

Assembly Democrats Recognize Equal Pay Day

Written by Wisconsin Assembly Democrats

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MADISON – Representative **Chris Sinicki** (D-Milwaukee), author of the Equal Pay Enforcement Act, and Assembly Democrats today recognized Equal Pay Day, which symbolizes how far into the year the average woman has to work to earn what the average man earned the previous year.

According to the National Women's Law Center, the gender wage gap costs women more than \$400,000 over the course of a 40-year career*. For women of color and Latinas, the wage gap is much higher. The same study found Latinas make \$946,800 less over their careers.



“Here in Wisconsin, women still make just 78 cents for every dollar men make,” Rep. Sinicki said. “Yet four years ago, Republicans in our state chose to repeal important legal protections that helped ensure women receive equal pay for equal work. Restoring equal pay protections would mean stronger women – and a stronger Wisconsin.”



Legislative Democrats, led by the law's authors, Rep. Sinicki and Senator **Dave Hansen**, this session put forward a bill to restore the Equal Pay Enforcement Act, which had been highly successful at helping to close Wisconsin's wage gap. Following its passage, Wisconsin became one of only a few states to see its wage gap shrink and we rose 12 places in the gender earnings parity ranking. Unfortunately, in repealing Wisconsin's equal pay protections Republicans put partisan politics and special interests ahead of Wisconsin women and the state economy.

Four years after Republicans repealed the law, the wage disparity is costing Wisconsin women an average of \$10,000 a year. The wage gap not only hurts Wisconsin women and their families – it also drags down the state economy to the tune of \$8 billion or more a year. It is estimated that more than 70,000 families headed by women live in poverty, in spite of their full-time wages.

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“Closing the wage gap is the right thing to do and it’s the smart thing to do,” Rep. **Peter Barca**, Assembly Democratic Leader, added. “Ensuring equal pay for equal work would improve our state’s lagging economy and make sure women can better support themselves and their families. Wage discrimination is unacceptable and those who experience it should have more and better opportunities to get justice.”

Reps. Sinicki and Barca encouraged the public to get involved in the Assembly Democrats’ continued efforts to ensure equal pay for equal work by signing the petition at <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/assembly/democrats/get-involved/support-equal-pay-for-equal-work/>

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*Source: National Women’s Law Center, The Lifetime Wage Gap, State by State <http://nwl.org/resources/the-lifetime-wage-gap-state-by-state/>