

On Equal Pay Day, Rep. Rothman Looks Forward to Voting for Paycheck Fairness Act

For Immediate Release: April 24, 2007

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(Washington, DC)— Equal Pay Day marks the time of year in which the wages paid to American women "catch up" to the wages paid to men from the previous year. In other words, because the average woman earns less for the same work, she must work longer for the same amount of pay. This year, Equal Pay Day falls on April 24th and Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ) is hopeful that the new Democratic-led House will take action on the Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 1338) - legislation to provide more effective remedies to women who are not paid equal wages for equal work.

"Women have the right to equal pay and that right must be upheld. I strongly support the Paycheck Fairness Act and believe that the new Democratic-led Congress can and should pass the bill this year," said Rothman, who is a proud co-sponsor of the legislation.

Specifically, the Paycheck Fairness Act, which was introduced by Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), increases penalties against employers who discriminate in the payment of wages; enhances the Department of Labor's outreach and training programs to work with employers to eliminate pay disparities; and enables employees to share salary information with their co-workers. It also requires the Department of Labor to continue collecting and disseminating information about women workers and creates a new grant program to help strengthen the negotiation skills of girls and women.

"There is absolutely no good reason for any lawmaker or citizen to be opposed to equal pay for equal work. Yet, I was stunned by Republican leaders who consistently blocked the Paycheck Fairness Act over the last several Congresses," added Rothman. "Today, in honor of Equal Pay Day, the House Education and Labor Committee held a hearing on the bill's importance and I look forward to the day that I finally get to vote in favor of it on the floor of the House of Representatives. Women have waited far too long for this legislation to pass."

Provisions in the Paycheck Fairness Act build on the Equal Pay Act, the first legislation to address the practice of paying female employees less than their male counterparts for the same job. When President John F. Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act into law on June 10, 1963, women earned only 59 cents on average for every dollar earned at the same job by men. In 2006, women still earned about 77 cents for each dollar a man doing the same work earns, according to the 2006 Census Bureau. That means that the wage gap has narrowed by less than half a cent per year.

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