

DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CAUCUS

CORE PRINCIPLES

Through record engagement and activism, the women of this country helped deliver the Democratic majority and the most diverse Congress in history. We have been at the forefront of the fight for equal pay, affordable health care, including reproductive health care, and freedom from violence and discrimination. Our agenda as follows reflects the common theme that when women have access to the tools they need to succeed their communities and the world are more peaceful and prosperous.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Women and families can't afford to wait any longer for equal pay. Despite being breadwinners in most families with children, women who work full time, year-round still only make 80 cents on the dollar for men's earnings. For women of color it is even less. Black women make only 61 cents, Latinas make 53 cents, and Native women make 58 cents for every dollar paid to white men. While Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) women make 85 cents for every dollar paid to white men, many AAPI communities experience drastically wider pay gaps. Close to two-thirds of minimum wage workers are women, and women are far more likely than men to hold low-wage jobs. Although women are nearly half the U.S. workforce, they make up only a small percentage of employees in the skilled trades and other non-traditional occupations. Women's lower wages also exacerbate the student loan crisis, with women holding two-thirds of outstanding student debt. In addition, just 17 percent of the workforce has paid family leave, fewer than 40 percent of workers has access to paid personal medical leave, and nearly one in three private-sector workers does not have a single paid sick day. Women still face pregnancy discrimination and are forced out of a job or denied reasonable accommodations. And high-quality child care, essential for children to learn in safe, nurturing environments while parents work, is increasingly unaffordable. Moreover, the child care workers providing this essential public good – most of whom are women, and disproportionately women of color and immigrant women – earn poverty level wages, undermining their economic security. These issues are interrelated, with pay discrimination and barriers to economic opportunity jeopardizing women's ability to access the health care they need, afford child care, or reach their full potential. *Women deserve economic opportunity, security, and policies that recognize the demands of work and family.*

SAFETY & FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE

Sexual violence robs women of their ability to provide for their families and advance in the workplace, schools, and the military. One in three women experience sexual violence in their lifetime, one in five women are sexually assaulted on college campuses, and 56 percent of girls and 40 percent of boys in grades 7-12 are sexually harassed in any given school year. Moreover, 60 to 70 percent of women face sexual harassment during their careers, with Black and Brown women disproportionately impacted, and over 49,000 cases of human trafficking are reported annually in the U.S. with women and girls representing 75 percent of those trafficked. In the wake of #MeToo, women and men are bravely coming forward to share their stories of sexual harassment and assault and demand change to our laws and institutions. Women and families are also facing the threat of gun violence, with women 21 times more likely to be murdered with guns in the U.S. than in other high-income countries and most mass shootings related to domestic or family violence. Women, particularly women of color, are also disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis, which threatens the safety and economic security of all people. As a nation built by immigrant families, we also recognize that women and families seeking refuge deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. Our nation's immigration policies must be humane. Cruel policies, such as family separation, will not be tolerated. *Women and girls deserve to feel safe and secure in all aspects of life.*

DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CAUCUS

CORE PRINCIPLES

EQUALITY FOR ALL

The fact that women, particularly women of color and LGBTQI+ individuals, continue to face pervasive discrimination in all aspects of life permeates our society and makes our hard-earned rights vulnerable. Discrimination robs individuals of their ability to care for themselves and their families. *Women and LGBTQI+ individuals deserve dignity and equality under the law.*

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE & REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM

All people deserve access to affordable and comprehensive health care, as well as the dignity, autonomy, and economic security to make the health care decisions that are best for them. Thanks to the Affordable Care Act (ACA), more women and their families have insurance coverage to get the care they need. However, constant attacks on the ACA undermine the health and well-being of Americans. Instead of attacking the ACA and access to care, women and families deserve action to address the maternal mortality crisis, lower health care costs, and expand access to care, including reproductive health care. Women need access to family planning to lead fully productive lives and control their own destinies. Restrictions on reproductive care and insurance coverage of reproductive health care, including abortion, particularly harm those who already face barriers to health care including communities of color and those struggling to make ends meet. Attempts to restrict access to sex education, contraception, counseling, and abortion at home and abroad are a harmful violation of women's freedoms. *Women deserve quality, affordable health care, and to have control over their own bodies.*

SUPPORTING WOMEN SERVICEMEMBERS & VETERANS

For too long, the contributions and distinct challenges faced by women servicemembers and veterans have been forgotten or ignored. Women servicemembers are vital to our nation's defense, and their growing inclusion in all military fields, including combat arms, can only strengthen our military's readiness. Representation of women in the military has increased to 17 percent, a far cry from the 2 percent representation in 1970. Despite this positive trend, military and veteran institutions and cultures fall desperately short in their support for women servicemembers and veterans. Military Sexual Trauma continues to plague our armed forces and service academies. Some Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities lack the ability to provide equitable care or services women veterans need, including care for sexual violence. The U.S. must ensure the VA can address the needs of women veterans who struggle to access the benefits they have earned, and continue to face barriers such as homelessness, unemployment, as well as barriers to the medical care they need. *Women servicemembers and veterans deserve our recognition, support and respect.*

EMPOWERING WOMEN GLOBALLY

Promoting gender equality, advancing people's health and well-being, and upholding human rights so all people are free from violence and discrimination are essential to ensuring economic, social, and political empowerment for women and girls. When women are empowered, their countries are more peaceful and prosperous, benefitting our own national security. *Women and girls around the world deserve education, economic opportunity, safety, and health care, including reproductive freedom.*

DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CAUCUS

POLICY AGENDA FOR WOMEN & FAMILIES

When women succeed, our communities are stronger, safer, and more prosperous. The Democratic Women's Caucus Policy Agenda recognizes that the issues impacting women and their families are interconnected, and that true equality cannot exist until all people are able to live freely with dignity, autonomy, and economic security. The Democratic Women's Caucus Policy Agenda provides a bold vision for unleashing the power of women and girls.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Women deserve economic opportunity, security, and policies that recognize the demands of work and family.

[Paycheck Fairness Act \(Rep. DeLauro\)](#)

Women working full-time, year-round still typically make 80 cents for every dollar paid to men, amounting to an annual wage gap of more than \$10,100, and significantly more for women of color. The Paycheck Fairness Act would help ensure equal pay and strengthen the Equal Pay Act by:

- Requiring employers to prove that pay disparities exist for legitimate, job-related reasons. In doing so, it ensures that employers who try to justify paying a man more than a woman for the same job must show the disparity is not sex-based, but job-related and necessary.
- Banning retaliation against workers who discuss their wages.
- Making it easier to facilitate a wronged worker's participation in class action lawsuits that challenge systemic pay discrimination.
- Improving DOL's tools for enforcing the Equal Pay Act. To help the Department of Labor better uncover wage discrimination, it will speed up the collection of wage data from federal contractors, direct the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to conduct a survey of available wage information and create a system of wage data collection, and instruct DOL to conduct studies and review available research and data to provide information on how to identify, correct, and eliminate illegal wage disparities.
- Providing assistance to all businesses to help them with their equal pay practices, recognizing excellence in pay practices by businesses, and empowering women and girls by creating a negotiation skills training program.
- Prohibiting employers from seeking the salary history of prospective employees.

[Raise the Wage Act \(Rep. Scott\)](#)

Nearly two-thirds of minimum wage workers are women. Since 2009, the federal minimum wage has been just \$7.25 per hour, not nearly enough to live on. Since 1991, the federal minimum cash wage for tipped workers has been just \$2.13 per hour. Raising the minimum wage to \$15.00 by 2025 will give more than 33.5 million Americans a pay increase, including more than one in four women workers. The Raise the Wage Act would help more families make ends meet by:

- Raising the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$15 over the next seven years.
- Indexing future increases in the federal minimum wage to median wage growth.
- Gradually phasing out the outdated and unfair tipped minimum wage.
- Gradually phasing out the youth wage.
- Ending subminimum wage certificates for individuals with disabilities.

[Fair Pay Act \(Rep. Holmes Norton\)](#)

Nearly half of the gender wage gap since 1980 can be attributed to women working in different occupations and industries than men. The Fair Pay Act (FPA) would help eliminate the gender wage gap by requiring men and women doing comparable work to be paid comparable wages. For example, if a woman is an emergency services operator, a female-dominated profession, she should not be paid less than a fire dispatcher, a male-dominated profession, simply because each of these jobs has been dominated by one sex.

Under the FPA, the burden will be on the plaintiff to prove discrimination. The plaintiff must show that the reason for the disparate treatment is gender discrimination, not legitimate business reasons.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

[The Better Pay and Lifetime Earnings for Teenage Girls through Adulthood Act \(Rep. Lawrence\)](#)

This bill requires the Secretary of Labor to study the pay gap in the teenage labor force and recommend policy changes. Preliminary studies show the wage gap appears early and widens over women's lifetimes, especially for women of color.

[The Pink Tax Repeal Act \(Rep. Speier\)](#)

In 1994, the California Assembly Office of Research conducted a study that found that women pay a "gender tax" of \$1,351 per year for the same services as men. Rep. Speier subsequently sponsored the "Repeal the Gender Tax Act" in the California Assembly, which passed in 1996, and required that prices for services like dry cleaning and haircuts be determined by the amount of time needed to do the job, not by gender. In December of 2015, the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs conducted a study on the gender-pricing of goods marketed to both men and women and it found that women's products cost up to 13 percent more than similar products for men. The gender wage gap means income losses from "gender tax" schemes are even more financially damaging than the raw numbers indicate. The Pink Tax Repeal Act would discourage unfair pricing practices by:

- Prohibiting differential pricing of consumer products and services that are substantially similar when pricing differences are based on the gender of consumers.
- Allowing the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to treat and enforce a violation of this act as an unfair or deceptive practice.
- Give State Attorneys General the authority to bring civil action on behalf of state residents in order to compel compliance with the law or obtain damages, restitution, or other compensation on behalf of residents of the State.

[Child Care for Working Families Act \(Rep. Scott\)](#)

Across the country, too many families do not have access to high-quality early learning and care that will help their children thrive without breaking the bank. The Child Care for Working Families Act would address the current early learning and care crisis by ensuring that no family under 150 percent of state median income pays more than seven percent of their income on child care. Families would pay their fair share for care on a sliding scale, regardless of the number of children they have. The bill would also support universal access to high-quality preschool programs for all 3- and 4-year olds. Finally, the bill would significantly improve compensation and training for the child care workforce to ensure that our nation's teachers and caregivers have the support they need, as well as the children they are caring for, to thrive. The Child Care for Working Families Act would ensure greater access to quality, affordable child care and early education by:

- Building off the current federal-state partnership in the Child Care and Development Block Grant to provide high-quality, affordable child care from birth through age 13.
- More than doubling the number of children eligible for child care assistance and ensuring all those who are eligible have the ability to enroll their child in a quality program.
- Providing incentives and funding for states to create high-quality preschool programs for low- and moderate - income 3- and 4-year olds during the school day, while providing a higher matching rate for programs for infants and toddlers, who are often harder and more expensive to care for.
- Increasing workforce training and compensation, including by ensuring that all child care workers are paid a living wage and early childhood educators are provided parity with elementary school teachers with similar credentials and experience.
- Improving care in a variety of settings, including addressing the needs of family, friend, and neighbor care and care during non-traditional hours to help meet the needs of working families.
- Building more inclusive, high-quality child care providers for children with disabilities, and infants and toddlers with disabilities, including by increasing funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- Helping all Head Start programs meet the new expanded duration requirements and provide full-day, full-year programming.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

[FAMILY Act \(Rep. DeLauro\)](#)

At some point, everyone needs time away from work to care for a family member or a new child, or to recover from a serious illness. Yet just 17 percent of the workforce has paid family leave through their employers, and less than 40 percent has personal medical leave through an employer-provided short-term disability program. The FAMILY Act would create a comprehensive national program that helps meet the needs of working families by:

- Providing workers with up to 12 weeks of partial income when they take time for their own serious health conditions, including pregnancy and childbirth recovery; the serious health condition of a child, parent, spouse or domestic partner; the birth or adoption of a child; and/or for particular military caregiving and leave purposes.
- Enabling workers to earn 66 percent of their monthly wages, up to a capped amount, ensuring that low- and middle-wage workers have a higher share of their wages replaced.
- Covering workers in all companies, no matter their size. Younger, part-time, lower-wage, contingent and self-employed workers would be eligible for benefits.
- Be funded responsibly by small employee and employer payroll contributions of two-tenths of 1 percent each (two cents per \$10 in wages), or less than \$2.00 per week for a typical worker.
- Be administered through a new Office of Paid Family and Medical Leave. Payroll contributions would cover both insurance benefits and administrative costs.

[Family Medical Leave Modernization Act \(Rep. Carolyn Maloney\)](#)

Current family leave law only protects workers who put in at least 1,250 hours over 12 months and work for an employer with 50 or more employees. The Family Medical Leave Modernization Act will extend the ability to take unpaid, job-protected parental, family caregiving, personal medical, and military caregiving leave to the 40 percent of the workforce that is not currently eligible under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The Family Medical Leave Modernization Act will:

- Lower the employer threshold to 15 employees, matching the threshold in the Americans with Disabilities Act and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- Allow employees to take a limited amount of unpaid parental involvement leave, to attend their children's and grandchildren's activities sponsored by a school or community organization. Employees may take up to 24 hours of leave during any 12-month period and up to 4 hours of leave during any 30-day period. Update the family relationships covered by the FMLA to reflect a broader range of caregiving relationships, including coverage for relationships that are the equivalent of a family relationship but are not bound by blood or legal ties, ensuring that workers can use leave to care for a domestic partner, parent-in-law, aunt, uncle, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, son/daughter-in-law or other significant relationships.

[Federal Employee Paid Leave Act \(Rep. Carolyn Maloney\)](#)

Federal employees are among those who do not have paid family and medical leave, forced to choose between a paycheck and their caregiving responsibilities or addressing their own personal health issues. The Federal Employee Paid Leave Act would ensure that the nation's largest employer, the federal government, offers comprehensive paid leave.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Healthy Families Act (Rep. DeLauro)

More than 37 million workers lack access to paid sick days, forcing them to choose between earning a paycheck and caring for their health. The Healthy Families Act would create a national paid sick days standard by:

- Allowing workers in businesses with 15 or more employees to earn up to seven job-protected paid sick days each year to be used to recover from their own illnesses, access preventive care, provide care to a sick family member, or attend school meetings related to a child's health condition or disability. Workers in businesses with fewer than 15 employees would earn up to seven job-protected unpaid sick days each year to be used for the same reasons, unless their employers choose to offer paid sick days.
- Allowing workers who are survivors of domestic violence, stalking or sexual assault to use their paid sick days to recover or seek assistance related to an incident.
- Including a simple method for calculating accrued sick time. Workers would earn a minimum of one hour of paid sick time for every 30 hours worked, up to 56 hours (seven days) per year, unless the employer selects a higher limit.
- Allowing employers to require certification if an employee uses more than three paid sick days in a row. For survivors of domestic violence, the certification may be from a law enforcement officer or survivor advocate.
- Allowing employers to use their existing policies, as long as they meet the minimums set forth in the Healthy Families Act for time, types of use and method of use, and give employers flexibility as to how they define a "year" for the purposes of sick time accrual.

Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (Rep. Nadler)

Sixty-two percent of pregnant women and new moms are in the workforce, yet under current law, pregnant workers can be placed on unpaid leave or forced out of their jobs because of a pregnancy. The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act would address legal ambiguities and help ensure that pregnant women are treated fairly on the job by:

- Clarifying that employers must make reasonable accommodations for workers affected by a known limitation related to pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions.
- Requiring an interactive process between employers and pregnant workers to determine appropriate reasonable accommodations, similar to the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Providing an exemption for businesses if an accommodation imposes an undue hardship on an employer.
- Protecting pregnant workers from retaliation, coercion, intimidation, threats or interference if they request or use an accommodation.
- This legislation applies to employers with 15 or more employees and provides protections for both job applicants and employees.

Social Security Caregiver Credit Act (Rep. Lowey)

Nearly 65 million Americans sacrifice their job or reduce their hours during their careers to provide care to family members. Women, who make up two-thirds of unpaid caregivers, are disproportionately impacted. Unpaid caregiving on average accounts for \$324,000 in lost wages and Social Security benefits in a caregiver's lifetime.

The Social Security Caregiver Credit Act would provide a Social Security earnings credit to caregivers who have to leave the labor force or reduce their hours to care for a loved one. The Social Security Caregiver Credit Act would support retirement security for caregivers by:

- Creating a credit that would be added to an individual's earnings to calculate their future Social Security benefits. In order to qualify, caregivers must provide care for a minimum of 80 hours per month to a parent, spouse, domestic partner, sibling, child, grandparent, aunt, or uncle who cannot perform daily living activities without assistance.
- The credit, which individuals can claim for up to 60 months, is progressive and would vary on an income-based sliding scale.
- A caregiver's Social Security credit will decrease in value as the caregiver earns closer to the average national wage. The credit will phase out when the caregiver earns more than the average national wage.
- Individuals who do not earn an income will receive a maximum credit equal to half of the average national wage.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

[American Family Act \(Rep. DeLauro\)](#)

The most recent Congress increased the child tax credit yet left out one third of all children from the full benefit who are in families who earn too little to get the full child tax credit. This group includes disproportionately larger families, rural families, military families, and families with young children. The American Family Act among other things would:

- Create a new Young Child Tax Credit of \$300 per month for children under 6 years of age.
- Expand the maximum Child Tax Credit to \$250 per month for kids 6 years of age or older for all children under the age of 18.
- Make the Young Child Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit fully refundable.
- Allow for advance payment of the tax credits, as monthly payments to help families' incomes and spending levels through the year, helping particularly in difficult months.
- Extend the Young Child Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit to the United States Territories.

[Working Families Tax Relief Act \(Rep. Kildee\)](#)

The tax code can help families make ends meet with refundable tax credits that help working families living paycheck to paycheck, but many low-income workers are excluded if they don't have dependent children or if their earnings are too low. The Working Families Tax Relief Act would begin to fix our laws to help women and their families keep their heads above water and would provide relief to 46 million households across the country. The Working Families Tax Relief Act would:

- Expand the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), a refundable tax credit for low wage workers, for those with and without children.
- Make the child tax credit fully refundable.
- Create a Young Child Tax Credit for children under age 6.
- Provide an EITC expansion and make the Child Tax Credit refundable for Puerto Rico.

[Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit Enhancement Act \(Rep. Davis\)](#)

The Child and Dependent Care Tax Enhancement Act of 2019 modernizes the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit to help many more working families afford the rising cost of care. Child care is one of the largest expenses for families. The average cost of daycare for children up to age four has climbed to between \$8,091 to \$11,502 annually. For families earning the national median income, the average cost of care for just one child under five amounts to 18 percent of their income, for lower-income families, child care alone can cost as much as 30 percent of their pay. The Child Care and Dependent Credit Enhancement Act would:

- Make the full credit available to most working families.
- Put more money into a family's pocket by almost tripling the maximum credit from \$1,050 to \$3,000 per child, up to \$6,000.
- Help lower income families see a benefit by making the credit fully refundable.
- Help working married couples who file separately due to high student loan debt by allowing them to access the credit.
- Retain the credit's value over time by indexing the benefits to inflation to ensure they keep up with ever-growing costs.

[Schedules That Work Act \(Rep. DeLauro\)](#)

Too many workers – especially those in the low-wage jobs in which women predominate – are subject to unfair or unpredictable scheduling practices, making it difficult to juggle their responsibilities at home and on the job and be financially secure. When workers have little to no say in their schedules it is difficult to arrange child care, participate in children's school activities, care for themselves and their families, or get a leg up by taking on classes or training courses. The Schedules That Work Act would promote greater certainty by:

- Protecting all employees from retaliation for requesting a more flexible, predictable or stable work schedule.
- Restricting "just-in-time" scheduling practices in the industries in which it is most common – such as retail and food service – by, for example, requiring at least two weeks of advance notice of work schedules and providing compensation for schedule changes and cancellations made with little notice.

DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CAUCUS

POLICY AGENDA FOR WOMEN & FAMILIES

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

[Even Playing Field Act of 2019 \(Reps. Speier, Frankel, Lawrence, Escobar, and Haaland\)](#)

The U.S. Women's National Team (USWNT) captivated millions during the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup, inspiring the world with their thrilling fourth World Cup title victory and their fight for equal pay. Despite being the most successful team in women's soccer history, the USWNT continues to endure inequities in compensation, investment, and working conditions. For example, despite the U.S. Women's Soccer Team's success, the U.S. Soccer Federation pays the Women's National Team as little as 38 cents on the dollar compared to the Men's National Team. Our athletes deserve equal pay for equal work, and equity across investment and workplace conditions. The Even Playing Field Act would:

- Clarify eligibility requirements for NGBs to include demonstrating and providing investment, working conditions, wages and other compensation for amateur athletes, coaches, trainers, managers, administrators, and officials that is free from discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, or national origin.
- Stipulate that duties of NGBs include providing equitable support and encouragement for participation by women, including investment, working conditions, wages and other compensation.
- Mandate that each NGB submit regular reports to Congress on their compensation practices disaggregated by race and gender.

[GOALS Act \(Reps. Matsui and DeLauro\)](#)

The U.S. Women's National Team has captivated our country and the global soccer community with their dominance on the pitch and their inspiring fight for equal pay. The GOALS Act would support the basic principle that equal work deserves equal pay by holding the U.S. Soccer Federation accountable for unequal pay practices. Specifically, the GOALS Act would withhold federal funding for the 2026 World Cup until the U.S. Soccer Federation ends their discriminatory practices and provides equal pay for all of its athletes.

[Athletic Fair Pay Act \(Reps. Frankel and Castor\)](#)

Female athletes are paid significantly less than their male counterparts despite being required to perform the same work. For example, the women's national soccer team has won four FIFA World Cup titles, four Olympic gold medals, and has been ranked number one by FIFA for 10 of the last 11 years. In addition, the women's team has generated \$50.8 million in game revenue from 2016 to 2018. Despite this, the U.S. Soccer Federation pays the Women's National Team as little as 38 cents on the dollar compared to the Men's National Team. In addition, in 2017, the U.S. Women's National Hockey Team reached a settlement with USA Hockey in a wage dispute only after the team threatened to boycott a major competition. Prior to the settlement, USA Hockey, the sport's National Governing Body, *refused to pay female athletes* in non-Olympic years and only paid \$6,000 to each player in the year leading up to Olympic Games. Only after suing USA Hockey were female hockey players finally eligible to earn up to \$70,000 per year, which included increased training stipends year-round and performance bonuses for winning Olympic medals. The Athletics Fair Pay Act would:

- Amend the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act to Require Equitable Pay for Female Athletes in Amateur Athletics.
- Adds new reporting requirements for National Governing Bodies to require National Governing Bodies to provide an annual report to Congress on athlete pay broken down by race and gender.

[9-1-1 Saves Act \(Rep. Torres\)](#)

The 9-1-1 Saves Act would recognize the protective nature of the work performed by our nation's 9-1-1 call-takers and dispatchers, who are disproportionately women. The federal government currently classifies these occupations as administrative/clerical in nature, which is inaccurate and a disservice to the lifesaving work and dedication of these professionals. This zero-cost legislative fix would reclassify public safety telecommunicators as "Protective Service Occupations."

[Appropriations](#)

Ensure that our enforcement agencies such as **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)**, the **Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP)**, and the **Wage and Hour Division** have the resources to enforce pay discrimination and wage theft laws. Support robust funding for the Women's Bureau, which promotes the welfare of working women by advancing their opportunities for employment and improving their working conditions. Ensure investment in programs provided through the **Women in Apprenticeship and Non-Traditional Occupations (WANTO)** grant, which improves opportunities for women to access apprenticeships and enter traditionally male-dominated jobs. Ensure that our children have access to quality, affordable child care and early education and workers earn a living wage by increasing funding for **Child Care and Development Block Grants (CCDBG)**, **Head Start**, the **Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS)** program, **Preschool Development Grants**, and **21st Century Community Learning Centers**.

SAFETY & FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE

Women and girls deserve to feel safe and secure in all aspects of life.

Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019 (Reps. Bass and Fitzpatrick)

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), enacted in 1994, is landmark legislation responding to our nation's crisis of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. VAWA is up for reauthorization, providing an opportunity to strengthen the law and increase funding levels. The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019:

- Enhances judicial and law enforcement tools, through reauthorization of the STOP Grants, authorizing the use of stop grants to develop and enforce firearm surrender policies, expand permissible use allowed use of grant funding for programs focused on increasing survivor/law enforcement/community safety, and legal assistance for dependent children in appropriate circumstances
- Improves services for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking
- Provides services, protection, and justice for young victims of violence, including extending the Rape Prevention and Education grant program, addressing bullying of young people, improving grants focused on prevention education for students, and expanding relevant training for school-based and campus health centers
- Reauthorizes and updates the SMART Prevention Program to reduce dating violence, help children exposed to violence, and engage men in preventing violence
- Expands grants under the Public Health Service Act to support implementation of training programs to improve the capacity of early childhood programs to address domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking among the families they serve
- Preserves and expands housing protections for survivors
- Provides economic security assistance for survivors, by reauthorizing the National Resource Center on Workplace Responses, protecting employees from being fired because they are survivors of sexual assault or domestic violence, and protecting survivors' eligibility to receive Unemployment Insurance
- Helps prevent "intimate partner" homicides, by including provisions expanding firearms laws to prohibit persons convicted of dating violence from possessing firearms, prohibiting persons convicted of misdemeanor stalking from possessing firearms, and prohibiting individuals subject to ex parte protective orders from possessing firearms
- Helps protect Native American women by including provisions to improve tribal access to federal crime information databases and reaffirming tribal criminal jurisdiction over non-Indian perpetrators of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, stalking, and trafficking for all federally recognized Indian tribes and Alaskan Natives
- Protects the Office on Violence Against Women in the Department of Justice from being de-emphasized, merged, or consolidated into any other DOJ office.

The Security and Financial Empowerment (SAFE) Act (Rep. Roybal-Allard)

The Security and Financial Empowerment (SAFE) Act builds on progress made through legislation like the Violence Against Women Act and the Affordable Care Act to continue to raise awareness and break down the economic barriers that intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and stalking create for survivors and their families—because no one should have to choose between financial security and physical safety. The SAFE Act would help survivors get the support they need by:

- Allowing a survivor to take up to 30 days off from work in a 12-month period, including seven days of paid time off consistent with the Healthy Families Act, to receive medical attention, seek legal assistance, attend court proceedings, and get help with safety planning.
- Protecting employees from being fired because they were harassed by their abuser, obtained protective orders, participated in the criminal or civil justice process, or sought modifications at work to increase workplace safety in response to domestic or sexual violence.
- Requiring employers to make reasonable safety precautions or job-related modifications if requested, unless doing so would impose an undue burden on the employer.
- Ensuring that survivors of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and stalking who have been separated from their employment as a result of such violence and exploitation are eligible for unemployment insurance.
- Investing in a national awareness campaign to encourage a culture of prevention and support for survivors of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
- Requesting a GAO report on the impact of domestic violence on survivors' ability to repay student loans.

SAFETY & FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE

[Zero Tolerance for Domestic Abusers Act \(Reps. Dingell and Donovan\)](#)

Firearms are often involved when an incident of domestic violence escalates from a violent one to a lethal one. When a gun is present in a domestic violence situation, the victim is five times more likely to be killed. The Zero Tolerance for Domestic Abusers Act would protect survivors by:

- Ensuring people who have abused dating partners are prohibited from buying or owning firearms.
- Closing the loophole that lets some convicted stalkers access guns.

[The Stopping Harmful Image Exploitation and Limiting Distribution \(SHIELD\) Act \(Reps. Speier and Katko\)](#)

Nonconsensual sharing of private, explicit images is a serious problem that disproportionately affects women and minors. Victims of these egregious privacy violations report frequent harassment and significant distress about losing control over their privacy, their relationships, and their reputation. Several victims have, tragically, taken their own lives. While 40 states and D.C. have enacted statutes in this area, they offer incomplete and inconsistent coverage. Furthermore, the inherently interstate nature of the privacy violation poses a jurisdictional challenge for state and local law enforcement agencies. The Stopping Harmful Image Exploitation and Limiting Distribution (SHIELD) Act would:

- Narrowly establish federal criminal liability for distributing private, intimate images (sexually explicit or nude) without the consent of the person depicted. It requires proof of knowledge or reckless disregard as to the lack of consent of the person depicted in the image and their reasonable expectation of privacy.
- The bill includes a number of civil liberties safeguards, such as newsworthiness or legal reporting of wrongdoing. Leading constitutional scholars have reviewed the SHIELD Act and concluded that it is consistent with the First Amendment.
- The SHIELD Act also includes safeguards for innocent Internet service providers and online platforms, recognizing that they exercise limited control over their customers. These intermediaries would only be liable if they intentionally promote or solicit conduct that is in violation of the Act.

[The Online Safety Modernization Act \(Reps. Clark, Brooks, and Meehan\)](#)

Victims have had their private addresses released by online mobs threatening rape and murder (doxing), have had their private photos published without permission (non-consensual pornography), or used against them in exchange for sexual activity or money (sextortion), and have even been subjected to raids by armed SWAT teams responding to fake emergencies (swatting). As federal policies have failed to keep up with online abuses and local police face a lack of resources, victims often feel they have no choice but to take drastic action like fleeing their homes, spending enormous sums on protection, and leaving job opportunities. The Online Safety Modernization Act would provide protections by:

- Prohibit use of a victim's sexually intimate visual depictions to extort or coerce.
- Prohibit forcing victims to produce sexually intimate visual depictions.
- Prohibit knowingly transmitting false information in an effort to cause an emergency law enforcement response.
- Prohibit knowingly publishing a victim's personally identifiable information, including sexually intimate visual depictions, with the intent to harm.
- Provide additional enforcement resources to the FBI and require the DOJ to designate Assistant U.S. Attorneys as responsible for prosecution.
- Establish a national resource center to provide information, training, and technical assistance to improve the capacity of individuals, organizations, and governments to address cybercrimes against individuals.
- Establish a grant program to train and equip state and local law enforcement, prosecutors, and judicial personnel on cybercrimes against individuals.

[Closing Law Enforcement Consent Loophole Act \(Rep. Speier\)](#)

In February 2018, *Buzzfeed* published a powerful article that recounted the story of a teenage girl's struggle for justice after she was raped by two police officers, who were able to claim that she had consented while she was under arrest, due to a loophole in New York state law. This loophole still exists in 30 states, and there is no federal law that eliminates the consent defense for federal law enforcement officers, with the exception of federal corrections employees. The Closing Law Enforcement Consent Loophole Act would:

- Make it a criminal offense, punishable by up to 15 years in prison, for a federal law enforcement officer to engage in a sexual act with anyone in their custody, regardless of consent.
- Provide additional Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) grant funding to states that implement similar laws and require that those states submit information to the DOJ on the number of complaints made to law enforcement agencies regarding an officer engaging in a sexual act with any individual in their custody.

SAFETY & FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE

[Taking Prosecution of Military Sexual Assault Out of the Chain of Command \(Rep. Speier\)](#)

Commanders currently decide whether or not those accused of committing sexual assault will be taken to trial, the charges against them, and how they'll be punished. Historically, this has led to commanders trying few cases and reducing sentences after perpetrators had been convicted. More recently, commanders' role in the military justice system has created a liability—through unlawful command influence—that has led to the overturning of several sexual assault convictions. Constraining commanders' role in sexual assault prosecutions by leaving prosecution and sentencing decisions to expert lawyers and judges will increase perceived and real fairness within the system, making it easier to prevent assault and hold perpetrators accountable. To accomplish this goal, Rep. Speier's proposal would:

- Give military lawyers the power to take sexual assault cases to trial and give judges authority over sentencing.
- Clarify unlawful command influence laws to ensure commanders can play a role in preventing and responding to sexual harassment and assault.

[EMPOWER Act \(Reps. Frankel, Fitzpatrick, Nadler, Katko, Blunt Rochester, Underwood\)](#)

Workplace harassment is an abuse of power, robbing women and men of a safe and dignified work environment and harming their ability to care for their families. The EMPOWER Act is a bipartisan package to combat harassment by:

- Prohibiting non-disparagement and non-disclosure clauses that cover workplace harassment as a condition of employment, promotion, compensation, benefits, or change in employment status or contractual relationship.
- Establishing a confidential tip-line for the EEOC to receive reports about harassment and target employers that continue to allow for systemic harassment at the workplace. This would supplement the EEOC's current formal complaint process. The information would be shared with state-based Fair Employment Practice Agencies, who could also bring civil enforcement actions against employers.
- Requiring that public companies disclose the number of settlements, judgments, and aggregate settlement amounts in connection with workplace harassment (as a material disclosure) in their annual SEC filings; and disclose the existence of repeat settlements with respect to a particular individual.
- Prohibiting companies from receiving tax deductions for expenses and attorneys' fees paid in connection with litigation related to workplace harassment; prohibiting tax deductions for amounts paid pursuant to judgments related to workplace harassment; protecting plaintiffs' awards and settlements received in connection with workplace harassment as nontaxable income; and ensuring that plaintiffs who receive frontpay or backpay as a result of harassment and discrimination are not taxed unjustly.
- Requiring development and dissemination of workplace training programs to educate at all levels about what constitutes prohibited workplace harassment and how to prevent this behavior; educate employees about their rights with respect to workplace harassment, including how to report it; and train bystanders on how to intervene and report; developing a public service advertisement campaign to provide further education on this issue.

SAFETY & FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE

[BE HEARD in the Workplace Act \(Reps. Clark, Pressley, Slotkin, and Mucarsel-Powell\)](#)

The BE HEARD Act provides a comprehensive set of reforms to address and prevent workplace harassment and other forms of discrimination. It builds on and strengthens existing civil rights laws and workplace protections, and extends anti-discrimination protections to all workers, while also safeguarding existing antidiscrimination laws and protections. It draws from the experiences workers have bravely shared and takes ambitious steps to ensure businesses have more resources to prevent harassment, workers have more support when they seek accountability and justice, and those who think they can get away with assault or harassment on the job get a clear message: time is up.

- Require workplace harassment prevention strategies including nondiscrimination policies and trainings.
- Provide resources to assist employers in preventing and addressing harassment including model policies and trainings, industry-specific best practices, and model workplace climate surveys.
- Support research and data collection on workplace harassment including a nationwide prevalence survey, study and report on harassment in the federal government, and research on successful prevention strategies.
- Eliminate the tipped minimum wage, which exacerbates harassment.
- Expand workplace protections against harassment of and discrimination against workers at small businesses, independent contractors, interns, fellows, volunteers, and trainees, and clarify protections for LGBTQ workers.
- Restore workplace protections for older Americans, employees harassed by their supervisors, and workers retaliated against for bringing harassment claims.
- Clarify the standard workers must meet to prove harassment claims in court so that the law's protections address conduct most people would find egregious.
- Extend statutes of limitations for workers to file harassment claims with the EEOC.
- Eliminate caps on damages for workers who successfully bring claims of harassment and discrimination.
- Prohibit mandatory arbitration and pre-dispute nondisclosure agreements and create guardrails for post-dispute nondisclosure agreements.
- Ensure federal contractor compliance with civil rights laws.
- Provide grants for preventing and addressing harassment and employment discrimination, including grants for legal assistance to low-income workers, creating a system for state-level advocacy, and grants to worker centers.

[National Domestic Worker Bill of Rights \(Rep. Jayapal\)](#)

Over two million domestic workers – most of whom are women, disproportionately women of color and immigrant women – go to work in people's homes across the U.S. every day. These workers care for children, clean homes, allow older persons to remain in their homes and support the independence of people with disabilities. However, domestic workers are not covered by basic protections available to most other workers. Domestic workers were intentionally left out of New Deal labor protections because lawmakers were unwilling to equalize the wages of African American woman workers. These exclusions have caused serious harm to this workforce. Domestic workers face high levels of wage theft, sexual harassment, discrimination, workplace injuries and trafficking. The National Domestic Worker Bill of Rights:

- Fills in key gaps in employment protections.
- Builds on state innovations to create workplace protections specific to domestic work.
- Provides tailored protections for the most vulnerable and trafficked workers.
- Ensures that federal agencies competently support and protect domestic workers.
- Commissions research to better protect and stabilize this workforce.
- Invests in the stability and expansion of this workforce.
- Supports innovative new worker education and empowerment models.
- Addresses employers' needs.

[Ending Forced Arbitration of Sexual Harassment Act \(Reps. Bustos, Stefanik, Jayapal, and Jones\)](#)

Forced arbitration allows sexual harassment and assault to fester in the workplace by keeping workers from taking their cases to court. Research shows arbitration procedures overwhelmingly favor employers at the expense of survivors. The Ending Forced Arbitration of Sexual Harassment Act would change this equation by:

- Prohibiting a predispute arbitration agreement from being valid or enforceable if it requires arbitration of a sex discrimination dispute, including sexual harassment.
- The prohibition does not apply to an arbitration provision in a contract between an employer and a labor organization or between labor organizations, subject to limitations.

SAFETY & FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE

[Forced Arbitration Injustice Repeal \(FAIR\) Act \(Rep. Johnson\)](#)

Over 60 million workers have signed away their right to a jury trial through mandatory arbitration agreements, which often silence survivors and protect harassers from public scrutiny. The FAIR Act would facilitate the pursuit of justice by:

- Prohibiting a predispute arbitration agreement from being valid or enforceable if it requires arbitration of an employment, consumer, antitrust, or civil rights dispute.
- The validity and enforceability of an agreement to arbitrate shall be determined by a court, under federal law, rather than an arbitrator, irrespective of whether the party resisting arbitration challenges the arbitration agreement specifically or in conjunction with other terms of the contract containing such agreement.
- Nothing in this bill applies to arbitration provisions in a contract between an employer and a labor organization or between labor organizations, except that no such arbitration provision shall have the effect of waiving the right of an employee to seek judicial enforcement of a right arising under the U.S. Constitution, a state constitution, a federal or state statute, or related public policy.

[Hold Accountable and Lend Transparency \(HALT\) Campus Sexual Violence Act \(Reps. Speier, Fitzpatrick, Kuster and Adams\)](#)

Disturbingly, 20 percent of young women and six percent of young men become victims of sexual assault on campus. The bipartisan Hold Accountable and Lend Transparency (HALT) Campus Sexual Violence Act would hold institutions accountable and strengthen prevention and enforcement efforts to combat campus sexual violence by:

- Allowing the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to issue financial penalties for noncompliance with civil rights requirements under Title IX.
- Increasing penalties for violating the Clery Act from \$35,000 to \$100,000.
- Creating a private right of action for students harmed by institutions that fail to meet campus safety requirements.
- Requiring public disclosure of a list of colleges and universities under investigation for violations of Title IX and the Clery Act, the sanctions (if any) or findings issued pursuant to such investigations, and copies of all program reviews and resolution agreements entered into between a university, ED, and the Department of Justice.
- Requiring campuses to conduct biennial climate surveys tracking instances of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and stalking, the effectiveness of campus awareness and prevention programs, and the effectiveness of current processes and investigations, among other things.
- And creating an interagency task force to increase coordination between agencies and enhance investigations.

[Not Invisible Act \(Rep. Haaland\)](#)

The epidemic of missing and murdered indigenous women has long been overlooked, with indigenous women facing murder rates that are 10 times higher than the national average. The Not Invisible Act of 2019 seeks to establish an advisory committee and best practices for law enforcement on combatting the epidemic of missing persons, murder, and trafficking of Native Americans and Alaska Natives, and designates an official within the Bureau of Indian Affairs charged with improving coordination of violent crime prevention efforts across federal agencies.

[Savanna's Act \(Reps. Torres, Newhouse, Haaland, Gianforte, Davids, Cole, Gallego, and Armstrong\)](#)

Savanna's Act is named in honor of Savanna LaFontaine-Greywind, a 22-year old pregnant member of the Spirit Lake Tribe who was tragically murdered in August 2017. Native American women face a murder rate ten times higher than the national average, with 84 percent experiencing some form of violence in their lifetime. Savanna's Act would help address the disturbing increase in murdered and missing Native American women by creating new guidelines for responding to these cases and by incentivizing their implementation through grant programming.

SAFETY & FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE

[Children's Act for Responsible Employment and Farm Safety \(CARE\) Act \(Rep. Roybal-Allard\)](#)

Agriculture is the only American industry that permits child workers as young as twelve to work without restrictions on the number of hours they spend in the fields outside of the school day. Children farm laborers receive no legal protection for how early they start working during mornings, how late they work on school or weekend evenings, and the total number of hours they can work during the day. In part due to long unregulated work schedules, half of children who regularly perform farm work do not complete secondary education. Child farmworkers also endure serious threats to their health and safety. According to the CDC, National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety, agriculture is the most dangerous industry for young workers. The CARE Act would:

- Bring age and work-hour standards for children in agriculture up to the standards for children working in all other industries.
- Establish a minimum penalty for child labor violations;
- Increase the maximum civil monetary penalties and maximum criminal penalties for child labor violations;
- Provide children with greater protections against pesticide exposure;
- Mandate employer reporting requirements on work-related serious injuries and fatalities;
- Require DOL to report to Congress annually a summary of data collected on work-related child injuries, illness, and fatalities and an analysis of this data.

[Humane Enforcement and Legal Protections \(HELP\) for Separated Children Act of 2019 \(Rep. Roybal-Allard\)](#)

The Pew Research Center reports that there are more than 5 million children in the United States living with at least one unauthorized immigrant parent. The vast majority of those children are U.S. citizens. Through no fault of their own, these children are vulnerable when their parents are the subjects of immigration enforcement, detention, and removal actions. The HELP for Separated Children Act will help protect children whose parents are involved in immigration enforcement actions. By instituting smart, responsible, and humane time of apprehension protocols, this bill will limit the harm to children caused by the involvement of parents in our immigration system and help to keep children out of foster care.

[Help Separated Families Act of 2019 \(Rep. Roybal-Allard\)](#)

In June 2019, the Trump Administration announced that ICE would begin aggressive interior enforcement actions, ripping children from their families across the country. The HELP Separated Families Act aims to limit the trauma faced by a growing number of children who are torn from their families and placed in the child welfare system following a parent's detention or removal by immigration authorities by supporting family unity and reunification and upholding parental rights. The Help Separated Families Act would:

- Ensure that the immigration status of a parent, legal guardian, or relative caregiver is not by itself grounds for disqualification from being a placement for a child;
- Require that child welfare agencies accept foreign documentation as sufficient identification for the purposes of a child welfare placement background check; and
- Prohibit child welfare agencies from filing for termination of parental rights in cases when a fit and willing parent or relative has been deported, detained, or is otherwise involved in an immigration proceeding, unless certain conditions have been met.

[Asylum Seeker Protection Act \(Rep. Escobar\)](#)

The United States has a long tradition of honoring asylum protections for individuals who are forced to leave their home country to escape danger or violence. Despite its name, the Trump Administration's cruel "Migrant Protection Protocols" (aka Remain in Mexico) policy puts this vulnerable population, often including pregnant women and children, at unnecessary risk by denying timely entry to the U.S. This bill ensures no taxpayer funds are used to enforce this dangerous policy.

[Fair Employment Protection Act \(Rep. DeLauro\)](#)

The Fair Employment Protection Act restores protections for workers harassed on the job by supervisors and those with authority to direct people's day-to-day work. These protections were weakened by the U.S. Supreme Court's June 2013 decision in *Vance v. Ball State University*. The Fair Employment Protection Act would:

- Restore strong protections from harassment by making clear that employers can be vicariously liable for harassment by individuals with the authority to undertake or recommend tangible employment actions or with the authority to direct an employee's daily work activities;
- Leave undisturbed the negligence standard that applies to coworker harassment;
- Leave undisturbed the strict liability standard that applies to supervisor harassment that results in a tangible employment action; and
- Make clear that employers are still able to avoid liability by proving the affirmative defense to vicarious liability for hostile work environment harassment.

SAFETY & FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE

Federal Funding Accountability for Sexual Harassers Act (Rep. Speier)

Sexual assault and harassment, both of which are vastly underreported, are an enormous barrier to the success and retention of women in STEM fields. According to a 2017 survey conducted by the University of Texas system, 20 percent of female science students, over 25 percent of female engineering students, and more than 40 percent of female medical students experienced sexual harassment by faculty or professors. However, abusive professors continue to get new jobs and taxpayer-funded grants. The Federal Funding Accountability for Sexual Harassers Act (FFASHA) targets this problem by:

- Requiring that universities report findings of a grievance process where a research professor engaged in discrimination on the basis of sex to all federal agencies that have awarded it a competitive research and development grant in the past 10 years (e.g., NIH, NSF, NASA).
- Requiring the university to also report incomplete investigations that have been ongoing for more than 6 months to the agencies, but without any personally identifiable information.
- Mandating that each funding agency may then consider these reports when awarding future competitive research grants.
- Future reintroduction of FFASHA will also include additional provisions to, amongst other reforms, create a database to house reports of sexual harassment by those seeking federal grants.

Women and Climate Change Act (Rep. Lee)

Women are often more vulnerable to the effects of climate change because they are more likely to be poor, have more limited mobility, and are more dependent on natural resources for their livelihood. Climate change endangers the safety of women and families, exacerbating instability and conflict, and placing a strain on financial resources. The Women and Climate Change Act highlights the disproportionate impact of climate change impacts on women and children and would require the U.S. government to:

- Establish a Federal Interagency Working Group on Women and Climate Change, the mission of which is to prevent and respond to the effects of climate change on women globally; and
- Implement a coordinated, integrated, evidence-based, and comprehensive strategy on Women and Climate Change throughout United States policies.

Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019 (Rep. Thompson)

Current law requires every federally-licensed dealer to run a background check on every gun they sell. There is proof these background checks work. Every day background checks stop more than 170 felons and some 50 domestic abusers from getting a gun from a federally-licensed dealer. Unfortunately, in some states, those same prohibited purchasers can go to an unlicensed dealer to get a firearm without a background check. A recent study found that about 22 percent of gun owners got their most recent firearm without a background check. The Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019 would require that every sale of a firearm include a background check.

Enhanced Background Checks Act of 2019 (Rep. Clyburn)

The Enhanced Background Checks Act of 2019 would strengthen background check procedures to block the sale of guns to individuals who are ineligible to purchase and possess them. The Act would provide more time to conduct background checks on individuals before a firearm dealer may sell to a prospective buyer. Under the Act the initial period a gun dealer must wait for an answer from the National Instant Criminal Background Check System is extended from 3 to 10 days.

Appropriations

Combat violence against women by funding the **Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO)** in the Department of Defense, and programs within the **Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)** and **Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA)** in the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services.

Facilitate workplaces free from harassment and discrimination by funding workplace rights enforcement and protection agencies such as the **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)**, the **Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP)**, and the **National Labor Relations Board**. Fund enacted reforms to better protect the workplace rights of Congressional staff, including the **Office of Employee Advocacy (OOEA)** established by H.Res. 724 (115th Congress), annual **Workplace Rights and Responsibilities** training established by H.Res. 630 (115th Congress), and the **Office of Congressional Workplace Rights**.

Increase funding for **Pell Grants** and ensure that the Department of Education's **Office for Civil Rights (OCR)** is adequately funded, and that OCR Regional Offices are not closed, so that schools are held accountable for violations of students' civil rights, including under Title IX.

EQUALITY FOR ALL

Women and LGBTQI+ individuals deserve dignity and equality under the law.

Equal Rights Amendment

The fact that women and LGBTQI+ individuals are still not considered equal in the eyes of the law permeates all aspects of our society. The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) is a constitutional amendment declaring that women shall have equal rights in the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction. Congress approved the Equal Rights Amendment in 1972, but by the 1982 deadline for state ratification, the ERA was three states shy of the 38 necessary.

In March 2017, Nevada ratified the ERA. In May 2018, Illinois became the 37th state to ratify the ERA, theoretically leaving just one state left. Finally ratifying the ERA would provide a constitutional prohibition against sex discrimination and bolster the entire women's agenda.

H.J.Res.38 - Removing the deadline for the ratification of the equal rights amendment (Rep. Speier)

This joint resolution eliminates the time limit for ratification of the equal rights amendment proposed to the states in House Joint Resolution 208 of the 92nd Congress, as agreed to in the Senate on March 22, 1972. The amendment shall be part of the Constitution whenever ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the states.

H.J.Res.35 - Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to equal rights for men and women (Rep. Carolyn Maloney)

This joint resolution proposes a constitutional amendment declaring that women shall have equal rights in the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction. The amendment prohibits the United States or any state from denying or abridging equal rights under the law on account of sex.

Equality Act (Rep. Cicilline)

In many states there are not clear or explicit protections against sex discrimination in housing, credit, education, employment, and more when that discrimination is tied to sexual orientation or gender identity. The Equality Act updates the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other statutes to explicitly provide that existing protections against sex discrimination include protections on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, public education, access to credit, jury service, federal funding, housing, and public accommodations. The Act also closes longstanding gaps in civil rights law by adding new protections from discrimination on the basis of sex.

Greater Leadership Overseas for the Benefit of Equality (GLOBE) Act (Rep. Titus)

Human rights are universal, but more must be done to honor and protect the rights of LGBTQI individuals around the globe. The Globe Act would establish a broad set of directives to reinstate U.S. leadership in the protection and promotion of the rights of LGBTQI individuals around the world. Specifically, the bill would:

- Codify Obama Administration tools aimed at promoting LGBTQI fairness and equality – e.g., LGBTQI specific human rights reports, an interagency focus group, and the now-vacant Special Envoy for LGBTQI Human Rights Position – that the current Administration has ignored;
- Endorse the selective use of existing sanctions to punish those responsible for egregious murders of and abuses directed at LGBTQI populations;
- Ensure that our foreign assistance and global health programs are inclusive of LGBTQI populations, and, therefore, effectively reaching most-at-risk populations;
- Make decriminalization of LGBTQI status, conduct, or expression a goal in our rule-of-law programs;
- Ensure fair access to asylum and refugee programs for LGBTQI persons who face persecution because of their orientation or identities;
- Call for active USG leadership in multilateral consideration of these issues; and
- Underscore that the State Department should deepen efforts to ensure that LGBTQI diplomatic personnel and their families are “world-wide available” in the same manner that their straight colleagues are.

EQUALITY FOR ALL

[Patsy T. Mink and Louise M. Slaughter Gender Equity in Education Act \(GEEA\) \(Rep. Matsui\)](#)

The Patsy T. Mink and Louise M. Slaughter Gender Equity in Education Act (GEEA) would provide additional resources for schools, school districts, states, and institutions of higher education to ensure compliance with the Patsy Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act, commonly referred to as Title IX. Title IX is a federal law that prohibits gender-based discrimination in federally supported education programs and activities. The GEEA would fight to ensure all students have access to a safe and equitable education by:

- Establishing an Office of Gender Equity in the U.S. Department of Education to coordinate activities within the Department and among other federal agencies;
- Combating discrimination, harassment, bias, and violence based on sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions;
- Supporting Title IX coordinators with annual training;
- Providing competitive grants to K-12 schools, institutions of higher education, local educational agencies, or states as the primary applicants, with the option to partner with organizations with relevant expertise;
- Including evaluation and assessment of how applicants improve on indicators of gender equity; and
- Disseminating resources and best practices nationwide.

[Pregnant Women in Custody Act \(to be introduced by Rep. Bass\)](#)

- The majority of women in the House of Representatives introduced the Pregnant Women in Custody Act to provide a national standard of care to address pregnancy-related needs of incarcerated women during pregnancy, labor, delivery and post-partum periods.
- The Pregnant Women in Custody Act would require the Department of Justice to collect data on women's mental and physical health in federal, state, tribal, and local corrections, focusing on pregnancy and the post-partum period. Prohibit restraints and restrictive housing on federal prisoners who are pregnant or who have given birth within the last eight weeks.
- Establish minimum standards for healthcare for pregnant women, fetuses, and newborns in federal custody, and require the DOJ to develop training programs and guidelines for federal correctional officers and US marshals, in consult with healthcare professionals
- Require reporting on the use of restraints and restrictive housing on any inmate while she is pregnant, in labor, or recovering from child birth to the agency director. Each year, a summary of these reports must be submitted by the agency director to the House and Senate Judiciary Committees.
- Direct the DOJ, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, to fund training and technical assistance to state and local corrections and law enforcement agencies, to ensure that restraints and restrictive housing are used in accordance with state laws.
- Provide competitive grant funding for states that have a law addressing the treatment of incarcerated women that the Attorney General (AG) determines meets or exceeds federal standards established in this legislation.
- Provide a preference in grant funding to states that have enacted or implemented services or pilot programs to address the needs of incarcerated pregnant women.

[Stop Shackling and Detaining Pregnant Women Act \(Rep. Garcia\)](#)

In March of 2018, the Trump-Pence Administration announced it had ended the policy of presumed release of pregnant women and youth in immigration detention. According to an internal memo, ICE no longer honors the previous policy, and instead makes a "case-by-case custody determination taking any special factors into account" when considering pregnant women and youth. Between December 2017 and April 2018, ICE detained more than 500 pregnant women. The Stop Shackling and Detaining Pregnant Women Act would:

- Reinstate the presumption of release of pregnant women and youth, with exceptions only when the DHS Secretary makes an individualized determination that credible, reasonable grounds exist to believe that the person presents an immediate and serious threat of hurting herself or others.
- Prohibits the shackling of pregnant women in custody at any time during pregnant, labor, and postpartum recovery.
- Sets minimum standards for comprehensive health care for any pregnant women or youth in custody including: routine or specialized prenatal care, comprehensive counseling, postpartum follow-up services, lactation services, an abortion services.
- Requires pregnant women and youth in custody are given privacy during a pelvic exam, labor, delivery, or treatment of any other symptom relating to a pregnancy.
- Requires public quarterly reporting on detention of pregnant women and youth, including audits and reports to Congress.

EQUALITY FOR ALL

H.R. 1 - For the People Act (Rep. Sarbanes)

During the 2018 midterms, voters elected a historic Democratic majority to the House of Representatives, with a mandate to end the culture of corruption in Washington, strengthen the security of our elections, and reducing the influence of big money in our politics.

The *For the People Act of 2019* would provide critical reforms in three critical areas:

- Voting Rights: H.R. 1 expands access to the ballot box by mandating automated voter registration, and expanding early-voting across the country. It would also prohibit voter roll purges, discriminatory voter ID laws, and end partisan gerrymandering.
- Campaign Finance: H.R. 1 would require any organization involved in political activity to disclose its large donors, strengthen oversight of campaign finance, and establish a small donation matching system to decrease the influence of interest groups and corporations.
- Ethics and Accountability: H.R. 1 expands conflict of interest law and divestment requirements, preventing Members of Congress from serving on corporate boards and requiring presidential candidates to disclose their tax returns. It also provides the Office of Government Ethics with more resources to enforce the law to establish more effective oversight.

H.R.1 passed the House of Representatives March 8, 2019.

H.R. 4-Voting Rights Advancement Act (Rep. Sewell)

In the 2013 case *Shelby County v. Holder*, the Supreme Court struck down Section 4(b) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which outlined the qualifications needed to determine which states are required by the Justice Department to pre-clear elections changes in states with a history of voter discrimination.

- Following the *Shelby County* decision, several states passed sweeping voter suppression laws that disproportionately prevent minorities, the elderly, and young people from voting.
- H.R. 4 creates a new coverage formula as required by the Supreme Court decision, that applies to all states and hinges on a finding of repeated voting rights violations in the past 25 years.
- States found to have repeated violations will be covered by the federal government for 10 years, and can come out of coverage if they establish a clean record.
- H.R. 4 also strengthens oversight by allowing federal courts to order coverage of certain jurisdictions, and allowing the Attorney General to request federal observers be present anywhere in the country to monitor threats of discriminatory practices.

Woman on the Twenty Act (Rep. Beatty)

The Administration indefinitely delayed plans to feature abolitionist Harriet Tubman on the new \$20, putting politics above recognizing this historic figure and finally including a woman on United States currency. The Woman on the Twenty Act will ensure that Harriet Tubman is featured on the \$20 bill after 2022.

Do No Harm Act (Reps. Kennedy and Scott)

The Do No Harm Act would clarify that religion cannot be used as a reason to discriminate, contrary to fundamental civil rights. It comes in response to continued efforts across the country to cite religious belief as grounds to undermine Civil Rights Act protections, limit access to health care, refuse service to minority populations, and permit discrimination in state-funded foster care. Specifically, the Do No Harm Act would limit the use of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) in cases involving discrimination, child labor and abuse, wages and collective bargaining, access to health care, public accommodations, and social services provided through government contract.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE & REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM

Women deserve quality, affordable health care, and to have control over their own bodies.

[Strengthening Health Care and Lowering Prescription Drug Costs Act \(Rep. Blunt Rochester\) and Protecting Americans with Preexisting Conditions Act \(Rep. Kuster\)](#)

Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, being a woman is no longer a pre-existing condition and essential health benefits such as maternity care are covered. Democrats are passing legislation to further strengthen protections for people with pre-existing conditions, lower prescription drug costs, and reverse the Trump Administration's health care sabotage. *H.R. 986 passed the House of Representatives May 9, 2019, and H.R. 987 passed the House May 16, 2019.*

[Women's Health Protection Act \(Reps. Chu, Fudge, and Frankel\)](#)

Since 2011, more than 400 laws have been passed that restrict and regulate abortion for medically unnecessary reasons. The Women's Health Protection Act (WHPA) would protect health care providers' ability to deliver abortion services free from medically unnecessary and onerous restrictions, such as needless waiting periods, burdensome admitting privilege requirements for providers, or unnecessary medical procedures, like ultrasounds, and from bans that single out and impede access to abortion, like the recent bans passed in Alabama and Georgia. It would also protect a patients' ability to receive these services. WHPA is a crucial step toward improving women's health and protecting constitutional rights, no matter a person's zip code.

[EACH Woman Act \(Reps. Lee, Schakowsky, and DeGette\)](#)

The EACH Woman Act would reverse the Hyde Amendment and related abortion funding restrictions, making a meaningful policy change for millions of women and their families. The EACH Woman Act creates two important standards for reproductive health:

First, it sets up the federal government as a standard-bearer, ensuring that every woman who receives care or insurance through the federal government will have coverage for abortion services. The EACH Woman Act restores abortion coverage to those:

- Enrolled in a government health insurance plan (i.e., Medicaid, Medicare), including those who live in the District of Columbia;
- Enrolled in a government-managed health insurance program (i.e., FEHBP, TRICARE) due to an employment relationship; or
- Receiving health care from a government provider or program (i.e., Indian Health Services, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the Veterans Administration).

Second, it prohibits political interference with decisions by private health insurance companies to offer coverage for abortion care. Federal, state and local legislators will not be able to interfere with the private insurance market, including the insurance marketplaces established by the Affordable Care Act, to prevent insurance companies from providing abortion coverage.

[Affordability is Access Act \(Reps. Pressley, Ocasio-Cortez, Hill, and Bera\)](#)

Access to safe and affordable contraception is fundamental to reproductive and economic freedom. Despite being one of the safest and most effective forms of birth control, oral birth control pills remain largely out of reach for nearly 1 in 3 people across America. For many women, particularly women with limited access to transportation, affordable childcare, or health insurance, prescription requirements and regular doctor visits pose significant challenges in accessing birth control. The Affordability is Access Act builds on the Affordable Care Act's birth control benefit by requiring ACA insurance plans to cover over-the-counter, contraceptive methods without out-of-pocket cost regardless of whether someone has a prescription.

[Access to Birth Control Act \(Rep. Carolyn Maloney\)](#)

Though birth control use is widespread and 99 percent of women have used contraceptives at some point in their lives, women continue to face obstacles when attempting to purchase birth control from pharmacists who refuse to fill these prescriptions based on their own personal beliefs. In various cases, pharmacists have kept and refused to transfer a prescription, refused to sell over-the-counter emergency contraception, or given the customer false medical information about the requested birth control. The Access to Birth Control Act ensures women's timely access to basic, preventive health care and ensures that women will not be denied birth control or emergency contraception by their pharmacist. The Act would also require pharmacies to help a woman obtain medication by her preferred method if the requested product is not in stock and would protect women from being intimidated when requesting contraception.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE & REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM

[Real Education for Healthy Youth Act of 2019 \(Rep. Lee\)](#)

Data tells us that we must do more to ensure that young people have access to the education and skill-development they need to make informed decisions about their sexual health. Of the pregnancies among 15–19-year olds, 75 percent are unintended. Young people also still account for nearly half of the approximate 20 million new sexually transmitted infections each year and are disproportionately impacted by HIV.

The Real Education for Healthy Youth Act would help schools implement age-, developmentally and culturally appropriate sex education that is medically accurate and complete and grounded in evidence; train educators and other school staff; and expand sex education programs at institutions of higher learning. The bill would also end the Title V abstinence-only "Sexual Risk Avoidance" program and prevent further federal funds from being spent on ineffective, medically inaccurate sexual health education programs that shame and stigmatize young people.

[The Youth Access to Sexual Health Services Act \(Rep. Adams\)](#)

All young people need information about, and access to, affordable, youth-friendly, and culturally competent health care, as well as care providers who respect their privacy and support them in making choices that are right for them.

The Youth Access to Sexual Health Services Act would provide communities with resources to help young people bridge barriers to sexual health through a variety of age-appropriate and effective efforts to promote communication, equip youth with information and skills on how to access and obtain services, supplement existing programs, support young parents and families, and train those working with youth to promote linkage to sexual health services and help ensure their well-being.

[MOMMA's Act \(Rep. Kelly\)](#)

The United States has a maternal and infant mortality crisis with the highest rates among developed nations. According to the CDC, 60 percent of pregnancy-related deaths are preventable, and black and Native women are three times as likely as white women to die of pregnancy-related causes. The U.S. must rectify this injustice and immediately act to ensure the health and wellbeing of pregnant women.

[Midwives for Optimizing Optimal Maternity Outcomes \(MOMS Act\) \(Rep. Roybal-Allard\)](#)

Despite significant investment in our health care, America continues to rank far behind almost all other developed countries in birth outcomes for both mothers and babies, including unacceptably high rates of maternal and infant mortality, preterm births, and severe complications of pregnancy that have adverse effects on women's health. Communities of color disproportionately experience these tragedies at birth. Decades of research have shown that midwifery is associated with high-quality care and outcomes that are comparable to, or in some studies better than, care provided by OBGYNs. But Midwives are currently only about 12 percent of all births in the U.S., and 56 percent of counties in this country do not have a single nurse-midwife or certified midwife. The Midwives for MOMS Act will establish two new funding streams for midwifery education, one in the Title VII Health Professions Training Programs, and one in the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs. The bill will also address the significant lack of diversity in the maternity care workforce by focusing on students from minority or disadvantaged communities.

[Protecting Access to Lifesaving Screenings \(PALS\) Act \(Rep. Wasserman-Schultz\)](#)

This year, more than 40,000 Americans will lose their lives to breast cancer. While most women develop breast cancer later in life, young women do develop the disease, often developing rapidly in more aggressive forms. In 2017, the American Cancer Society estimated that nine percent of new, fatal cases of breast cancer were among women in their forties. The PALS Act protects access to annual mammograms with insurance coverage with no-copay starting at age 40 by extending the moratorium on the United States Preventative Services Task Force breast cancer screening guidelines, and also ensures that veterans treated in the Veterans Health Administration do not face these same obstacles to getting the care they and their health care providers deem necessary.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE & REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM

Menstrual Equity For All Act (Rep. Meng)

Menstrual equity is a human right, and a health necessity for over half of the population. Popular culture depicts these menstrual hygiene products as ubiquitous and cheap, but many women face difficulty when it comes to access and affordability.

It's estimated that up to 86 percent of women use tampons, up to 72 percent use pads, and 75 percent use panty liners. Most premenopausal women use menstrual hygiene products on a monthly basis and it is estimated that a woman will use up to 16,000 tampons in her lifetime. As such, women spend a significant amount of money on purchasing menstruation hygiene products each year. Beyond being cost-prohibitive, different populations of women and girls face unique challenges in accessing menstrual hygiene products.

The Menstrual Equity For All Act would comprehensively address barriers of accessibility and affordability of these products by:

- Giving states the option to use federal grant funds to provide students with free menstrual hygiene products in schools;
- Ensuring that inmates and detainees incarcerated in federal (including immigration detention centers), state, and local facilities have access to free menstrual hygiene products;
- Allowing homeless assistance providers to use grant funds that cover shelter necessities (such as blankets and toothbrushes) to also use those funds to purchase menstrual hygiene products;
- Allowing individuals to use their own pre-tax dollars from their health flexible spending accounts to purchase menstrual hygiene products;
- Requiring that Medicaid covers the cost of menstrual hygiene products for recipients;
- Directing large employers (with 100 or more employees) to provide free menstrual hygiene products for their employees in the workplace; and
- Requiring all public federal buildings, including buildings on the Capitol campus, provide free menstrual hygiene products in the restrooms

Menstrual Products Rights to Know Act (Rep. Meng)

Consumers can easily see the ingredients used in products like shampoo, or in the foods that they eat; these same transparency requirements should apply to products that touch, or are inserted into, our most sensitive and absorbent parts of the body. Instead, consumers are denied access to crucial information, which affects their safety and their ability to make informed decisions.

The Menstrual Products Right to Know Act would make menstrual hygiene products safer by ensuring that women know what they are putting in their bodies. This bill would ensure transparency by requiring manufacturers of commonly used menstrual hygiene products, such as scented and unscented pads, cups, and scented and unscented tampons, to label the ingredients in these items, and list them in descending order of concentration.

Infant Formula Protection Act (Rep. Meng)

Busy parents need to be able to rely on the safety of products, like formula, that they buy in grocery stores to make sure their newborns are well-fed and healthy. Grocery stores that stock expired formula – even by just a few days – pose real health risks to infants. Although regulations require expiration dates to be placed on formula, currently, federal law does not prohibit the sale of infant formula after its expiration has passed. As a result, many stores continue to keep the expired items on their shelves even though the products are outdated.

Infant Formula Protection Act of 2019 would categorize expired infant formula as “adulterated.” This bill would prohibit the sale of expired baby formula. Failure to remove such products would subject sellers to fines. Parents must be able to trust the safety of the products they buy in their stores.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE & REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM

[Newborn Screening Saves Lives Reauthorization \(Rep. Roybal-Allard\)](#)

Each year thousands of babies are born with a genetic, metabolic, hormonal or functional condition that is not otherwise apparent at birth. Today, a simple set of tests performed at birth can detect these life-threatening illnesses before any symptoms begin, allowing crucial time for early treatment to prevent long-term damage. In 2008, Congress passed the original Newborn Screening Saves Lives Act, which established national screening guidelines for the first time and helped make possible comprehensive newborn screening in every state. Unfortunately, critical gaps and challenges still remain. Discrepancies in the number of tests given from state to state cause children to tragically die or become permanently disabled from otherwise treatable disorders. The Newborn Screening Saves Lives Reauthorization Act will ensure that infants continue to receive comprehensive and effective screenings by:

- Reauthorizing Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grants to assist states' efforts to improve their screening programs, educate parents and health care providers, and improve follow-up care for infants with conditions detected through newborn screening;
- Renewing the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Heritable Disorders in Newborns and Children, which maintains and updates the Recommended Uniform Screening Panel that states adopt and implement;
- Reauthorizing programs at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide technical assistance to state newborn screening programs to track outcomes of infants identified through newborn screening and the Newborn Screening Quality Assurance Program, and;
- Reauthorizing the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Hunter Kelly Newborn Screening program, which funds research aimed at identifying new treatments and new screening technologies.
- Commissioning a National Academy of Medicine (NAM) report to make consensus recommendations to shift to a 21st century newborn screening system.

[Jeanette Acosta Invest in Women's Health Act \(Rep. Gomez\)](#)

The Jeanette Acosta Invest in Women's Health Act would:

- Create new grants for public and nonprofit entities to expand preventive services, particularly for women of color. The grants would emphasize life-saving cancer screenings, Pap tests, human papillomavirus vaccination, and diagnostic tests for women with cancer symptoms;
- Create training opportunities for providers to expand training for breast and gynecologic cancer screenings, including specialty training for serving women of color and those with low-incomes.
- Study awareness and availability of effective cancer screening options.

[The Lower Drug Costs Now Act \(H.R.3\)](#)

Prescription Drug companies are charging Americans prices that are three, four, or even ten times higher than what they charge for the same drugs in other countries – even though they admit they still make a profit overseas. With the Lower Drug Costs Now Act, House Democrats are taking bold action to level the playing field and lower prescription drug costs for every American. This bill:

- **Ends the ban on Medicare negotiating directly with the drug companies**, and creates powerful new tools to force drug companies to the table to agree to real price reductions, while ensuring seniors never lose access to the prescriptions they need.
- **Makes the lower drug prices negotiated by Medicare available to all Americans**, including those with private insurance, not just Medicare beneficiaries.
- **Stops drug companies ripping off Americans while charging other countries less for the same drugs**, limiting the maximum price for any negotiated drug to be in line with the average price in countries like ours, where drug companies charge less for the same drugs – and admit they still make a profit.
- **Creates a new, \$2,000 out-of-pocket limit on prescription drug costs for Medicare beneficiaries**, and reverses years of unfair price hikes above inflation across more than 8,000 drugs in Medicare.
- **Reinvests in innovation and the search for new cures and treatments**, using some of the savings from lowering the unjustified drug prices that are bankrolling Big Pharma's stock-buybacks to reinvest billions of dollars in the search for new breakthrough treatments and cures at NIH.

[Appropriations](#)

Promote women's access to health care by funding the **Title X Family Planning Program**, the **Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program**, the **Division of Adolescent Health**, the **Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)**, and the **Maternal, Infant, & Early Childhood Home Visiting Program**. Ensure women's access to nutrition services by funding the **Women and Infant Children (WIC)** program and **Meals on Wheels**, and support caregivers through the **National Family Caregiver Support Program**. **Repeal the Hyde Amendment, the Weldon Amendment, and other harmful abortion restrictions.**

SUPPORTING WOMEN SERVICEMEMBERS & VETERANS

Women servicemembers and veterans deserve our recognition, support and respect.

[Access to Contraception for Servicemembers and Dependents Act \(Rep. Speier\)](#)

The 4.6 million women who receive health care through the Department of Defense deserve comprehensive counseling and care without out of pocket costs, as civilians currently have thanks to the Affordable Care Act. Access to contraception is central to women's health and well-being, and the Department of Defense should not give servicewomen and their dependents fewer options than civilian women receive. Additionally, studies regarding women in the military and contraceptive counseling and access indicate the need for increased health education. The Access to Contraception for Servicemembers and Dependents Act of 2019 would address these issues by:

- Requiring that all women, including non-Active Duty Servicemembers and dependents, who receive health care through the military are treated the same as civilian women, with access to all FDA approved contraceptive methods and counseling services with no co-pay. It would also remove cost sharing for contraceptive care, including in insertion and removal of contraceptive methods like intrauterine devices.
- Requiring the Department of Defense to develop a comprehensive family planning education program for all servicemembers, ensuring that military families have the information necessary to make informed decisions.
- Enhancing and codifying access to emergency contraception for survivors of sexual assault.

[Deborah Sampson Act \(to be introduced by Rep. Brownley\)](#)

The bipartisan Deborah Sampson Act addresses gender disparities at the VA to ensure that women veterans are getting equitable care. This bill also addresses the needs of women veterans who are more likely to face homelessness, unemployment, and go without needed health care. The Deborah Sampson Act would ensure women veterans are getting the benefits they have earned through their service by:

- Empowering women veterans by expanding peer-to-peer counseling, group counseling and call centers for women veterans.
- Improving the quality of care for infant children of women veterans by increasing the number of days of maternity care VA facilities can provide and authorizing medically-necessary transportation for newborns.
- Eliminating barriers to care by increasing the number of gender-specific providers and coordinators in VA facilities, training clinicians, and retrofitting VA facilities to enhance privacy and improve the environment of care for women veterans.
- Providing support services for women veterans seeking legal assistance and authorizing additional grants for organizations supporting low-income women veterans.
- Improving the collection and analysis of data regarding women and minority veterans and expanding outreach by centralizing all information for women veterans in one easily accessible place on the VA website.

[Violence Against Women Veterans Act \(Rep. Velázquez\)](#)

It is estimated that one third of female veterans experience domestic violence compared with less than a quarter of civilian women. The Violence Against Women Veterans Act would improve services for women veterans experiencing domestic violence by:

- Establishing local domestic and sexual violence outreach coordinators under the VA, who would be tasked with helping veterans utilize existing service providers.
- Codifying the current VA Task Force on Domestic Violence and directing it to establish a comprehensive national program to prevent and treat intimate partner violence.
- Filling an existing lack of data by directing the VA to complete a national study on the prevalence and causes of domestic violence among veterans.

EMPOWERING WOMEN GLOBALLY

Women and girls around the world deserve education, economic opportunity, safety, and health care, including reproductive freedom.

[Global Health, Empowerment and Rights \(HER\) Act \(Rep. Lowey\)](#)

The Global HER Act would permanently repeal the Global Gag Rule that was reinstated and expanded by the Trump Administration. The Global Gag Rule is a U.S. foreign policy that, when enacted, requires non-U.S. NGOs receiving U.S. global health funding to choose between receiving U.S. resources or providing comprehensive health care to their patients. The Trump Administration expanded the policy to apply not only to family-planning funds, but also to all U.S. global health aid. The Global HER Act would encourage comprehensive reproductive health care, uphold a patient's right to informed choice, and demonstrate respect for the doctor/patient relationship by:

- Ensuring that eligible foreign NGOs can continue to operate U.S.-supported health programs abroad, particularly those that provide legal health services to women – including counseling, referral, and legal abortion services – with their own, non-U.S. funds.
- Guaranteeing that foreign NGOs will not be forced to sacrifice their right to free speech in order to participate in U.S.-supported programs abroad.
- Helping expand access to health programs for women around the world to improve health and development outcomes for entire families, communities, and developing countries.

[Keeping Girls in School Act \(Reps. Frankel and Brooks\)](#)

Today, 130 million girls are not enrolled in school. When girls hit adolescence, they are most at risk of dropping out due to forced marriage, pregnancy, or family pressure. The Keeping Girls in School Act empowers girls and increases their educational opportunities and economic security by:

- Recognizing that every child deserves an equal opportunity to access quality education, and that the U.S. has been a global leader in efforts to expand and improve educational opportunities, particularly for girls.
- Bringing attention to the barriers girls face in accessing quality education at the secondary level, including forced marriage, female genital mutilation and poor safety traveling to schools.
- Authorizing USAID to enter into results-based and traditional grant project proposals to reduce barriers adolescent girls face in attaining inclusive and equitable educational opportunities. These agreements will integrate innovative technologies and funding mechanisms, including public-private partnerships and development impact bonds.
- Requiring a global strategy to empower adolescent girls and states that the U.S. Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls shall fulfill this initial requirement, to be reviewed and updated every 5 years.

[Reproductive Rights are Human Rights Act \(Reps. Clark, Lowey, Engel, Lee, and Frankel\)](#)

The Secretary of State reports annually to Congress on the status of human rights in each country receiving U.S. foreign aid, as well as in each United Nations member state. Since 2011, these reports have included detailed information on deprivation of women's access to reproductive rights.

In 2017, the State Department deleted all subsections on reproductive rights from its annual human rights reports with no warning or justification. This marks a dramatic about-face in U.S. efforts to protect the rights of women, sends an unmistakable signal that the U.S. no longer recognizes women's rights as human rights, and sends a message to abusive governments that the U.S. will not hold them to account for such violations.

The Reproductive Rights are Human Rights Act would ensure that the State Department reinstates and includes comprehensive reporting on reproductive rights in its annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. The Act would:

- Require the State Department to report on whether each country has adopted and enforced policies to promote: access to contraception; access to comprehensive family planning information; access to health care services to prevent maternal deaths and ensure healthy pregnancy and childbirth; and access abortion services, including post-abortion care in accordance with that country's laws.
- Require the State Department to report on the rates and causes of maternal deaths including deaths due to unsafe abortions and to describe instances of discrimination, coercion, and violence against women and girls in health care settings.
- Require the State Department to report on the ability to access modern methods of family planning, assess whether there are barriers to access as well as unmet need, and to describe any instances of denial of family planning information and services in that country.
- Require the State Department to prepare the reports in consultation with representatives from civil society, both within the U.S. and locally, ensuring that comprehensive, accurate, and non-biased data and analysis is included in the annual Reports.

DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CAUCUS

POLICY AGENDA

EMPOWERING WOMEN GLOBALLY

[International Violence Against Women Act \(Rep. Schakowsky\)](#)

According to the World Health Organization, 1 in 3 women around the world has experienced physical and/or sexual violence during her life. The International Violence Against Women Act (IVAWA) codifies a comprehensive plan for U.S. efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence around the world and supports survivors by:

- Permanently establishing the Office of Global Women's Issues in the U.S. State Department to develop and implement a cohesive, cross-agency effort to advance the status of women and girls globally. The Office does this by providing guidance in diplomacy, support and resources for programs that advance the status of women and girls globally, and serving as a subject-matter expert through policy guidance.
- Codifying a Gender-Based Violence Strategy that ensures that victims and survivors of gender-based violence and harmful traditional practices around the world have better access to services, protection, and the justice they deserve.
- Updating and enhancing emergency response mechanisms for outbreaks of violence against women and girls abroad.
- Ensuring that gender-based violence prevention and response are included in all U.S. humanitarian efforts.
- This legislation does not authorize new spending but instead focuses current resources more efficiently and effectively.

[Women and Countering Violent Extremism Act \(Reps. Frankel and Chabot\)](#)

When it comes to violent extremism and terrorism, U.S. government policy and programs focus too little on the roles women play as victims, perpetrators, and preventers. Increasing women's participation will improve the likelihood that U.S. counterterrorism and peacebuilding efforts are successful. The Women and Countering Violent Extremism Act of 2019 achieves this by:

- Authorizing assistance to support women's empowerment civil society organizations working on countering violent extremism;
- Mandating that appropriate State and Defense Department officials receive training in how to facilitate women's participation in countering violent extremism in their communities;
- Authorizing the Defense Department, State Department and USAID to research the intersection of women and countering violent extremism;
- Ensuring future relevant U.S. government strategies account for women's varied roles in countering violent extremism and terrorism; and
- Requiring the State Department's annual Country Reports on Terrorism to address gender-specific drivers of radicalization and terrorist recruitment strategies in at least five pilot countries.

[Visa Transparency Anti-Trafficking Act \(Rep. Frankel\)](#)

Human traffickers use nonimmigrant visa programs to facilitate their criminal conduct. Temporary visa holders often pay sizeable recruitment and travel fees for the opportunity to work in the United States. There is a lack of information regarding the millions of foreign workers with these visas. When this information is hidden from policymakers and advocacy groups, workers remain vulnerable to human trafficking. One study found that 71 percent of labor trafficking victims from outside the U.S. had entered the country on temporary worker visas.

The Visa Transparency Anti-Trafficking Act addresses this lack of transparency by creating a standardized reporting system across nonimmigrant visas that permit employment and requiring that this information be made public. Anti-human trafficking organizations can use the data to identify where traffickers are operating abroad, develop targeted trafficking prevention outreach campaigns, and warn vulnerable workers and U.S. embassies in source countries. U.S. non-governmental organizations can use this information to identify U.S.-based traffickers, inform law enforcement, and educate workers about their rights. Researchers and policymakers can use this data to identify systemic failures in U.S. worker visa programs and correct them, thus protecting both foreign and U.S. workers.

[Appropriations](#)

Promote the advancement of women and girls around the world by funding programs that **promote gender equality and women's political participation, economically empower women, educate adolescent girls, combat gender-based violence** such as sexual violence, child marriage, and female genital mutilation, **implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda, promote women's access to health care and international family planning**, including by funding the **UN Population Fund (UNFPA)** and **eliminating the Global Gag Rule, support women and girls at risk of violent extremism**, fund the **State Department's Office of Global Women's Issues**, and provide the full U.S. contribution to **UN Women**.

**The Policy Agenda for Women and Families is a sampling of issues, and not an exhaustive or comprehensive list. Many other priorities – such as passing comprehensive immigration reform; combatting poverty and homelessness; increasing the number of women in leadership and on corporate boards; and building a National Women's History Museum – are significant for the Democratic Women's Caucus.*