As a result of long-term and systemic discrimination, women in the United States and around the world continue to be uniquely undervalued and disadvantaged in their pursuit of economic security and opportunity. On average, women continue to be paid less, work lower paying jobs, and endure higher levels of sexual harassment and abuse, all while taking on more family care responsibilities.

Having long been tasked with unpaid care work, women suffer cumulative financial penalties while being denied basic supports. Women are more likely to receive lower pay, be pushed into part-time work without benefits, forced to leave work, terminated or demoted, experience job disruptions, and denied job opportunities and promotion typically due to caregiving responsibilities. Meanwhile, our laws still deny women access to reproductive health and freedom, pregnancy accommodations, paid family leave, paid sick time, flexibility to manage the realities of care giving, affordable childcare, and recourse to obtain adequate or equitable pay and benefits to support themselves and their families.

The COVID-19 pandemic only amplified these inequities, highlighting our population's dependence on a workforce led by essential women workers who remain underpaid, overworked, exposed to health and safety risks, and relegated to financial insecurity.

By dismantling the right to abortion, the Supreme Court added insult to injury, stripping women of their fundamental right to decide their futures in a society that grossly devalues the wellbeing of women with children.

As a result, women face overlapping barriers that accumulate and reinforce each other, creating cycles of disempowerment, with women more likely to live in poverty and work minimum wage jobs. And due to intersecting forms of discrimination, women of color consistently face the largest disparities across the country.

But women are not powerless. Women and people of color have achieved significant victories that serve as the foundation for our fight to achieve meaningful gender and racial equality. Recognizing the heightened barriers for women of color, immigrant women, women with disabilities, survivors of gender-based violence, and members of the LGBTQ+ community, Women Valued continues to work towards a vision of basic equality for ALL women.

To achieve this vision, the Working Woman's Bill of Rights is grounded in the need for an integrated solution with meaningful protections, accommodations, and services that eliminates existing gender-based penalties, provides necessary supports to women and families, and addresses the unique vulnerabilities faced by women who are most vulnerable in our economy.

The Working Woman's Bill of Rights therefore reimagines our economy as a place of equal opportunity for ALL women, setting forth a holistic roadmap for advocates, legislators, and employers that is grounded in an equality framework. By identifying core goals in 12 cross-cutting areas, the Bill of Rights provides a checklist of necessary practices that should be adopted by employers, reflected in our laws, and meaningfully enforced.

1. A FAIR AND EQUITABLE WORKPLACE FREE FROM DISCRIMINATION AND RETALIATION
2. FREEDOM FROM SEXUAL AND OTHER FORMS OF HARASSMENT AT WORK
3. PAY EQUITY
4. A LIVING WAGE AND FREEDOM FROM UNJUST WAGE PRACTICES
5. FREEDOM FROM ECONOMIC INSECURITY
6. EQUAL ACCESS TO HIGHER PAYING JOBS, ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY & LEADERSHIP PATHWAYS
7. A SAFE & HEALTHY WORKPLACE
8. FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION FOR SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
9. THE RIGHT TO DECIDE IF AND WHEN TO HAVE A CHILD ABSENT POLICING OR INTERFERENCE
10. THE RIGHT TO HAVE A CHILD SAFELY FREE FROM DISCRIMINATION AND FINANCIAL PENALTY
11. THE RIGHT TO WORK AND RAISE A FAMILY FREE FROM DISCRIMINATION AND FINANCIAL PENALTY
12. THE RIGHT TO ACT COLLECTIVELY TOWARDS ECONOMIC EQUALITY & WORKPLACE JUSTICE
1. A FAIR AND EQUITABLE WORKPLACE FREE FROM DISCRIMINATION AND RETALIATION

Despite existing laws against sex-based employment discrimination and retaliation, women continue to face pervasive forms of discrimination in the workplace. And, due to high levels of retaliation, workers typically do not report violations for fear of losing their jobs, losing basic income security, harming their careers, or losing their ability to live and work in this country. Facing intersecting forms of discrimination, women of color experience significantly larger disparities and notably many of the most vulnerable women workers, including immigrant workers, domestic workers, farmworkers, part-time workers, and contract workers are excluded from core legal protections. To eliminate discrimination in the workplace, our laws must address underlying causes and ensure that ALL women have access to meaningful protections, remedies, and enforcement mechanisms that will not cost them their jobs.

- Our Constitution must include express safeguards against all forms of gender discrimination.
- Our anti-discrimination laws must cover all workers, apply to small employers, cover all industries, and cover all categories of workers including part-time workers, contractors, gig workers, and consultants.
- To dismantle broader structural discrimination, our laws and our courts must address the disparate impact of systemic policies in addition to setting better standards to address intentional discrimination.
- Our laws must eliminate practices that disempower workers from the start, prohibiting forced arbitration and non-disclosure clauses in employment contracts with respect to discrimination claims.
- Labor and anti-discrimination enforcement agencies must be funded to carry out their mandates and trained to address intersectional forms of discrimination.
- Retaliatory threats based on workers’ immigration status should be subject to express prohibitions, including criminal penalty.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION OF NOTE

- Federal Equal Rights Amendment*
- Be Heard Act*
- Part-Time Workers Bill of Rights*
- Domestic Workers Bill of Rights*

2. FREEDOM FROM SEXUAL & OTHER FORMS OF HARASSMENT AT WORK

Perpetrators of sexual and other forms of harassment typically abuse their power to exploit and perpetuate women’s economic insecurity and harassment often thrives in workplaces that lack diversity, equity, and inclusion. We must reform workplace culture to eliminate workplace harassment and ensure system-wide accountability for abuse, particularly in workplaces and industries where women face unique and heightened risks and vulnerabilities, such as in hospitality, domestic work, and farming. Our job is not done until the most vulnerable workers can come forward.

*Pending legislation
**Legislation enacted into law
To eliminate workplace cultures that enable harassment, our laws must drive employers to address the full spectrum of harassment with proportionate action, instead of waiting until harassment is severe and pervasive.

Our laws must encourage system-wide accountability and establish clear, fair, and transparent mechanisms for reporting and investigating violations. As a start, employers should be required to maintain written policies on workplace harassment and all staff responsible for administering the policy should be required to undergo training on legal requirements and applicable procedures.

Laws and policies should target high-risk industries, where women face unique and heightened risk, with industry-specific approaches.

Our laws should explicitly protect participation in employer discrimination and harassment complaints from defamation liability, granting absolute immunity for statements made during the course of reporting workplace harassment and discrimination.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION OF NOTE

Be Heard Act*

PAY EQUITY

Over 50 years since the Equal Pay Act of 1963 was enacted, Black women still earn almost 40% less than white men, and Latina and Native American women earn almost 50% less. The average 20% wage gap between men and women working fulltime has persisted despite the fact that women now achieve higher levels of education than men. Not only do employers continue to pay women less than men for doing substantially similar work, our economy has consistently devalued women’s work such that women are disproportionately represented in essential yet low-wage industries. Achieving pay equity requires bold action to address systemic inequities, like occupational segregation, and to remove existing legal barriers so that persistent inequities can be identified, addressed, and prevented going forward.

Pay transparency is indispensable to achieving pay equity. Our laws should require employers to disclose pay rates up front in advertisements and to existing employees; conduct internal audits; track pay rates by gender, race, and ethnicity; and disclose the data. Employees must be able to share salary information without risk of retaliation.

Employers should be prohibited from inquiring about or relying upon a person’s salary history in hiring or salary setting, a practice known to perpetuate gender and racial discrimination.

Our pay equity laws should cover all protected categories, and when problematic inequities are exposed, employers should be required to correct them, not rationalize them.

Our laws must drive up wages for the disproportionate number of women in low-wage work, starting with the large number of underpaid women in care work.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION OF NOTE

Paycheck Fairness Act*
Pay Equity for All Act*

*Pending legislation
**Legislation enacted into law
A LIVING WAGE & FREEDOM FROM UNJUST WAGE PRACTICES

In the United States, women are twice as likely to work in low-wage occupations. Women of color, immigrant women, and working mothers are especially likely to work low-wage jobs essential to our economy but typically overlooked. More than two-thirds of minimum wage workers are women, and at only $7.25 an hour since 2009, the federal minimum wage is not nearly enough for women and working families to meet basic needs such as housing, food, and healthcare. The persistence of the tipped wage hurts women further. Tipped workers, two-thirds of whom are women, are twice as likely to live in poverty. Women in low-wage work, many of whom are women of color and immigrant women, are especially susceptible to wage-theft, including minimum wage violations, withholding of wages, denial of overtime or benefits, off-the-clock work, and stealing of tips. Women's work must be valued. As a starting point, all workers must, at minimum, earn a wage that allows them to work and support themselves and their families.

- To move women out of poverty, we must enact a living wage that is indexed to inflation and worker productivity.
- The sub-minimum wage must go: all industries must be required to pay at least the minimum wage to all categories of workers.
- We must enact stronger safeguards against wage-theft, including meaningful penalties and safeguard against retaliation for all workers irrespective of immigration status.
- Workers in low-wage industries should be able to earn higher wages without the risk of losing necessary public benefits.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION OF NOTE

Raise the Wage Act*

FREEDOM FROM ECONOMIC INSECURITY

Poverty remains gendered. In the United States, women are 29% more likely than men to live in poverty and more likely to face economic insecurity that will follow them throughout their lives. Due to the long-term, systemic, and intersectional impacts of discrimination, women lack access to necessary supports to work, raise children, and afford basic necessities. As a result, women are more likely to have difficulty earning sufficient and stable incomes, forcing many to rely on public benefits and services to support themselves and their families. Yet public benefit systems remain complex and difficult to navigate, making benefits inaccessible and easy to lose. As a result, many women who are eligible for public benefits and services never access them, and those with benefits are constantly at risk of losing them. A robust and accessible public benefits scheme is essential to advancing gender and racial equality and ensuring that women have the necessary foundations to support themselves and their families.

- Expand tax credits for working families.

*Pending legislation
**Legislation enacted into law
Establish a guaranteed income/universal basic income-scheme to help pull individuals and families out of poverty.

Enhance eligibility, access, and navigability of existing benefits.

Remove problematic eligibility requirements, e.g., women should be able to pursue an education without being thwarted by public assistance work requirements.

Establish procedural safeguards and language access to ensure that recipients can maintain their benefits and challenge termination of benefits.

Empower agencies to act in concert to provide a continuum of care to women and families navigating these complex processes under adverse conditions.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION OF NOTE
Build Back Better Act**
SUPPORT Act*

** EQUAL ACCESS TO HIGHER PAYING JOBS, ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY, & LEADERSHIP PATHWAYS

Despite gains in skills and education, women continue to be segregated into lower paying occupations without access to pathways for improvement. Women also continue to be dramatically under-represented in leadership. To secure policies that elevate women, we need women to lead the way. To close the gender wage gap, women must be equipped with the education, training, and opportunity to enter higher paying fields, including fields considered nontraditional for women.

Allocate funding for targeted outreach, recruitment, training, and development of support systems for women and underserved communities to increase women’s access to comprehensive education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); job networks; training and apprenticeships; basic job preparedness; and English as a Second Language education.

Increase federal investment aimed at identifying strategies to expand women's and girls' access to entrepreneurial and contracting opportunities, business financing, and participation in STEM and non-traditional CTE programs to address existing inequities in this area.

Invest in infrastructure that links local lenders, community-based organizations, and small business owners.

Track lending practices and collect demographic data from lenders to identify and address discriminatory lending practices.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION OF NOTE
Women and Workforce Investment for Nontraditional Jobs Act**

** A SAFE & HEALTHY WORKPLACE

Women face unique and disproportionate risks at work. For example, women are often forced to work low-paying jobs in unsafe conditions, work in isolation where the risk of sexual harassment or assault is high, denied adequate safety gear or training, denied adequate rest or break-time, denied time off when sick, denied necessary pregnancy accommodations that put the health of the mother and baby at risk, and forced to endure scheduling practices that make it impossible to work and raise a family. Women in low-wage work often suffer from inconsistent and
insufficient work hours that result in irregular earnings, making it hard to earn a living, care for families, and obtain public benefits.  All workers deserve to work under conditions that are safe and stable, receive necessary training, and have mechanisms to address and correct unsafe conditions. In addition to ensuring that adequate health and safety protections are in place, our laws must address the unique risks faced by women in our workforce and often by women in low-wage industries.

- Mandate employers to provide paid sick time for all workers.
- Recognizing the disproportionate burdens of unpaid care work placed on women, workers must be able to request flexible work schedules without the risk of retaliation.
- Prohibit employers from utilizing exploitative scheduling practices, including last minute scheduling or shift cancellations that lead to unpredictable schedules and make it impossible for workers to manage work and family care obligations.
- Workplace safety requirements should be enforced and safety education must be language accessible.
- Enact industry-specific protections that safeguard employees and all workers along the supply chain.
- Mandate pregnancy accommodations and industry-specific safeguards against sexual harassment.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION OF NOTE

- Healthy Families Act*
- Schedules that Work Act*
- FABRIC Act*

FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION FOR SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking often risk losing their jobs or have difficulty finding a job due to consequences of the abuse. A person’s status as a survivor of gender-based violence should never be used against them, and individuals should have the right to take measures to safeguard themselves from abuse while maintaining their economic security. Abuse should not endanger a survivor’s job or financial security especially at a time when that security is so critical to a survivor’s ability to escape and seek safety and independence.

- Survivors should be specifically protected against discrimination and afforded reasonable accommodations to address the abuse.
- Survivors should be able to take job-protected paid leave to address the abuse.
- Survivors should have access to unemployment insurance if they have to leave a job as a result of the abuse.
THE RIGHT TO DECIDE IF AND WHEN TO HAVE A CHILD ABSENT POLICING OR INTERFERENCE

The right to control one’s reproductive health and to have an abortion are fundamental. When a pregnant person is denied the ability to choose if and when to have a child, it sets in motion a ripple of self-reinforcing gender-based barriers that will likely impact her entire life. Gender-based disadvantages are reinforced by legal systems that prevent women from controlling their reproduction while turning a blind eye to the costs and realities that women face once they become pregnant and have children. Safeguarding women’s economic opportunity requires safeguarding reproductive choice and access to reproductive and maternal health services.

- State constitutions and legislation must include express protections for abortion, making clear that it is a fundamental right.
- Restrictions on abortion access should be prohibited.
- All individuals should have access to affordable abortion coverage.
- Funding must be allocated to ensure all women can travel to receive reproductive healthcare where necessary.
- Abortion providers must be protected.
- Laws should prohibit the surveillance, policing, and criminalization of pregnant persons and pregnancy outcomes.
- Data privacy must be protected.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION OF NOTE

Women’s Health Protection Act*
EACH Act*

THE RIGHT TO HAVE A CHILD SAFELY FREE FROM DISCRIMINATION AND FINANCIAL PENALTY

Despite marking a critical first step, the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, which prohibits employment discrimination based on pregnancy, falls short of requiring employers to provide pregnancy accommodations, a necessary step to meaningfully account for the unique challenges pregnant people face in the workforce. On top of this, the U.S. is the only developed country in the world that does not provide any paid family leave. As a result, only 23% of U.S. workers have access to paid leave through their employers, and those with access to unpaid leave generally cannot afford to take it. Due to the lack of pregnancy accommodations and paid leave, too many women lose their jobs, are forced to go on unpaid leave, forced to endure unhealthy and strenuous working conditions, forced to quit breastfeeding, and are forced to return to work immediately after giving birth. Women should not have to pay a price for having children and our laws must ensure that all pregnant workers can deliver safely and have time to recover, bond with their children, and breastfeed if they choose.

- To level the playing field, mandatory reasonable accommodations should be afforded for pregnancy, child birth, adoption/fostering, and breastfeeding.
- To address persistent “motherhood penalties” it is essential that ALL individuals are afforded equal opportunity to take job-protected paid family leave to

*Pending legislation
**Legislation enacted into law
bond with new children, including recently adopted or fostered children, and to care for sick family members.

- Anti-discrimination protections must apply based on pregnancy, childbirth, familial status, and related conditions.

**FEDERAL LEGISLATION OF NOTE**

*Pregnant Workers Fairness Act*
*FAMILY Act*

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**THE RIGHT TO WORK AND RAISE A FAMILY FREE FROM DISCRIMINATION AND FINANCIAL PENALTY**

Adding insult to injury, women, many of whom must prematurely return to work after having a child, typically lack access to high quality, affordable childcare options and necessary workplace accommodations. For low-wage workers, childcare costs generally exceed their incomes. And all too often mothers face a spectrum of overt discrimination and unconscious bias that results in difficulty finding employment, depressed salaries, and lack of access to promotions available to men in similar circumstances. The burden and cost of unpaid care work cannot continue to fall on the shoulders of women alone. Women seeking to return to work or pursue an education must have access to high quality, affordable childcare options and safeguards against discrimination based on familial status. As we work towards improving our care infrastructure, we must ensure that the work of care workers is valued at each point along the spectrum.

- Establish universal childcare for all, starting with pre-K.
- In the meantime, we must increase funding and expand eligibility for subsidized childcare assistance and create mechanisms to ensure that the private sector also provides such support.
- Childcare workers must be fairly compensated in a manner that recognizes the essential value of care work.
- Discrimination based on familial status must be prohibited.

**FEDERAL LEGISLATION OF NOTE**

*Child Care for Working Families Act*
*Universal Child Care and Early Learning Act*

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**FREEDOM TO ACT COLLECTIVELY TOWARDS ECONOMIC EQUALITY & WORKPLACE JUSTICE**

Workers face significant obstacles and barriers in identifying and challenging unjust workplace practices, a process that can be incredibly isolating. Consulting and taking action with other workers is often a critical way to unearth unjust treatment, become more empowered, and develop collective strategies to challenge unlawful workplace practices. To achieve gender and racial equality in the workplace and in our economy, it is essential that workers in all industries have the freedom to engage in collective action, including through worker centers, employee resource groups, worker cooperatives, or unions.

*Pending legislation
**Legislation enacted into law
All workers must have the right to discuss their experiences, organize, join a union, and take action with other employees to improve pay, working conditions, and discriminatory workplace practices.

Whether at work, in arbitration, or in the courts, women must have the ability to challenge discrimination collectively.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION OF NOTE

 Protecting Rights to Organize Act*

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*Pending legislation

**Legislation enacted into law