THE CHALLENGE

In 2019, Connecticut lawmakers passed legislation to raise the minimum wage, implement one of the strongest paid family and medical leave programs in the nation, and expand sexual harassment training and protections in workplaces across the state. Despite legislative victories, unequal pay and discrimination persist.

Though women now make up the majority of the U.S. workforce, they are more likely to work in low-wage jobs and, due to gender and racial discrimination, continue to earn significantly less than their male counterparts. Too many workers - especially women of color - continue to lack access to basic protections that boost their family’s economic security and safety.

All women* in Connecticut deserve economic security and gender equity. This session, lawmakers must approve measures that dismantle systemic oppression and protect the rights of women across our state.

POLICY PRIORITIES

END DISCRIMINATORY PAY PRACTICES & INCREASE WAGES

Lost wages due to the gender wage gap and discrimination at work have long-lasting impacts on women’s housing, childcare, education and health care decisions. To strengthen Connecticut’s pay discrimination laws and increase transparency, CWEALF recommends legislation to require employers to provide applicants and employees information about salary ranges and encourage employers to examine their own pay practices. Legislation should also address occupational segregation by requiring employers to pay workers equal pay for comparable work.

REMOVE BARRIERS TO SELF SUFFICIENCY

Access to affordable and reliable child care, housing and transitional assistance are key components of women’s economic security and advancement in the workforce. CWEALF recommends legislation to expand eligibility for Care 4 Kids to include workers enrolled in job training or post secondary education programs. CWEALF urges lawmakers to advance legislation that centers the needs of women of color in access to affordable housing and quality education, and prevents benefits cliffs.

*Includes women who identify as cisgender, transgender, and nonbinary
EXPAND RIGHTS & PROTECTIONS AT WORK

CWEALF supports legislation to protect workers’ rights, especially for low-wage workers who often encounter unfair scheduling practices and lack access to benefits such as paid sick days. Lawmakers should prohibit age discrimination and ensure that domestic workers, who are disproportionately women of color, are covered by basic labor protections.

IMPLEMENT PAID FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE

As Chair of the Campaign for Paid Family Leave, CWEALF will monitor the implementation of paid family and medical leave to ensure the program is transparent, and prioritizes the most underserved Connecticut residents.

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PROTECT & IMPROVE ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

All Connecticut residents deserve access to quality healthcare regardless of gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, immigration status, race, ethnicity, income, or disability. Lawmakers should examine ways to improve maternal health, especially for women of color, and pass legislation that protects patients' privacy in an explanation of benefits. Legislation should also take steps to ensure women receive truthful and legitimate information to inform their healthcare decisions.

ENSURE ACCESS TO JUSTICE & SAFETY

CWEALF recommends legislation to strengthen protections for victims of domestic and sexual violence and ensure the rights of women and other marginalized populations are represented in laws related to custody, child support, and divorce. To continue the momentum of 2019’s “Time’s Up” Act, legislation should also require employers to train all employees annually on sexual harassment, and limit the use of nondisclosure agreements in settlements and as a condition of employment.