

COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA

Report of the CWA National Women's Committee

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CWA

CWA National Women's Committee

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Ensuring Equitable Access to Quality Healthcare Through Medicaid Expansion

*Kimberly Liska, CWA Local 4302 and
Natashia Pickens, CWA Local 6355 (Committee Chair)*

The economic shutdown caused by COVID-19 sparked new discussions about the millions of Americans who lack access to healthcare and the many states that have opted not to expand eligibility under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). In 2010, the ACA extended health coverage to millions of uninsured Americans who were previously denied insurance due to preexisting conditions or financial limitations. The law also includes a mandate requiring that everyone have healthcare coverage.¹ This provision of the ACA soon went to the Supreme Court on the basis that the government's attempt to force people to buy a product is a violation of the Commerce Clause of the Constitution. In 2012, the court ruled that States could not be forced to expand their Medicaid programs. The decision resulted in inconsistent coverage across the nation. Essentially leaving more than 2.5 million low-income people with no affordable healthcare options.

The decision not to expand coverage is particularly harmful and damaging to the 25 million women who have never had healthcare. According to national enrollment statistics, women comprise 36 percent of the overall Medicaid population and make up the majority of adults who are enrolled in Medicaid.² According to Kaiser Family Foundation, 56 percent of the non-elderly women on Medicaid work outside the home, 19 percent receive no pay and are caring for family members, 13 percent have a severe illness or disability, and another 6 percent attend school. Six in ten mothers on Medicaid are working, and another quarter care for family members.³ Compared to their uninsured counterparts, women with Medicaid experience fewer barriers to healthcare. Because the healthcare program offers a wide range of health coverage for women, most of them lack access to primary, preventive, specialty, and long-term care services. They use primary care, specialty care, and receive pap smears and mammograms at a much higher rate than uninsured women.

In fact, women on Medicaid are much less likely to delay care due to cost.⁴ This allows for better prevention of disease, thus preventing more expensive care needed in the future. Additionally, economists have stated that Medicaid expansion is good for the economy as most employers stand to benefit from federal funding of healthcare opportunities. For example, the Medicaid expansion option is separate from any employer

¹ [Medicaid expansion | healthinsurance.org](https://www.healthinsurance.org/medicaid-expansion/)

² <https://www.kff.org/womens-health-policy/fact-sheet/medicaids-role-for-wo>

³ <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/fact-sheet/medicaids-role-for-women/>

⁴ <https://harvardcrcl.org/an-argument-for-medicaid-expansion/>

payments required by health reform and has no employer contribution or responsibility of any kind. Furthermore, healthy employees are productive employees, which means fewer missed days from work due to illnesses.

CWA fully supports access to affordable, quality health care for all. CWA partners with the community and activist groups to push bargaining and legislative action to provide quality healthcare and promote expansion for individuals who otherwise do not have coverage.

This collaboration includes:

- Hosting town halls and forums.
- Moving our legislative and political agenda.
- Working with allies who move the community towards the positive changes we seek.

In states like Missouri, where elected officials refused to bring Medicaid expansion to their state, CWA members partnered with coalitions to draft language, collect signatures, and engage in conversations with community members to put Medicaid expansion on the ballot. After dedicated advocates refused to give up, in 2020, primary voters in Missouri overwhelmingly voted to expand Medicaid coverage. Since then, elected officials have been working hard not to fund the budget for Medicaid expansion fully.

Oklahoma was the fifth state in which voters have passed ballot initiatives to expand Medicaid, circumventing Republican governors and legislators.⁵ Oklahoma's initiative was slightly different as it called for a change to the state constitution rather than State laws. Additionally, under the ACA, 90 percent of the funding will come from federal money. Voters in other states, including Georgia and South Dakota, have started circulating petitions to get Medicaid expansion on the ballot in the near future.

Today, there are still 12 states that have opted not to adopt the Medicaid expansion option. CWA recognizes that healthcare is a fundamental human right that we must defend. CWA members are determined to be leaders in the positive changes we want to see, including acquiring the resources, technology, and staff needed to continue funding Medicaid expansion. CWA must continue to educate the membership on the importance of quality health care for all. The economic stability that healthcare coverage provides is a necessary rung on the ladder of opportunity that allows families to thrive. We should continue to promote Medicaid expansion and advocate for the resources needed to implement the protections that the expansion provides.

⁵ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/voters-in-deep-red-oklahoma-approve-medicaid-expansion/>

CWA must continue to advocate for livable wage increases so families can have financial stability and create a habit of meeting basic healthcare needs. This is a crucial change and shift from the current normal for many people that do not seek healthcare for fear of not being able to afford to be sick. CWA recognizes that access to quality healthcare is essential to human life, and CWA has a responsibility to ensure it becomes a reality.

Unions Respond to Gender Inequality During Covid-19

Elizabeth Mercado, CWA Local 1101, Ann Vogler, CWA Local 2006, and Cheryl Bacon, NABET-CWA Local 59053

In 2020, the nation planned to celebrate the centennial anniversary of the 19th Amendment. Instead, the onset of COVID-19 exacerbated existing gender inequalities and dealt a striking blow to the progress women made over the past 20 years. While the virus wreaked havoc in the lives of all workers, it especially uprooted the lives of working women who are disproportionately impacted by the effects of gender inequality. One of the most unprecedented impacts of the pandemic was the closure of nearly all daycare centers, schools, and after-school programs. Although many women were already standing on the front lines of the pandemic as essential workers, pandemic-induced reductions in child care options forced a massive exodus of women from the workforce.

Additionally, since March 2020, disruptions to daycare centers and schools have resulted in nearly 2.8 million women leaving work to become stay-at-home mothers and teachers.⁶ The numbers were so high because mothers, caregivers, and women who handled most of the family responsibilities found themselves either frequently reducing their work hours or leaving the workforce entirely.

A 2020 study of how parents and caregivers managed the competing obligations of work, childcare, and remote learning showed that 80 percent of parents worked and facilitated remote learning. Similarly, 90 percent of parents who had school-aged and younger children were primarily responsible for caring for both, even while still meeting their work obligations.⁷ Because women often tend to contribute almost twice as much unpaid care time to household tasks such as shopping, cooking, cleaning, and taking care of kids and parents, the choice to leave work was unavoidable.

Additionally, a 2018 study conducted by American Community Survey, shows that pre-Covid, nearly half of all working women, or 46 million women, supported their families by working in low-paying jobs and earned less than \$10.93 an hour.⁸ These low-paying jobs in industries such as retail and hospitality were disproportionately affected by economic slowdowns and shutdowns compared to male-dominated industries such as construction.⁹

CWA represents fields that employ large numbers of women; however, some sectors were hit harder than others. Airline shutdowns severely impacted AFA-CWA members. Sara Nelson, AFA-CWA President, testified before Congress in support of the Payroll Support

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<https://www.diversityinc.com/one-year-after-brunt-of-pandemic-hit-2-million-women-remain-missing-from-u-s-workforce/>

⁷ <https://medium.com/rapid-ec-project/somethings-gotta-give-6766c5a88d18>

⁸ [Acs-womens-earnings.html](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/acs-womens-earnings.html)

⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/09/us/unemployment-coronavirus-women.htm>

Program (PSP), which provided up to \$32 billion in federal aid to maintain employment in the airline industry by providing funds to cover employee wages, salaries, and benefits, vaccine prioritization, and mask mandates.¹⁰ CWA also secured additional paid sick and family leave at many employers.. Health and Safety Committees were created in many locals and added to some bargaining agreements to navigate problems at individual worksites. Non-union women do not have a voice to speak for them.

In the time of Covid, unions have played a notable role in limiting overall job loss for union members. A 2020 report by the Economic Policy Institute, outlines the importance of unions in giving women a voice in the workplace.¹¹ The report specifically highlights how unions negotiated to save jobs during COVID-19 by securing enhanced safety measures, additional premium pay, paid sick time, layoffs, or work-from-home arrangements.

CWA recognizes the impact of COVID-19 and its role in creating chaos in the lives of working people. Through bargaining and negotiation, CWA has been able to protect jobs and the safety of members by establishing pandemic-related workplace policies and practices. These policies include paid leaves for absences associated with COVID-19, establishing work-from-home agreements, and extending healthcare coverage.

It has been over a year since the first COVID lockdowns sent working people home, and women still account for 80 percent of the 1.1 million people unable to return to work. Even as the economy begins to experience growth, businesses reopen, and jobs are added, economists estimate that employment numbers for women may not return to pre-pandemic levels until 2024—two full years after men return to 2019 employment numbers.¹²

COVID-19 has proved that women play an essential role in the household and the economy. Yet, lacking any cultural or structural changes at home or work, women will never be fully protected in the workforce. The pandemic has illuminated as never before the unique challenges facing working women as they juggle careers and home. Maximizing our efforts to pass the Protecting the Right to Organize Act will strengthen our power in addressing the needs of women. The Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act, which would grant millions of state and local government workers a voice on the job and the ability to bargain for fair work conditions, must also be enacted.

¹⁰ [afa_sara_house_covid19_feb2021](#)

¹¹

<https://www.epi.org/publication/why-unions-are-good-for-workers-especially-in-a-crisis-like-covid-19-12-policies-that-would-boost-worker-rights-safety-and-wages/>

¹² <https://news.gallup.com/poll/330533/working-women-fared-during-pandemic.asp>

The CWA Political and Legislative agenda must include issues of child care, healthy families, and higher wages. Using local committees such as the Women’s Committee and the Civil Rights and Equity Committee, CWA Legislative and Political activists, and data on gender and the foundational disparities between union and non-union employees, CWA can take the lead on gender equity. Every local, member, district, and sector must recognize the importance of our actions and pledge their support. Without both immediate and long-term efforts to rebuild and support the child care infrastructure and establish more progressive work-family policies, the U.S. cannot achieve continued economic growth nor protect and advance gender equity.

Working People Need the Equality Act

*Yolanda Pearson, CWA Local 3204 and
Kimberly Johnson, CWA Local 29011*

Nearly 13 million people identify as LGBTQ+.¹³ Of this 13 million, an overwhelming 50 percent of LGBTQ+ people lack protection from discrimination in employment, education, housing, and public accommodations.¹⁴ In 2015, both the House and the Senate introduced legislation to protect the civil rights of LGBTQ+ Americans. The Equality Act (H.R. 5/S. 393), which addresses the unjust and unacceptable discrimination of LGBTQ+ working people, would update the 1964 Civil Rights Act to include sexual orientation and gender identity in the list of protected classes. The proposed legislation would provide comprehensive, fair, and equal protection against discrimination in education, employment, housing, public accommodations, healthcare, and federally funded programs. The bill has been introduced multiple times before; however, in February of 2021, it passed the House of Representatives in a significantly bipartisan 224–206 vote.¹⁵

While public opinion of the legislation is primarily divided along political and religious lines, nearly 70 percent of Americans, including a majority in every state, are in support of legislation that would protect lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people against discrimination.¹⁶ In fact, most voters were utterly unaware that 29 states do not explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in employment, housing, and public accommodations.¹⁷ The Equality Act is the only legislation that would permanently ban discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals, cementing protections that could otherwise be left up to interpretation.

The legislation would also have an impact on education, particularly on how teachers implement an LGBTQ+-inclusive curriculum. Although states do not explicitly require teachers to discuss LGBTQ+ issues, in 2011, California was the first state to pass a law mandating an LGBTQ+-inclusive curriculum. When California legislators passed the Fair Education Act, many advocates hoped the law would lead to opportunities for equitable and inclusive learning about the contributions and accomplishments of LGBTQ+ people throughout history and into the present. However, in over ten years, only 20 percent of teachers in California have integrated LGBTQ+ history into their curriculum. With many states avoiding LGBTQ+ topics in the classroom and five states passing laws that

¹³ <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/lgbt-nondiscrimination-statutes/>

¹⁴

https://www.lambdalegal.org/sites/default/files/publications/downloads/whcic-report_when-health-care-isnt-caring.pdf

¹⁵ <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/116-2019/h217>

¹⁶ <https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/new-poll-7-in-10-voters-support-the-equality-act>

¹⁷ https://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2012/06/pdf/state_nondiscrimination.pdf

outright forbid teachers to discuss LGBTQ+ topics in a positive light, states are failing to provide the next generation with an inclusive and accurate version of American history. The Equality Act would not only allow teachers to provide an unabridged version of American history, but it would also safeguard the jobs of teachers who are constantly in fear of losing their positions for teaching acceptance and topics that affect LGBTQ+ students.

Harassment, violence, and discrimination against transgender and gender non-conforming individuals are widespread in the LGBTQ+ community, especially for African American transgender women. In the summer of 2020, six Black trans women, all under the age of 32, were murdered in the span of nine days. Black trans women experience discrimination, prejudice, and inequities at a much higher rate than anyone else in the LGBTQ+ community. Additionally, they are killed at increasingly alarming disproportionate rates because of their intersecting Black, trans, and female identities. A study by the National LGBTQ+ task force found that 26 percent of Black trans people are unemployed (a rate much higher than the national unemployment rate for transgender people), 41 percent of Black trans people have been homeless (more than five times the general population), 34 percent of Black trans people have household incomes less than \$10,000 (more than eight times the general population), and nearly half of the Black trans population has attempted suicide.¹⁸ These vicious attacks must stop! The Equality Act offers the protection of fundamental rights that all humans deserve.

At CWA's 75th Convention, delegates passed Resolution 75A-15-8: Equal Access to Jobs, Housing, and Public Accommodations for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, and Transgender (LGBT) People. In part, the resolution reaffirms that we will not tolerate discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and must continue to do our part to engage in conversations in our communities and workspaces that support the Equality Act. CWA is fully committed to increasing the number of fully functioning human rights committees in our locals. We encourage members to get involved in their local Civil Rights & Equity and Women's Committees. The Equality Act must be passed to give LGBTQ+ working people protection and equal rights. Together, we can build power for all working people.

¹⁸

<https://www.thetaskforce.org/new-analysis-shows-startling-levels-of-discrimination-against-black-transgender-people>

The Harmful Impact of Implicit Bias

*Karen Pearce, CWA Local 7704 and
JoAngela Herrera, CWA Local 6143*

Over a year has passed since the murder of George Floyd, and racial justice protests still continue around the world. As much as 2018, was the year of the Me Too movement, 2020, was a hotbed of racial injustice generating much attention and need for a conscientious resolution. Even more so, as activists and allies marched and protested against racial inequality, others were forced to grapple with difficult questions about their prejudices and biases. Implicit bias, also known as unconscious bias, is a human condition that affects us and those with whom we interact.

Implicit bias should not be mistaken for overt racism or prejudice. Instead, it is a crucial component of our being that affects our decisions and actions towards other people, particularly Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC). In fact, data from 2007 to 2015, shows that 73 percent of white people, 34 percent of Black people, and 64 percent of people of other races have a pro-white, anti-Black bias.¹⁹ Psychologists describe implicit bias as any prejudice formed unintentionally and without our direct knowledge.²⁰ It can often contradict our explicit beliefs and behaviors. Usually, it reflects a mixture of personal experience, attitudes around us as we have grown up, and our wider exposure to society and culture – including the books we read, television we watch, and news we follow.²¹

Our biases can be based on ethnicity, race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, weight, and many other characteristics. Because implicit bias is a thinking process, it is more difficult to call out and address than overt racism. Furthermore, implicit bias can lead to many forms of discrimination and may go unnoticed by those displaying them; it can affect how everyone behaves towards one another. What is so dangerous about implicit bias is that, without being fully aware, it can seep into a person's behavior, sometimes in total contradiction to their upheld beliefs and values.

To build a sustainable movement that dismantles racism, we must first recognize and understand our own biases. By being aware of our own biases, we create opportunities to discuss prejudices and learn how to conquer disparate and unequal treatment. CWA has always been at the forefront of advocating for equality on and off the job. CWA's Policy of Mutual Respect was first adopted by the Executive Board in 2009. A portion of the strong

¹⁹

<https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2015/08/19/exploring-racial-bias-among-biracial-and-single-race-adults-the-iat/>

²⁰ <https://gspp.berkeley.edu/assets/uploads/research/pdf/SpencerCharbonneauGlaser.Compass.2016.pdf>

²¹ <https://gspp.berkeley.edu/assets/uploads/research/pdf/SpencerCharbonneauGlaser.Compass.2016.pdf>

statement is as follows: “The Communications Workers of America reaffirms its commitment as a matter of principle and policy that all forms of discrimination, for whatever reason, be vigorously opposed until all vestiges of discrimination are eliminated from society.”²² On June 24, 2020, President Christopher Shelton asked all CWA Locals to provide information on how they have been implementing the Policy on Mutual Respect in order to ensure that our union is actively working to dismantle practices and attitudes that perpetuate racism and that Locals, officers, and members alike are abiding by the policy.

Our affiliation with CWA is a testament to our responsibility of being anti-racist. Following up on our commitment to being CWA STRONG, members actively engaged in several actions. On June 11th, 2020, CWA members mobilized to commemorate the life of George Floyd by kneeling for 8 minutes 46 seconds. Our Juneteenth celebration that year featured a panel discussion with allies and advocates, including the Chair of CWA’s National Women’s Committee, Natasha Pickens, on building a workers’ movement that takes on racism.

Locals in each district engaged in the Strike for Black Lives Matter on July 20th of last year to illustrate how the fight for racial, economic, healthcare, immigration, climate, and other justice fights are connected. And Legislative Committees in multiple Districts, Sectors, and Divisions phone banked with the Congressional Black Caucus campaign “Black America.”

Understanding the need to create spaces where members have the opportunity to recognize bias and have discussions about race and racism, CWA developed a series of virtual training sessions on recognizing implicit bias, understanding the difference between being non-racist and anti-racist, and how to form Human Rights committees. The first installment of the training, *Implicit Bias: A Short Introduction*, is self-guided training designed to engage members in recognizing the way unconscious biases work to shape our lives, thoughts, and actions. The training allows members to see their own biases to be more conscious of the racial inequality and discrimination in one’s environment.

The next installment, *Building An Anti-Racist Union*, aims to highlight how racism is woven into the fabric of our daily lives. The training includes exercises on the various ways racial bias manifests in our workplaces and why union members must commit to engaging in anti-racist activities that actively dismantle the racist norms in our workplaces, our communities, and even our union.

²² <https://cwa-union.org/for-locals/cwa-constitution#discrimination>

The final installment of the series, Forming Human Rights Committees, is designed for members to develop and grow their skills as human rights activists in our union and communities by learning the role, responsibility, and function of a Human Rights Committee. During the training, members will examine case studies highlighting union values while also discussing organizing actions that build power for working people. The National Civil Rights and Equity Committee and the National Women's Committee have attended all three parts of the series and are eager to help Local leaders bring these training classes to their members and local Human Rights Committees. CWA fully supports the creation and effectiveness of the local Civil Rights and Equity Committees and Women's Committees. These are the members who educate and engage locals on issues that impact members on and off the job.

CWA members cannot stop fighting for equality now. We must continue the work to keep this momentum going. Local leaders must educate themselves and the membership to fight against the systemic racism that disadvantages the BIPOC community and so many of our union siblings. Implicit bias and systemic racism will not fade away without action. It is up to each of us to do better, not just for others but for ourselves. When we keep equity and fairness at the root of our actions, we will make meaningful changes and create a more equitable world.

Bullying and Mental Health in the Workplace

LaTonya Wilcox, CWA Local 81381

Workplace bullying is a continual, repetitious pattern of unreasonable intentional actions of an individual(s) directed towards another laborer or group of workers. The strategies used are deliberate and pose potential health and safety risks, both mentally and physically. According to an article in SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management), “84 percent of U.S workers say poorly trained managers create a lot of unnecessary work and stress.”²³ Some examples of workplace bullying include unsolicited and invalid criticism, unfounded accusations, unfair or differential treatment from colleagues, abusive language, public denigration and ridicule, exclusion or social isolation, and constant surveillance through excessive monitoring.

There is an adage that, "hurt people, hurt people." With the emergence of the pandemic altering life as we know it, one would like to believe that workplace bullying took a backseat. However, the 2020 Covid-19 outbreak, with no preemptive strategic protocol placements, further accelerated the tactics of bullying managers to become completely intolerable for their targets. The pandemic intensified bullying behavior for some toxic managers, such as mood swings, criticism, projection of blame, changing expectations, shaming, exclusion, aggression, threats, or blocking advancement. The results of trickle transference of bullying on targeted workers for further agitation motivates reactive responses like filing a complaint, or going out on medical leave, or filing a lawsuit.

Forbes Magazine reports that 75 percent of the workers they have interviewed have experienced workplace bullying.²⁴ The Halunen Law publication on bullying states that Although bullying tends to be gender-neutral, most workplace bullying is woman-to-woman. “Women being mistreated by their female managers represent a growing demographic, although male subordinates reported bullying by female management on occasion.”²⁵ Forbes Magazine has also reported also that women tend to carry an unconscious bias towards other women.

With the increase in workplace bullying, workplace environments have become more toxic, and it has taken a toll on targeted employee's mental health, resulting in a rise

²³

<https://www.shrm.org/about-shrm/press-room/press-releases/pages/survey-84-percent-of-us-workers-blame-bad-managers-for-creating-unnecessary-stress-.aspx#:~:text=ALEXANDRIA%2C%20Va.%2C%20August%2012,of%20unnecessary%20work%20and%20stress>

²⁴

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/pragyaagarwaleurope/2018/07/29/workplace-bullying-here-is-why-we-need-to-talk-about-bullying-in-the-work-place/?sh=3773b173259a>

²⁵ <https://www.halunenlaw.com/in-minnesota-is-workplace-bullying-against-the-law/>

in the use of Employee Assistance Programs (EAP).²⁶ Essential workers pre and post-COVID are bearing the brunt of bullying which leaves workers drained physically and mentally daily, especially if they are not supported by a strong union presence in their company. There seems to be a disconnect by management that the same set of circumstances that caused them mental stress can also result in the same, if not more, concerns to the employee's mental stability.

CWA has taken a stance against bullying in the workplace and supported and provided sexual harassment training for its members. In 2012, CWA introduced the Violence In the Workplace Manual that addresses and provides comprehensive strategies for dealing with bullies. CWA's website also provides links to mental health links for self-care or when additional services are needed. The U.S. Department of Labor has a documented Workplace Violence Program to address workplace bullying. Even with all of the supportive programs, there is still work to be done as there is no federal legislation that prohibits workplace bullying.

CWA must continue fighting and standing in solidarity with employees to help pass the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act, H.R. 1195, into law. We can achieve this through proactive training followed by mobilized petitioning that brings awareness to the spiral effects of workplace bullying and its impact on mental health, decreased morale, poor service output, and staff retention. This training will empower and enlighten staff to take a stand and help end workplace bullying against working people.

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<https://www.rgare.com/knowledge-center/covid-19/covid-19-the-rise-of-the-eap-and-the-price-of-peace-of-mind>

Equal Pay at the Bargaining Table

Maggie McCormack, CWA Local 9588

Demanding equal pay at the bargaining table is not the same as demanding equal pay for a specific job title. Demanding equal pay is about supporting women and the right to bid on or obtain a job that provides the same dollar amount as a man. Unions bargain titles and universal pay rates, so no matter if a man or woman is in that job, they receive the pay bargained for that title. The more significant issue is that companies have figured out how to implement prerequisites, considerations, and conditions that prevent women from being hired into job titles that allow them to make the pay associated with that title. These considerations and requirements grant the company the power not to pay women and men equally and keep women at lower wage scale jobs.

As an example in the telephone sector, consider the many women hired to work in central offices. Upon being hired, every woman was required to take a series of tests to determine if they possessed any qualifications that could transfer to a different position as their career grew. Anyone who did not pass the tests the first time could retake the tests, so as their skill sets rose, they had the opportunity to obtain the job title they aspired to grow into and then retire.

For decades, women have worked in central offices and have trained both men and women to work in those functions. However, phone companies mandate that only someone with work experience as a field technician can work in central offices, excluding women, as women have never worked in the field. Prerequisites to working in a central office are unnecessary and only hinder women from getting higher-paying jobs. Furthermore, it is a rarity to find a female field technician. Therefore requiring this specific job title before transferring into the central office has no valid reason other than keeping women relegated to administrative or call centers positions, which are inherently lower-paying job titles.

It has been nearly 60 years since the passing of the Equal Pay Act, and more than a decade since President Obama signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009, yet women are still fighting for equal pay. According to the National Committee on Pay Equity, for every dollar a man earns, women only earn \$0.82, with the gap widening for women of color.²⁷ On average, Latina women are paid \$0.55 less, Native American women \$0.60, Black women \$0.63, and Asian American and Pacific Islander women are paid as little as \$0.52 for every dollar paid to a white, non-Hispanic male.²⁸ Women need better legislation to secure equal pay for equal work. Women need Congress to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act. The bill's passing would strengthen equal pay protections, eliminate the gender pay gap, and

²⁷ <https://www.pay-equity.org/day.html>

²⁸ <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/fair-pay/the-paycheck-fairness-act.pdf>

guarantee that women can challenge pay discrimination and hold employers accountable.

CWA National Bargaining Committees must interact with each Sector and District to ensure that strategies adopted by various Companies and Sectors are combatted universally through all CWA Bargaining Committees. We must ensure that while maintaining job titles and a living wage, the method to obtain these wages is not exclusive to one gender. Considerations and tiers should be countered in such a way that equality is still adhered to and recognized.

CWA has continuously fought for equal pay for working women, and we are not stopping now. It is the hard work of union members that guarantee union jobs and salaries are much higher than minimum wage. We have the power to organize our locals, educate the community, and demand fairness and equal pay for working women. Employers cannot continue to place tiers, thresholds, and conditions on how wages are obtained. We must fight to end any discriminatory considerations and requirements that are nearly impossible for women to receive. In these times of economic uncertainty, we all must work together to ensure women receive equal pay.