

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

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HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E: JULISSA FERRERAS
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Charles Barron
Margaret S. Chin
Annabel Palma
Ruben Wills

A P P E A R A N C E S

Emily Kadar
Government Affairs and Advocacy Manager
NARAL Pro-Choice New York

Stephanie Demmons
Planned Parenthood of New York City

Martha Kamber
CEO
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Taina Bien-Aimé
Executive Director
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Linda C. Hartley
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Elizabeth Gedmark
Attorney
A Better Balance

Avalynn Simon
President
The New York Coalition of 100 Black Women

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Good

afternoon. I am Council Member Julissa Ferreras, chair of the Women's Issues Committee. I'd like to first extend my apology for being late. I was voting downstairs in the Parks Committee. I'd like to thank my colleagues, Council Member Rodriguez and Lappin for co-sponsoring the pre-considered resolution calling upon New York State Legislature to pass and the governor to sign the Women's Equality Act. I'd also like to thank the Committee staff for their hard work on today's hearing. I commend Governor Cuomo for making women's equality a cornerstone of his legislative agenda this year. Many of the provisions included in the Women's Equality Act introduced last week are deeply needed and long overdue. Every provision of the ten point agenda is crucial to strengthening the rights of women in New York State including the provision that would provide assurances that abortions would remain safe and legal in New York even if the United States Supreme Court strikes down Roe versus Wade. The 1973 decision established the right to an abortion. The women's equality act is about much

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2 more than strengthening a woman's right to choose.
3 This bill would strengthen wage protections,
4 prohibit employers from discriminating against
5 women with children and provide more safeguards
6 for housing discrimination for victims of domestic
7 violence or female heads of households on welfare.
8 It would increase penalties of human trafficking
9 and expand the state's sexual harassment law to
10 include all workplace. In particular, it is
11 particularly fitting that we would hear this
12 resolution today on the 50th anniversary of the
13 signing of the Equal Pay Act given the additional
14 wage protections it provides for women in New
15 York. The legislation has the support of over 800
16 individuals and groups including myself and many
17 members of this legislative body. We will hear
18 from some of those groups today. I am proud to
19 sponsor this resolution and now my colleague or
20 co-sponsors, I don't know if anybody would like to
21 say a few words... Okay. I got the note now. Would
22 you like to say a few words? Excellent. Council
23 Member Barron?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: First, I'd
25 like to definitely have my name added to the bill

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2 itself, but I think this is a great day. This is
3 a great session for women in this state. I think
4 it is long overdue. We have been fighting for pay
5 equity for the longest, but the sexual harassment
6 and discrimination when through pregnancy, the
7 human trafficking and the fiasco that happened up
8 in the state with Silver [phonetic] and Vito Lopez
9 [phonetic] is sending a very, very negative signal
10 to the protection of women, so I hope after the
11 governor takes care of this, he takes care of that
12 too to make sure that that is the harder one--this
13 might be a light--that is more challenging, and
14 that is something that questions people in power,
15 especially men in power, and I just really think
16 that this is a bill that we should push hard for.
17 We should be very active after we get it passed
18 here to make sure that it happened. This is long
19 overdue, and I am just enthusiastically supporting
20 this bill.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you
22 very much, Council Member Barron. If we have
23 everyone, we are going to listen to the first
24 panel. Emily Kadar [phonetic], NARAL Pro-Choice
25 New York, Stephanie Demmons [phonetic], Planned

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2 Parenthood of New York City, Martha Kamber
3 [phonetic] YWCA of Brooklyn. I am really sorry
4 about those last names--with a last name like
5 Ferreras, I understand, so whenever you would like
6 to begin.

7 EMILY KADAR: Good afternoon.

8 Thank you, Chairwoman Ferreras and members of the
9 Committee for offering the opportunity to speak in
10 favor of this resolution. My name is Emily Kadar,
11 and I am the government affairs and advocacy
12 manager at NARAL Pro-Choice New York. We are a
13 political and advocacy organization that works to
14 ensure that every woman has the right and ability
15 to make whatever reproductive health decisions are
16 best for her life and her family. This includes
17 preventing unintended pregnancy, bearing health
18 children and choosing safe legal abortion. NARAL
19 Pro-Choice New York is also a member of the New
20 York Women's Equality Coalition, 850
21 organizations, labor unions, religious groups and
22 businesses across New York State that have joined
23 together in support of the Women's Equality Act, a
24 groundbreaking ten point plan that was recently
25 sent up to the state legislature by Governor

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2 Andrew Cuomo. The Women's Equality Act addresses
3 the many ways in which the gender and equity
4 currently enshrined in state law harms women and
5 prevents them from achieving their goals. The WEA
6 would strengthen pay equity, orders of protection
7 and anti-human trafficking laws and better protect
8 low income individuals, survivors of domestic
9 violence, pregnant women and parents from
10 discrimination in New York State. The proposed
11 law also recognizes that in order to have equal
12 opportunities a woman must be able to protect her
13 reproductive health without state interference.
14 New York has always been a trailblazer when it
15 comes to the pursuit of equality. New York State
16 legalized abortion back in 1970, three years
17 before the Supreme Court did so nationally through
18 Roe v. Wade. The 1970 law allows women to obtain
19 abortions before 24 weeks and permits later
20 abortions in cases when a woman's life is at risk;
21 however, the state never revised its abortion law
22 after Roe v. Wade was decided, creating an
23 incongruity between state and federal law. The
24 Women's Equality Act offers clear language to fix
25 that inconsistency saying the state shall not deny

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2 a woman's right to obtain an abortion as
3 established by the United States Supreme Court in
4 the 1973 decision Roe versus Wade. By bringing
5 our law into law with the federal standard, women
6 and providers will have the assurance that Roe v.
7 Wade's protections for women's health are the
8 standard here in New York as well. The Women's
9 Equality Act will mirror Roe in stating that
10 abortion is always permissible when the fetus is
11 not viable or when necessary to protect a woman's
12 life or health as determined by a licensed
13 physician. We have a unique but short window in
14 which to improve the lives of New York women and
15 make history for our state and for the nation.
16 Passing the Women's Equality Act will set an
17 example for the rest of the country that
18 progressive policy around women's health and
19 rights is possible. We can provide a path to
20 protect against the backwards trend and
21 reproductive rights happening in states around the
22 country as well as protect against any reversal of
23 Roe by the Supreme Court. As states continue to
24 pass draconian restrictions on abortion and birth
25 control and undermine women's ability to be equal

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2 players in society, now is the time to take a
3 stand to protect the rights of New York women and
4 to provide a way forward for the rest of the
5 nation. NARAL Pro-Choice New York is thrilled to
6 support the New York City Council as it considers
7 this resolution in support of the Women's Equality
8 Act. Thank you.

9 STEPHANIE DEMMONS: Good afternoon.
10 My name is Stephanie Demmons, and I am testifying
11 on behalf of Joan Malin [phonetic], president and
12 CEO of Planned Parenthood of New York City. I am
13 pleased to be here today to provide testimony in
14 support of this resolution championing the Women's
15 Equality Act. This resolution will enforce that
16 New York State must lead our nation in progressive
17 legislation and policies that uphold the lives of
18 all women. I want to first thank the chair of the
19 Women's Issues Committee, the honorable Julissa
20 Ferraras, for introducing this resolution and
21 holding this hearing. I also want to especially
22 thank our Council Members, who have already signed
23 on to the resolution. PPNYC's board, staff and
24 our patients are grateful for your leadership. I
25 also want to take this opportunity to recognize

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2 Council Speaker Christine Quinn for her continued
3 leadership on women's issues. We look forward to
4 our continued work with Speaker Quinn and the New
5 York City Council to improve the lives of New
6 Yorkers. For almost a century Planned Parenthood
7 of New York City has offered high quality
8 affordable healthcare services to New York City's
9 women, men and adolescents. Planned Parenthood
10 provides a full range of confidential reproductive
11 health services and counseling to the women, men
12 and teens of New York City. During 2012, our
13 50,000 patients from all boroughs made nearly
14 85,500 visits to our health centers with a
15 specific focus on preventive care. The broad
16 spectrum of services provided this past year
17 included lifesaving breast and cervical cancer
18 screenings, birth control counseling and
19 provision, gynecological exams, HIV testing, male
20 reproductive services, testing and treatment of
21 STIs--sexually transmitted infections--and both
22 medical and surgical abortion care. Here in New
23 York we have a historic opportunity to provide
24 national leadership by passing the Women's
25 Equality Act, legislation that secures the rights

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2 of women in the state of New York and affirms
3 reproductive healthcare as basic and essential
4 care. Right now New York's outdated laws mean
5 that women here could potentially lose many of
6 their current reproductive rights and freedoms,
7 and that is not the only problem that the Women's
8 Equality Act seeks to amend. Right here in the
9 state of New York women who are pregnant or have
10 children continue to face discrimination in the
11 workplace and women are five times more likely
12 than men to be sexually harassed. One in four
13 women will experience intimate partner violence in
14 her lifetime. In addition, women are five times
15 more likely than men to be sexually harassed and
16 one in four women will experience intimate partner
17 violence in her lifetime. New York has the power
18 to solve many of these problems by simply amending
19 provisions in the state law. The governor's
20 proposal is a groundbreaking attempt to provide
21 opportunity to women from all walks of life, in
22 all corners of the state so that all women can
23 participate fully and equally in society. Women
24 support the WEA. In a recent Sienna [phonetic]
25 poll, 80 percent of New Yorkers support the WEA

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2 and New Yorkers stand with Governor Cuomo on
3 abortion three to one. The numbers speak for
4 themselves. We must bring Governor Cuomo's ten
5 point Women's Equality Act to a vote in the New
6 York State Legislature now. Constituents want to
7 and expect to see their elected representatives
8 stand up for the women of this state. Last week,
9 members of the over 850 Women's Equality Act
10 Coalition representing the five boroughs here in
11 New York City brought four buses of activists,
12 over 200 people, to rally in the capital and meet
13 with legislators. We joined hundreds of other
14 groups from across New York State. The sheer
15 number of New Yorkers making the trek to Albany to
16 show their support for the Women's Equality Act is
17 a testament to the overwhelming support for this
18 agenda. Planned Parenthood of New York City
19 thanks the New York City Council for calling for a
20 vote on the Women's Equality Act in New York State
21 knowing that reproductive health is not a marginal
22 issue, but in fact central to the real lives of
23 women and families in New York City. Today we
24 applaud the New York City Council for taking the
25 lead in moving this resolution forward and hope

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2 that New York City can serve as the national model
3 for championing women's health. Thank you.

4 MARTHA KAMBER: Hello. My name is
5 Martha Kamber. I am the CEO of the YWCA of
6 Brooklyn. I'd like to thank the Women's Issues
7 Committee for the opportunity to testify on behalf
8 of the City Council resolution in support of the
9 women's equality agenda. The 21 YWCAs throughout
10 New York State support the women's equality agenda
11 because we see the devastating consequences of
12 gender inequality and violence against women in
13 our work every single day. The YWCA Brooklyn Is
14 the largest provider of affordable housing in
15 downtown Brooklyn with 299 units for low income
16 and homeless women. Virtually all of our
17 residents are survivors of domestic violence
18 and/or sexual assault. Most were homeless before
19 coming to the YWCA often because they were fleeing
20 intimate partner violence or struggling with the
21 emotional consequences of trauma. Without the
22 foundation of a safe, affordable home women and
23 their children cannot heal from past traumas,
24 rebuild their lives or move on to a brighter
25 future. WEA is not a bill designed to protect the

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2 rights of women; it's a bill that also protects
3 the human rights of children and subsequently of
4 entire families and communities. Women comprise
5 half the population in New York State and without
6 pay equity, a workplace free of sexual harassment
7 and violence and accommodations for pregnant
8 women, we cannot progress as a state. 37.6
9 percent of female headed households with children
10 live in poverty in New York State. This is not
11 only shameful; it robs the next generation of
12 vital resources they need to become productive
13 members of society. When women are empowered,
14 everyone benefits. Let's be clear. WEA is not
15 proposing special treatment for anyone. It is
16 simply leveling the playing field so that all New
17 Yorkers have the same fair chance.

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you
19 very much for your testimony, and we are going to
20 call up the next panel. Looking forward to seeing
21 you up in Albany when this is finally passed.
22 Taina Bien-Aimé [phonetic] Women's City Club of
23 New York, Linda C. Hartley [phonetic], Equal Pay
24 Coalition. I should have known that. I am so
25 sorry. Elizabeth Gedmark [phonetic], A Better

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2 Balance, and Avalynn Simon [phonetic], The New
3 York Coalition of 100 Black Women. We can just
4 pull up a chair right next to--and my colleagues,
5 this is the last panel, so we will be voting right
6 after.

7 TAINA BIEN-AIMÉ: My name is Taina
8 Bien-Aimé and I am the executive director of the
9 Women's City Club of New York or WCC, which is a
10 non-profit, non-partisan, multi-issue civic
11 organization founded by suffragettes in 1915. Our
12 mission is to improve the lives of New Yorkers by
13 helping to shape public policy and promoting
14 responsible government. The WCC is also a member
15 of the Women's Equality Act Coalition's New York
16 City regional steering committee. We would like
17 to thank the honorable City Council Member Julissa
18 Ferreras, chair of the Women's Issues Committee
19 and her colleagues for their leadership in the
20 efforts to pass a resolution regarding the Women's
21 Equality Act in New York State. Eleanor
22 Roosevelt, a formidable New Yorker and one of the
23 WCC's early members was the architect of the
24 universal declaration of human rights, which
25 states that all human beings are born free in

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2 dignity and rights regardless of sex. Within this
3 human rights framework, it is well-established
4 that legal discrimination against women can lead
5 to violence against women and that our government
6 has an obligation to ensure that all of its
7 citizens including those born female enjoy
8 inalienable and indivisible rights. The Women's
9 Equality Act is a critical step towards that
10 realization. Consisting of over 800 New York
11 based organizations members of the Women's
12 Equality Act Coalition including the WCC are
13 urging New York to pass this groundbreaking
14 legislation and the City Council to pass a
15 resolution in its favor. The Women's Equality Act
16 is a ten point piece of legislation that would
17 help New York move closer to equality for women.
18 It must pass in its entirety. New York can no
19 longer discriminate against pregnant women in the
20 workplace or against victims of domestic violence
21 in search of housing. New York can justify
22 exempting any employers from the law should they
23 engage in sexual harassment. New York can no
24 longer afford the unacceptable fact that today on
25 the 50th anniversary of the Equal Pay Act, women

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2 still earn 84 cents for each dollar her male
3 colleagues make, and if she is black or Latina,
4 that economic disparity drops to 69 and 60 cents
5 respectively. How can New York once a leader in
6 women's rights not meet the federal government's
7 standards in legislating of women's rights to make
8 decisions about her reproductive health. New York
9 must align its antiquated law on abortion with
10 federal law. Nothing more, nothing less.

11 According to a recent - - University poll the vast
12 majority of New Yorkers believe that women have a
13 right to choose. The legislators of New York must
14 be aligned with the wishes of New Yorkers.

15 Finally, New York must strengthen its human
16 trafficking laws through the trafficking victims
17 protection injustice act, part H of the Women's
18 Equality Act. In past years we have come to
19 better understand that human trafficking is a
20 violent crime and how critically important it is
21 to provide quality, holistic services that
22 survivors so desperately need. The proposed
23 legislation aims at targeting traffickers, pimps
24 and buyers of sex as well as seeking justice for
25 human trafficking victims particularly for sex

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2 trafficked children. The Women's Equality Act is
3 comprehensive legislation that shows that we
4 cannot parse out women's rights. It is also
5 recognition that if New York does not legislate
6 against discrimination, it in effect condones
7 inequality. The WCC would like to thank the City
8 Council for its leadership, time and work on
9 promoting and protecting women's rights in law and
10 in practice. Thank you.

11 LINDA HARTLEY: good afternoon. I
12 am Linda Hartley. I'm president of Hartley
13 Consulting, fundraising for non-profits. In my
14 volunteer time I am board vice president for
15 development for New York Women's Agenda. I am
16 former president of women in development. I was
17 on the board of NARAL in the '80s, and I am part
18 of the Equal Pay Coalition. President John
19 Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act into law on June
20 10th 50 years ago. He said the new legislation
21 would end the unconscionable practice of paying
22 female employees less wages than male employees
23 for the same job. In 1963, women were paid 59
24 cents, as we have heard compared to a dollar for
25 dollar a man is paid. Today that figure is now 77

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2 cents nationwide. In 50 years, we have made 18
3 cents worth of progress nationwide. New York
4 Women's Agenda is a coalition of over 100 women's
5 organizations and advocates in metropolitan New
6 York. We founded the Equal Pay Coalition in 2004
7 representing another 40 organizations in addition
8 to our upstate sister coalition, the New York
9 State Pay Equity Coalition and we are now part of
10 the steering committee in support of the Women's
11 Equality Act representing over 850 businesses and
12 non-profits and other groups across the state.
13 When I first joined the board of New York Women's
14 Agenda in 2000, I wrote the organization's first
15 policy statements on both reproductive rights and
16 pay equity. The pay equity policy statement began
17 with noting that it has been nearly 40 years since
18 President Kennedy signed into law the Equal Pay
19 Act. Now here we are 13 years later, and women
20 have gained five cents nationwide to the dollar
21 with the needle barely moving for African American
22 and Hispanic women each gaining about a penny
23 towards pay equity since 2000. While the numbers
24 are better here in New York, it is still not
25 enough and we cannot afford to wait another 50

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2 years to close the gap at this rate. We are
3 talking about millions of dollars lost to women in
4 careers every year. I have a personal story to
5 share as an example. Earlier in my career I
6 joined a major New York university as a staff
7 member in the development office. I performed
8 well, was promoted several times, given a nice
9 office, and was also completing an MBA at night.
10 I heard many times from my boss and then also the
11 dean with whom I worked how my performance was far
12 superior to the other person, an older white man,
13 who held the job before me. At the time, my
14 salary was 20,000 dollars. Then a female
15 colleague risking her own job and sharing the wage
16 information with me told me that I was being paid
17 5,000 dollars less than my male counterpart. I
18 was stunned and outraged. It took me the better
19 part of the next year convincing my boss that I
20 deserved to be paid based on my performance.
21 Finally, I received a 2500 dollar increase, only
22 half way towards that 5,000 dollars that from my
23 point of view I had already lost, but from the
24 university's point of view, this was a huge
25 increase, almost unheard of in terms of

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2 percentage. Now let's look at those numbers a
3 little more closely. If you take that initial
4 5,000 dollars lost in that first year, assume it
5 was invested and compounded it at seven percent
6 over 35 years, the total lost is 57,000 dollars.
7 If you take the following 2500 that was lost and
8 that was lost every year since then over 35 years
9 compounded at seven percent, that is 400,000
10 dollars, so that is almost 460,000 dollars total,
11 which at the time just seemed like a blip in my
12 career, and that is just me. Ellen Bravo author
13 of Taking on the Big Boys said that we pay women
14 less because we can pay them less because we
15 simply pay them less. We pay women who take care
16 of our young children less than we pay men that
17 take care of our lawns, our pets and our cars.
18 The Women's Equality Act is an important step
19 towards pay equity and full equality for women.
20 We will continue to work with elected officials on
21 legislation addressing comparable worth beyond the
22 equal pay for the same job. Council Member
23 Julissa Ferreras, thank you for calling for a
24 resolution in support of the Women's Equality Act.
25 It is 50 years past time to end this

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2 unconscionable practice of paying women less
3 because we can.

4 ELIZABETH GEDMARK: Good afternoon.
5 My name is Elizabeth Gedmark, and I am an attorney
6 with A Better Balance, the work and family legal
7 center. A Better Balance is a legal advocacy
8 organization dedicated to promoting fairness in
9 the workplace and helping workers care for their
10 families without risking their financial security.
11 A Better Balance also hosts a clinic for low
12 income working New Yorkers. I wanted to start by
13 thanking the New York City Council for convening
14 this hearing to discuss the New York State Women's
15 Equality Act. This testimony will focus on three
16 vitally important provisions of the Women's
17 Equality Act--pregnancy discrimination, family
18 status discrimination and pay equity; however, A
19 Better Balance, a member of the steering committee
20 of the New York for Women's Equality Coalition
21 strongly supports all 10 points of the Women's
22 Equality Act. When a woman is empowered in
23 different areas of her life, such as in the
24 workplace, feeling safe in the home, and her
25 healthcare decisions, she will better be able to

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2 participate in the economy and earn what she
3 deserves. We urge the City Council to pass a
4 resolution supporting the Women's Equality Act
5 program bill number 9. First pregnancy
6 discrimination, pregnant women are pushed out of
7 their jobs and often treated worse than other
8 employees with similar limitations or
9 disabilities. For example, a pregnant retail
10 worker in New York City was rushed to the
11 emergency room when she fainted on the job because
12 her boss would not let her drink water. The
13 Women's Equality Act would codify and clarify that
14 the New York State Human Rights Law protects
15 pregnant women who need minor adjustments at work.
16 The Women's Equality Act would explicitly require
17 employers to provide a reasonable accommodation to
18 the known medical conditions related to pregnancy
19 and childbirth of an employee unless doing so
20 would create an undue hardship. This law is
21 necessary to provide a proactive tool for pregnant
22 women and ensure equal treatment under the law.
23 Recent court decisions have added great confusion
24 about this protection and legislative clarity is
25 essential. Second, family status discrimination.

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2 Mothers earn five percent less per child than non-
3 mothers. Discrimination that prevents parents
4 from staying at their jobs or advancing at work is
5 a significant threat to family economic security.
6 The New York State Human Rights Law already bans
7 discrimination in housing based on family status,
8 but there is no similar provision prohibiting
9 discrimination in employment. The WEA would
10 explicitly protect parents from discrimination at
11 work. Third, pay equity, New York women deserve
12 fair pay. Today is the 50th anniversary of the
13 1963 federal Equal Pay Act, and it is important to
14 recognize that we still have far to go in
15 achieving equal pay in New York State. New York
16 Women earn 84 percent of men's earnings on
17 average. For women of color this figure is even
18 lower, 64 percent for Hispanic women and 79
19 percent for African American women. Loopholes in
20 our current equal pay law make enforcement
21 difficult. Courts have interpreted the catch all
22 defense of factors other than sex so broadly that
23 employers regularly evade liability even where sex
24 has played a role in pay differentials between men
25 and women. The WEA would close these loopholes.

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2 The Women's Equality Act would also protect
3 workers from retaliation from sharing salary
4 information. The WEA would make it illegal for
5 employers to retaliate against employees because
6 they discussed or disclosed their wages. If a
7 woman does not know how much her male colleagues
8 earn, it is difficult for her to know when she is
9 the victim of wage discrimination limiting her
10 ability to negotiate for higher pay and earn that
11 she deserves. Increased damages are critical for
12 improving enforcement of the law. The WEA would
13 triple the amount of damages available to
14 plaintiffs helping employees afford representation
15 and achieve justice. In conclusion New York
16 should be a leader in breaking down barriers to
17 women's equality and providing an environment
18 where women can flourish. The Women's Equality
19 Act would have a significant impact on the long
20 term economic security of women and families in
21 New York. Thank you.

22 AVALYNN SIMON: Chairwoman

23 Ferreras, distinguished councilmen and women, good
24 afternoon. I am Avalynn Simon, president of the
25 New York Coalition of 100 Black Women. Today we

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2 observe the 50th anniversary of the Equal Pay Act.
3 Seven years into the passage of this act in 1970,
4 26 women gathered to lay the framework for the New
5 York Coalition of 100 Black Women. At the heart
6 of their concern and what has become the mission
7 of the coalition were equality and fairness for
8 women and the advancement of women's issues,
9 particularly black women. Since the founding of
10 our organization there have been advances in the
11 cause of women's equality; however, there is still
12 a great deal of gender based disparities and
13 discrimination that exists in our state and our
14 nation. I am here today to join the hundreds of
15 other organizations who collectively represent
16 millions of New Yorkers to state publically the
17 coalition's support of Governor Cuomo's ten point
18 women's equity agenda and to call on New York
19 State's elected officials to vote for the passage
20 of this act that will give women greater power in
21 dealing with domestic violence, pregnancy,
22 housing, source of income and family status
23 discrimination that will strengthen human sex
24 trafficking laws, allow for attorney fees in
25 employment, lending and credit discrimination

1 cases, stop sexual harassment in the workplace,
2 achieve pay equity and protect reproductive
3 health. Time does not permit me to delve into the
4 implications of all ten aspects of the agenda;
5 however, I beg your indulgence today on the 50th
6 anniversary of the Equal Pay Act to elaborate
7 briefly on the disparity in pay and its
8 implications for women of color who are faced with
9 a double wage gap meaning that while all women are
10 paid less than white men for equal work women of
11 color, black, Hispanic and Asian women earn even
12 less than their white women counterparts. This is
13 further compounded by the fact that women of color
14 are more likely than their white counterparts to
15 be breadwinners for their families or share that
16 responsibility with a partner. Nationally women
17 on average earn 77 cents to every dollar a man
18 earns for comparable work, a gender gap of 23
19 percent. African American and Hispanic women earl
20 just 64 centers and 55 cents respectively for
21 every dollar a many earns. This has many
22 immediate and long term implications, less money
23 for necessities such as housing, food, education
24 and health, much less in accumulated retirement
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2 benefits and a huge barrier to wealth
3 accumulation. Closing the wage gap would afford a
4 working African American woman more than two
5 years' worth of food, nearly ten months' worth of
6 mortgage and utilities payments, approximately 16
7 months of rent, more than three years' worth of
8 family health insurance premiums or 4,549
9 additional gallons of gas each year. According to
10 economist, Heidi Hartman [phonetic], president of
11 the Institute of Women's Policy Research, it would
12 have a stimulus effect that would grow the U.S.
13 economy by at least three to four percentage
14 points. This is a historic opportunity for our
15 New York State lawmakers to help level the playing
16 field in bringing about gender equality, to
17 empower women with the tools and opportunity to
18 reach their full potential and to once again put
19 New York State at the forefront of advancing the
20 agenda for women. The New York Coalition of 100
21 Black Women strongly supports the Women's Equity
22 Act. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you
24 for your testimony. Do we have any questions?
25 Okay. I just wanted--we are going to be calling

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2 on the vote, but as I sit here, and we commemorate
3 the 50th anniversary, I know that as a Council
4 Member I am paid equally as my male members, and I
5 sit here having entered my third trimester of my
6 pregnancy. There is nothing more peaceful than
7 knowing that you can always come back to work,
8 that I can take this time off, and as my
9 legislative director is about to give birth, also
10 knowing that I can afford her the opportunity to
11 peacefully take her time off and be a mom and
12 focus on that, and I think that every woman has
13 that right, and that is why we are here, and that
14 is why this is so important. It makes such a
15 difference for many, many households and I think
16 every woman in New York State deserves this. So I
17 thank you all for all of the work that you have
18 done because I'd like to think that I stand on
19 your shoulders--the men and women. As Council
20 Member Barron very eloquently put it, I think that
21 this is about coalition building, and it is also
22 about reaching out to our male colleagues also, so
23 I am very excited and I urge my colleagues to vote
24 aye. If the clerk can call the vote... did I say
25 that right?

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,
3 committee clerk. Roll call vote, Committee on
4 Women's Issues pre-considered resolution. Council
5 Member Ferreras?

6 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Yes.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK: Barron?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I want to
9 say I enthusiastically vote yes, and this is a
10 good day for my mother 'cause if it wasn't for my
11 mother who sacrificed so much, I wouldn't be who I
12 am today, and I know growing up in public housing
13 on the Lower East Side of Manhattan there were
14 times because of discrimination and she didn't
15 bring home enough money where she sacrificed
16 getting a new dress, she sacrificed and she told
17 us, showed us how to eat, make them biscuits with
18 syrup and mayonnaise sandwiches and whatever it
19 took to bring us together, and these young guys
20 and thy buy sneakers today for hundreds of
21 dollars, I had to buy seven dollar sneakers, and
22 when there was a hole in the bottom, my mother put
23 cardboard in there, so I had to wear out the
24 cardboard too, but she sacrificed so much. If I
25 had to do what my mother had to do, I probably

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2 would have been in jail. I probably would have
3 hurt somebody because I just couldn't do what she
4 did. So this is a good day for my mama, and I
5 thank all the women of this state.
6 Congratulations. Aye.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK: Palma?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: I want to
9 thank Council Member Ferreras for your leadership
10 on this issue and the issues that are before this
11 committee. I want to associate myself with the
12 comments that Council Member Barron made.
13 Although we are years apart in age, I think that
14 the struggles are true to what I experienced
15 growing up and growing up with a single mom, I
16 think I also dedicate this vote to her for
17 allowing us to become--for sacrificing herself for
18 us to become better people, and I vote aye.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK: Chin?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you. I
21 really want to thank everyone for being here
22 today. Today marked the 50th anniversary, and it
23 just really reminded us that we still have so much
24 more to do, and also for me personally, this year
25 marked my 50th anniversary in the United States and

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2 talking about fighting for equality, that is
3 something that I have been doing for so long, and
4 being the only daughter in my family, it has been
5 a struggle, but the fact that we are here, that we
6 continue to make progress, it is just so important
7 for us to be able to do this. I am really proud
8 to be a member of the Women's Issues Committee,
9 and we touch on so many important issues that are
10 crucial to our family and to our community. I am
11 one of the proud sponsors of this resolution, and
12 I hope that we can really encourage our state
13 legislature to move it quickly and get this
14 passed. Thank you so much. I vote aye.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK: By vote of four
16 in the affirmative, zero in the negative, no
17 abstentions, the resolution is adopted. Council
18 members, please sign the committee report. Thank
19 you.

20 [applause]

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: We are going
22 to close the Committee. Thank you.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Kimberley Campbell certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

Signature

Kimberley CampbellDate 7/8/13