

# Women's Economic Agenda

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When women succeed, communities flourish, and when women lead, countries grow stronger. As the first woman Speaker of the House, I stood on the shoulders of those who have come before me — Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Alice Paul, Sojourner Truth — and every other pioneer who fought to empower and inspire women. I am committed to policies that ensure equality and opportunity for all women, from ensuring equal pay for equal work, protecting a woman's right to choose, ending gender-based discrimination in all areas, supporting programs addressing violence against women in any form, and improving access to affordable, quality health care and education.

For too long, America's women have faced outdated policies and practices that prevent them from fully participating in our economy. Fifty years after the Equal Pay Act was signed into law, what President John F. Kennedy called the "unconscionable practice" — paying women less than men for the same amount of work — continues to persist. Women make **only 77 cents to every dollar** earned by men, making it harder for the 40 percent of families with female breadwinners to make ends meet.

If we are ever going to unleash the intellect, the determination, and the courage of women into the world, we need affordable, quality childcare. The **high cost of child care** is forcing too many mothers and families to choose between the lesser of two evils: either low-quality child care or forgoing much needed wages for child care needs. As we work to help employees better balance the demands of work and family, we must also expand and improve the **Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)** to allow working parents to meet their needs at home, support their families, and ensure the health and safety of America's workers. That is why House Democrats are offering the ***When Women Succeed, America Succeeds: An Economic Agenda for Women and Families***—an agenda to address the economic challenges facing women and families today:

## PAY

### **The Problems:**

- Women make only 77 cents for every dollar earned by men, amounting to a yearly gap of \$11,084 between full-time men and women. That \$11,084 lost could purchase 89 more weeks of food or more than 3,000 additional gallons of gas or more than one year of rent for a woman's family.
- For African American women and Latinas the pay gap is even larger. African American women on average earn only 64 cents and Latinas on average earn only 55 cents for every dollar earned by white, non-Hispanic men.
- The minimum wage is a women's issue; nearly two-thirds of minimum wage workers are women. Yet the minimum wage has not kept up with inflation over the last 45 years — with the minimum wage now, in inflation-adjusted terms, **more than 30 percent** lower than it was in 1968.

**The Solutions:**

- Paycheck Fairness
- Increase Minimum Wage (Including Tipped)
- Invest in Job Training and Education Opportunities
- Protect and Restore Employment Rights
- Support Women Entrepreneurs/Small Businesses
- Pregnant Workers Fairness
- Adequate Tools to Investigate Wage Discrimination

[Learn more about challenges and solutions for pay equity in America.](#)

## WORK & FAMILY BALANCE

**The Problems:**

Workers in 145 countries around the world have earned paid sick days – but there is no policy to ensure earned paid sick days in the U.S. The United States has no mandatory paid family leave policy — making it one of just three countries in the world and the only country among industrialized countries to not mandate paid maternity leave for new mothers.

- More than 40 million private sector workers in this country – including more than 13 million working women – are not able to take a paid sick day when they or a family member are ill. Millions more lack paid sick time to care for a sick child.
- Nearly one-quarter of adults in the U.S. (23 percent) report that they have lost a job or have been threatened with job loss for taking time off due to illness or to care for a sick child or relative.
- Fully 89 percent of the U.S. workforce does not have paid family leave through their employers, and more than 60 percent of the workforce does not have paid personal medical leave through an employer-provided temporary disability program, which some new mothers use.

**The Solutions:**

- Paid Sick Leave
- Paid Family and Medical Leave
- Expanded Family and Medical Leave
- Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave

[Learn more about the challenges and solutions for work and family balance in America.](#)

## CHILD CARE

**The Problems:**

Today, child care is a necessity for most families with preschool children because households need two incomes to pay all the bills. But while most other industrialized countries have universal preschool for three and four-year olds, there is a drastic lack of quality preschool for American children in the U.S. What's more, the lack of availability of affordable and high-quality child care in this country has reached crisis proportions.

- The U.S. ranks 28th out of 38 countries in the share of four-year-olds enrolled in preschool, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).
- Nearly two-thirds of American women with pre-school age children work; yet in the U.S., families are generally left on their own for providing child care.
- The average cost of full-time child care for one child in a day care center in 2011 ranged from \$4,000 to \$12,000 depending on the state.

**The Solutions:**

- President Obama's Preschool and Early Head Start/Child Care Initiative
- Promote Affordable and High Quality Child Care
- Adequate Funding of Child Care Programs
- Adequate Training and Pay for Child Care Workers
- Expand Child Care Tax Credit
- Make Child Tax Credit Permanent and Indexed
- Increase Access to Child Support

[Learn more about the challenges and solutions for child care in America.](#)