

Center for American Progress

Why Women's Economic Security Matters for All

Introduction/Moderator:
Neera Tanden,
President,
Center for American Progress

Speakers:
Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton;
Representative Nancy Pelosi (D-CA);
Senator Patty Murray (D-WA);
Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY);
Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT)

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NEERA TANDEN: Good morning, everyone. (Applause.)

We're really honored to be here. My name is Neera Tanden, and I am the president of the Center for American Progress. And I'm really thrilled to have all of you here with us today and this truly amazing group of women who have been leaders for women. As I said, I'm the president of the Center for American Progress, and honestly, I am the president of the center because earlier in my career, when I had young children, I was able to lean in, I was able to take on more responsibility because I had a boss who understood, who really got it, that you need to be flexible to get the greatest amount of work from people. And that boss was Hillary Clinton. And so I'm particularly honored that she's here amongst a fantastic group. And I will briefly introduce, and then we'll just get right into the conversation.

As I said, Secretary Clinton, who has been – (applause) – who has been a tremendous champion of women's issues, women's economic security throughout her career.

And we also have Leader Pelosi, the first – (applause) – the first – the first woman speaker and who has been championing issues of women's economic security over the last several years and in the last several months has done a series of events around the country.

We have Senator Murray – (applause) – the highest-ranking woman in Senate leadership and an advocate of a whole host of issues as chair of the Budget Committee; Senator Gillibrand who's a – (applause) – new author, and CAP has worked very closely with Senator Gillibrand on a whole host of issues, including paid leave.

And then finally I have Congresswoman DeLauro of our leadership – (applause) – a champion of a whole host of issues, who also prods us along on women's economic security everywhere we go.

And finally, we have Shawnta Jones and Rhiannon Broschat, who really highlight why we're all here, which is to ensure that women can balance work and family issues, that economic security issues are good for our bottom line. And so we'll hear a little bit more from them as well.

So I'm going to just – we really want to have a conversation today. I'm going to – I just – I open up the floor to the – to questions, to our speakers, and I hope we all have a good conversation back and forth.

And my first question will be for Secretary Clinton. Secretary, Madam Secretary, you've championed Family and Medical Leave Act in the early '90s, fought for minimum wage increase, which disproportionately affects women, low-income women, campaigned on universal pre-K, paid leave. Why have these issues been so important to you, and why do you think they are important to the country?

HILLARY CLINTON: Well, thanks, Neera, and it's great to be back here at CAP, especially with this extraordinary group of women. I've worked with and served with most of them, and we're delighted that we've got Shawnta and Rhiannon to be part of this conversation

as well. But as Neera said, CAP, along with Nancy Pelosi and Patty Murray and Kirsten Gillibrand and Rosa DeLauro, have really been at the forefront of translating what means for people who work hard and do their very best, and especially for parents, to have the kind of economic security and opportunity that they need and deserve to have in our country. I thought it was summed up well in a piece that Neera wrote in the National Journal where she talks about how women are held back by a culture that often marginalizes their voices, by a society that undervalues their work, and by public policy that fails to support and empower them.

So what does that mean exactly? Well, it means a lot of things. It means, number one, that because we do not have full participation by women in our labor force in the United States, we don't have as strong an economy as we would if we did. In fact, if we had been able to close the gap between men and women participating in the workforce, our gross domestic product would be 10 percent higher. Now, when people are talking about how important it is to get growth growing again, get jobs that are good jobs being created again, why are we leaving 10 percent on the table? Because we don't do enough to give women the support they need to be empowered to take care of themselves and their families.

Now, even as we work to create a broader-based economic growth platform that provides inclusive prosperity for people, there are things we could be doing right now that would make a difference because what I see as I travel around our country, just as I saw when I traveled around the world as secretary of state, is where women are left out, where women are not given the opportunity to pursue their economic well-being, their children suffer, their communities suffer; indeed, their countries suffer.

Now, in our own country, women hold two-thirds of all minimum wage jobs. And that's bad enough because if you work full time on a minimum wage job and you have a family of three, you are still below the poverty line. But think about this: Women hold nearly three-quarters of the jobs that are reliant on tips. And in fact, they don't get the minimum wage with the tips on top of it. These are jobs like being waitresses or bartenders or hair stylists. They don't get that. They get in many states about two dollars and 12 or 13 cents. And then they're at the mercy not only of customers, who can decide or not to tip; they're at the mercy of their employers, who may collect the tips and not turn them back, or who may harass the women in these positions because they are so dependent upon making customers happy so that we, the customers, will tip them.

So think about what it's like trying to succeed at work and give your children the support they need if you have a minimum wage job or if you have one of these minimum tipped jobs that are so prevalent among working women. Without equal pay, without flexibility or predictability at work, without access to quality, affordable child care, without the ability to take a day off if your child or aging parent is sick, without paid family and medical leave, this woman is really on the brink. And that's what the latest CAP Shriver Report make clear. And the floor is collapsing. We talk about a glass ceiling. These women don't even have a secure floor under them.

So over time, we have seen very well how women in greater numbers have gone into the workforce. We now know that, depending upon how it's calculated, between 40 and 60 percent

of women in the workforce are the primary breadwinners or the co-breadwinner. So this is not a woman's issue; this is a family issue, and it certainly is a children's issue. So we have to do more in order to bring these issues to the forefront.

And I just want to end with one quick reference. And I got this on – you know, I got this online as I was coming over here, and it's from Bloomberg. I don't know if Bloomberg is in the room, but there is a great article called "Eight Things in the Poverty Report That'll Make Women Mad" because we did have a slight improvement with the poverty rate falling for the first time in this economic recovery. But for women, there's a lot less to cheer about because gender equality (sic) in the workforce remains a reality. We ticked up from 70 cents per – on the dollar for women versus men in the workforce to 78 cents. And we know that more women are more likely to be impoverished even if they're working. So this gathering today is to further the agenda that my friends in the Congress, in the House and the Senate, are pursuing to try to level that playing field and to give women a fair shot at economic opportunity and empowerment.

MS. TANDEN: Thank you. Thank you so much. And that is a – that is a great segue into a question I really want to ask you, Leader Pelosi. What is – what are the strategies in the Congress? What could we do to address these whole host of issues? Secretary Clinton raised childcare, paid leave, the whole minimum wage, equal pay. What are – what is our strategy here?

REP. PELOSI: Well, thank you very much for the question and for the opportunity to be here again. I thank CAP for bringing us together for the Fair Shot announcement – was it almost a year ago?

MS. TANDEN: Yeah, last – almost a year.

REP. PELOSI: Whenever – and then for your participation in the White House Summit on Working Families as well as the – as the secretary referenced, the – it isn't –

MS. TANDEN: Is it working? Yeah – let's – good strategy.

REP. PELOSI: Thank you. Can you hear me now?

(Audience affirmation.)

I was praising CAP for the Fair Shot announcement almost a year ago, when we came together for their participation in the White House Summit on Working Families and for the participation that the secretary referenced in the Shriver Report, all of it the important documentation that we need. For us to go forward in the Congress, as the question was asked, we wanted to further document, in the words of women, what made a difference to them, what would unleash the power of women in the workplace? Under the leadership of Rosa DeLauro, who is our godmother on this issue and so many others and Donna Edwards and Doris Matsui, of our congressional working group on women in the House, what we did one year ago – more than a year ago, in July, we stood on the steps of the Capitol, women members of Congress, and some men, and we announced our When Women Succeed, America Succeeds agenda. And before

that, and since, we've had over a hundred meetings across the country, Rhiannon was at one for us in Chicago on the subject of paid leave, and we listened – (well ?) what would make a difference in their lives? We surmise, we know, we – we've lived it, but we wanted to be very current on the priorities, and the priorities came down to an agenda that we called When Women Succeed, America Succeeds about respect for the work of women in the workplace, whether it's equal pay or raising the minimum wage, or it's paid leave and also the issue of quality affordable childcare.

Now, I mention those – and, again, we went around the country, listened to our true VIPs – Shawnta and Rhiannon, thank you for honoring us with your presence – because that was what was valid, what did they have to say? But our point in announcing it at – last year, the 165th anniversary of the Declaration of Sentiments at Seneca Falls, was that it said, “All women and men are created equal”, and, as such, we had to rise to the occasion in terms of our potential. And the – it took 70 years, largely it was about the right to vote – you know the history, it took about 70 years to get the right to vote. A couple decades later, women were in the workforce, helping in the war effort, leaving home – that was revolutionary – and then, the higher education of women, more women in the workplace, whether entry-level or in the professions, but the missing link in the evolution of women in the workplace, in my view, was the lack of affordable quality childcare. This is such a big issue to deal with, all the others very important, and we make that fight, but affordable childcare: a bigger issue, almost to the caliber of healthcare reform to get that to be done. So our strategy was, to honor the words of President Lincoln, “Public sentiment is everything, to listen to the public.”

And now hearken back to those women in Seneca Falls and they fought for the right to vote. If women vote, women will succeed and America will succeed. So whether they vote Democratic or Republican or whatever party, we want the debate to be about these issues because they are long overdue. To echo some of (so she, presumptuously ?) the secretary's remarks, the – it's about the – it's about women, it's about their families, it's about their retirement – but it's about our economy. And we were so honored to be able to celebrate the naming of Janet Yellen as the chair of the Fed for Women's History Month in the spring. And when she spoke, very seriously – you know, we were celebrating, and Christine Lagarde was there, everybody was there to pay their respects. But when she spoke, she had a very important message. And her message, my friends, was that the greatest economic growth in the second half of the 20th century was because of the increased involvement of women in the economy.

So taking it conversely – not just what we do for women and families – but what is the most important thing that we can do to grow the U.S. economy? It is to unleash the power of women in our economy. It ties into education, which is part of our middle class jumpstart. It ties into education, good-paying jobs here in the U.S. and the rest of the jumpstart agenda. But it is really important.

And other countries recognize it. You see the – and the – whenever they go to Davos, I don't know, January, February, whenever that is, in the winter – the prime minister of Japan said how – the answer to how they were going to really improve their economy, because they needed help, was to involve more women in the economy. What did they do since then? A massive childcare initiative. And what did they do? An equal number of women and men in the Cabinet.

So presidents of countries, heads of state come to my office all the time and talk about how women are going to be the answer for their additional growth that they need in their economy. So it's important for the country, for its competitiveness. It's important for women and families and the retirement of women. It's important for children who are our future. So there's every reason to do it.

Why now? What is our strategy? Well, we want women to vote because, again, well, it depends on who wins, but I don't even – elections are about two things, about who wins, but what do the American people win in terms of the priorities that the people tell elected officials, this is important to me and I'm watching. And if women vote, their voices will count in a stronger way. That's what our suffragettes fought for. That's what we – whose shoulders we stand on.

So again, I thank CAP for channeling all of this energy in that direction. It's absolutely essential. It will happen. We think it should happen soon. They have resisted some of our initiatives. As I always say, it's inevitable to us. It's inconceivable to them. We have to shorten the distance between the inevitable and the inconceivable. (Laughter.) So thank you.

MS. TANDEN: Thank you so much, Leader Pelosi. (Applause.) Sorry, sorry, our bad. So you really touched on a whole series of issues, and really how there's a false choice between economic growth and addressing the needs of workers. And I think Rhiannon's story really helps us understand what these broad policy debates really mean in someone's life. So I would love you, Rhiannon, to just share with us the struggle you've had as a working mom and some of the challenges you've seen.

RHIANNON BROCHAT: Sure. First of all, I just want to say, thank you for having me, Neera. It's really an honor. Well, first off, I am a mother before anything. I have a 10-year old son who is autistic. I am a student at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago and I'm also a retail worker. So – I mean, first off, the struggle is just trying to juggle all three of those things at the same time and still try to succeed in life.

And so paid sick days to me is a really important issue, as I was employed by Whole Foods for about a year and a half. And earlier this year, in January, I had an instance where the weather fell inclement. And I was – I was working at Whole Foods and my son was also going to school. I was working while my son was in school. And the weather turned really fierce. It was negative 30s almost. And the Chicago Public Schools decided that for the safety of the kids that they were going to close down the schools.

So I had to scramble for child care, which I came up short on and decided that I – you know, I needed to call my employer and let them know my situation. And seeing how they're attendance policy is very strict, it doesn't leave room for emergency room visits, which was one of my instances, or illness, or even death, really. I had to call them and just let them know. And when I got the response of, you know, we understand, it will be fine, I kind of took it as I would be all right and my job wouldn't be on the line.

The next day, they called me and let me know that I was going to be terminated for abusing their attendance policy, and so I outright lost my job, essentially. So since then, I took it, you know, outright and I reached out to the 515 (ph), I reached out to Family Values at Work, and just to put it out there that it's – there's no way that a family – a single mom like myself can really live under those strict policies that, you know, my work would hold. Things happen, emergencies happen. Things like that need to be taken into consideration, especially in something like cold weather, where my son's safety was kind of in the balance. So I think that that's one of the most important issues, to get it out there, to realize that, you know, there's lots of single moms like myself out there that are all struggling, we're trying to get by, and I think that it's really important for paid sick days to be implemented in America so that we can really succeed. (Applause.)

MS. TANDEN: Thank you so much for sharing your story with us, and more people can hear it.

And Shawnta, I really wanted to ask you, as a working mom, you've seen the benefits of having some support for childcare. Can you share your story?

MS. JONES: Sure. I want to thank you guys for having me, and I really appreciate it. Some of the benefits, there were many benefits as far as child care subsidies. I was a teen mom at 17 years old, and I wasn't sure, you know, where I was going to find good, reliable childcare. And of course, my family could not afford it. However, I did stumble across resources that helped me out, you know, along the way. And one of the things was, it helped me be responsible, balance my finances, provide for my family, because I wanted to do all of those things, like go to college and things like that. I mean, at one point I wasn't even sure if I would be able to graduate because I didn't have childcare that I could afford. But luckily, I was fortunate to find a great place to take the children, Alphabets Education (ph), where all three of them went. And I think one of the benefits is not just for me being able to afford it, but they were able to start off an early learning environment. And there – all of them are great kids, very smart. My oldest – they're honor roll students and model students as well, I think because they got that early start, you know, and they went to school and they aced almost everything. So it is really very fortunate, I think, for working families. These resources of assistance is very, very important.

SEN. GILLIBRAND: Do you know if that was a subsidized program? Do you know who supported it?

MS. JONES: It was –

SEN. GILLIBRAND: Because average daycare in this country is about \$10,000 a year, so obviously you weren't paying \$30,000. Do you know – whether it was supported by the city or a not-for-profit?

MS. JONES: It was through Social Services in my community.

SEN. GILLIBRAND: It makes a huge difference.

MS. JONES: And they would pay most of it, and I would just have to pay the co-pay according to my income, and it was awesome. So –

SEN. GILLIBRAND: And you were able to go back to school, right, because of the childcare.

MS. JONES: Yes, I got my associate's degree. I'm still a full-time student for my bachelor's. And I'm just accomplishing so many goals these days, and it's awesome. And I'm also a great, you know, role model for the kids. (Applause.)

MS. TANDEN: (You get ?) a success story for that. Fantastic. Thank you so much.

MS. JONES: Thank you.

MS. TANDEN: And I think that actually – Senator Murray, you've been a champion of childcare and pre-K, and you have a long history in pre-K, and I think Shawnta's story really tells us how those kinds of investments help the bottom line, because when she gets a better education, her kids get a better education and that's better for the economy overall.

Could you tell us a little bit about your work in this area?

SENATOR PATTY MURRAY (D-WA): Yeah, well, absolutely. And investment in early learning is something that is such a no-brainer in today's world. Hillary, you and I were working on the Ready to Learn Act when you were back in our world a few years ago. (Chuckles.) And we know the science, we know the research shows that if you invest in early learning, it makes a tremendous difference in the outcome of a child's success, whether they're incarcerated, whether they graduate from high school, whether they go on to college, and really their future economic ability to contribute to their families and to our economy. We know that that is the right investment and it works, so we know it's good for our kids. And I can tell you, as a former pre-school teacher, every pre-school teacher will tell you that it makes a difference in those children's lives. You see it in their faces, and you see it years later when you see those same faces going to college. So it's absolutely critical. But it's critical for our economy as well.

And I worry about our competitive edge globally today. As we are talking sequestration and budget cuts and, you know, all those kinds of things, other countries are investing in early learning today because they're talking about what their economic outcome is going to 20, 30 years from now and what their productivity will be, and they know by investing in those young kids today the ability to be competitive to us in the future. So we are moving backwards when other countries are sending very strong agendas moving forward. That's who those young kids who are in preschool today are going to be competing with in the future. And we are not making the right kinds of investments.

But let me go back and reference what Hillary talked about at the beginning, the importance of full participation by women in our workforce. Any woman who has worked when their kids are young will tell you they do a better job if they know their child is safe, well taken care of and learning while they're working. Any dad will tell you the same thing. (Applause.) And if we as a country are not making sure that women can fully participate at work, we're hurting our businesses, we're hurting our families and we're hurting our economy. So to me, this is absolutely the right kind of investment that our country should be making. We should be ahead of the curve globally, not moving backwards.

Now, what's interesting to me is that around the country this is not a partisan issue. We are seeing states like Utah who are – and Georgia – who are investing in early learning in a bipartisan way. The only place that seems to be partisan right now is here in the United States Congress. And I think this is something that we really have to work on to reach out to our Republican colleagues and talk about the critical investments that can be made and make sure that we are focused on early learning and child care, which is – can be a third of a family's income – so that can have women fully participating in our workforce. It is good for our families. It's good for our economy. It is good for the future of this country.

MS. TANDEN: Thank you so much. (Applause.) Senator Gillibrand, I think that these stories we've heard this morning really highlight the kind of upside-down nature of workplace policies in the U.S. because really we have the best policies for the highest income workers – paid leave, access to sick days – when it's our lowest income workers who are the most vulnerable. You've done a lot of work on paid leave in particular, but have really looked at this issue of low-income workers. So I hope you can share some of your thoughts with us.

SENATOR KRISTEN GILLIBRAND (D-NY): Thank you. It's an honor to be in this roundtable with such extraordinary women. Thank you all for being here. Thank you for sharing your stories. They truly inform everything we do here as legislators.

I believe that our workplace policies are stuck in the “Mad Men” era. We are stuck in an era when dad went to work and mom stayed at home. And that is just not a reality anymore. Today, eight out of 10 families, mom is going to work. Four to 10 families, she is the primary or sole wage earner. But we have no policies that actually reflect this reality. And so all the issues that we talked about – and their stories could not be more perfect.

When women are working and trying to provide for their families, they need to have support because no matter how wonderful many marriages are and how many wonderful things spouses will do, women are still bearing 70 percent of the housework, the childcare and meeting the family's needs at home. And so we need support. And we need support at all different times in our careers and in our lives.

And because we are not providing that support, we are creating an artificial drag on the economy. And I'll give you some examples. So the first challenge is when you're having children. A couple of impediments. We don't have affordable daycare in this country. Her story is the story of what we need all across America. Average daycare in my state is \$10,000 a year. If you are low-wage worker, minimum wage worker that means you're making about \$15,000 a year. If you have two kids, that means you're \$3,000 below the poverty line and you're working full time. How is that woman possibly going to afford daycare?

So we need supports to make daycare affordable for all communities. We need something as simple as universal pre-K. It is so emblematic of what – everything Senator Murray said. When you invest a dollar in that child with early childhood education, it's \$11 out during her lifetime because that early learning gives her the potential of reaching her full potential.

Now, paid leave is perhaps the one that makes me the angriest. We are the only industrialized country in the world that doesn't have paid leave – the only industrialized country in the world. Pakistan and Afghanistan, who don't even educate their girls, have more paid leave than America. That is outrageous. And what does paid leave look like? So there are times in your life where you need that flexibility. When you have the baby, absolutely. It's a very important time in our lives.

But what happens if your child gets hit by a car and is in a wheelchair for five months? That happened to a lady I know in New York. She had a master's degree. She was in a good-paying job. FMLA only protects you for three months. She needed to be home five months, 24/7 care for her daughter.

She lost her job. She was never able to ramp back on where she got off. She was never paid as much. She never had the same level of seniority. And she never actually got to work in her field of higher education. That was her story, because she didn't have that flexibility to protect her job and let her meet her family's needs when she needed it.

It also happens when our parents are aging. Women are often the caregivers when your mother or father is dying, and need that flexibility.

And so what women will often do in these challenges is they will make other choices. They may quit their job. They may work less hours. They may change jobs altogether. But again, they rarely if ever come back into the workforce where they left. And with women graduating – more than half of the college degrees and more than half of the advanced degrees, for women not to be earning their full potential in their industries, where they've had their education, is again creating this artificial drag.

And so I agree with Secretary Clinton and every woman up here. The number one thing we could do to help our economy grow is tap into the full economic potential of women who need and want to be in the workforce. (Applause.)

MS. TANDEN: Thank you!

I think one of the issues that just seems to be such a no-brainer – and Secretary Clinton referenced the new – the new numbers that we got this week – women are now paid – we've gone really far up. We've gone from 77 cents to a dollar to 78 (cents). (Laughter.) So – is paycheck fairness, and yet we continually have the hardest time with such a basic issue.

And Congresswoman DeLauro, you've been a champion of paycheck fairness for a very long time, and the whole host of issues here, and we obviously had a vote this week that was, unfortunately, a partisan vote in the Senate. Could you talk a little bit about the connection between paycheck fairness and these – all these economic security issues?

REPRESENTATIVE ROSA DELAURO (D-CT): Certainly. I'd be happy to do that. Thank you for the question.

But I'm delighted to be here, and it really is an outstanding panel of people who spend a lifetime working on these issues. And to Shawnta (sp) and Rhiannon, thank you. Thanks for your courage. You live this every single day. And we understand it. We empathize. But it's you that are – and that's where we get our strength from in order to try to move forward. (Applause.) Appreciate that. Thank you.

You know that when we did the bus tour – and I want to say thank you to the leader for being a champion on the women's economic agenda. And Hillary, I don't know if you're – you hear what this signals in terms of your future. I know what it signals in terms of the issues that you care about and what you have been championing for a lifetime.

When we were on the bus tour in June, it was a conversation – Judy Lichtman, Marcia Greenberger talked about the issues that for so long were on the margins of where our debate was, and that was paycheck fairness, paid sick days, affordable child care, paid family leave, flexibility in scheduling in the workforce, all of those things.

But today, in here and what we've seen in the last year, last several months, this is the center of the public discourse. And that really is a very, very big change, because it is at the center. It's not, as – some of the pundits and folks would like to say that this is – this is about the politics, this is about November's election. Let me just tell you: 1997 I introduced paycheck fairness. It wasn't – it wasn't popular then. 2005 for paid sick leave. Minimum wage has been out there for a number of years.

MS. JONES: (It passed in the House ?).

REP. DELAURO: And it passed in the House. Well, I'm going to get to that, Madam Leader, about passing in the House.

But the fact is that – what is the chief economic issue today, and that's the reason why this is so central, these issues are central to the public discourse, is because today jobs do not pay enough for people to live on. That is a fact of life. Incomes are stagnant. People are struggling. And for women, the struggle and the challenges are overwhelming. And you dealt with that, Neera, and you worked with the White House on the summit. It was The Shriver Report that was the focus of all of that. And we have been bringing this to the issue (sic).

The fact is, is that women, in terms of paycheck fairness – and let me make it very, very simple, because it – people like to convolute it and to try to turn it into something else. It is about same job, same pay, very clearly. This is not – we all live in a world, those of us who run for office, who serve in these bodies – men, women, different skill sets, different education levels – we do the same job, we get the same pay. That is not the case for women all over this country. Now, you know, we've had – one of the things that you've raised in the past, Neera, is that – how do we make progress on these issues in the environment in which we exist in the Congress? And people who are opposed to the work-family policies that have been discussed here today – pay equity, paid sick days – I don't forget, by the way, I have a long memory. I don't forget – it was in November 2010 that we came two votes short in the Senate and there were a number of – and I won't name names, but there were a number of Republican women who could've voted for paycheck fairness; we needed those two votes. I will just say, in the

House of Representatives, under the leadership of Speaker Pelosi, we passed paycheck fairness twice. (Applause.) Twice. And, by the way, we also had – we also had, in the first time around, 14 Republicans who supported it and, secondly, we had, on the second time around, 10 Republicans.

This week, the Senate did (what it was ?) doing – it's about the third time since spring of 2012 that, on a partisan vote, the Republicans said no to paycheck fairness. We can't even get a vote in the House of Representatives on paycheck fairness. So what it means to women – it's when you take that prism of looking at not having enough money to live on, that drives it all. That means paycheck fairness. It means minimum wage. It means affordable childcare. It means education and training and the opportunity to be able to get better jobs in order to be able to make more money for your family. It means that you need to have a flexible work schedule, you have to know what your schedule is going to be about, so that they don't send you home and they tell you that they're not going to pay you for that day's work. And why are women looking to raise their incomes, to do this? They want a better quality of life for themselves and for their families and it is – it is very simply stated.

And if that happens, I will just go and not – because I think – and I'll conclude with this, and, not my words, but an extraordinary young woman economist and that's Heather Boushey, who's written a piece recently who – and she says that where we used to be, in the New Deal, that it was – and if you're watching "The Roosevelts", that program, my god, your heart sings – your heart sings and longs for what's – what happened. But, if you watch what happened in the New Deal, it was about families. It was about family-centered economics and the economy, and what happened – what was the reality of people's everyday lives, was where you had to start in order to make the economy grow. We have moved away from that and it has become so business-centric, that that's where our – the best of our economy will be, but it is not going to be the case, it is those fundamental work-family policies that will be central. And paycheck fairness is at the top of that effort because it underlies all of these issues, is a women's ability – and working women and men – to be able to have a kind of a salary that allows them to do all of these things and to help us to grow the economy. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. TANDEN: Thank you so much, Rosa. I really want to encourage a conversation back and forth, so I'll start off and just ask a question actually dovetailing off of Rosa's remarks. Secretary Clinton, in the '90s we were talking about kitchen table issues and, really, a lot of these issues were at play there, but it does seem that there's a growing momentum around these issues in the – even in some of the election Senate races, issues like equal pay, minimum wage are obviously in heated dispute. But you've really made the agreement for a while now: It's not a conflict between business and workers, it's really an – in the interest of the bottom line, in the interest of economic growth. Do you think that argument is taking off? Is there a moment – are we in a moment, now, where we can make real progress now and into the future?

MS. CLINTON: Well, I think the argument is grounded in reality, but unfortunately reality is always the context in which these decisions are made. (Laughter.) You know, the Congress increasingly – despite the best efforts of my friends and others – is living in an

evidence-free zone where what the reality is in the lives of Americans is so far from the minds of too many who don't place the highest priority on what Rosa called family-centered economics.

Now, it is clear to me that the imperative – the realistic imperative of how people are living today, and the difficulties that women and men face in getting the kind of jobs that will provide the kind of income that they need for themselves and their families, is roiling beneath the surface of the political debates. We all see it. We know it. Kirsten told stories. We could all tell stories about people who we know who have been really egregiously impacted by the failure of our political leadership on the other side of the aisle to recognize the importance of making sure that people who work hard, play by the rules – that old description – have a chance to get into the middle class and certainly a chance to stay in the middle class.

So I would just make three quick points. I was thinking, as Nancy was talking, about the Declaration of Sentiments, what an amazing moment in history that was in Seneca Falls, New York, in upstate New York, for the first time claiming that women were equal to men. And then, a very long struggle to get the vote in 1920. The women's commission – or the Commission on American Women that President Kennedy put into effect, and as Rosa was saying, Eleanor Roosevelt was on that commission. She died before its final report was delivered, but it was dedicated to her because she was, once again, sounding the themes that she had ever since she was a young woman. And that was opportunity for all, obviously including women.

And I remember one other date that I had some personal involvement in when I was an intern at the Children's Defense Fund, working with Marian Wright Edleman. And the Congress passed a universal childcare bill. And the White House, then under the leadership of President Nixon, fully supported it because even though conditions were not yet what they are today in terms of the globalization of the economy and the loss of jobs that used to be available to people that meant that so many communities were hollowed out, it was becoming clear by then that if there wasn't universal childcare, you could not provide the support that women needed to be in the workforce.

And we saw for the first time in my adult life an organized campaign to convince the White House that had supported the bill to veto the bill on ideological grounds – not on evidence, not on the real lives, the day-to-day family needs that Americans had, but ideologically, that this was something that had to be rejected. So there's a history here. Now, I think we're on the right side of history because I think inevitably, inexorably, as Nancy was saying, you get to the point where the lives of people are so much of an imperative in the political environment that politicians have to listen at their peril. And that's where I think we are now.

I think that there will still be battles to be fought. Some victories are happening at the local and state level, which I think are very important because the other thing about watching the Ken Burns special on the Roosevelt's, the old idea of the laboratory of democracy, we're getting paid leave in places. California just had a big victory on paid leave. (Cheers, applause.) And I see my friend Ann O'Leary out there, who was one of the leading advocates for that. Other cities and states are moving in that direction.

So the reality cannot be ignored, but that does require leadership, and it requires what Nancy said in the beginning. It requires that people, like our two very brave witnesses here – it requires that they vote for people who will support them and will support the way they live today. And they represent many millions of women across our country who need this kind of help. So I think, Neera, that, you know, we are seeing the convergence of reality and politics, and that’s often the way things get done in our country. And I think the other side will hang on for all they’re worth. Nancy knows that better than anybody. But I think that if voters – if citizens speak up for themselves and their families and their futures, we will see the kind of changes that we’re all advocating for. (Applause.)

MS. TANDEN: Leader Pelosi, do you want to –

REP. PELOSI: Yes, I just want to briefly take off from some of the points that the secretary made. The – you talked about Seneca Falls – bragging about the state of New York. We all caught that. (Laughter.)

MS. CLINTON: Well, we were a state then. (Laughter, jeers.)

MS. : Wow – wow.

REP. PELOSI: But we just had our 10th anniversary –

MS. CLINTON: (Inaudible) – California if – otherwise.

REP. PELOSI: – had the 10th anniversary of paid maternity leave –

MS. CLINTON: (Inaudible.)

REP. PELOSI: – in California just recently. But in any event, here’s my point. When women got the right to vote – when they did, 70 years later, the papers all said “women given the right to vote.” Women weren’t given anything. Women fought, marched, starved, were starved. You know everything that women went through to get that done. And that’s such a precious thing that we want women to exercise that vote so that all the things that would spring from the empowerment of women would happen. And one of the things that Eleanor Roosevelt did early in the ‘20s was join the League of Women Voters, which was a new organization that had formed, because women understood how important that vote was.

But the reason I mention it is because President Lincoln has said, public sentiment is everything. And if women want these things, they can be had and gained just by voting, and persuading people of all parties, this is what means something to me. This is what I’m going to predicate my vote on, because that financial stability – that financial stability is what gives women freedom and flexibility and the rest – money – money. (Laughter.)

And I’d just make one point, since we’re talking about dates. Today, September 18th, marks six years to the day when the secretary of the Fed came to my office with a meeting of the Democrats, Republicans, House and Senate leadership with the secretary of the Treasury, who

described a terrible scenario of a financial service community going down the drain, melting down. I asked the chairman of the Fed, do you agree with that description? And he said if we don't act immediately, we won't have an economy by Monday. That was six years ago.

And that scar on our economy, and the uncertainty that it put in peoples' lives is really something that we are still dealing with. So as we have this opportunity of an election, of marking a time – Governor Strickland knows very well what happened at that time and dealt with it in a very positive way. Thank you, Governor.

But nonetheless, this time has to give us an opportunity to say, business as usual was not only not good for the country. It's not good for women. Women are the solution – women in the workplace, and all that goes to unleash their power.

MS. TANDEN: Thank you so much, Leader. Nancy – I mean, Rosa.

REP. DELAURO: Thank you – thank you very much. I just don't want to, you know, pre-empt New York or California – (laughter) – but quite frankly, Connecticut was the first state that passed paid sick leave and an increase in the minimum wage. (Laughter, applause.) That being said, I want to – really, this is –

MS. CLINTON: Competition's good on this issue.

(Cross talk.)

REP. DELAURO: Yes, yes, it's very good. And that's the point I want to make, because I think what we've said here – this is a moment – this is a moment for these issues. The confluence of what has come together in terms of the economic reality and the need, and where it lies, and my colleagues – women do have to vote and participate and do what they need to do to make the changes, but as we've done, we have to elevate this issue. We have to bring energy to it and creative intensity around this issue.

That's why we did a bus tour. That's why there are hundreds of events all over the country by our colleagues. Quite frankly, in my view, we ought to be on the road now talking about these issues because we know where the vulnerabilities are. And when people are indifferent to these issues, they pay a price. And that is a reality in politics today. So states, these issues are front and center. They're not on the margins. You look at North Carolina, Iowa, Colorado, Georgia, New Hampshire, Kentucky; in the House, Colorado, California, Arizona, Massachusetts, Nevada.

We should not be deterred by intransigence from the other side. We need to pick up the ball and run with it. We need to look at those states like California, like New York, like Portland and Seattle and so forth, where our cities and states are taking the lead. We need to use those as our models to move forward.

And a final point I would make is, we do have a president who is articulating this agenda. He did it at the summit. He did it at the State of the Union. And he did it just last week on “Meet the Press” –

MS. : Yep.

REP. DELAURO: – and talked about these. And he also talked about the other side that isn’t willing to take this up as an agenda. My view is, “Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead” – (laughter) – and just take this on and go for it. (Laughter.)

MS. TANDEN: Oh, Rosa.

(Cross talk.)

MS. TANDEN: Senator Murray, we had a vote this week, actually, speaking of damning the torpedoes. Could you just talk a little bit about the vote we had and why it’s so hard in the Senate to get some action?

SEN. MURRAY: Well, listening to this conversation I would say that what we need to do is bring the world to the United States Senate. And maybe if the men in the Senate were paid 78 cents on the dollar of the women, maybe they’d really understand what’s happening, you know.

I have to say that the passion around the women’s economic issues is so real across the country, and I think the debate here in Washington, D.C. is really missing it. This is so important for families in our communities, but it is important for our economic growth. We are stymied right now. We’re coming out of this recession but we’re not growing because of the inability for women to get equal pay, for women to have the ability to go to work and be secure at work, and all the issues we talked about played into that.

I don’t think the enemy here, as we fight to get these issues at the national agenda, is the arguments on the other side of this issue. The fear I have is that too many people are saying, Washington can’t do anything. We’re incompetent. We can’t accomplish anything. So women at home go, why should I bother, because I don’t think they can?

I think we have to change that conversation. You bet we can do things here. We have proven that. And we need to fight for them and define them, and we need everybody fighting for our country to be able to accomplish these things together.

MS. TANDEN: Senator Gillibrand?

SEN. GILLIBRAND: Well, you know, I just want to compliment the women here for articulating this issue so well. I think we need a “Rosie the Riveter” moment for this generation. If you remember that iconic image, sleeves rolled up, slogan, “We can do it.” Women in America responded because the American people needed them. It was a call to action to say, we need you to work in these industries because men are fighting during World War II.

Women responded. They responded because they were told two things: that they could do it and that they would make a difference. And 6 million women entered the workforce because of that call to action. We need a call to action today, to ask 6 million more women to be voting, 6 million more women to be heard, 6 million more women to hold these members of Congress accountable when they do not put their values first.

And that's what we have here. We have members of Congress who aren't listening to their constituents. They aren't believing that these are priorities. So every woman in America, every man in America who cares about his wife and cares about his daughters, need to speak up, need to demand action, and that's what our democracy is about.

MS. TANDEN: Fantastic. (Applause.) It's like a revival.

I would just like to say that I went to college in California, and I was in New York for a very long time – (laughter) – and I did – I did actually go to law school in Connecticut, so – (laughter) – so it's all great.

SEN. GILLIBRAND: And Washington – and Washington is the only state that has women elected to all –

MS. TANDEN: That is a good point.

SEN. MURRAY: That's correct.

SEN. GILLIBRAND: – statewide positions, so – (laughter).

MS. TANDEN: So this has been a fantastic discussion. Sadly, I have a lot of your – your schedules are all very busy, so I was just hoping we could perhaps wrap up. And with that, Secretary Clinton, do you any thoughts for us and what we should really be doing going forward, how we can formalize these arguments that call to arms?

MS. CLINTON: Well, I think you've heard it from everybody up here. I think, number one, political candidates and officeholders do pay attention when people vote on issues that are of concern to them. And that sounds so simplistic, but as Nancy knows so well, when we can turn an issue into a political movement that demands people be responsive during the election season, it carries over.

So these issues have to be in the lifeblood of this election and any election. And the more we can do that, you know, harnessing 6 million or however many we can, you know, bus tours, storming the gates, with Rosa leading the way, whatever it's going to take, we have to make these issues part of every political debate.

And then I think, secondly, we need people to feel that they're part of a movement, that it's not just about an election; it's about a movement – a movement to really empower themselves, their families and take the future over in a way that is going to give us back the country that we care so much about. We haven't seen a full recovery from the economic crash

that, you know, Nancy described in such chilling detail, because those of us who were in the Senate at that time, you know, we had to vote to make those difficult decisions. And then when the president came in, he deserves an enormous amount of credit for staunching the bleeding and preventing a further deterioration and getting us out of that ditch we were in. But we know that unless we change our policies, a lot of the benefits are not going to be broadly shared, and that's what we're talking about here. It's not just about more jobs for more people and better-paying jobs. It's making sure that people themselves get to keep those benefits and build that future back that they are desperate to see for themselves.

So I think, Neera, what – the work that you and CAP have done has been absolutely essential. We've all benefited from it, and we have to now take all those extraordinary recommendations for policy, some of which have been around for a long time, and get to work in the election and then after, no matter what the outcomes are, to just go after it day in and day out until we achieve the goals that we've set to make the workplace more woman-friendly and to provide more opportunities for women to fulfill their own economic potentials.

MS. TANDEN: Thank you all. Thank you so much. (Applause.)

(END)