

EQUAL PAY DAY

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 23, 2008

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I rise in recognition of Equal Pay Day, which was yesterday, April 22, 2008. Equal Pay Day was originated by the National Committee on Pay Equity in 1996 as a public awareness event to illustrate the gap between men's and women's wages. The day, observed on a Tuesday in April, symbolizes how far into the year a woman must work, on average, to earn as much as a man earned the previous year. Because women earn less, on average, than men, they must work longer for the same amount of pay. In other words, the average American woman must work 16 months to earn what a man did in 12. The wage gap is even greater for most women of color.

President John F. Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act into law in 1963, but the wage gap between men and women has been closing at a very slow rate. In 1963, women who worked full-time, year-round made 59 cents on average for every dollar earned by men. In 2006, women earned 77 cents to the dollar.

The wage gap exists, in part, because many women and people of color are still segregated into a few low-paying occupations. More than half of all women workers hold sales, clerical and service jobs. Studies show that the more an occupation is dominated by women or people of color, the less it pays. Part of the wage gap results from differences in education, experience or time in the workforce. But a significant portion cannot be explained by any of those factors; it is attributable to discrimination. In other words, certain jobs pay less because they are held by women and people of color.

Democrats are taking action to address the wage gap. The House has already passed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which restores basic protections against pay discrimination by rectifying the May 2007 Ledbetter v. Goodyear Supreme Court decision that overturned precedent and made it much more difficult for workers to pursue pay discrimination claims. The Senate is scheduled to consider this legislation this week. The House is also considering the Paycheck Fairness Act, which would strengthen the Equal Pay Act of 1963 by providing more effective remedies to women who are not being paid equal wages for doing equal work. I strongly support both of these measures.

Equal pay is not simply a women's issue, but a family issue. The wage gap hurts everyone—husbands, wives, children, and parents—because it lowers family incomes that pay for essentials: groceries, energy bills, doctors' visits and child care. Furthermore, 41 percent of women supply their families' sole source of income.

It is estimated that if we do nothing, it will take until 2057 to close the pay gap. To force women and their families to wait nearly another 50 years to receive equal pay for equal work is absolutely unacceptable. I pledge to continue the fight for pay equity until all Americans, regardless of gender or race, receive equal pay for equal work.

HONORING THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE OF REVEREND WALT PARRY

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 23, 2008

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the distinguished public service of Reverend Walt Parry, of Fresno, California. After nearly 25 years with the non-profit organization Fresno Metro Ministry where Reverend Parry succeeded in serving the needs of the local community, he retired this past January.

During his tenure at the Fresno Metro Ministry, Reverend Parry aided thousands of deserving local residents with his passion for excellence and strong ethical drive. I have had the pleasure of working with him frequently and his dedication to the community is to be commended, especially in the areas of public health, cultural diversity and disadvantaged advocacy.

Reverend Parry was instrumental in the creation of the Community Food Bank, an organization that helps distribute food to people in need throughout California's Central Valley. Healthy nutrition was a paramount concern for the Reverend, who both fought against the obesity epidemic as well as the lack of nourishment in the area. Other notable achievements of Reverend Parry include better access to healthcare, clean air, improved nutrition, and a deep respect for multiculturalism in our Valley communities.

Throughout his career in the area, Reverend Walt Parry has proven to be a highly effective administrator who was always committed to excellence in public service. As he gets ready to spend much more time enjoying retirement as well as supporting the social causes he is passionate about on a more personal level, I wish him continued success and best of luck for the future.

RECOGNIZING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE MODERN STATE OF ISRAEL

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 322, recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel and reaffirming the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel. I would like to thank my distinguished colleague from California, Speaker of the House, Representative NANCY PELOSI and Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Representative HOWARD BERMAN for their leadership on this important issue.

Today, Israel celebrates its 60th birthday, or its Day of Independence. This is a very special day for this country, where citizens live in a constant state of unknown, but are united for their love for the state. In addition to birthday greetings, I want to wish Israel the best of luck in its continued attempts to make peace this upcoming year.

Israel was created in 1948; it took President Truman only 11 minutes to recognize the new Jewish State. Since then, it has come to exist as the only true democracy in the Middle East. Israel and the United States have many of the same foundations of government: Freedom of religion, free speech, basic human rights, the rule of law and being a nation of immigration and diversity. Israel has provided a unique opportunity for Jews from all over the world to reestablish their ancient homeland. In addition, it is a home to many religious sites which are sacred to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam and attracts visitors every year.

Israel provided a refuge to Jews who survived the horrors of the Holocaust and the evils committed by the Nazis which were unprecedented in human history. The people of Israel have established a unique, pluralistic democracy which includes the freedoms cherished by the people of the United States, including freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of association, freedom of the press, and government by the consent of the governed.

Israel continues to serve as a shining model of democratic values by regularly holding free and fair elections, promoting the free exchange of ideas, and vigorously exercising in its Parliament, the Knesset, a democratic government that is fully representative of its citizens.

I want to applaud the Government of Israel for successfully working with the neighboring Governments of Egypt and Jordan to establish peaceful, bilateral relations. I have had the privilege of visiting Israel, and hearing firsthand how the government is taking great strides to ensure peace for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, this important legislation recognizes the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel and reaffirms the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel. I am proud to join 201 of my colleagues in cosponsoring this important legislation. For these reasons, I support H. Con. Res. 322 and urge all Members to do the same. The United States and Israel enjoy a strategic partnership based on shared mutual democratic values, friendship, and respect. The people of the United States share affinity with the people of Israel and view Israel as a strong and trusted ally. I hope this friendship continues to grow and blossom for decades to come, as Israel settles itself in a firm place on our global map.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL PUBLIC WORKS WEEK

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 23, 2008

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Speaker, I support the goals and ideals of National Public Works Week. National Public Works Week is celebrated for a full week each May to celebrate our public works professionals and the important work they do to keep our country running smoothly.

May 18 through 24, 2008 will recognize the many duties that public works professionals—those who design, build, operate, maintain and