

fishing often goes hand-in-hand with transnational organized crime, human trafficking and forced labor, and weapons and drug trafficking. American fishermen should never be expected to compete against fraudulent seafood imports harvested with slave labor, especially in the Indo-Pacific region.

Madam Speaker, again I thank Congressman YOUNG (R-AK) for his partnership as the original cosponsor on this important, bipartisan bill. I urge all Members to join us in cosponsoring the Wildlife Conservation and Anti-Trafficking Act.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LLOYD SMUCKER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 30, 2019

Mr. SMUCKER. Madam Speaker, due to illness I missed Roll Call vote No. 59. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 59.

IN SUPPORT OF PAYCHECK
FAIRNESS ACT

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 30, 2019

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I am proud to be a sponsor of the Paycheck Fairness Act.

This Act is needed to stop discriminatory practices by employers against our mothers, wives, daughters, and granddaughters that do the same job as their male counterparts.

It is sad that today in America, women working full-time, year-round still earn 80 cents, on average, for every dollar earned by men.

Women of color face the brunt of the inequality, with African American women earning 61 cents, Latinas earning 53 cents, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander women earning 62 cents compared with white, non-Hispanic men.

This year marks the 10-year anniversary of President Barack Obama signing the Lily Ledbetter Act, which made it easier to sue in cases of pay discrimination.

This legislation that we are discussing today—the Paycheck Fairness Act—is but one small step towards that end.

The Paycheck Fairness Act, will strengthen the Equal Pay Act—passed more than 45 years ago—and as a result improve the law's effectiveness, and help to address the persistent wage gap between men and women.

The Paycheck Fairness Act would:

Clarify acceptable reasons for differences in pay by requiring employers to demonstrate that wage gaps between men and women doing the same work are truly a result of factors other than sex.

Deter wage discrimination by strengthening penalties for equal pay violations, and by prohibiting retaliation against workers who inquire about employers' wage practices or disclose their own wages.

The bill's approach would ensure that women can obtain the same remedies as

those subject to discrimination on the basis of race or national origin.

Provide women with a fair option to proceed in a class action suit under the Equal Pay Act, and allow women to receive punitive and compensatory damages for pay discrimination.

Clarify the establishment provision under the Equal Pay Act, which would allow for reasonable comparisons between employees to determine fair wages.

Authorize additional training for Equal Employment Opportunity Commission staff to better identify and handle wage disputes.

It will aid in the efficient and effective enforcement of federal anti-pay discrimination laws by requiring the EEOC to develop regulations directing employers to collect wage data, reported by the race, sex, and national origin of employees.

It will require the U.S. Department of Labor to reinstate activities that promote equal pay, such as: directing educational programs, providing technical assistance to employers, recognizing businesses that address the wage gap, collecting wage-related data, and conducting and promoting research about pay disparities between men and women.

More importantly for our young ladies going into the workforce it will establish a competitive grant program to develop salary negotiation training for women and girls.

As a Member of the Women's Caucus I have been fighting for pay equity for American women since before I arrived here as a Representative in 1995, and I believe that equal pay for equal work is a simple matter of justice.

Wage disparities are not simply a result of women's education levels or life choices.

In fact, the pay gap between college educated men and women appears first after college—even when women are working full-time in the same fields with the same major as men—and continues to widen during the first 10 years in the workforce.

Further, this persistent wage gap not only impacts the economic security of women and their families today, it also directly affects women's retirement security tomorrow.

Now is the time for additional proactive measures to effectively address wage discrimination and eliminate loopholes that have hindered the Equal Pay Act's effectiveness.

I urge my colleagues, both men and women to support equality in rights and pay for all Americans by supporting the Paycheck Fairness Act.

HONORING DR. TWANA COOKS-
ALLEN AT CONGRESSMAN
VELA'S BLACK HISTORY MONTH
CELEBRATION

HON. FILEMON VELA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 30, 2019

Mr. VELA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Twana Cooks-Allen of Harlingen, Texas for her exceptional service to the Rio Grande Valley.

Since earning her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology and Marriage and Family Therapy, Dr. Cooks-Allen has been an esteemed professional in mental health for over 30 years.

Dr. Cooks-Allen's experience includes support to the Department of Homeland Security

and the Department of Defense, as well as local and state agencies in Minnesota, Missouri, Illinois, and Texas. Throughout her career, she has helped patients struggling with depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, chronic suicidality, substance abuse, sexual assault, pedophilia, eating disorders, schizophrenia, and personality disorders.

Dr. Cooks-Allen currently works as Marriage and Family Counselor at the Veterans Affairs Texas Valley Coastal Bend Healthcare System in Harlingen. She is also the proud founder of the Veteran Kids/Teen Program at the Veterans Outreach Center. The program provides children of veterans with emotional, psychological, and educational assistance.

A true champion, Dr. Cooks-Allen also spends her spare time helping our veterans and their children. Every year she hosts a one-week summer camp with activities, meals, and snacks for the children of veterans. Her goal is to create a place for these children to discuss their concerns and fears and to receive support from their peers, while enjoying activities. Not only does she dedicate her time to these programs, Dr. Cooks-Allen also funds many of the activities herself.

I am pleased to recognize Dr. Twana Cooks-Allen for her generous and invaluable support in Texas' 34th Congressional District. Whether working at the VA or volunteering with veterans, our district and the State of Texas are forever grateful for her work. I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking her, her family, and friends on this special occasion.

TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE OF MARY
ALICE O'CONNOR

HON. MARK DESAULNIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 30, 2019

Mr. DESAULNIER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the life of Mary Alice O'Connor, a longtime resident of the Bay Area.

Born in January 1943 to an Irish Catholic family, Mary Alice grew up in Chicago, Illinois. In 1968, she headed to the West Coast and eventually settled in the Bay Area. While raising three children, Mary Alice worked in her family's printing business and later for a telephone company.

Mary Alice was always passionate about philosophy and spiritualism. In 1991, she pursued her goal of bringing peace, joy, and compassion to the world by becoming an ordained Unity minister. She served the community through ceremonies for weddings, memorials, blessings, and other events. Mary Alice also taught inherent beauty and self-expression through spiritual rehabilitation sessions, working to promote physical and spiritual healing.

In the early 2000s, Mary Alice became the Executive Director of the Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center in Walnut Creek, CA. During her leadership, the peace center became an engaged and energetic community partner.

Mary Alice passed away on December 3, 2018. She is survived by her sister Margaret O'Connor; her children Glory Marshall, Sikwaya Condon, and Shasta Lockwood; and her grandchildren Chavez Li Condon, Moses Lockwood, and Jacob Lockwood; her former husband Pat Condon, and her partner Willard Davis.