

The President's Weekly Address

April 12, 2014

Hi, everybody. Earlier this week was Equal Pay Day. It marks the extra time the average woman has to work into a new year to earn what a man earned the year before. You see, the average woman who works full time in America earns less than a man, even when she's in the same profession and has the same education.

That's wrong. In 2014, it's an embarrassment. Women deserve equal pay for equal work.

This is an economic issue that affects all of us. Women make up about half our workforce. And more and more, they're our families' main breadwinners. So it's good for everyone when women are paid fairly. That's why this week I took action to prohibit more businesses from punishing workers who discuss their salaries. Because more pay transparency makes it easier to spot pay discrimination. And I hope more business leaders will take up this cause.

But equal pay is just one part of an economic agenda for women. Most lower wage workers in America are women. So I've taken executive action to require Federal contractors to pay their federally funded employees at least \$10.10 an hour. I ordered a review of our Nation's overtime rules, to give more workers the chance to earn the overtime pay that they deserve.

And thanks to the Affordable Care Act, tens of millions of women are now guaranteed free preventive care like mammograms and contraceptive care, and the days when you could be charged more just for being a woman are over for good. Across the country, we're bringing Americans together to help us make sure that a woman can have a baby without sacrificing her job, or take a day off to care for a sick child or parent without hitting hardship. It's time to do away with workplace policies that belong in a "Mad Men" episode and give every woman the opportunity she deserves.

Here's the problem though. On issues that would benefit millions of women, Republicans in Congress have blocked progress at every turn. Just this week, Senate Republicans blocked the Paycheck Fairness Act, commonsense legislation that would help more women win equal pay for equal work. House Republicans won't vote to raise the minimum wage or extend unemployment insurance for women out of work through no fault of their own. The budget they passed this week would force deep cuts to investments that overwhelmingly benefit women and children, like Medicaid, food stamps, and college grants. And of course, they're trying to repeal the Affordable Care Act for the 50th or so time, which would take away vital benefits and protections from millions of women.

I'm going to keep fighting to make sure that doesn't happen, because we do better when our economy grows for everybody, not just a few. And when women succeed, America succeeds. Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 11:50 a.m. on April 11 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on April 12. In the address, the President referred to Executive Orders 13568 and 13665. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 11, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on April 12.

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