

## January 9, 2009 - Rep. Slaughter Applauds Passage of Historic Legislation to Close the Wage Gap

FOR  
IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Congresswoman  
Slaughter Applauds House Passage of Historic Legislation to Close the Wage Gap

Washington, DC - Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Chairwoman of the House Committee on Rules and former Chair of the Congressional Women's Caucus, today applauded the House passage of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act (H.R. 11) and the Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 12), historic legislation to reverse a Supreme Court ruling that makes it difficult for

Americans to pursue pay discrimination claims and to close the persistent wage gap between men and women.

In 1963, President Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act to address the unconscionable practice of paying women less than men for the same job. At that time, women earned 59 cents for each dollar earned by a man. While the wage gap has narrowed, today's working women still earn only 78 cents for every dollar earned by men for the same work.

"The wage gap is one of the most pressing issues facing women workers, their families, and the economy," said Rep. Slaughter. "The historic legislation passed today will help to close this wage gap and ensure that American women are compensated fairly in the workplace."

"Especially during these tough economic times when too many workers are seeing their jobs and wages slashed, we've got to make sure that all Americans are paid fairly for their hard work," Slaughter concluded. "This new Congress is committed to rebuilding our economy and strengthening our middle class. This legislation is a critical start."

## BACKGROUND

## Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act (H.R. 11)

### The Lilly Ledbetter Fair

Pay Act will reverse a Supreme Court ruling that makes it more difficult for Americans to pursue pay discrimination claims. This legislation applies to workers who file claims of discrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age, or disability.

Lilly Ledbetter worked for nearly 20 years at a Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company. She sued the company after learning that she was paid less than her male counterparts at the facility, despite having more experience than several of them. A jury found that her employer had unlawfully discriminated against her on the basis of sex.

However, the Supreme Court said that Ledbetter had waited too long to sue for pay discrimination, despite the fact that she filed a charge with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as soon as she received an anonymous note alerting her to pay discrimination.

While Ledbetter filed her charge within 180 days of receiving discriminatory pay, the court ruled that, since Ledbetter did not raise a claim within 180 days of the employer's decision to pay her less, she could not receive any relief. Under this Supreme Court decision, employees in Ledbetter's position would be forced to live with discriminatory paychecks for the rest of their careers.

## Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 12)

### Working

women in the United States

only make 78 cents for every dollar earned by a man for the same work. Moreover, the Institute of Women's Policy Research concluded that this wage disparity will cost a woman anywhere



- Require the Department of Labor to continue to collect and disseminate wage information based on gender; and

- Create a new grant program to help strengthen the negotiation skills of girls and women.

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