

**OUR MISSION:** CWEALF advocates for and empowers women and girls in Connecticut, especially those who are underserved or marginalized. We work to create an equitable society where women and girls thrive.

**THE CHALLENGE:** Despite the fact that women currently make up nearly half of the workforce, unequal pay and discrimination persist.

In Connecticut, women, on average, earn 83 cents to every dollar paid to men, an inequity that is significantly greater for women of color. Women's wages are critical to their families' financial stability: 81% of black mothers, 66% of Latina mothers and 48% of white mothers are primary breadwinners to their families.

Women, however, often lack access to critical workplace policies such as paid family and medical leave, and are underrepresented in STEM occupations and leadership positions. Policies that advance the economic security of women in our state are critical to the well-being of our workforce, prosperity of our state's economy, and retention of young workers in Connecticut.

## POLICY PRIORITIES

**Pass Paid Family & Medical Leave:** Connecticut is surrounded by states with paid family and medical leave programs. CWEALF recommends a paid leave program that is publicly administered, includes job protection and high wage replacement, and expands on FMLA's definition of family to include chosen families.

**Expand Sexual Harassment Training:** CWEALF recommends that all workers at employers of 3 or more receive sexual harassment training annually, with modernized content that includes bystander intervention. CWEALF also recommends the creation of a task force to regularly examine sexual harassment and best practices. Legislation should also extend the amount of time to file a complaint with CHRO from 180 days to 1 year.

**Combat the Gender Wage Gap:** One reason the wage gap persists is because women, especially women of color, are overrepresented in minimum wage and tipped wage jobs. To combat the gender wage gap, CWEALF recommends an increase in the minimum wage. Lawmakers should also require employers to pay workers equal pay for comparable work, and encourage businesses to examine their pay practices through self audits and remedy any discrepancies.



## ◀ POLICY PRIORITIES

### Protect Access to Comprehensive Health Care:

All women in Connecticut deserve access to safe, quality and affordable healthcare regardless of gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, income, disability, or immigration status. Lawmakers should examine ways to improve maternal health, especially for women of color, and reinstate statutory language that healthcare is a human right.

### Advance Employment and Leadership Opportunities for Women:

CWEALF recommends legislation to support women in the workforce, especially low-wage workers, with policies such as affordable childcare, housing, and predictable schedules. Lawmakers and newly elected statewide officers should also take steps to ensure women are equally represented in positions of leadership and in STEM occupations.

### Ensure Access to Justice:

CWEALF recommends legislation to strengthen protections for victims of sexual and domestic violence and ensure the rights of women and other marginalized populations are represented in laws related to custody, child support, and divorce. This includes the elimination of the statute of limitations in cases of sexual assault. Lawmakers should also consider the recommendations from 2016's Task Force to Improve Access to Legal Counsel in Civil Matters to protect the needs of those who cannot afford legal representation.



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