

Washington, DC -- U.S Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) voted today to ensure that employers pay employees based on their work and productivity, not their gender, setting the stage for higher wages for families across Upstate New York.

“Fair pay isn’t just about equality, it is about families making ends meet with rising costs and economic uncertainty,” **Arcuri said**. “This legislation will help all working families – especially the children of single moms who are the primary breadwinners in their family. Ending pay discrimination in the workplace strengthens businesses by improving moral and productivity, which in terms helps grow our economy.”

Today, the U.S. House of Representatives passed, with Arcuri’s strong support, the Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 12) and the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act (H.R. 11). In the 110th Congress, Arcuri voted for, and the House passed, both bills, but no further action was taken.

The Paycheck Fairness Act strengthens the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and ensures that women have access to the courts in the event of a pay discrimination case. H.R. 12 puts gender-based discrimination sanctions on equal footing with other forms of wage discrimination by allowing women to sue for compensatory and punitive damages. Under H.R. 12 employers seeking to justify unequal pay must show that the disparity is not sex-based, but job-related. It also requires the Department of Labor to enhance outreach and training efforts to work with employers to eliminate pay disparities and prohibits employers from retaliating against employees who share salary information with their co-workers.

The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act bill restores the law as it was prior to a narrowly-decided (5-4) 2007 Supreme Court decision, Ledbetter v. Goodyear. That decision upended longstanding law and made it much harder for women and other workers to pursue pay discrimination claims – stating a pay discrimination charge must be filed within 180 days of the employer’s initial decision to pay an employee less. H.R. 11 restores prior law – providing that a pay discrimination charge must simply be filed within 180 days of a discriminatory paycheck.

Women, who now more than ever provide for their families and create economic growth in Upstate New York, still make less than men. Thirty years ago, women earned 59 cents for every dollar a man earned. Today, on average, women earn just 78 cents for every dollar earned by a man. The Institute of Women’s Policy Research has found that this wage disparity will cost

women anywhere from \$400,000 to \$2 million in lost wages over a lifetime. Closing the wage gap would also have a long-term impact on women's economic security, especially in retirement, as unequal pay affects Social Security and pension benefit calculations.

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