The Honorable Janet Dhillon  
Chair  
U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission  
131 M Street, N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20507

Dear Chair Dhillon:

We write to express our strong opposition to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s (EEOC) recent decision to halt progress toward closing the gender and racial wage gap. By refusing to require the Employer Information Report (EEO-1), which requires employers to report on compensation across race, sex, and ethnicity, the EEOC jeopardizes the economic security of people across the country.

In 2016, the Obama Administration directed the EEOC to collect pay data from large companies. This data is vital to helping the EEOC detect patterns of pay discrimination and enforce equal pay laws. The EEOC’s decision not to comply with this directive raises serious questions about whether the Administration will continue to protect workers from pay discrimination.

Equal pay is an issue of economic fairness and is essential for women and their families across the country. Women in the U.S. who work full time, year round are paid only 82 cents, on average, for every dollar paid to men – and for women of color the wage gap is even larger. Black women make only 62 cents, on average for every man’s dollar, and Latinas make 54 cents, on average, for every man’s dollar. Similarly, the EEOC has found that African American men and Hispanic men who worked full time in wage and salary earn approximately 76 percent and 69 percent, respectively, of white men’s median weekly earnings.

In addition, pay decisions are often cloaked in secrecy. Over 60 percent of private sector workers report that discussing pay is discouraged or prohibited in their office. Workers cannot all depend on anonymous notes to discover pay inequities. Data from large companies on pay practices by sex, race and ethnicity allows the EEOC to better detect and put an end to patterns of discrimination.

We cannot overemphasize our disappointment in the EEOC’s decision. Pay data is key to ensuring women and families are able to succeed. As much as 38 percent of the gender wage gap cannot be explained by differences in occupation, industry, experience, education, race, union status, and religion – pointing to bias and discrimination as a potential factor.

The EEOC’s refusal to continue efforts to close the gender and racial wage gap, and to allow employers to continue to hide the wage gaps that exist behind closed doors is unacceptable.
Paying people fairly for the work they do should not be dependent on their gender, race, or ethnicity.

Sincerely,

Lois Frankel  
Member of Congress

Rosa DeLauro  
Member of Congress

Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress

José E. Serrano  
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore  
Member of Congress

Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress

Lauren Underwood  
Member of Congress

Bobby L. Rush  
Member of Congress

Daniel W. Lipinski  
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

Albio Sires  
Member of Congress

Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress

Adam Smith  
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress

Doris O. Matsui  
Member of Congress
Brenda Lawrence
Member of Congress

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

Grace Meng
Member of Congress

Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress

Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress

Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress

Raúl Grijalva
Member of Congress

Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Nancy M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

Lori Trahan
Member of Congress

Andy Levin
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Katie Porter
Member of Congress

Alma Adams
Member of Congress

Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress

Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress

Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress
Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress

Tony Cardenas  
Member of Congress

Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress

Deb Haaland  
Member of Congress

Donald S. Beyer, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Joseph D. Morelle  
Member of Congress

Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress

Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress

Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress

Judy Chu  
Member of Congress

Darren Soto  
Member of Congress