more or to get involved, visit 9to5.org and find us on Facebook and Twitter.

Colorado Women and the Wage Gap

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In Colorado, on average, a woman who holds a full-time job is paid \$40,236 per year while a man who holds a full-time job is paid \$50,987 per year. **This means that women in Colorado are paid 79 cents for every dollar paid to men, amounting to a yearly gap of \$10,751 between men and women who work full time in the state.**¹

Nationally, women who hold full-time, year-round jobs are paid, on average, just 77 cents for every dollar paid to men.² African American women are paid 64 cents and Latinas are paid just 55 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.³

What Does the Wage Gap Mean for Colorado Women?

As a group, women who are employed full time in Colorado lose approximately \$7,708,155,221 every year due to the wage gap.⁴ If the wage gap were eliminated, a working woman in Colorado would have enough money for approximately:

- ▶ 78 more weeks of food (1.5 years' worth);⁵
- ▶ Seven more months of mortgage and utilities payments;⁶
- ▶ 12 more months of rent;⁷ or
- ▶ 3,001 additional gallons of gas.⁸

Colorado Women and Families Cannot Afford Discrimination and Lower Wages

Colorado women are responsible for the economic security of their families.

- ▶ 198,121 households in Colorado are headed by women.⁹ About 28 percent of those households, or 55,474 households, have incomes that fall below the poverty level.¹⁰ Eliminating the wage gap would provide much-needed income to women whose salaries are of critical importance to them and their families.

Congress Must Pass the Paycheck Fairness Act

The economic security of women and families is put at risk when women are paid less than men. The Paycheck Fairness Act would strengthen the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and help women fight wage discrimination. The Paycheck Fairness Act would:

- ▶ Prohibit employers from retaliating against workers who discuss salaries with colleagues;

- ▶ Put gender-based discrimination on equal footing with other forms of wage discrimination – such as race or national origin – and allow women to take legal action for damages;
- ▶ Require employers to prove that pay differences exist for legitimate, job-related reasons;
- ▶ Create a negotiation skills training program for women and girls;
- ▶ Recognize employers for excellence in their pay practices;
- ▶ Provide businesses, especially small ones, assistance with equal pay practices; and
- ▶ Enhance the ability of the Department of Labor and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to investigate and enforce pay discrimination laws.

1 U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2011, Geographies: All States within United States, Table B20017: Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months by Sex by Work Experience in the Past 12 Months for the Population 16 Years and Over with Earnings in the Past 12 Months*. Retrieved 25 March 2013, from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_1YR_B20017&prodType=table

2 U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). *Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) Supplement: Table PINC-05: Work Experience in 2011 – People 15 Years Old and Over by Total Money Earnings in 2011, Age, Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex*. Retrieved 25 March 2013, from http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032012/perinc/pinc05_000.htm

3 Ibid.

4 See note 1 and U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2011, Geographies: All States within United States, Table B20005: Sex by Work Experience in the Past 12 Months by Earnings in the Past 12 Months for the Population 16 Years and Over*. Retrieved 25 March 2013, from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_1YR_B20005&prodType=

5 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2012, September). *Consumer Expenditure Survey, Table 8. Region of Residence: Average Annual Expenditures, 2011*. Retrieved 25 March 2013, from <http://www.bls.gov/cex/2011/Standard/region.pdf> (Calculation uses overall average “food” cost for region.)

6 U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2011, Table R2511: Median Monthly Housing Costs for Owner-Occupied Housing Units with a Mortgage (Dollars): United States and States*. Retrieved 21 March 2013, from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_1YR_R2511.US01PRF&prodType=table

7 U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2011, Table GCT2514: Median Monthly Housing Costs for Renter-Occupied Housing Units (Dollars): United States – States; and Puerto Rico*. Retrieved 25 March 2013, from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_1YR_GCT2514.US01PR&prodType=table (Calculation uses median gross rent for state.)

8 AAA. (2012). *AAA’s Daily Fuel Gauge Report: Current State Averages*. Retrieved 28 March 2013, from <http://fuelgauge.report.opisnet.com/sbsavg.html> (Calculation uses average cost of regular quality gasoline on 28 March 2013.)

9 U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2011, Geographies: All States within United States, Table DP02: Selected Social Characteristics in the United States*. Retrieved 22 March 2013, from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_1YR_DP02&prodType=table (Calculation uses households headed by females living in a household with family and no husband.)

10 U.S. Census Bureau (2012). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2011, Geographies: All States within United States, Table DP03: Selected Economic Characteristics*. Retrieved 22 March 2013, from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_1YR_DP03&prodType=table (To determine whether a household falls below the poverty level, the U.S. Census Bureau considers the income of the householder, size of the family, number of related children, and, for 1-and 2-person families, age of householder. The poverty threshold is \$18,123 for a single householder and two children under 18.)

The National Partnership for Women & Families is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy group dedicated to promoting fairness in the workplace, access to quality health care and policies that help women and men meet the dual demands of work and family. More information is available at www.NationalPartnership.org.

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