

Congressman Rothman's Statement on Women's Equality Day

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CONTACT: Aaron Keyak

office: (202) 225-5061

cell: (202) 905-6361

aaron.keyak@mail.house.gov

Washington, DC – Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ) released the following statement:

Today, I join with all Americans to celebrate Women's Equality Day. 91 years ago, women finally won the right to vote in the United States. However, despite having made tremendous progress since then, full gender equality is not yet a reality in our country.

Women still earn only 77 cents for every dollar earned by a man, and this wage gap is even greater within minority communities. We cannot allow this injustice to continue. I am extremely proud to have voted to pass the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which President Obama signed into law in 2009. This law protects and enforces the rights of women to challenge unfair pay. I also strongly supported the Paycheck Fairness Act, which passed the House of Representatives during the 111th Congress, but unfortunately is not yet law. There is no reason that, in 2011, any female should still not be treated as an equal with her male counterpart.

Women also continue to face challenges when trying to access quality healthcare. Last year, we made tremendous progress for women's health by passing historic health care reform legislation. The Affordable Care Act will prevent insurance companies from continuing their current practice of discriminating against women and require coverage of services critical to a woman's health. This is great news, but challenges still remain.

Opponents to health care reform continue an intense campaign to undo all of this progress. And on both the national and state levels, a woman's right to access reproductive health services is facing unprecedented attacks. That is why earlier this year, I re-introduced the CARE Act, legislation that requires hospitals that receive federal funding to provide accurate information and offer emergency contraception to rape victims.

This Women's Equality Day, I encourage all Americans to reflect on the real progress we have made, and to recommit to the goal of achieving full equality for every member of our society.

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