

**Report of the
National Women's Committee
To the
76th Convention**

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CWA

Pay Inequality

On average, women make 80 percent of what men are paid in the United States, a pay gap of 20 percent. Women have made great strides narrowing the pay gap since 1960, due largely to our progress in education and workforce participation. But at the current rate of change, women won't achieve full pay equity in 2059, according to the American Association of University Women.

And in recent years, the rate of progress has slowed, even stalled. At the current rate, women won't reach pay equity until 2152.

The pay gap varies depending on where one lives. Women in New York earn 89 percent as much as men, while the rate is 64 percent in Wyoming.

The gap also varies widely depending on one's race and ethnicity. When compared to white men, Asian American women have the smallest pay gap at 85 percent. But the gap is most expansive – at 54 percent -- when comparing wages of Hispanic and Latina women to white men.

Disabled women, typically a hard category to define, made just 68 percent when compared with non-disabled men.

Younger women, ages 20 to 24, tend to fare better in terms of pay earning 90 percent of what men make. However, this ration holds true until about the age of 35, when women's wages start to stagnate.

Although people tend to earn more as their education level increases, women's' median earnings are less than men's at every level of academic achievement. But even though American women now earn more college and post-graduate degrees than men, this still fails to eliminate the gender pay gap, according to the U.S. Department of Education. AAUW discovered that one year after graduating from college, women earned 82 percent of what their male peers make.

Why is this important?

The gender pay gap has a life-long financial effect, and is a direct cause of female poverty. In 2015, 14 percent of American women ages 18 to 64 were living below the federal poverty level, compared with 11 percent for men.

The pay gap conundrum has worsened as the family construct has changed in recent years. Between 1967 and 2012, the number of mothers contributing at least a quarter of a family's earnings increased from 28 percent to 63 percent. As wages stagnate and stall for women, the pay gap ends up affecting men and children, as well.

Educated women with student loan debt are less able to repay their loans than men, because of gender pay disparities.

The problem gets worse with age. Ten percent of women age 65 (or older) were living in poverty as of 2015. Researchers say eliminating the gender gap would cut the poverty rate of working women in half.

Even after women leave the workforce, the gender pay disparity continues to haunt them. Their Social Security, pension, and other sources of retirement income lag behind those of men. Disability and life insurance benefits are less for women, because they are based on earnings.

Why is this happening?

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, women make up 47 percent of the full- and part-time workforce, which totaled 149 million in 2015.

But there is a distinct difference in the types of work women and men do. Women are disproportionately represented in education, office and administrative support jobs, according to AAUW. Men, on the contrary, are better represented in higher-paying jobs such as construction, maintenance and repair, and production and transportation. This "occupational gender segregation" has certainly declined in the past 40 years, as women have moved into traditionally male dominated jobs. But even that integration has stalled since the early aughts.

It stands to reason that if women move into traditionally male fields, they'd close the gap. But the gap still persists in jobs such as computer programming.

Another challenge facing women: Raising a family may remove women from the workplace entirely or in part. This creates a gap in their resume and earning power. Many careers prioritize the ultimate commitment of long hours, versus flexible, non-traditional schedules. When mothers do return to the workplace, should they choose to do so, they often face the "Motherhood Penalty." Several studies have found that employers are more likely to extend lowball offers to mothers rejoining the workplace, versus those who have stayed on a full-time career tract.

Then, there's just discrimination, plain and simple. AAUW attempted to quantify this by comparing the salaries of women and men with similar qualifications – and women still earned 7 percent less than their counterparts.

What should we do?

CWA is already implementing one of the most powerful tools for combating pay inequity – the collective bargaining agreement. Unions already provide higher pay and more generous benefits to workers of all backgrounds over their non-union colleagues – with unionized workers earning an average of \$204 more per week than their non-union counterparts. This union difference is even greater when comparing the wages and benefits of union women with those of non-union women. As mentioned earlier, women working without the benefit of a collective bargaining agreement earn around 76 cents on the dollar compared to their non-union male counterparts. Union women, on the other hand, earn 94 cents on the dollar compared to union men. In addition – unionized women enjoy greater access to critical benefits like paid leave and health insurance, which cut steeply into the earnings of workers without access to such benefits.

Advanced education can lead to higher-paying jobs for women, especially those in professions typically dominated by men. Women should also learn to negotiate in an assertive manner to better reflect their worth. Union pay scales promote singularity and solidarity among the workforce and enhance transparency.

In this regard, information is power. By knowing your employer's pay scales, women can push for equal pay. Unfortunately, the Institute for Women's Policy Research found pay secrecy is common in the private sector, where 61 percent of employees are discouraged or barred from discussing wage and salary information with their colleagues. That figure compares with 14 percent of public-sector employees being discouraged from such discussions. Minnesota requires public-sector employers to conduct a pay equity study every few years, and eliminate any disparities. And federal workers can compare their pay with others at their grade level and geographical location with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

Despite the gains made by unions, there are some professions in organized labor where over-scale pay is offered. This is true within the NewsGuild, an independent sector of CWA. Based on salary information afforded to Guild negotiators prior to collective bargaining, Guild officials found that women were paid less than men at the New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal and Minneapolis Star Tribune. Using this real data, however, the Guild has been able to make a strong and well publicized push for pay equity in the newsroom as a result.

Most states, with the exception of Alabama and Mississippi, have laws that attempt to ensure that women receive equal pay for equal work. But few of these laws are enforced, and their reach varies considerably.

On the federal level, the Paycheck Fairness Act would help secure equal pay for all Americans. The bill would update the Equal Pay Act of 1963, which has had limited success in closing the wage gap due to limited enforcement tools and inadequate remedies, according to the American Civil Liberties Union.

The new iteration, introduced in the House in 2015, requires employers to prove that wage differentials are based on factors other than sex. It would prohibit retaliation against workers who ask about their employer's wage practices, or disclose their own wages to others. The measure also strengthens penalties for equal pay violations, and offers additional training for Equal Employment Opportunity Commission staff to combat wage disputes.

It is unclear how this proposed law will fare under the Trump administration. Despite this, CWA is active in numerous coalitions at the local, state, and national that fight for equal pay ordinances and legislation. Nationally, CWA advocates for these important policies in front of Congress and the Administration. Moreover, CWA Locals across the country have participated in campaigns aimed at raising the minimum wage and enacting state and local protections for paid leave.

There are also a number of other interesting laws on the state level that women could push for in a more-uniform manner. Among them: laws that prohibit "mommy-tracking" (Maryland); the prohibition of employers from asking potential employees their salary history (Massachusetts).

In the end, CWA should support organizing more workers - union women have a voice in the workplace to combat the disparity.

Money in Politics and Women

The Supreme Court's dangerous and misguided decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* opened the floodgates for unlimited spending by corporations and wealthy individuals in our political system. The ruling stated that political spending is protected under the First Amendment as free speech, thus allowing corporations and individuals to spend unlimited amounts of money on political activities as long as it is done independently of a party or candidate. The result has been an onslaught of cash poured into Political Action Committees or Super PACs – entities created specifically to funnel millions of dollars in undisclosed donations into local, state and federal elections. As a result, the 1% have been able to exercise undue influence over our political system, manipulating the outcomes of our elections to favor their interests.

This onslaught of political spending has affected not only the integrity of our democratic system, but also the policy priorities of our elected officials. While Americans support raising the minimum wage, increasing access to affordable health care, and increasing education spending in overwhelming numbers, our elected officials have instead focused on trade deals written by and for the 1% percent, and tax breaks for the wealthy. Moreover, we have seen women's reproductive rights attacked again and again in recent years and much of the source of this attack is fueled by secret money funneled into Super PACs.

By allowing the 1% to dictate our political system, we are losing major ground on women's issues. While we have made progress on some of the rights of women in this country, gender inequality persists. We cannot afford to go backwards, much less fight battles that have already been won.

One way to staunch the flow of money in politics is to establish a small donor public campaign financing system. This type of election funding system amplifies the voice of small dollar contributions from average Americans by matching each contribution with taxpayer dollars. Small donor campaign financing would level the playing field for political candidates financially, especially female candidates who have a far harder time raising money, while allowing their campaigns to focus on the issues, rather than pandering to massive financial contributors.

Moreover, *Citizens United* must be overturned. People elected to positions of power should not be influenced by the whims of wealthy donors. Allowing unfettered donations ensures politicians only pay mind

to the interests of Super PACs. The issues of working Americans must be at the center of our government - not the greed of the 1%.

CWA must Stand Up and Fight Back against dark money in politics – and we are doing so across the country. As a founding member of the Democracy Initiative, CWA has joined with The Sierra Club, the NAACP, Greenpeace, Common Cause, and the AFL-CIO to build the movement to take back our democracy by educating these diverse groups about the shared problem of massive, corporate backed blocks to our democratic process. Until we address the corrosive influence of corporate money on the policymaking of our elected officials, we as a progressive movement cannot move forward to address any of the issues that matter – be it environmental protections, strengthened collective bargaining rights, or immigration reform. Through this coalition, CWA has pushed the labor movement forward on the issue of campaign finance reform, and has raised the profile of democracy issues across the progressive spectrum. For example, in April of 2016, CWA was pivotal in the massive demonstration known as Democracy Awakening – a one day demonstration on the steps of the U.S. capitol building, which brought together over 4,000 people from 100 diverse organizations all to demand justice in the face of corporate takeover of our democracy. CWA brought the largest group of demonstrators – over 500 members traveled to Washington, D.C. to participate in this landmark event - and another 100 members took the brave step of civil disobedience.

Moreover, CWA has participated in dozens of campaigns to create small donor driven programs at the state and local level. Most recently, CWA was active in the successful campaign to bring small donor programs to Howard County and Montgomery County, Maryland; and Seattle, WA. CWA will continue to advocate for these essential programs at the state and local level, in addition to our robust advocacy efforts to pass the Fair Elections Now Act in the US Senate, and the Government by the People Act in the US House of Representatives.

The 1% are controlling our elections and therefore our government. This system has resulted in policy decisions that harm women, from a lack of paid time off to persistent income inequality to barriers for female candidates for political office. While major corporations have the money, we have the people power. We must go beyond calling on lawmakers to do the right thing and give monetarily. If every single member gave \$10 per month to COPE/PAC, imagine how much stronger our voice would be on Capitol Hill and in state legislatures across the country. Imagine how much stronger, "We The People" would be. It is time to invest in our right to democracy and make our voices heard!

Silent Discrimination: Environmental Justice/Racism

The EPA defines environmental justice as the fair treatment and involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Everyone should be entitled to the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards. With the events of the Dakota Pipeline protests and the Trump administration's environmental regulation rollbacks, it is clear that environmental justice is not a privilege enjoyed by the marginalized and the poor.

The current administration sees environmental regulations as merely "red tape" that gets in the way of big business and big profits. Already, the Trump administration has laid waste to West Virginia's protections against the coal mining industry, overturning the Stream Protection Rule which protected over 6,000 miles of streams and 52,000 acres of forest from mining runoff and required coal companies to restore any streams damaged by mining to be restored to pre-mining conditions.

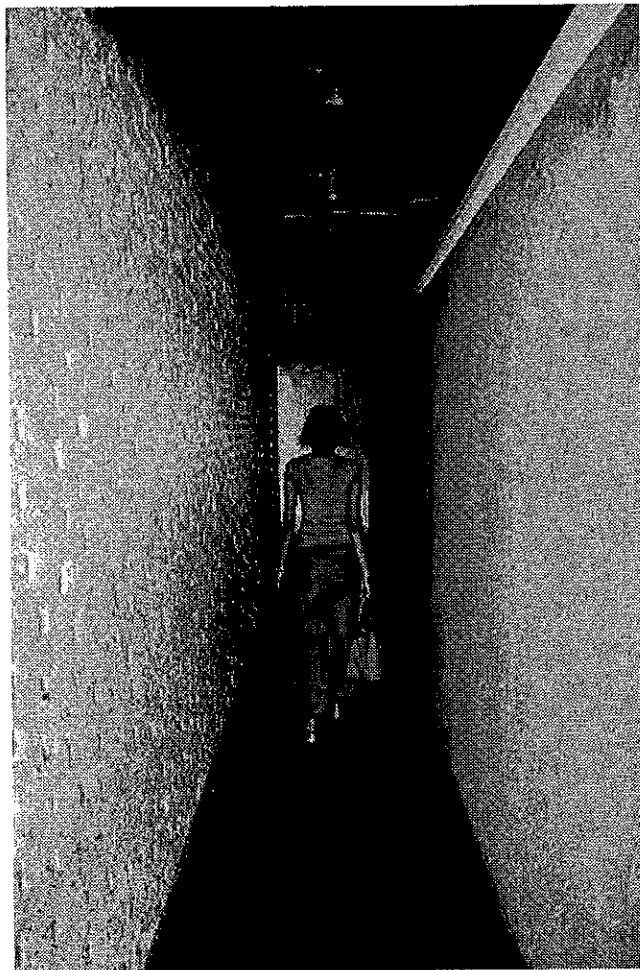
In addition to laying waste to the streams and forests of West Virginia, the Trump Administration is also pushing the Dakota Access Pipeline and the Keystone XL Pipeline. The Dakota Access Pipeline is slated to be built through Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's sacred burial and ceremonial lands and poses the danger of poisoning the drinking water of thousands of people. Thousands of protestors have traveled from across the country to stand in solidarity with the Sioux, and to block the construction of the pipeline. This solidarity and courage in the face of bitter cold and violent police backlash resulted in an injunction – temporarily preventing the pipeline from being built. With the stroke of a pen, however, President Trump signed an Executive Order to push the Dakota Access Pipeline as well as the Keystone Pipeline, ignoring American's environmental and public health concerns. The Dakota Access Pipeline is in the process of being laid under the Missouri River, where one leak could destroy clean drinking water for everyone along the Missouri River, impacting literally thousands of communities.

The war this administration is waging on our environment will have severe consequences for the environment, and will disproportionately impact those with very little power to change their circumstances - the poor and minorities. It shouldn't be only the privileged few who have access to safe, clean water to drink and clean air to breathe. How can we, as a Union, stand idly by while the Trump administration vows broad rollbacks of decades of environmental policy and reform?

We as a nation and a Union must take a stand and demand the government stop treating minority and poor communities as toxic dumping ground. CWA takes our role in this work very seriously. As active members of the Blue-Green Alliance, we work with environmental groups and other labor unions to advocate for clean energy jobs and environmental regulations that protect both workers and the environment. In addition, as members of the People's Climate Movement, we push for legislation to protect poor and minority communities from unequal impacts of environmental hazards at the state and local level. As a strong demonstration of our commitment to combating climate change, and its ravages on poor communities, CWA participated in the People's Climate March, bringing hundreds of members to march on DC in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the environmental movement. CWA must continue this important work to ensure no one lives in fear of the water they drink or the air they breathe!

Attacks on Women's Reproductive Rights

Back into the dark back alley? Not on our watch!



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In 1973, the Supreme Court handed down their decision in Roe vs Wade, which made abortion legal nationwide. Prior to this ruling, abortions were illegal in most states. At that time only three states, Alaska, New York, and Washington, had legalized abortion. This meant that women in other states seeking abortions were left with difficult and dangerous choices to make. The Supreme Court found that there is a fundamental right in the Constitution protecting the freedom of privacy¹, including choice, which the individual states cannot legislate away. This principle has been consistently upheld in the 40 years since Roe, despite many attacks.

Women's reproductive rights have been under attack in recent years and with the election of President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence it is clear that these attacks will only intensify. Donald Trump sits poised to sign into law most of the agenda of the new Republican Party. Moreover, his Vice President Mike Pence has repeatedly stated that he doesn't believe in a woman's right to choose, and is a proponent of leaving the question to the states. His approach will cause a state by state dismantling of women's reproductive rights protections. In addition to the Executive Branch, both the House and Senate are controlled by Republicans. Almost immediately upon being sworn in, the Republican-controlled Congress has begun attacking basic women's health rights, and is bent on removing national protections for abortion. We cannot permit this administration take back the rights that women have fought so hard to secure. House Republican Jody B. Hice, of Georgia, a late middle aged white male, sponsored H.R. 586. This bill declares that:

... (1) the right to life guaranteed by the Constitution is vested in each human and is a person's most fundamental right; (2) each human life begins with fertilization, cloning, or its equivalent, at which time every human has all the legal and constitutional attributes and privileges of personhood; and (3) Congress, each state, the District of Columbia, and each U.S. territory has the authority to protect all human lives...

¹ Court established a right of personal privacy protected by the due process clause that includes the right of a woman to determine whether or not to bear a child. In doing so, the Court dramatically increased judicial oversight of legislation under the privacy line of cases, striking down aspects of abortion-related laws in practically all the States, the District of Columbia, and the territories. To reach this result, the Court first undertook a lengthy historical review of medical and legal views regarding abortion, finding that modern prohibitions on abortion were of relatively recent vintage and thus lacked the historical foundation which might have preserved them from constitutional review. Then, the Court established that the word "person" as used in the due process clause and in other provisions of the Constitution did not include the unborn, and therefore the unborn lacked federal constitutional protection. Finally, the Court summarily announced that the "Fourteenth Amendment's concept of personal liberty and restrictions upon state action" includes "a right of personal privacy, or a guarantee of certain areas or zones of privacy" and that "[t]his right of privacy . . . is broad enough to encompass a woman's decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy."

This bill would effectively make abortions illegal by giving embryos autonomous rights.

Additionally, House Republican Diane Black of Tennessee sponsored H.R. 354. This bill prohibits, for a one-year period, the availability of federal funds for any purpose to Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc., or any of its affiliates or clinics, unless they certify that the affiliates and clinics will not perform, and will not provide any funds to any other entity that performs, an abortion during such period. This restriction does not apply in cases of rape or incest or where a physical condition endangers a woman's life unless an abortion is performed. This bill is clearly intended to destroy Planned Parenthood.

Safe and legal access to reproductive health care is under attack. There is an argument to be made that if there were better safety nets for impoverished people in this country — the kind of safety nets Republican politicians like Diane Black rail against — women wouldn't be in situations where they need to look to Planned Parenthood for help. In addition to her repeated attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act, Diane Black voted in 2014 to cut food stamps and voted in 2013 to require federal welfare work requirements for people in need of assistance.

Along with politicians, shadowy private entities are also waging war against women's reproductive rights. The Koch brothers have funded a network of political action groups that are calling their newest campaign "You Promised," and are prepared to spend heavily to destroy health care funding. A 2017 report by the New York Times' Jeremy Peters found the conservative political action committee, Americans for Prosperity, which has spent tens of millions of dollars in advertising opposing the Affordable Care Act, is bringing back some of the subjects of its initial ads — ordinary people who spoke about the problems with "government-run medicine" — for its new push. Moreover, it is arming activists with supporting evidence — it found, for instance, that 98 percent of Republicans in the Senate, or 51 of the 52, had voted at one point to repeal the law. They are organized and well-funded. Their strategy is "a nationwide digital advertising campaign featuring testimonials from people who say they were harmed by the Affordable Care Act."

Mr. Peters further reports that Tim Phillips, president of Koch-brothers funded "Americans for Prosperity," pointed out that the group coordinated efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act, including picking-off various parts of it during the last several years. "Congressional Republicans have promised an Obamacare repeal in unequivocal terms," Mr. Phillips said. "It's time for them to keep their promise." And the Koch

brothers promise to destroy access to health care for all but those who can afford it, including access to reproductive health care.

So how do we avoid the destruction of these fundamental rights? As is often the case, the best defense is to block your opponent's offense. We need to stop these bills long before they get to the President's desk and long before they are agenda items in our State legislatures. Some Americans don't realize that we actually have a say in what is done in our state-houses and in Congress. We need to educate, communicate and convince our members and the public to take action now.

A strategy along these lines starts with education. We need to educate ourselves, our members and the public of the importance of women's reproductive rights. We need to develop strong statements that don't equate fundamental reproductive rights with being pro-abortion. That is the tactic of folks that call themselves "pro-life."

Simultaneously, we need to pressure our members in the House and the Senate to stand up to the Koch brothers on women's reproductive rights. We can build on work already being done to flood Congressional town halls with people who resist the repeal of the Affordable Care Act. We need to resist all proposed bills, including H.R. 354 and H.R. 586, and any other proposals that seek to erode women's health care choices.

In order to protect these crucial and fundamental rights, CWA partners with Planned Parenthood, NARAL, and other reproductive rights groups to combat legislation that would restrict access to these essential health services. In addition to these important partnerships at the national and state level, each Local should organize an informational campaign aimed at mobilizing our members, as well as their families and friends, to call their representatives and remind them how important women's health issues. We must keep up the pressure on lawmakers to stop these bills. Third, each local should continue to seek out ways to support women's health programs such as Planned Parenthood with donations of money and time. Finally, each local should reach out to like-minded groups to coordinate our efforts. Together, CWA can stop the attacks on women health and reproductive rights!

Equal Access to Healthcare

Equal access to healthcare in America has long been fraught with issues of inequality, ranging from high premiums to lack of coverage for preexisting conditions. Americans have often been forced to decide between healthcare and other life necessities. Unfortunately, access to affordable healthcare has not been considered a human right in this country, like it has in most other developed nations. The enactment of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has made steps in the right direction, but it now under attack by the Trump administration and Republicans in Congress.

Prior to the enactment of the ACA, millions of Americans were unable to find insurance companies to provide coverage for them. Young Americans under the age of 26 were not eligible to be included on their parent's insurance and frequently couldn't afford insurance for themselves. As a result, many of young Americans would take a gamble and stay uninsured, hoping a medical emergency wouldn't put them in debt. In addition, Americans with preexisting conditions were ineligible for coverage. These people were among the most vulnerable because they desperately needed medical coverage to treat their conditions. Women were regularly charged higher premiums than men, causing issues with coverage for them. In a word, the healthcare system was broken.

In March of 2010, however, after a long and difficult fight, Congress passed the Affordable Care Act. The ACA ensured Access to affordable healthcare for the first time for millions of Americans. Since the passing of the ACA, access to healthcare has improved dramatically, extending coverage to over 24 million people. Young adults can remain on their parents' insurance plans up to age 26. People with preexisting conditions cannot be denied coverage. Millions of Americans also qualified for subsidies to make their premiums affordable. The ACA was a great step in the right direction.

However, the current healthcare system still has issues. Premiums continue to rise, sometimes making people choose between the tax penalty for not having insurance and the cost of the insurance. In addition, while there are subsidies to help offset the cost, some families are still struggling to find the right coverage at a reasonable price. Though the current system isn't perfect, it is a vast improvement over the former system and extends affordable, comprehensive health insurance to millions that many didn't have access before.

However, all that could change in the blink of an eye. In March of 2017 President Trump introduced his American Health Care Act. Despite promises to keep the most important aspects of the ACA, the GOP and

Trump bargained to push forward a plan that had not really considered any of those promises. Once again, those with preexisting conditions were in danger of losing coverage. Though this initial plan was never brought to a vote as many key Republicans said they would not vote for it, a new plan is once again in the works. While details are not quite known yet, what is clear is the ACA is under constant threat by the current administration.

In response to these attacks on affordable health care, voters have come out in droves to town halls across the country to let their representatives in Congress know how they feel about the ACA and what a repeal of it would mean to them and their families. Some Republican representatives, facing a barrage of angry Americans determined to have their voices heard, cancelled their town halls to avoid the backlash. These representatives seem to be more concerned with their own political interests than those of the people they represent. If the ACA is repealed, an estimated 24 million people will be without health insurance. Premiums for those who do have healthcare coverage will continue to climb.

Healthcare should not be a privilege for those who can afford it, it is a human right. CWA takes the right to health care seriously – bargaining for strong health benefits in all of our contracts. Beyond our work at the bargaining table, CWA was central in the fight to pass the Affordable Care Act, pushing for even stronger protections in the law. Moreover, since the ACA's passage, we have fought tirelessly against the assault on the health care system at every turn – driving thousands of calls and petition signatures, as well as organizing dozens of protests across the country. We will continue to push for a robust and effective health care system that provides quality care for all, regardless of race, gender, geography or income.

If Congress could set aside their political differences and see what the country really needs rather than what insurance companies want, we might be able to enact real, meaningful change. Americans should never have to choose between putting food on the table and buying life-saving medicine. The unchecked greed of the insurance and prescription companies needs to be stopped. When something as simple and critical as an epinephrine pen becomes too expensive for the people who need it, something is seriously wrong. When prescription companies continue to reap record setting profits, and people are dying for want of life saving medication, it is time for the government to step in and for people to demand change.

Many other countries have created solutions to the same problems plaguing our healthcare system today. If we were to examine the healthcare systems of countries like Canada, England, Germany, Denmark, or Australia, we could certainly find a system that works for America. The answer is not simple or easy, but it

is not impossible. We as union members, and as Americans, need to stand up and demand our concerns be heard by lawmakers. We cannot sit idly by while legislators sell our health to the highest bidder. We must stay involved and engaged in the discussions and we must fight for what we deserve!

Universal Basic Income

Universal Basic Income, or UBI, is a bold policy vision with the ability to alleviate economic instability and reduce poverty. This is a financial system in which all citizens of a country, regardless of income level, receive a stipend each month that covers the basic costs of essentials like housing and health care. UBI would be paid in addition to any income earned from working. When the government guarantees basic living expenses are met each month through more equitable distribution of wealth, individuals achieve greater security and greater freedom. When citizens feel they have a strong sense of security and freedom, there will be greater overall stability within the country, leading to a stronger economy where upward mobility is possible.

As with any new system or idea, there are many who question the feasibility of UBI. Some believe that UBI will remove the incentive for citizens to work. However, this is unlikely because as one leading researcher in the field states "[UBI] would not offer a level of income which would remove the necessity of work, but rather one that would address some of the issues of insecurity." Another field expert acknowledges that if everyone has basic income, they would only be taxed on their earned income. This would make citizens more inclined to accept low wage jobs. In order for our society and economy to be successful, people need to be willing to work at all wage levels. Many experts believe that Universal Basic Income will actually create an incentive to work.

In order to make a change, there needs to be a reform set into motion. Just like many reforms in our past, there will always be positives and negatives and it is important to weigh all consequences and be prepared to manage them. The first step in reform is to create a pilot program to investigate the amount of funding required to provide all citizens with Universal Basic Income, which will vary based on location. Many that oppose of Universal Basic Income state that funding and support would be prohibitive to the success of this program. However, the need for many public spending programs, such as HUD and food stamps, would be eliminated by Universal Basic Income. These savings could be used, in part, to fund the new system. Moreover, there are many avenues for procuring the funding necessary for Universal Basic Income. For example, the Alaska Permanent Fund distributes an annual check to all Alaska residents and derives its funding from the State's oil revenue. It is not enough to simply create the pilot programs - it will also be crucial for the pilot programs to report and inform the government of all results. In order for our society to effectively implement Universal Basic Income, it needs to be consistently reviewed and adjusted.

Why is it so important to consider Universal Basic Income now? Our society is dangerously close to becoming economically unstable. Even individuals that work 40 hours per week live in poverty. As Guy Standing – a UBI advocate - stated in an interview with Business Insider, “The old system has broken. Wages will continue to decline. Insecurities will continue to grow. That is the recipe for economic instability.” In order for improvement to occur, we must demand that all citizens receive a basic monthly income provided by the government. It is important to start relieving the income insecurities of our citizens. We must reduce income inequality. Universal Basic Income doesn't need to be the only solution; however, it is crucial to have a new, more equitable income distribution system.

Transgender Rights are Human Rights

Transgender people are from every region of the United States and around the world. They are from every racial and ethnic background, every faith and in every community. They are your coworkers, your neighbors, your friends, and your family. There are approximately 1.4 million transgender adults living in the United States and they are human beings that deserve to have respect and live without fear of discrimination or violence for who they are.

Transgender people are people whose identity is different from the gender they were assigned at birth. Unfortunately, transgender people face serious discrimination and mistreatment at work, school and even within their own families and communities.

Transgender individuals are more likely to be fired or denied a job. This affects them economically as well as emotionally. They frequently face harassment and bullying at school. They are more likely to be homeless or live in extreme poverty, be denied housing or access to a shelter, be incarcerated or targeted by law enforcement and face abuse and violence. Gender non-conforming individuals are even under continuous attack in the most basic function of life -- using the restroom.

President Obama made some progress in granting transgender people a sense of equality and positive visibility through executive orders aimed at granting protections and rights to the LGBTQ community. In addition, there has been a wider acceptance of LGBTQ culture in mainstream America. Despite the many gains the LGBTQ community has won in the past decade, a stroke of a pen could subject the transgender community to huge setbacks.

The right to use the bathroom that aligns with a transgender individual's identified sex rather than the sex arbitrarily assigned at birth is one that is constantly under threat. Many cases have been brought to court in the hopes of securing this right. One court battle poised to set a favorable precedent was the case of Gavin Grimm, a 17 year old transgender boy who sued the Gloucester County School Board for the right to use the boys' bathroom and won in the Fourth Circuit Court in Virginia. The lower court based their decision on the Obama Administrations view that Title IX, the 1972 law that prohibits schools that receive Federal funding from discriminating on the basis of sex and requires that schools treat transgender students in a way consistent with their gender identity. Transgender advocates were hopeful that the Supreme Court

would hear the case of Gavin Grimm and settle this question. Unfortunately, however, the Trump administration rescinded the Obama administration's brief, and the Supreme Court declined to hear the case this term, instead delaying a ruling and sending the case back to the lower court for reconsideration.

Thus, the fight continues to rage in the lower courts and in the States. At least thirteen states have attempted to pass dangerous legislation that would require people to use the restroom indicated on their birth certificate rather than the gender they identify with. These measures are introduced under the guise of protecting children from sexual predators – a complete fiction simply used as a scare tactic. In reality, transgender people have been using public restrooms and locker rooms for decades without incident. Only recently has this become a focal point of conversation and debate. These bills, and the vicious rhetoric surrounding them, feed on dangerous stereotypes of LGBTQ individuals.

The wave of hate directed toward transgender people has ignited a political firestorm. We have to stand with our brothers and sisters in the transgender community and tell our elected officials that they need to stop playing politics with transgender lives, health and safety. We need to send a strong message that we will not allow the blatant discrimination and bullying of anyone. We have to keep up the public pressure and educate those who do not understand. Laws alone won't protect our transgender brothers and sisters without increased public awareness, outspoken allies and a society that values the dignity of transgender people. Everyone, including transgender people should be treated equally under the law. Like all nondiscrimination protections, trans-inclusive policies don't require anyone to change their religious beliefs, they simply ensure that transgender people can live, work, study and participate in public life according to their identities.

CWA has stood at the forefront on the issue of transgender rights – partnering with such organizations as our union family at Pride at Work, and our allies at the National Center for Transgender Equality. As board members of Pride at Work, CWA has been a strong voice in the fight for stringent protections for LGBTQ workers in all union contracts, as well as providing solidarity to LGBTQ union workers. Moreover, at the local, state, and national level, CWA fights tirelessly for non-discrimination ordinances and the Equality Act – a provision to amend the Civil Rights Act to include sexual orientation as a protected class. This is a long overdue change that is particularly important now as the Department of Justice makes moves to exclude protections for LGBTQ individuals through the Civil Rights Act. The Equality Act would have a profound impact on the job security of transgender workers by making these protections explicit. In conclusion, CWA

must continue to stand with all of our LGBTQ brothers and sisters, and demand equal protection under the law.

Respectfully Submitted,

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