

Congress of the United States
Joint Economic Committee
Democrats

For Immediate Release
April 25, 2006

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GENDER PAY GAP PERSISTS
April 25th Marks Day When Women's Pay Catches Up with Men's Previous Year's Pay

Washington, D.C. – In an effort to end economic discrimination against women, **U.S. Senator Jack Reed (D-RI)** and **Representative Carolyn Maloney (D-NY)** today marked Equal Pay Day, a day that indicates just how far into each year a woman must work to earn as much as a man earned in the previous year. Despite narrowing over time, the gender gap in earnings persists so that, on average, a woman still makes only about 77 cents for each dollar earned by a man, according to a background analysis by the **Joint Economic Committee Democrats**.

“Unfortunately, in the 21st century women typically still earn less than men for the same amount of work. Unequal pay costs working women and their families thousands of dollars each year, which could help them pay for better child care, health care or education for their children,” said **Sen. Reed**, Ranking Democrat on the Joint Economic Committee (JEC). “Equal Pay Day shines a much needed spotlight on this problem and reaffirms our commitment to ensuring that women everywhere are given equal access to economic opportunities.”

“Women are more highly educated than ever and have made important contributions to the labor market and productivity, yet these gains have not yet translated into equal pay across the board,” said **Rep. Maloney**, Senior House Democrat on the JEC. “Differences in skills and career-versus-family choices can't explain away the gender pay gap, so workplace discrimination must also play a role. Not only should we value the work of women, but we should also pay them what they're worth.”

The Census Bureau estimates that in 2004, the female-to-male earnings ratio was 0.77 for full-time, full-year workers. Median annual earnings for full-time, year-round female workers were \$31,223 and median earnings for full-time, year-round male workers were \$40,798.

About half of the decline in the wage gap over the past 40 years occurred during the 1980s, the report finds. The 1990s brought slower progress, but still steady narrowing of the wage gap, while the earnings ratio has remained essentially unchanged since 2001.

Part of the narrowing of the wage gap can be explained by higher educational attainment and greater work experience among women. However, the closing of the wage gap occurred not only because female earnings increased, but also because male earnings stagnated. Part of the difference generally remains unexplained, and evidence suggests that gender-based employment discrimination almost certainly plays a role.

Report link: <http://jec.senate.gov/democrats/Documents/Reports/earningsgap25apr2006.pdf>

The Joint Economic Committee, established under the Employment Act of 1946, was created by Congress to review economic conditions and to analyze the effectiveness of economic policy.