

EMPOWER Act Endorsements – 116th Congress

List of Organizations

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4. National Partnership for Women & Families
5. American Association of University Women
6. The Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
7. Center for American Progress
8. Equal Rights Advocates
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What They Are Saying:

- **Vanita Gupta, President and CEO, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights:**

“All people deserve to be treated with dignity in safe work environments free from harassment and discrimination,” said Vanita Gupta, president and CEO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. “We applaud Senators Harris and Murkowski and Representative Frankel for working across the aisle to propose much-needed reforms that are crucially important especially for people of color and those individuals who work jobs that pay low wages. By banning non-disclosure and non-disparagement agreements in employment contracts, creating a confidential EEOC tip line, and encouraging transparency and accountability, this bill will encourage working people across industries to speak up about inappropriate conduct and abuse. Congress must enact these strong protections against workplace harassment now.”

- **Emily Martin, Vice President for Education & Workplace Justice, National Women’s Law Center:**

“The outpouring of stories in the 17 months since #metoo went viral have confirmed that no workplace – from newsrooms, to restaurant kitchens, to factory floors – is immune from harassment. This bill will empower survivors and bystanders, who have remained silent for so long out of fear, to report harassment safely and will help lift the veil of secrecy that has allowed harassers to escape accountability for their actions. We applaud the lead sponsors for their bipartisan effort to find solutions to the longstanding and pervasive issue of workplace harassment. Everyone deserves to work with safety, dignity and respect.”

- **Vania Leveille, Senior Legislative Counsel, ACLU:**

“Despite longstanding prohibitions against workplace harassment, too many working people – especially women, low wage workers, and people of color – are subjected to reprehensible conduct that deny them equal employment opportunities, safety, and dignity. The bipartisan and bicameral EMPOWER Act takes strong steps to address the culture of silence that allows workplace harassment to fester and grow by prohibiting non-disparagement and non-disclosure clauses in employment agreements. Other key provisions in the bill advance transparency and accountability and support workers’ ability to understand their rights and report harassment. We applaud Rep. Frankel, Sen. Harris, and Sen. Murkowski for their leadership and urge members of Congress to pass this important legislation.”

- **Debra L. Ness, President, National Partnership for Women & Families:**

“The EMPOWER Act is urgently needed legislation that will help stop sexual harassment and provide greater transparency when it does occur. The protections in this bill would make a meaningful difference for women, including those who face the largest power imbalances in the workplace, such as domestic workers, farmworkers, and restaurant and retail workers. We are pleased that the bill prohibits nondisparagement and nondisclosure clauses in employment agreements, and requires public companies to disclose the number of settlements and judgments as well as repeat settlements with respect to individual perpetrators. These provisions will create powerful disincentives for companies to tolerate workplace harassment. We urge every member of Congress to make passage of this bill a high priority.”

- **Deborah J. Vagins, Senior Vice President of Public Policy and Research, American Association of University Women:**

“AAUW, along with our over 170,000 members and supporters across the country, commend Senators Harris and Murkowski, Representative Frankel, and the bipartisan co-sponsors of this bill, for reaching across the aisle to take this important step towards addressing pervasive workplace harassment in all its forms. Recently we have had a reckoning when it comes to the hostile climates and power dynamics that allow discrimination and harassment to persist in virtually every industry. The far reaching effects of harassment on an employee’s pay, advancement, and well-being cannot be overstated. Women are raising their voices and they will no longer be silent. With the EMPOWER Act, workers will see an end to many practices that

encourage silence and secrecy when harassment occurs and, by passing this bill, Congress can further assure survivors: we hear you, we support you, and we will stand by you.”

- **Holly O’ Donnell, CEO, The Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law**

“Workplace harassment remains a widespread problem for workers with disabilities as well as other workers. The EMPOWER Act will bring needed transparency and help protect all workers. The Bazelon Center strongly supports this important legislation.”

- **Jocelyn Frye, Senior Fellow, Women’s Initiative, Center for American Progress**

“The EMPOWER Act is an important step forward in the fight against workplace sexual harassment. Women are far more likely to file sexual harassment claims, and they deserve to work in workplaces without having to endure harassment or putting their job at risk if they complain. Thus, it is critical to tackle head on barriers used to shield discrimination, and pursue policies that can ensure that workers who face harassment are not foreclosed from sounding the alarm when it occurs. Prohibiting non-disclosure and non-disparagement clauses that are made a condition of employment can help make sure that survivors are not discouraged or deterred from coming forward about harassment. Requiring employers to report on harassment settlements and judgments can promote greater accountability and incentivize employers to adopt stronger anti-harassment prevention measures. This commonsense, bi-partisan proposal is an important reminder that the need for concrete action to combat sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination should never be partisan concerns. We all have a stake in ensuring that our workplaces are free of discrimination and foster equal opportunity for everyone.”

- **Noreen Farrell, Executive Director, Equal Rights Advocates:**

“People of all genders who experience workplace sexual violence and harassment need justice not loopholes. Equal Rights Advocates is proud to stand with Senators Harris and Murkowski and Representative Frankel to support this bill which will remove many of the barriers thrown in the path of survivors of workplace violence and harassment.”

- **Eleanor Smeal, President, Feminist Majority:**

The Feminist Majority applauds Senator Kamala Harris, Senator Lisa Murkowski, and Representative Lois Frankel for taking action and developing meaningful tools to help workers fight back against sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination. There is no question that workplace harassment is a pervasive problem that exists across industries, undermining economic security and violating basic human rights. By helping to give voice to the millions of people facing harassment and abuse at work, the EMPOWER Act is a critical step toward increasing accountability and promoting prevention. All workers should be free to make a living in safe workplaces where they are treated with dignity and respect.”

- **Esta Soler, President & Founder, Futures Without Violence:**

“We would like to thank Senators Harris and Murkowski and Representative Frankel for their thoughtful leadership in taking the first steps in transforming systems of accountability and

enforcement in America's workplaces to protect workers vulnerable to experiencing workplace harassment and violence. With this legislation, more workers will feel empowered to speak up about harassment and violence in the workplace without fear of retaliation, and employers will be moved to provide support, appropriate response, and engage in prevention. Futures Without Violence endorses this bill as an important start to helping the private sector change the culture of the American workplace to one of respect, equity, and support so that all workers and workplaces can thrive."

- **David Stacy, Government Affairs Director, Human Rights Campaign**

"The epidemic of sexual harassment in the workplace is pervasive across industries and impacts working people of all backgrounds, including the LGBTQ community," said Human Rights Campaign Government Affairs Director David Stacy. "Far too often, survivors of workplace harassment are forced into silence while perpetrators and employers avoid consequences. Employers should not be allowed to hide behind nondisclosure agreements that pressure survivors to remain silent in exchange for their job. We thank Senator Harris, Senator Murkowski and Representative Frankel for introducing the bipartisan EMPOWER Act that addresses these critical gaps in ending workplace harassment."

- **Mónica Ramírez, Founder and President, Justice for Migrant Women:**

"Farmworker women, domestic workers and many other low-paid migrant women currently work under the constant threat of sexual harassment and retaliation with little hope of relief or protection. Among the EMPOWER Act's important protections, employers would no longer be able to negotiate non-disparagement and non-disclosure agreements that favor their business interests and silence survivors. Justice for Migrant Women applauds Senators Kamala Harris and Lisa Murkowski and Representative Lois Frankel for their leadership in this bipartisan and bicameral effort to bring us closer to ending the wide-spread workplace sexual violence and other forms of discrimination that currently exist across all sectors and industries."

- **Kristen Clarke, President & Executive Director, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law**

"Everyone deserves to work in an environment free of harassment. Yet, women continue to face harassment by coworkers and supervisors. Women of color who experience harassment on the basis of race and gender face even greater barriers, higher rates of retaliation and fewer alternative economic opportunities. We commend Senators Harris and Murkowski and Representative Frankel for working together to introduce this comprehensive bill to protect victims of harassment who are too often silenced as a result of unfair nondisparagement and nondisclosure clauses. If passed, this bill would encourage victims of harassment to speak out against workplace abuses and incentivize employers to undertake proactive measures to root out harassment. We urge Congress to pass this important bill."

- **Terri Poore, Policy Director, National Alliance to End Sexual Violence:**

"We are grateful for the leadership of the sponsors and wholeheartedly support the EMPOWER Act. This legislation listens to the #MeToo movement to build in more accountability and reduce barriers for survivors in the workplace. Prevention is possible, training is important, and we

believe this legislation will support workplaces in being part of the solution. Rape crisis centers and advocates across the country call on Congress to listen to survivors and act on this legislation."

- **Nancy K. Kaufman, CEO, National Council of Jewish Women:**

"National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) is pleased to support the bipartisan EMPOWER Act offered by Senators Kamala Harris and Lisa Murkowski and Representative Lois Frankel. For far too long, sexual harassment has pervaded the workplace, and we are all too well aware that no industry is immune. While as a society we are declaring #metoo, the systems that have allowed sexual harassment in the workplace to be a well-kept secret must be addressed. The EMPOWER Act would do just that by expanding and strengthening the role of the EEOC in preventing and monitoring sexual harassment and prohibiting a number of employment practices and tax benefits that impede sexual harassment claims, among other important provisions. The EMPOWER Act is a strong first step to address gaps in federal law that allow this crime to remain hidden, enabling the culture of sexual harassment to flourish in our workplaces."

- **Ai-jen Poo, Executive Director, National Domestic Workers Alliance:**

"All women deserve respect and safety at work, regardless of where they work or the nature of the work they do. Despite the importance of supporting families and maintaining homes, domestic workers are especially vulnerable to abuse, in large part because they are not adequately protected under federal employment laws. I commend Senators Harris and Murkowski and Representative Frankel for including domestic workers in the EMPOWER Act and advancing new anti-sexual harassment policies. Now survivors will have more accessible ways of reporting harassment, and our voices will no longer be silenced as a condition of keeping our jobs."

- **Christine Owens, National Employment Law Project:**

"If we want just and equitable workplaces, we need to use all the tools available to stop insidious behavior such as sexual harassment. We commend Senators Harris and Murkowski and Representative Frankel for working together, across party lines, to address a serious problem that knows no partisan bounds."

- **Terry O'Neill, Executive Director, National Employment Lawyers Association:**

"Harassment and discrimination persist because employers have virtually unlimited control to silence employees who complain when they face illegal treatment on the job. This bill would stop employers from imposing their one-sided terms on victims of workplace abuse, and ends the tax penalty on those who succeed in holding their employers accountable. NELA applauds Senators Harris and Murkowski and Representative Frankel for introducing this important legislation and calls on the Senate and the House to move swiftly to enact it into law."

- **Toni Van Pelt, President, National Organization for Women:**

“Passing the EMPOWER Act is absolutely essential to making our workplaces safe for women; NOW’s grassroots will work hard to assure that the EMPOWER Act becomes the law of the land.”

- **Marge Baker, Executive Vice President for Policy and Program, People For the American Way:**

“Workplace harassment is a pervasive problem that threatens both the livelihood and the safety of those experiencing it—disproportionately low-wage workers. We applaud Senators Harris and Murkowski and Representative Frankel for taking an important step toward addressing this urgent issue. Every person deserves to feel respected and safe in their own workplace.”

- **Lisa Gilbert, Vice President for Legislative Affairs, Public Citizen:**

“We have reached a tipping point in society—and there is now a clear recognition that we should not, and will not, tolerate discrimination and harassment in the workplace. While there is much more that we have to do to shine a bright line on fixing systemic issues of discrimination and harassment, the EMPOWER Act is a promising first start and we look forward to working to quickly pass this important bill.”

- **Saru Jayaraman, president and co-founder of Restaurant Opportunities Centers United:**

“Real numbers don’t lie: the rate of sexual harassment that tipped workers experience in states with a \$2.13 minimum wage is two times higher than those who earn a guaranteed wage. In solidarity, the EMPOWER Act will restore dignity of labor, provide equal opportunity, eliminate poverty and harassment, and break down the walls of siloed voices of women from a mom-and-pop cafeteria in Pittsburg to a fine-dining restaurant in New York.”

- **Shaunna Thomas, Co-founder and Executive Director, UltraViolet:**

“All people deserve to work in environments free from harassment and sexual violence - regardless of where they work. Short of that, all people deserve to be believed and supported when they do face harassment. This legislation is an important first step in cementing the increased public awareness about sexual abuse in the workplace into policy change by increasing transparency and making it easier for survivors to report harassment.

- **Cherita Ellens, CEO, Women Employed**

“Women Employed is proud to support the bi-partisan sexual harassment EMPOWER Act sponsored by Senators Harris and Murkowski and Representative Frankel that will provide much-needed strengthening to existing law. Sexual harassment continues to be all too pervasive for women regardless of where we work. This bill will help provide transparency and additional protections, making it easier for victims to speak up. We encourage all members of Congress to make this bill a priority to ensure its passage.”

- **Alejandra Y. Castillo, CEO, YWCA USA**

“As an organization that serves over 2 million women and girls annually and as the largest network of domestic violence services providers in the country, we at YWCA USA know that women across the country face sexual harassment and abuse every day, at every level of work and across all sectors. From domestic work to the restaurant industry, to white collar professional women—especially women of color—face sexual assault, harassment, and retaliation. Women working under these conditions continue to be frequently silenced by men with positions of relative power and authority. We applaud Senators Harris and Murkowski and Representative Frankel for taking action to address the widespread problem of workplace harassment, discrimination, and abuse, and to stop the silencing of survivors and bystanders. The EMPOWER Act is a good step forward in the fight to end workplace sexual violence and discrimination. All women deserve to be able to work with safety, dignity, and respect, free from sexual violence and discrimination, and without fear of retaliation.”

- **Leng Leng Chancey, Executive Director, 9to5, the National Association of Working Women:**

“We at 9to5 applaud Senators Harris and Murkowski, as well as Rep. Frankel and the other House co-sponsors, for leading on this critical legislative initiative,” said Leng Leng Chancey, Executive Director, 9to5, the National Association of Working Women. “The only way women, especially women of color and those working for low wages, will feel safe to come forward with their stories of sexual misconduct is if we make it safe for them. The EMPOWER Act will move us forward as a society by providing employers the tools to focus on solutions, not cover-ups.”

- **Paula Brantner, Senior Advisor, Workplace Fairness**

“The EMPOWER Act shines much needed light on workplace harassment, and bans some of the most common strategies employers use to prevent harassment claims from going forward. Workplace Fairness supports the EMPOWER Act and continuing efforts on both the federal and state level to strengthen harassment laws so that those targeted for harassment have an incentive to seek legal relief.”

- **Jen Klein, Chief Strategy and Policy Officer, TIME’S UP**

“TIME’S UP supports the bipartisan EMPOWER Act because all women deserve safe, fair and dignified work. This much-needed legislation will strengthen existing protections for employees experiencing harassment in the workplace and help ensure that no woman ever has to sacrifice her safety for a paycheck.”