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Testimony before the New York State Department of Labor June 26, 2017

Submitted by Dina Bakst Co-Founder & Co-President of A Better Balance: The Work & Family Legal Center

I want to start by thanking Lieutenant Governor Hochul and Commissioner Reardon for convening this hearing to bring attention to the persistent wage gap faced by women, especially women of color, in New York State and the cycle of poverty the gap perpetuates for low-income working women. The Cuomo Administration has been at the vanguard of developing concrete solutions to combat the wage gap—this hearing is testament to your unwavering commitment to ensuring that the women of New York are afforded equal pay for equal work. My organization, A Better Balance (ABB)—a non-profit legal advocacy organization—was founded with the goal of ensuring workers can meet the conflicting demands of their jobs and family needs, and ensuring that women and mothers can earn the fair and equal wages they deserve in order to provide for themselves and their families.

ABB has been proud to work in partnership with you to advance many of these pioneering solutions, as leaders of the coalitions to pass both the Women's Equality Act, and most recently, New York's groundbreaking Paid Family Leave law that goes into effect this January. We are also leaders of a national campaign, Equal Pay Today!, that challenges barriers that have allowed gender discrimination in pay to persist in every corner of the country.



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I. KEY CAUSES OF THE GENDER WAGE GAP

Why are women paid less than men for equal work, and why is the wage gap even worse for mothers and women of color? The wage gap is a multi-faceted problem. Closing it requires addressing multiple forms of discrimination, including pregnancy discrimination, caregiver discrimination, and unequal compensation for the same work. Closing the wage gap also requires addressing other factors that contribute to its persistence. In my limited time this afternoon, I will highlight a few key drivers of the gender wage gap, and solutions that exist, and hope we can build upon, to promote justice and equality for New York women and their families.

1. PREGNANCY & CAREGIVER DISCRIMINATION

Through our free legal clinic for low-income pregnant women and caregivers, we at ABB see, up close, how bias and institutional barriers penalizing pregnant women and mothers in the workplace deny women equal opportunities, harm families, and threaten our State's economic growth. In fact, the pay gap and income inequality share a common core—one we call "the pregnancy penalty": bias and inflexibility towards women in the workplace that starts when they become pregnant and snowballs into lasting economic disadvantages.¹

Women like Armanda Legros, an ABB client who was pushed out of her job driving an armored truck in Long Island when she was six months pregnant and asked for a lifting accommodation, per doctor's orders, for a pulled muscle.² The result was devastating. She tried to get another job, but at that point was visibly showing and employers refused to hire her. Her

¹ Dina Bakst & Phoebe Taubman, A Better Balance, *The Pregnancy Penalty: How Motherhood Drives Inequality & Poverty in New York City* 1 (2014) [hereinafter *ABB Pregnancy Penalty Report*].

² *Id*. at 6.



40 Worth Street, 10th Floor, New York, NY 10013 | t: 212.430.5982 | info@abetterbalance.org | abetterbalance.org | credit score dropped and she almost lost her apartment. Ms. Legros had no choice but to apply for public assistance, and fainted in line while waiting to do so. Then, at eight and a half months pregnant, her health insurance was cut off. She was forced to apply for Medicaid and when the baby was born, struggled to provide food for him and her four-year-old. When she tried to get a

new job, they would only give her part-time hours, barely enough to cover childcare costs.

And women like Nadine, a new mother in Westchester who was passed over for a promotion to a manager position. Despite her stellar qualifications, her boss told her she wasn't right for the job and she should "stay home and take care of her baby." One of the most cited studies on the topic found that mothers were recommended for significantly lower starting salaries, perceived as less competent, and less likely to be recommended for hire than non-mothers. In the low-wage workplace, caregiver discrimination is often especially blatant. We have heard from countless women who have had their hours slashed, or eliminated all together, because they chose to start a family.

2. RIGID & UNPREDICTABLE WORK SCHEDULES & LACK OF QUALITY, AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE

Rigid and unpredictable workplace schedules also routinely serve to push women, especially mothers, out of the labor force. For higher-earning mothers, long work hours and the stigma associated with flexible or part-time work often shove them into less lucrative jobs or out of the

³ *Id.* at 9 (citing Shelley J. Correll, Stephan Benard, and In Paik, *Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty?*, 112 American J. of Sociology 1297 (2007), http://gender.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/motherhoodpenalty.pdf).



40 Worth Street, 10th Floor, New York, NY 10013 | t: 212.430.5982 | info@abetterbalance.org | abetterbalance.org | workforce all together. Middle-income mothers contend with highly supervised schedules, where they might be fired for being a few minutes late, and face mandatory unscheduled overtime that can throw carefully constructed, tag-team childcare plans into disarray. 5

Lower-income mothers often face the most acute work-family challenges, yet they are least likely to be able to control their work schedules. Approximately half of low-wage hourly workers report having limited control over their work hours. The consequences are profound: many mothers find it impossible to arrange safe, affordable child care at a moment's notice and must exit the workforce, with no path for reentry. Other women are forced to work part-time, but this flexibility comes at a cost: part-time workers often face an earnings penalty when compared with their full-time counterparts and they are less likely to qualify for benefits such as paid leave, health insurance and employer-sponsored retirement plans.

We have seen this disastrous dynamic unfold in the case of our current client Karina Flete.

Karina is a single mother and the sole caregiver for her three-year-old daughter with special needs. She has worked for the New York City Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications as a 311 customer service representative for more than three years. After her daughter started school last fall, Karina requested that her 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. schedule be shifted by one hour to ensure that she would be able to arrive to work on time after placing her

⁴ *Id*. at 5.

⁵ *Id*.

⁶ *Id*.

⁷ Joint Economic Committee Democratic Staff, *Gender Pay Inequality: Consequences for Women, Families and the Economy* 16 (2016), https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/0779dc2f-4a4e-4386-b847-9ae919735acc/gender-pay-inequality----us-congress-joint-economic-committee.pdf.

⁸ ABB Files Discrimination Charge Against New York City on Behalf of Single Mother, A Better Balance (Mar. 29, 2017), http://www.abetterbalance.org/abb-files-discrimination-charge-against-nyc-on-behalf-of-single-mother/.



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daughter on the school bus. Karina knew that her coworkers worked many different shifts at the 24-hour call center. She also knew that other workers had requested and received schedule changes in the past. Yet her supervisor told her that only overnight shifts were available and suggested she work overnight. Karina explained that working at night was impossible due to her parental responsibilities and the fact that she could not afford nighttime childcare.

She was stunned when shortly thereafter, the agency notified her that her schedule was being changed to 3:00 to 11:00 p.m.—a shocking reprisal for asking that her daytime schedule be modified and one clearly intended to force her off the job. To make matters worse, after learning that she is currently not earning income, Karina's child's father filed a petition in family court against her to change their existing custody arrangements.

Karina's case is a prime example of how discrimination against caregivers and rigid work rules perpetuates economic inequality for women, particularly women of color. When low-wage working mothers cycle in and out of the workforce, they lose not only wages, but also seniority and other benefits of continuous employment that would promote economic stability for their families. For these women, the pregnancy penalty is steep: each new child brings a pay penalty of fifteen percent, compared to four percent for higher-wage earning mothers. Even worse, low-earning mothers suffer the largest pay penalties at the moment when physical care of their children is most intense: the pay penalty per preschooler is almost five times as great for a low-

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⁹ See ABB Pregnancy Penalty Report, supra note 1, at 6.



40 Worth Street, 10th Floor, New York, NY 10013 | t: 212.430.5982 | info@abetterbalance.org | abetterbalance.org income mother as for her higher-earning counterpart. The long-term financial consequences for families can be devastating.

3. ACCESS TO PAID SICK DAYS AND PAID FAMILY LEAVE

Most workers will have to provide care to a loved one at some point in their lives, but the United States has no national paid leave law to help them stay afloat in these critical life moments. Without paid leave to help them weather family health emergencies, almost one in five low wage working mothers have lost their jobs due to sickness or caring for a family member. In fact, half of women with less than a high school education "quit" their jobs in order to bond with new babies, reporting that without paid leave they had no other choice. These workforce exits result in longer gaps in work histories with a negative impact on future wages. In contrast, new mothers with access to paid sick days and paid family leave are more likely to return to work and earn higher wages.

4. FAILURE TO PAY MEN AND WOMEN EQUALLY FOR COMPARABLE WORK

Women, especially women of color, begin earning less at the very outset of their careers. Even after accounting for other factors such as occupation, major, GPA, and hours worked, female college graduates in the U.S. earn nearly seven percent less than male college graduates one year after graduation. That number jumps to 12 percent a decade after graduation. The

¹¹ *Id*.

 $^{^{10}}$ *Id*.

 $^{^{12}}$ Id.

¹³ Id

¹⁴ Dina Bakst & Sarah Brafman, *Bill would make job applicant's salary history irrelevant*, Times Union (June 20, 2017), http://www.timesunion.com/tuplus-opinion/article/Bill-would-make-job-applicant-s-salary-history-11234112.php.



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wage gap also cuts across industries and education levels. For example, women with doctoral degrees earn less than men with master's degrees, and women with master's degrees are paid less than men with bachelor's degrees.¹⁵

In job interviews, employers often ask applicants what they made previously and continue to set salaries based on an applicant's past salary. When employers do this, women are immediately at a disadvantage when it comes to negotiating and setting salary rates, and their lower pay follows them from job to job. The practice of asking about salary history thus perpetuates and reinforces wage inequality. At the same time, wage discrimination often remains undetected due to policies and practices that voluntarily punish employees for sharing salary information or otherwise curb wage transparency. The negative impact on women's earnings is significant.¹⁶

5. OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION

Occupational segregation of the sexes—with male-dominated fields tending to pay more and women-dominated fields tending to pay less—is one of the most important measurable factors explaining the present wage gap between men and women in the United States.¹⁷ Within the paid labor force, women are underrepresented in higher wage occupations and overrepresented in fields like nursing, teaching, social work, home health care, and others that

¹⁵ See National Partnership for Women and Families, Fact Sheet: American's Women and the Wage Gap 2 (2017), http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/workplace-fairness/fair-pay/americas-women-and-the-wage-gap.pdf.

¹⁶ See Institute for Women's Policy Research, Pay Secrecy and Wage Discrimination (2014), https://iwpr.org/wpcontent/uploads/wpallimport/files/iwpr-export/publications/Q016%20(1).pdf; see also Ariane Hegewisch et al., Institute for Women's Policy Research, The Gender Wage Gap in New York State and Its Solutions 4 (2011), https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/wpallimport/files/iwpr-export/publications/C390.pdf.

¹⁷ See Ariane Hegewisch & Heidi Hartmann, Institute for Women's Policy Research, Occupational Segregation and the Gender Wage Gap: A Job Half Done 11 (2014), https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/wpallimport/files/iwpr-export/publications/C419.pdf.



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involve the direct provision of physical and emotional care.¹⁸ Yet workers in those fields are notoriously undercompensated for their work. Jobs performed predominantly by women and people of color are systematically underpaid because of historic discrimination.¹⁹ For example, some school districts pay teaching assistants less than cleaners despite the fact that teaching assistants are required to have associate's degrees and cleaners are not.²⁰ The disparate earnings between female and male dominated fields are a key contributor to the wage gap.

The disparity is especially evident in the municipal workforce. For example, in New York City, women employed in New York City's municipal government face a gender wage gap that is three times larger than that of women in the private sector.²¹ While, on average, women in the City's municipal workforce earn 92 percent of what men in the municipal workforce earn, when you account for overtime and other pay, the wage gap more than doubles.²² Moreover, women are concentrated in agencies that comprise the City's lowest paying jobs.²³

II. SOLUTIONS TO PAY EQUITY IN NEW YORK

In February of this year, Governor Cuomo expressed his pride "that New York is continuing to lead the country forward in the march toward economic justice." New York has been at the forefront of addressing issues impacting women's economic security, from the passage of the

¹⁸ *Id.* at 15–16, 18–19.

¹⁹ Equal Pay Coalition NYC/NYWA, *Call to Action: Pay Equity Resource Guide*, http://www.lwvny.org/advocacy/pay-equity/2010/PayEquityGuide061510.pdf. ²⁰ *Id*.

²¹ Letitia James, N.Y.C. Public Advocate's Office, *Policy Report: Advancing Pay Equity in New York City* 2 (2016), http://pubadvocate.nyc.gov/sites/advocate.nyc.gov/files/opa_pay_equity_report_final.pdf. ²² *Id.* at 9.

 $^{^{23}}$ *Id*

²⁴ Press Release, *Governor Cuomo Announces Regulations to Implement New York's Nation-Leading Paid Family Leave Program*, NY (February 22, 2017), https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-regulations-implement-new-yorks-nation-leading-paid-family-leave.



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Women's Equality Act, minimum wage, to paid family leave. But we are not done. Closing the gender wage gap is a key step in this march toward economic justice. New York can lead in this fight both by enforcing existing laws and by passing even stronger laws to help close the wage gap. This multi-faceted problem needs a multi-pronged solution.

1. Paid Family Leave Enforcement

New York's paid family leave is the strongest in the nation. Beginning in January 2018, most private sector workers will be able to take up to 8 weeks of job-protected time off to bond with a new child or care for a seriously ill family member. ²⁵ One of the greatest strengths of the law is that the bonding leave benefit applies to both parents in a two-parent household.²⁶

The State must ensure that both men and women understand that they may take equal amounts of leave. If men take leave in equal rates to women, and taking leave becomes a norm for all parents, this will reduce discrimination women often experience for taking leave. Moreover, to ensure effective implementation, workers, especially low-income parents, must understand their rights under the law and employers must understand their obligations to employees.

2. Enforcement of New York's Nursing Mothers in the Workplace Act

Under New York Labor Law, employers of public and private sector workers must provide nursing mothers with break time to pump breast milk at work for up to three years after the birth of the child.²⁷ Moreover, employers must provide nursing mothers with a private space with a

²⁵ N.Y. Workers' Comp. Law § 204.

²⁶ *Id*. at § 203.

²⁷ N.Y. Lab. Law § 206-c.



40 Worth Street, 10th Floor, New York, NY 10013 | t: 212.430.5982 | info@abetterbalance.org | abetterbalance.org | chair and a table, other than a bathroom, to pump. 28 Many employees are still unaware of their rights under the law and employers remain unaware of their obligations under the law. The Department of Labor should engage in a renewed public awareness campaign to educate employees about their rights under the law and devote more resources to enforcing the law.

3. Increased Enforcement of New York's Pregnant Worker Fairness Act and Familial Status Anti-Discrimination Law

Two relatively recent New York State laws afford protections to pregnant workers and caregivers and also need to be more heavily publicized and enforced. First, under New York State Human Rights Law, employers have to provide reasonable accommodations for workers with pregnancy-related conditions to make changes to their work duties or schedule in order to stay healthy, unless doing so would be an "undue hardship" on the business.²⁹ Additionally, under Human Rights Law, it is also illegal for employers to discriminate against employees based on familial status, i.e. they are a parent to a child under 18.³⁰ Yet, we often still receive calls on our legal hotline from workers, such as Karina Flete, struggling to receive accommodations at work or facing discrimination due to their family caregiving responsibilities. This points to the need for the State Division of Human Rights to continue strong education and enforcement of these laws so that they exist in more than just name only.

²⁸ *Id*.

²⁹ N.Y. Exec. Law § 292(21-e).

³⁰ N.Y. Exec. Law §296(1)–(1-a).



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4. Enforcing New York's Equal Pay Law

New York's recently strengthened equal pay law tightens exceptions in the previous version of the labor law, which allowed employers to cite nearly any factor other than sex—legitimate or otherwise—to justify pay differentials among men and women. Under the new law, however, if your employer pays you differently than someone of the opposite sex, then that differential has to be "job related" and "consistent with business necessity." Moreover, under the law employers cannot prohibit you from inquiring about, or discussing, or disclosing your wages or the wages of a co-worker at work. Employers and employees need more of an educational primer on the scope of these laws and the forms pay discrimination can take, such as being passed over for a promotion, retaliated against for asking a co-worker about their paycheck, or receiving fewer benefits than male co-workers.

III. NEW POLICIES NEEDED

 New York must address the problems of unpredictable and abusive scheduling, focusing on industries such as retail, food service, and health care.

Inflexible schedules are a prime contributor to the wage gap. The State should build on the Fair Work Week legislation passed last month in New York City and enact legislation allowing all workers to request alternative work arrangements without risking retaliation.³³ The city legislation, which A Better Balance worked closely on, insures that fast food workers will have

³¹ N.Y. Lab. Law § 194.

³² Id

³³ Press Release, Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Mark-Viverito Announce That New York City Is The Largest City To End Abusive Scheduling Practices In The Fast Food And Retail Industries (May 30, 2017), http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/372-17/mayor-de-blasio-speaker-mark-viverito-that-new-york-city-the-largest-city-end#/0.



40 Worth Street, 10th Floor, New York, NY 10013 | t: 212.430.5982 | info@abetterbalance.org | abetterbalance.org | advance notice of their schedules, will have enough time between shifts to rest and will have access to hours they need to support themselves and their families and that retail workers will no longer need to deal with the uncertainty of on call scheduling, so disruptive to the lives of workers and their families. The State should consider similar legislation to extend these rights to all employees in the State.

2. New York State must pass a law banning employers from asking about or relying on salary history when setting salary rates.

In August 2016, Massachusetts became the first state to pass a law banning employers from asking prospective employees about salary history. Since then, Oregon, Delaware, New York City, Philadelphia, and Puerto Rico have passed similar laws.³⁴ Such legislation, which would prevent employers from asking for, or relying on an applicant's previous salary to set salary rates, would also build upon the Executive Order Governor Cuomo signed in January 2017 requiring all New York State entities to adopt salary history blind hiring practices.³⁵

Many New York employers, including Salesforce, Kickstarter, and General Assembly, already acknowledge an applicant's salary should be based on their relevant experience and the value they bring to the job they are being hired to do, not their past salary.³⁶ In addition to this

³⁴ See H.B. 2005, 79th Leg. Assembly (Or. 2017), HS 1, 149th Gen. Assembly (Del. 2017), 2017 P.R. Act 16; N.Y.C. Int. 1253-2016; Phila., Pa. Code Tit. IX, § 9-1131 (2017).

³⁵ N.Y. Exec Order 161 (Jan. 9, 2017),

https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/EO 161.pdf.

³⁶ See A Better Balance, Fact Sheet: New York 2017 Equal Pay Measures: Why We Need a Law Prohibiting Employers from Asking About Salary History (2017), http://www.abetterbalance.org/resources/fact-sheet-new-york-2017-equal-pay-measures-why-we-need-a-law-prohibiting-employers-from-asking-about-salary-history/; see also Jena McGregor, New York City just banned bosses from asking this sensitive question, The Washington Post (Apr. 6, 2017), https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/on-leadership/wp/2017/04/06/new-york-city-just-banned-bosses-from-asking-this-sensitive-question/?utm term=.1cfe5e74a100.



practice helping businesses recruit the best talent, it will also help avoid costly pay discrimination litigation based on employers relying on salary history to set wages. A mix of recent court decisions on the issue leave employers exposed to liability—a clear legislative standard will provide the clarity and certainly employers need to run their business.³⁷ The passage of this crucial legislation would not only help further wage equality in New York State

3. The State must build on the middle class child-care tax cuts and guarantee affordable childcare to all New York families.

but also set an important precedent for other states across the country.

New York is in a childcare crisis. Currently, the average annual cost for center-based infant care in New York State is \$14,144, an exorbitant sum for many working families.³⁸ With the recent passage of legislation enacting a childcare availability task force, the State can now begin to take steps to address this problem by collecting data on the State's current childcare scheme.³⁹ The work of the taskforce must then translate into the development of a new comprehensive statewide strategy for the expansion of affordable, quality childcare for all families and children in the State.

³⁷ See A Better Balance, Fact Sheet: New York 2017 Equal Pay Measures: Why We Need a Law Prohibiting Employers from Asking About Salary History (2017), http://www.abetterbalance.org/resources/fact-sheet-new-york-2017-equal-pay-measures-why-we-need-a-law-prohibiting-employers-from-asking-about-salary-history/.

³⁸ Parents and the High Cost of Childcare: 2016 Report, Child Care Aware of America.

³⁹ A.7726A/S.5929A, 240th Leg. Sess. (2017),

 $http://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?default_fld=\&bn=A07726\&term=2017\&Summary=Y\&Actions=Y\&Text=Y\&Committee\%26nbspVotes=Y\&Floor\%26nbspVotes=Y.$



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4. To address occupational segregation, New York must expand data transparency requirements to private sector businesses and offer more extensive job training to women and girls.

In January 2017, Governor Cuomo signed Executive Order 162, requiring all state contractors to report information on the job titles, compensation, gender, race, and ethnicity of all their employees in all state contracts. ⁴⁰ Executive Order 162 requires that all New York State contractors and subcontractors disclose "detailed workforce utilization reports" on a quarterly basis that include the job titles and compensation information for every employee working on a State contract. ⁴¹ The Legislature should build on the Governor's executive order and require this same transparency from private sector businesses. Reporting this data will establish a model of transparency to ensure that contractors are held accountable for gender and race disparities in hiring and compensation. By gathering this data, the State will be able to better tackle the root causes of occupational segregation.

Moreover, to address occupational segregation, the State should develop targeted training and employment programs to assist women and girls in overcoming barriers to entering non-traditional fields. Furthermore, such programs should be developed in tandem with programs that encourage the recruitment and retention of women in such fields.

5. Allocate more resources to the Department of Labor and Division of Human Rights for enforcement.

⁴⁰ N.Y. Exec. Order 162 (Jan. 9, 2017),

https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/EO_162.pdf.

 $^{^{41}}$ Id.



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In order to ensure that the workplace and anti-discrimination laws already in place are properly publicized and enforced, the Department of Labor (DOL) and Division of Human Rights (DHR) must have adequate resources to investigate potential violations of the law. We would recommend increasing the budgets of both the DOL and DHR's enforcement offices.

6. Enact legislation that supports working families, including paid sick leave and the elimination of the tipped minimum wage.

Under the New York City Earned Sick Time Act, a law in which A Better Balance led advocacy efforts, employers are required to provide up to 40 hours of job-protected paid time off if the worker or a family member is ill or injured.⁴² No worker should be forced to choose between his or her job and their own health or the health of a family member. Seven states and 32 localities have already passed paid sick time laws.⁴³ It is time for New York to afford the same right to all workers throughout the State.

The State should also abolish the separate minimum wage for tipped workers and set one minimum wage for all workers so that they are guaranteed a livable wage.⁴⁴ Unsurprisingly, the tipped worker industry is predominantly female. Nearly seventy percent of tipped workers are women, a large portion are women of color, and forty percent are mothers.⁴⁵ The tipped minimum wage is yet another mechanism perpetuating the wage gap.

⁴³ A Better Balance, *Overview of Paid Sick Time Laws in the United States* (2016), http://www.abetterbalance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/PSDchartNovember.pdf.

⁴² N.Y.C. Admin. Code §§ 20-911-20-925.

⁴⁴ See Fact Sheet: Minimum Wage for Tipped Workers, New York State Department of Labor (2016), https://labor.ny.gov/formsdocs/factsheets/pdfs/p717.pdf.

⁴⁵ See Restaurant Opportunities Centers United, Forward Together, et al. *The Glass Floor: Sexual Harassment in the Restaurant Industry. New York, NY: Restaurant Opportunities Centers United* (2014), http://rocunited.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/REPORT_The-Glass-Floor-Sexual-Harassment-in-the-Restaurant-Industry2.pdf.



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7. Ensuring New York women have access to the affordable reproductive health care they need.

Finally, the State must work to ensure that women have full control over their reproductive lives. This is essential to women's equality. To that end, the Legislature should pass the Reproductive Health Act (RHA) and Comprehensive Contraception Coverage Act (CCCA), to remove the regulation of abortion from the criminal code and codify *Roe v. Wade* in state law, and protect access to affordable contraception. When women can control their fertility, they are more likely to invest in education and increase their representation in non-traditional jobs, resulting in higher wages.

CONCLUSION

All too often, the gender wage gap is misunderstood or mischaracterized. I thank the Department of Labor and Governor's Office for taking the time to study the problem in a nuanced and thoughtful way. A Better Balance looks forward to working with the Governor's Office, Department of Labor, and Division of Human Rights to effectuate the above-proposed solutions. Unless we take active steps to close the gender wage gap, women will not achieve wage parity until 2059.⁴⁷ We cannot, and will not, let that happen. I thank you for taking the time to study and combat this problem.

⁴⁶ New York Civil Liberties Union, *Press Release: State Assembly Approves Reproductive Health Protections Ahead Of Trump Presidency* (Jan. 18, 2017), https://www.nyclu.org/en/press-releases/state-assembly-approves-reproductive-health-protections-ahead-trump-presidency.

⁴⁷ Institute for Women's Policy Research, *Women's Median Earnings as a Percent of Men's Median Earnings*, 1960–2014 (Full-time, Year-round Workers) with Projection for Pay Equity in 2059, at 1 (2015), http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/equal-pay-projection-2059.