

Planning for AAUW Advocacy: Equal Pay Day 2016 December 16 at 7:00 pm ET

I. Equal Pay Day 2016: What, When, Why

AAUW is working to prepare everyone for a productive year of advocacy in 2016. From the start of most state legislative sessions in January through the November elections there are many opportunities to advance AAUW's public policy priorities.

Equal gap. Pay equity is a premier issue for AAUW and one that AAUW has been working on for a long time. 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.

Despite the Equal Pay Act, the wage gap persists. It has stood at 79 cents on the dollar for the last ten years. Although enforcement of the Equal Pay Act as well as other civil rights laws have helped to narrow the wage gap, significant disparities remain that need to be addressed.

For that reason, AAUW is advocating for the Paycheck Fairness Act which would improve the scope of the Equal Pay Act with stronger incentives for employers to follow the law, enhance federal enforcement efforts, and prohibit retaliation against workers asking about wage practices. To draw attention to the wage gap, and build support to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act, AAUW observes Equal Pay Day.

Equal Pay Day is the symbolic day when women's earnings "catch up" to men's earnings from the year before. In 2016, Equal Pay Day will be observed on Tuesday, April 12.

Think 79 cents is bad? The pay gap is worse for women of color. For that reason, we also observe African-American Women's Equal Pay Day on August 26, Native American Women's Equal Pay Day on September 14, and Latina Equal Pay Day on October 15.

Pay equity will play a central role in AAUW's voter education and turnout campaign in 2016. We'll be using the 2016 elections to advance AAUW priority issues by introducing those issues into the campaign debate and pinning down the candidates on those issues. Equal Pay Day will play an integral role in raising the profile of the wage gap during the election campaign.

AAUW will kick-off the 2016 "It's My Vote" campaign with a [conference call](#) on January 13. In this election cycle, we will focus our efforts on an issue-based outreach campaign in the early primary states to make pay equity a central issue in the election. We'll expand our issue education efforts from there with distribution of voter guides on US Senate races and governor's races. Stay tuned to the [Action Network listserv](#) for more information!

II. Five Easy Ideas for Equal Pay Day 2016

Idea #1: Urge Your Elected Officials to Act on Equal Pay Day

What: AAUW is working to advance equal pay legislation in state houses around the country. If your state legislature is considering equal pay legislation, contact your elected officials on Equal Pay Day to ask them to co-sponsor the bills. If no such legislation exists in your state or municipality, you can ask your governor, city council, and/or mayor issue a proclamation declaring Equal Pay Day. At AAUW's request, local governments in Oklahoma, Virginia, Wisconsin, and California proclaimed EPD in 2015. Of course, you can also encourage your members of Congress to take action on equal pay by passing the Paycheck Fairness Act.

Do Now: Identify contact information (email, phone number) for your elected officials. You'll likely need to follow up on your initial request, both by email and phone, so give yourself plenty of time to make the ask.

Plan for Later: If a public official in your community agrees to issue an Equal Pay Day proclamation, consider partnering with them on gaining media coverage for the proclamation and AAUW's role in issuing it!

Tools:

[Sample Equal Pay Day Proclamation](#)

[Gender Pay Gap Roadmaps by State and Congressional District](#)

[Tell Congress to Pass the Paycheck Fairness Act](#)

Idea #2: Host Unequal Bake Sale or UnHappy Hour

What: Use a fun, social environment to raise awareness and provoke conversation about fair pay! At these events, men will pay full price for the goods while women get a 21 percent discount.

Do Now: Location, location, location! Find a public space at which to host bake sale where baked goods are priced according to the wage gap, or contact local establishments and ask them to give women the un-happy hour special price of 21 percent off the price they are charging men. Even without pricing goods accordingly, you can use a social event as an opportunity to invite members of the public to learn about Equal Pay Day. This event will also provide a great recruitment opportunity for your branch.

Plan for Later: Have a representative of AAUW in your state provide brief remarks about Equal Pay Day and plan to make materials (membership postcards, Action Network sign up, The Simple Truth) available to attendees. If you're hosting a bake sale, don't forget to recruit bakers!

Tools:

[Pay Equity Resource Kit](#)

[The Simple Truth](#)

[Fight for Fair Pay](#)

Idea #3: Launch an Equal Pay Media Blitz

What: Write and submit Letters to the Editor and Op-Eds to a variety of publications in your state to gain broad coverage on Equal Pay Day.

Do Now: Recruit supporters to write Letters to the Editor and Op-Eds – ask branch members, coalition partners, prospective new members, student orgs, etc. to pledge to participate so many different voices are represented.

Plan for Later: Identify news outlets and reporters who might be interested in covering Equal Pay Day and make a calendar of their submission deadlines so you can plan ahead. Consider hosting a time for participants to gather to write their Letters to the Editor and Op-Eds.

Tools:

[How to Write an Op-ed](#)

[How to Write a Letter to the Editor](#)

[AAUW Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit](#)

Idea #4: Host an Issue Forum in Your Community

What: Issue forums are community dialogues on current AAUW issues and usually take the form of a panel discussion, with time for questions and answers. Use Equal Pay Day as an opportunity to host a forum on fair pay.

Do Now: Brainstorm speakers to invite to participate in your forum. Speakers should possess demonstrated knowledge or personal experience on the topic of equal pay. You may also consider inviting city, state, or federal elected officials. Work with diverse organizations, as working in coalitions allows you to reach more people, increase AAUW membership, and gain additional exposure.

Plan for Later: Equal pay will be a critical issue in the 2016 elections. Set up a **separate** table for voter registration at your forum. If you have Internet access at your event, you can use [AAUW's online voter registration tool](#).

Tools:

[How to Put Together an Issue Forum, Town Hall, or Tele-Town Hall](#)

[Voter Registration Tool](#)

Idea #5: Get Creative!

What: Have another idea or want to try something new? The possibilities for engaging events and activities are limitless and the AAUW Policy team is here to help. Contact us at advocacy@aauw.org for assistance brainstorming or event support.

Tools:

[Pay Equity Resource Kit](#)

[Take Your Equal Pay Day to the Next Level](#)
[8 Awesome Ways We Pushed for Equal Pay in 2015](#)

III. AAUW Resources

[Upcoming Events Form](#)

[AAUW Issues](#)

[It's My Vote: I Will Be Heard](#)

[Washington Update](#)