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Res. No. 1084

Resolution calling on the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) to commit to equitable revenue sharing, fair player compensation, and meaningful investment in women's basketball, in support of the "Pay Us What You Owe Us" campaign led by WNBA players.

By Council Members De La Rosa, Cabán, Hudson, Restler, Brannan and Hanif

Whereas, According to the Bergen Record, The Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), founded in 1997, is currently the longest running women's professional sports league in the United States; and

Whereas, WNBA players have consistently advanced conversations on gender equality, reproductive justice, and worker rights, demonstrating leadership both on and off the court; and

Whereas, According to MarketWatch, WNBA players receive about 9.3 percent of league revenues, compared to 49 to 51 percent in the men's National Basketball Association (NBA), at least 48.8 percent in the National Football League (NFL), and 50 percent in the National Hockey League (NHL); and

Whereas, According to Sports Illustrated, the average WNBA salary in 2025 is just over $102,000 despite the league's unprecedented growth, including record-breaking attendance, merchandise sales, and television ratings; and

Whereas, Since the last collective bargaining agreement in 2020, WNBA revenue has grown from $102 million in 2019 to $119 million in 2023, before the surge in popularity driven by star players in 2024 and 2025, which led to the league's most watched regular season in 24 years; and

Whereas, Reports indicate the league recently signed a new media rights agreement valued at $2.2 billion over 11 years, averaging $200 million annually, and expansion franchises in cities such as Cleveland,

Detroit, and Philadelphia are paying $250 million in fees, five times more than expansion costs just two years earlier; and

Whereas, Despite this financial success, player salaries have not kept pace with league growth, forcing many athletes to play overseas or in other leagues such as the player founded “Unrivaled” to supplement their income; and

Whereas, On July 19, 2025, during the All-Star Game in Indianapolis, WNBA All-Stars wore shirts reading “Pay Us What You Owe Us,” and fans in the sold-out arena chanted “pay them!” as the commissioner awarded the MVP trophy, reflecting the growing public demand for fair compensation; and

Whereas, Reports indicate the WNBPA has called for a new revenue sharing structure that ties salaries to league growth, ensuring players receive a fair share of the business they are helping to build; and

Whereas, Greater equity in pay and investment in the WNBA would strengthen women’s professional sports, expand economic opportunities for women athletes, and advance broader goals of gender equity; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA) to commit to equitable revenue sharing, fair player compensation, and meaningful investment in women’s basketball, in support of the “Pay Us What You Owe Us” campaign led by WNBA players.

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