



June 4, 2012

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the 500,000 members of the U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce, I strongly urge you to **support the Paycheck Fairness Act (S. 3220)**. We believe that we must build on the foundation provided by the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act through the enactment of comprehensive pay equity legislation. But the Ledbetter law is just one of many tools needed to address unfair wage disparities; the Paycheck Fairness Act would take that next important step in closing the gender pay gap.

The U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce was founded to support the continued economic advancement of the millions of women in America. Our members understand that the fight for equal pay is part of the battle that all women face for economic independence. Millions of women left these very struggles to become business owners. Studies have shown that women business owners frequently provide stronger employee benefits than their male counterparts, and our members tell us that – even as business owners – they understand and respect the ongoing struggle against wage discrimination that women continue to face.

The Paycheck Fairness Act is a comprehensive bill that will create stronger incentives for employers to follow the law as well as increase penalties for violations; strengthen federal outreach, education and enforcement efforts; and prohibit retaliation against workers who ask about employers' wage practices. **Since women-owned firms pay fairly, requiring other businesses to play fairly will level the playing field for competition when it comes to paying for overhead; clearly it is time to support women as workers and as business owners.**

The Equal Pay Act currently applies to businesses of any size with \$500,000 or more in revenues, as would the provisions of the Paycheck Fairness Act. We therefore believe it is unnecessary to add any additional small business exemptions to the Paycheck Fairness Act. Given that one out of two workers nationwide works for a small business, exempting them further would significantly diminish women's civil rights protections.¹ The U.S. Women's Chamber does not believe women should completely forfeit protections against pay discrimination simply because they work for a small employer.

As the 112th Congress does its work in a troubled economy, American women business owners are looking for further action to improve their economic security. Fair pay *and* fair play are essential. As employees and business owners, women understand the profound need to actively advance and protect our civil rights. The U.S. Women's Chamber urges you to **support the Paycheck Fairness Act (S. 3220)**.

Respectfully,

Margot Dorfman, CEO
U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce

¹ Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy. (January 2011). *Frequently Asked Questions*. Retrieved May 25, 2012, from www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/sbfaq.pdf.