

# AFL-CIO

## LEGISLATIVE ALERT

June 21, 2023

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I urge you to support the Paycheck Fairness Act (S.728), and the Healthy Families Act (S.1664). Both bills are long overdue to address the gender wage gap and lack of job-protected sick time, two issues that have greatly contributed to inequality experienced by far too many working families.

Sixty years after enactment of the Equal Pay Act, which made it illegal for employers to pay men more than women for the same work, wage disparities still persist in both the private and public sectors, at every educational level, across the country. Women working full time are paid only 84 cents for every dollar paid to men, and this gap is greater for women of color. The Paycheck Fairness Act reinforces the Equal Pay Act in several important ways. It prohibits employers' use of prior salary history in setting pay for new hires and employer retaliation against workers who discuss their pay with coworkers. The legislation requires employers to demonstrate that wage gaps between men and women doing the same work truly result from factors unrelated to gender, and provides grants to teach women workers wage negotiation skills. It conforms Equal Pay Act remedies and class action procedures with those available for other civil rights claims, and strengthens the government's ability to identify and remedy systematic wage discrimination by requiring employers to report pay data to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The Healthy Families Act ensures that no worker would have to choose between caring for themselves or a loved one and a paycheck. The legislation requires employers with 15 or more employees to provide up to 7 days of paid sick/safe leave each year. Those working for employers with fewer than 15 employees would earn up to seven job-protected unpaid sick days each year. It extends leave to workers for use to recover from domestic violence, stalking or sexual assault and to seek assistance. The Healthy Families Act makes clear that no worker should jeopardize the health or safety of themselves or a family member to keep a job.

While belonging to a union is the surest way to guarantee equal pay on the job and paid leave, the Paycheck Fairness Act and the Healthy Families Act provide new effective tools to close the wage gap and provide sick leave. When women endure pay discrimination or workers are unable to take time off to care for themselves and their families, entire families suffer. We urge you to support both the Paycheck Fairness Act (S. 728) and the Healthy Families Act (S. 1664), and to oppose any amendment that would weaken either of these two important and long overdue bills.

Sincerely,



William Samuel  
Director, Government Affairs