

## Testimony to Committee for Women October 11, 2016

As public policy chair for AAUW-Nevada I would like to submit testimony on behalf of our organization and the women of Nevada. AAUW's Public Policy Program states that AAUW is committed to supporting "fairness in compensation, equitable access and advancement in employment, and vigorous enforcement of employment antidiscrimination statutes" that will help achieve self-sufficiency for all women. The American Association of University Women has long fought to end wage discrimination. As early as 1922, AAUW's legislative program called for a reclassification of the U.S. Civil Service and for a repeal of salary restrictions in the Women's Bureau. In 1955, AAUW supported a bill introduced by Reps. Edith Green (D-OR) and Edith Rogers (R-MA) requiring "equal pay for work of comparable value requiring comparable skills." Congress enacted the Equal Pay Act, a version of the 1955 bill, in 1963, making 2013 the 50th anniversary of passage of this landmark legislation. AAUW's interest in this issue is reflective of women as a whole. Among issues identified as important to women, 90 percent say equal pay for equal work is a priority. This is not surprising, since the wage gap is a pervasive issue affecting women in all walks of life, regardless of marital, familial or employment status. Further, surveys show that most business leaders consider pay equity "good business" and a step that is necessary to remain competitive. Pay disparities are not limited to one career or to one demographic, and affect women of all ages, races, and education levels—regardless of their family decisions.

The wage gap has real consequences. With a record 70.2 million women in the workforce, wage discrimination hurts the majority of American families. Furthermore, women are increasingly the primary breadwinners in their households (22 percent in 2007, up from 4 percent in 1970). More women than ever before are the sole or primary sources of household income, the wage gap is undermining families' economic security. In addition, wage discrimination lowers total lifetime earnings, thereby reducing women's benefits from Social Security and pension plans and inhibiting their ability to save not only for retirement but also for other lifetime goals such as buying a home and paying for a college education. New research calculates that the pay inequity shortfall in women's earnings is about \$210,000 over a 35-year working life.

Improving Nevada's equity for women is a high priority of AAUW Nevada and should also be a priority of the Commission for Women.

The information in this testimony is excerpted from AAUW publication [Pay Equity and Workplace Opportunity: A Simple Matter of Fairness](#).

*Bonnie Barber, Public Policy Chair, AAUW Nevada*