

## Iran's Resistance to Women's Rights

Iranian women lost many rights including legal, political and social rights following the Islamic Revolution in 1979. When Dr. Haleh Esfandiari went to visit her mother in Iran, she was arrested and imprisoned in solitary confinement. Iranians who now live outside the country have been active in trying to reverse this oppression. Our speakers will help us understand what has been happening in Iran to limit women's human rights and advise us how we can work with them and others to change this situation. Dr. Esfandiari's book, *My Prison, My Home*, will be available in paperback for sale at the meeting.

Our speakers are **Dr. Haleh Esfandiari**, Director of the Middle East Program at the Woodrow Wilson Center and **Leila Milani**, a human rights lawyer with special expertise in dissident and activist groups based both in and outside of Iran.

**Date/Time:** Tuesday, October 26, 2010 / 12 noon sharp to 1:30 pm  
Open to the public, no reservation necessary.

**Place:** One Dupont Circle, 8th Floor Kellogg Room, Washington DC  
Bring brown bag lunch, soft drinks available from a machine.

***Renew Your Membership.***  
***Please fill out the form on page 5 and mail it with your dues.***

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

A photo ID must be shown at the security desk of One Dupont Circle.  
Please allow time to go through the sign-in system.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, November 23, 2010

## Pay Equity: Past, Present and Future

The September meeting featured **Catherine Hill, Ph.D.**, Director of Research at the American Association of University Women (AAUW), and **Michele “Mike” Leber**, Chair of the National Committee on Pay Equity (NCPE). Both speakers addressed the persisting wage gap for women in the United States today.

**Dr. Hill** reviewed statistics on the discrepancy between men’s and women’s earnings and addressed two issues: 1) what are the questions that come up about the gender pay gap and 2) how do we persuade people to believe it exists and to take it seriously. Dr. Hill began by discussing the fact that despite the progress that was achieved in decreasing the wage gap in the 1970s and 1980s, in this decade the gap has remained relatively unchanged. Hill suggested that the economic boost of women’s education advances may be leveling off. Women are still investing in education, indeed more women than men are now receiving doctoral degrees. All this education has helped increase women’s earnings in the 1980s and 1990s, but the education effect may be cooling as the job market absorbs more and more graduates.

Hill then differentiated between the varying ways to calculate the pay gap, and emphasized the need for women’s groups to be able to respond to criticism about inconsistent numbers concerning the gap by explaining why and how different numbers are reported.



Catherine Hill



Michele “Mike” Leber

The pay gap is sometimes reported using the annual earnings measure, based on survey questions that ask respondents to report their yearly earnings. The seasonally-adjusted statistic is calculated using only full-time, year-round workers and includes bonuses. The pay gap was calculated as 23% in 2009, with women receiving 77 cents for every dollar that men are paid, according to the Annual Economic Supplement released by the US Census Bureau.

Another method for calculating the pay gap is the weekly earnings measure, based on survey questions which require that respondents report only their pay for a week of work. The weekly earnings measure tends to include a slightly different population than the annual measure, as these respondents could be doing different work the next week. Only full-time workers are included, though respondents may or may not work full-time on a permanent basis. According to the weekly earnings measure, the pay gap for women was 20% in 2009, with women receiving 80 cents of pay for every dollar received by men, a ratio very similar to those reported in 2008 and 2007.

Hill also discussed the fact that educated women in the workforce receive lower pay than their male counterparts. One year after graduating from college with a bachelor’s degree, women’s weekly full-time earnings were just 80% of those of men who had graduated at the same time. That statistic fell to 69% ten years after graduation, when women were

## *Program Summary, continued*

earning only 69 cents to every dollar earned by a man. The ratio for part-time workers fell from 73 one year after graduation to a meager 56 ten years after graduation.

Hill noted that when the AAUW reexamined these surprising statistics, controlling for factors that might influence the amount of pay a worker receives (such as occupation, industry, hours, experience, educational attainment, GPA, region, race, and others), they found that the pay gap persisted. The gap for one-year post-graduates was still 5%, while the pay gap ten years after graduation was a considerable 12%. That the gap cannot be entirely explained by such factors is more proof to non-believers that pay equity is still a significant problem in the US and not merely the result of different choices.

The second speaker, **Mike Leber**, shared some sobering facts about the wage gap, and reasons why it is still around today. The NCPE was founded in 1979 in response to the unacceptable wage gap of 59.7 cents to the dollar—even lower than what it was twenty years before in 1959. She said the advances in narrowing the wage gap that took place in the 1990s were not because of women's earnings rising, but largely because men's earnings fell. She also stated that there has not been much progress since 2001, and that the gap has remained mostly static, emphasizing that there is still a long way to go toward pay equity.

Leber also discussed the importance and significance of Equal Pay Day, started in 1996, and the Paycheck Fairness Act, a bill already passed by the House and currently sitting in the Senate. She urged listeners to support the Paycheck Fairness Act, bill S.182, which would update and strengthen the Equal Pay Act of 1963, by contacting their respective senators and asking them to vote for the bill and vote without amendments. (See follow-up on

page 4.) The Paycheck Fairness Act would close loopholes in the Equal Pay Act so employers must have a legitimate reason for paying women less for the same work. Among other improvements, it would prohibit employers from retaliating against employees who share salary information, reinstate collection of wage data, provide training for enforcers, eliminate geographic limits in comparisons, and help level the playing field so employers who pay fairly are not disadvantaged.

Leber then discussed reasons for the continued wage gap, which focused heavily on the theory that historical discrimination has been built into the wage system. She highlighted the sex segregation of occupations as a major contributor to the gap and that women also earn less than men in the same occupations ranging from doctors to dishwashers.

As of the late 1800s, men advocated hiring women because they “could be paid less,” Leber said, adding that “old attitudes die hard.” For this she suggested that the relationships between fathers and their daughters might be used to push for pay equity, since it has been noted that men seem to be more concerned with whether their daughters make pay equal to male colleagues than whether their wives do.

During the discussion time we also learned from a graduate student from Sweden that they have a smaller pay gap than in the US and much more generous family leave policies where fathers and mothers are allowed equal leave days. However, since the leave days can be combined, it is more likely that women will take much more of the leave. The discussion also highlighted other complexities in attaining equal pay, such as the differential valuing of males and females with the same qualifications and that women are even penalized when they negotiate salaries as assertively as males.

## ***It Takes a Candidate — Why Women Don't Run for Office***

That's the title of the book written by Jennifer Lawless (co-authored with Richard L. Fox). Lawless is director of American University's Women and Politics Institute. On Nov. 29, AU will present a program with a book signing by Lawless at 5:15pm, to be followed by a panel discussion at 6pm with Dee Dee Myers, Dana Perino and Jennifer L. Lawless on the outcomes of the 2010 midterm elections. The program will be held at the AU's Katzen Arts Center, on Massachusetts Avenue near Nebraska Avenue. For more information call 202-885-2903.

## **Women and Poverty**

### *The National Women's Law Center*

NWLC has analyzed the new census data and says, "It paints a bleak picture for women and families." Some of NLWC's findings include:

- Poverty among women climbed to 13.9 percent in 2009, the highest rate in 15 years and the largest single year increase since 1980. Rates are even higher for women of color and single mothers. More than 15.4 million children lived in poverty last year, over half of them with single mothers.
- Lack of insurance coverage among women has never been so high: 19.1 million women aged 18-64 — nearly 1 in 5 — are uninsured. Even more women would have joined the ranks of the uninsured without the safety net of public health insurance programs such as Medicaid.
- For women in the workforce, the wage gap hasn't budged: women still make only 77 cents for every dollar their male counterparts earn. In an already down economy, women and their families remain short-changed by an unfair wage gap.

NWLC says "These numbers are staggering. We can't gloss over the stark reality of what women today face." To find out more on what these new numbers mean for women, advocates, and policymakers alike, visit [www.nwlc.org](http://www.nwlc.org).

## **CWI Member Organizations**

- Americans for Financial Reform  
[www.ourfinancialsecurity.org](http://www.ourfinancialsecurity.org)
- Office of Women in Higher Education (OWHE)  
[www.acenet.edu/](http://www.acenet.edu/)
- Equal Visibility Everywhere (EVE)  
[www.equalvisibilityeverywhere.org/](http://www.equalvisibilityeverywhere.org/)
- Fairfax County Commission for  
[www.fairfaxva.gov/host/women/local.html](http://www.fairfaxva.gov/host/women/local.html)
- Federal Employed Women (FEW)  
[www.few.org](http://www.few.org)
- Feminist Majority Foundation (FMF)  
[www.feminist.org](http://www.feminist.org)
- League of Women Voters of DC  
[www.lwvdc.org](http://www.lwvdc.org)
- Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW)  
[www.mdlegagenda4women.org](http://www.mdlegagenda4women.org)
- Maryland Women's Heritage  
[www.MDWomensHeritageCenter.org](http://www.MDWomensHeritageCenter.org)
- Montgomery County's Chapter of the National Organization for Women (MCNOW)  
[www.mcmdnow.org](http://www.mcmdnow.org)
- Montgomery County Commission for Women  
[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw)
- National Council of Women's Organizations (NCWO) [www.womensorganizations.org](http://www.womensorganizations.org)
- National Women's Editorial Forum  
[www.mediaforum.org/NWEF](http://www.mediaforum.org/NWEF)
- National Women's Law Center (NWLC)  
[www.nwlc.org](http://www.nwlc.org)
- Service Employees International Union Local 500  
[www.seiu500.org/](http://www.seiu500.org/)
- United For Equality, LLC  
[www.united4equality.wordpress.com](http://www.united4equality.wordpress.com)
- Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW)  
[www.wowonline.org](http://www.wowonline.org)
- WISER (Women's Institute For A Secure Retirement) [www.wiserwomen.org](http://www.wiserwomen.org)

## **Paycheck Fairness Act**

Bill S.182 passed the House in January of 2009 but has never been voted on in the Senate. Because Sen. Harry Reid has filed a cloture petition on the Paycheck Fairness Act, there will probably be a vote early in the next session.

## 2010-11 Membership

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**Checks should be made payable to CWI and mailed to:**

CWI, Holly T. Joseph, Treasurer, 8504 Rosewood Drive, Bethesda MD 20814

Individual - \$25     Under 30 years - \$15     Organization - \$35 or three years \$90

I would like to help CWI's outreach with an additional tax-deductible contribution: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### President's Message

The midterm election approaches and many of us are very discouraged that the economy has not shown more improvement. Despite that fact, please support your candidates and encourage your friends and family to vote. We all know the stories of women fighting to get the vote, we still need to exercise that right. VOTE!

*Barbara J. Ratner*

### Gender in Media

In 2007, Academy Award winner Geena Davis and star of the TV series *Commander in Chief* established the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, which publishes a weekly bulletin, *SmartBrief*.

While watching children's entertainment with her young daughter, Davis noticed a remarkable imbalance in the ratio of male to female characters which led her to commission the largest research study ever undertaken on gender in children's entertainment. Findings showed that in the top-grossing G-rated films, there were three male characters for every one female. You can receive free issues of *SmartBrief* by signing up at: [www.smartbrief.com/gdigm/](http://www.smartbrief.com/gdigm/)

### Women We Should Know

The Maryland Women's Heritage Center is presenting Saturday performances, part of its Living History Series. The performances are free and will "portray three diverse and extraordinary women of Maryland, who walked with Harriet Tubman, Ella Shields, and Rachel Carson."

On Saturday Oct. 23, 2 pm, Harriet Lynn will portray Ella Shields, the Baltimore-born vaudeville and British Music Hall legend.

On Saturday Oct. 30, 2 pm Kate Campbell Stevenson will be featured as Rachel Carson, noted environmentalist and author.

(The first performance took place Oct. 9.)

The performances will take place at the Maryland Women's Heritage Center in Baltimore. For information call 410- 767-0675 or visit [www.MDWomensHeritageCenter.org](http://www.MDWomensHeritageCenter.org)

### National Women's History Museum

*from Feminist News*

Senators Jim deMint and Tom Coburn placed a hold on the bill that would permit the purchase of federal land for a National Women's History Museum. They are concerned about the financial aspects of the project and that there are similar museums throughout the country that already receive government money.



## Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

10401 Grosvenor Place #917  
Rockville, MD 20852

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### COMING EVENTS

- Wednesday, October 20** **Aging in Place in Montgomery County Symposium.** The event is free and open to the public from 10a-noon at the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services, 4805 Edgemoor Lane, Bethesda, Maryland. For more information, contact Regional Services Director Ken Hartman at 240-777-8200.
- Saturday, Oct. 23 and 30** **Maryland Women's Heritage Center**, West Lexington and Liberty Streets in Baltimore. For information call 410-767-0675. See article on page 5. For parking and directions, visit [www.MDWomensHeritageCenter.org](http://www.MDWomensHeritageCenter.org).
- Wednesday, November 17** **National Women's Law Center 2010 Awards Dinner** honoring Melanne Verveer, Ambassador-at-Large, Global Women's Issues, U.S. Department of State. Washington Hilton Hotel. Reception: 6p; Dinner: 7p. More information at [www.nwlc.org](http://www.nwlc.org) or email [ndelahoyd@nwlc.org](mailto:ndelahoyd@nwlc.org) or call (202) 588-5180.

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*Photos: D. Anne Martin; Editor: Roslyn Kaiser; September meeting summary draft by Renata Maniaci and Allyson Gasdaska, FMF interns; Production: Letterforms Typography & Graphic Design.*

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