

Rep. Davis Speaks in Support of Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my strong support for this very important bill. I thank Speaker Pelosi for championing this effort to improve the lives of American women and their families.

The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act is a bill of enormous importance for women's rights and civil rights in general. For decades, companies big and small have paid women less for the same work as their male counterparts. Today, we correct a major fault in both law and market, and we move toward true equality for all men and women in America.

This bill is important in so many ways. Perhaps most obviously, the bill confirms America's commitment to women's rights. Kofi Annan, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, was right on the mark when he said, "when women thrive, all of society benefits, and succeeding generations are given a better start in life." Today we help underpaid women thrive, we help restore a sense of dignity and pride, we help women--mothers and mentors, daughters and sisters--improve the lives of others as we lawfully improve theirs.

With the passage of this bill, we tell working American women that their work is valued, that it is just as good as a man's, and that they deserve fair and equal pay. The extra 20 or 30 cents per dollar that so many women do not receive means less food on the table or less money to save for her family's future. Over a lifetime, unequal pay cheats dedicated, hard working women of \$400,000 to \$2 million. Imagine what these women could have done with this money. And to reflect back on the words of Mr. Annan, passing the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act into law will benefit both current and future generations.

This bill is valuable not only because of its significant place in the women's rights movement, but also because it demonstrates the Congress' and President Obama's commitment to positive change, change that better the lives of all Americans regardless of gender or race. Our passage of this bill confirms that equality is a priority for this new Congress. The first bill signed into law during the 111th Congress will be the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, ensuring all Americans that--even in these difficult times--their Government is committed to the ultimate American promise of equality for all.