

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 66

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 38

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 66—Relative to Equal Pay Day.

[Filed with Secretary of State April 27, 2004.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 66, Lieber. Equal Pay Day.

This measure would proclaim April 20, 2004, as Equal Pay Day, and would urge the Congress of the United States to protect the fundamental right of all American women to receive equal pay for equal work and to continue to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex and for other purposes.

WHEREAS, Forty-one years after the passage of the Federal Equal Pay Act and Title VII of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, American women continue to suffer disparities in wages that cannot be accounted for by age, education, or work experience; and

WHEREAS, According to the United States Census Bureau, in 2002, American women working full-time year-round earned on average 76.6 cents for every dollar earned by full-time working American men; and

WHEREAS, A General Accounting Office report on women's earnings shows that there exists an inexplicable wage gap of approximately 20 percent, even after taking into account work experience, education, occupation, industry of current employment, and other demographic and job characteristics; and

WHEREAS, In the 41 years since the Equal Pay Act, the gap has narrowed by less than half, from 41 cents per dollar to 22 cents, and research by the Institute for Women's Policy Research finds that recent change is due in large part to men's real wages falling, not women's wages rising; and

WHEREAS, California ranks fifth among all states in equal pay, yet it ranks 39th among all states in progress in closing the hourly wage gap, and at the current rate of change California working women will not have equal pay for another 40 years; and

WHEREAS, The consequences of the wage gap reach beyond working women and extend to their families and the economy, to the extent that, in 1999, even after accounting for differences in education, age, location, and the number of hours worked, America's working families lost \$200 billion of annual income to the wage gap, with an average of \$4,000 per family; and



WHEREAS, Women play a crucial role in maintaining the financial well-being of their families by providing a significant percentage of their household incomes and, in many cases, women head their own households; and

WHEREAS, Pay inequity results in a higher poverty rate for women, particularly in women-headed households, as evidenced by figures from the McAuley Institute which indicate that for families that are headed by a woman and have children under the age of five years, the poverty rate is an astonishing 46.4 percent; and

WHEREAS, Women currently account for 47 percent of the labor force, and by 2005 are expected to comprise 48 percent of the labor force; and

WHEREAS, Educated women are not exempt from pay disparity; and

WHEREAS, In 2001 the median weekly earnings of female full-time workers with a college degree was 72.5 percent of their male counterparts; and

WHEREAS, According to the United States Census Bureau March 2002 Current Population Survey, women with a master's degree on average earn less than men with a bachelor's degree; and

WHEREAS, The wage gap is even wider for women of color, as evidenced by a 2001 statistic that reported that African-American women earned 69 percent and Hispanic women earned 56 percent of average white male earnings; and

WHEREAS, The wage gap is also prevalent within minority communities, as shown by a 2002 report that African-American women earned 91 percent of what African-American men earned, and Hispanic women earned 88 percent of what Hispanic men earned; and

WHEREAS, Even in professions in which women comprise a majority of workers, such as nursing and teaching, men earn an average of 20 percent more than women working in these same occupations; and

WHEREAS, According to the data analysis of over 300 job classifications provided by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, women are paid less in every occupational classification for which sufficient information is available; and

WHEREAS, The wage gap continues to affect women in their senior years as lower wages result in lower pensions and incomes after retirement, and affect a woman's ability to save, thereby contributing to a higher poverty rate for elderly women; and

WHEREAS, The average 25-year-old woman who works full-time, year-round, is projected to earn \$523,000 less over the course of her career than the average 25-year-old man who works full-time, year-round; and



WHEREAS, If women were paid the same as men who work the same number of hours, have the same education and same union status, are the same age, and live in the same region of the country, then the annual family income of each of these women would rise by \$4,000, and the number of families who live below the poverty line would be reduced by half; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly and Senate of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature hereby declares April 20, 2004, to be “Equal Pay Day” in California and urges California citizens to recognize the full value and worth of women and their contributions to the California workforce; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature respectfully urges the Congress of the United States to protect the fundamental right of all American women to receive equal pay for equal work, and to continue to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Majority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States.

