

National Organization for Women

Government Relations Report

To: National Organization for Women Board Members

From: Bonnie Grabenhofer, Vice President, and Jan Erickson, Government Relations Director

Date: Sept. 14, 2016

EQUALITY

ERA in Democratic Platform

Several presidential elections ago, NOW authored language for the Democratic Party Platform that expressed full support for the Equal Rights Amendment. This time, NOW and our allies in the ERA Coalition made certain that language supporting ratification of the **Equal Rights Amendment** was in the 2016 Democratic Party platform. To help assure its inclusion, actor **Patricia Arquette** spoke in favor of the ERA at a party platform hearing in Phoenix, along with ERA Coalition founder and director, **Jessica Neuwirth**, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4605649/patricia-arquette-testifies-democratic-platform-committee-hearing>

The 2016 party platform says, “After 240 years, we will finally enshrine the rights of women in the Constitution by passing the Equal Rights Amendment. And we will urge U.S. ratification of the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women** (CEDAW).” (p.18-19). Additional provisions address the rights and opportunities of women and girls around the world, addressing sexual and reproductive health and rights around the globe. LGBT rights, globally, will also be defended by the U.S. and the platform pledges to “stop the scourge of human trafficking and modern slavery of men, women, boys, and girls.” You can review the final version of the platform at, <https://www.demconvention.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Democratic-Party-Platform-7.21.16-no-lines.pdf>

NOW Government Relations made a brief comparison of the two party platforms and that can be read here, <http://now.org/resource/democratic-party-platform-is-most-progressive-ever-gop-platform-nutty-and-dangerous/>

Although several women’s organizations promised to reach out to the Republicans to support the ERA in their platform (as the party once did) there is no mention of the ERA in the 2016 Republican Party Platform, [https://prod-static-ngop-pbl.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/DRAFT_12_FINAL\[1\]-ben_1468872234.pdf](https://prod-static-ngop-pbl.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/DRAFT_12_FINAL[1]-ben_1468872234.pdf)

Adoption of the Equal Rights Amendment as one of NOW's three **national Strategic Action Programs** was approved at the **2016 National NOW Conference**.

New Film: *Equal Means Equal*

Director Kamala Lopez is releasing her new film, *Equal Means Equal* which dramatically conveys the need for a constitutional protection of equality for women. On **Women's Equality Day, August 26**, private screenings of the film were held in various cities, including Washington, D.C.

You are invited to rent or purchase the film on iTunes, linked below.

Available today on @iTunesMovies: <http://radi.al/EqualMeansEqual> the unflinching reality of women in America.

Obtain your copy of #EqualMeansEqual on @iTunesMovies: <http://radi.al/EqualMeansEqual> reality American women face.

The film received a good review on Critics Pick in the New York Times. You can learn more at <http://equalmeansequal.com/>

Equal Pay Gains Under the Obama Administration

As President Obama's term in office heads to close, we recount the gains that have been made toward pay equity and fair and safe workplaces. In our **Women's Equality Day** greeting posted on the NOW website, we list information about the **White House Equal Pay Campaign**; Executive Order (EO) for **Paid Sick Leave** guarantees for employees of federal contractors and subcontractors; an EO promoting a new regulation to collect compensation data by gender and race; a clarification of the definition "manager" under the **Federal Labor Standards Act** so that employees who do not have hiring and firing authority (an essential feature of a "manager" position) are qualified for time and a half overtime pay; and an EO that increases accountability for federal contractors regarding safety violations as well as prohibits discrimination in hiring and firing by federal contractors and subcontractors. A 2014 EO raised the **hourly minimum wage** from \$7.25 an hour to **\$10.10** for employees of federal contractors.

The time and a half overtime pay clarification means that five million workers will benefit, especially the 65 percent who are women. You can read more about these initiatives and updates on new state comparable worth/equal pay laws and a widening gender pay gap at, <http://now.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Happy-Womens-Equality-Day.pdf>

Equal Pay Day Dates Noted

August 23 was the observed **Equal Pay Day for African-American women** representing the number of days in to the next year African-American women must work to be paid the same amount that white non-Hispanic men are paid in one year. Their wage ratio gap is 66.8 percent of

white, non-Hispanic men's one dollar. The median declined by 5.0 percent between 2004 and 2014 for Black women's real annual earnings for full-time, as calculated by the **Institute for Women's Policy Research**. The decline was even higher for Native American women at 5.8 percent, more than three times the as much as the decline for women's earnings overall, <http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/native-american-women-saw-the-largest-declines-in-wages-over-the-last-decade-among-all-women>

Our discussion of these declines is included in the Happy Women's Equality Day article linked above. Native American Women's Equal Pay Day will be observed on September 15 and NOW will participate in a twitter storm on that day.

Wage Gap means Huge Lifetime Losses

In 2014, the **National Women's Law Center (NWLC)** calculated the lifetime wage gap for different groups of women. For **Native American women** the loss over a 40 year career is estimated to be \$883,040 and in 13 states where wages on average are higher, the total would be more than \$1 million.

NWLC's estimates are based on the 2014 wage gap. For all women the lifetime wage loss is estimated at \$430,480, while the loss for African American women is estimated to be \$877,480. Go to <https://nwlc.org/resources/the-lifetime-wage-gap-state-by-state/> for details with a state-by-state comparison.

More recently, the National Partnership for Women and Families calculated that, on average, women employed full time in the U.S. lose a combined total of **nearly \$500 billion (!)** every year due to the wage gap, <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/workplace-fairness/fair-pay/americas-women-and-the-wage-gap.pdf>

Additionally, the **American Association of University Women (AAUW)** has recently published a guide to state laws on equal pay, <http://www.aauw.org/resource/state-equal-pay-laws/> which should be very useful for activists in promoting better laws in their home state.

New EEOC Resources for Women

Coinciding with the White House United State of Women summit, held in Washington, D.C. on June 14, the **U.S. Equal Employment Opportunities Commission** announced three new resource documents that address the equal employment opportunity rights of women in the workplace. They are linked below:

- **[Equal Pay and the EEOC's Proposal to Collect Pay Data](#)**
- **[Legal Rights for Pregnant Workers under Federal Law](#)**
- **[Helping Patients Deal with Pregnancy-Related Conditions and Restrictions at Work](#)**

NOW Supports Better Employment Data Collection – NOW submitted two comment letters earlier this year supporting improvement of data to be collected by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission from employers that would allow for a more substantial analysis of the gender/race wage gap.

New Census Data Show Increase in Earnings in 2015

The **U.S. Census Bureau** released new data this week about income, reporting that wages for women of all groups had increased slightly over the period 2014 to 2015. The gender wage ratio improved from 78.6 percent in 2014 to 79.6 in 2015. The gender wage gap for White and Hispanic women continued to stagnate, according to the **Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR)**, but Black women's real median annual earnings increased by 9 percent, Asian women's earnings by 4.3 percent, Hispanic women's by 2.6 percent.

These increases are a modest reversal of the steady backsliding we have seen for women's wages over the past decade and the marked earnings inequality for Hispanic and Black women remains serious. Hispanic women's real median annual earnings is very close to the qualifying threshold for eligibility for food stamps (\$31,427 per year in 2015, for a family of four. Black women's real median annual earnings at \$36,212 in 2015 places many families near the poverty line.

Women to Register for the Military Draft

In late 2015 **Department of Defense (DoD) Secretary Ash Carter** announced that the DoD would lift all gender-based restrictions on military service beginning January 2016. As a result, women may be required to register with the Selective Service System. But the chairs of the **House and Senate Armed Services Committees** asked for a 30 day review of the new policy; some Republican lawmakers and conservative groups vowed to stop the move and efforts were made during House debate to delete a provision authorizing the requirement.

Carter also announced that the Pentagon would open all jobs to women. Former **Defense Secretary Leon Panetta** had announced in 2013 that the direct ground combat exclusion rule for female service members would end. This change was adopted following a unanimous recommendation by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

But on June 14, the Senate approved (85-13) the **National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)** which contained a provision that would require young women to register for the draft at age 18, beginning in 2018. That provision had bipartisan support, including from Republican leaders and women senators, but **Sens. Mike Lee (R-Utah) and Ted Cruz (R-Tex.)** were in opposition.

Conference committee negotiations on the DoD House and Senate versions over the summer will determine whether the provision remains in the final bill. Currently, there is a stalemate due to increases in military's budget that attempt to get around a Democratic/Republican agreement to limit Defense spending unless matched with increases in non-defense budget (everything else,

health care, education, transportation, etc.) Both the **Obama administration** and the **Pentagon** oppose current Republican effort to overcome the earlier bipartisan agreement.

Following the June Senate vote, **Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton** said she supports the measure requiring women to register for the draft. "I am on record supporting the all-volunteer military, which I think at this time does serve our country well," Clinton told **The Huffington Post**.

The draft ended in 1973 and it is not likely that it will be reactivated unless a serious national emergency occurs.

Of some satisfaction to feminists is the fact that the policy change was announced before the death on Sept. 5 of arch-ERA opponent **Phyllis Schlafly** who vociferously opposed women being drafted for military service. For a history of women and the draft, go to:

<https://www.sss.gov/Registration/Women-And-Draft/Backgrounder-Women-and-the-Draft>

Also, posted on the NOW website is our Issue Advisory, **Women and the Draft – Moving Two Steps Closer to Equality**, <http://now.org/resource/issue-advisory-women-and-the-draft-moving-two-steps-closer-to-equality/>

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

In recent years, the federal program authorized under the Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA) to help implement Title IX has languished for lack of funds. But at the urging of the **National Coalition on Women and Girls in Education** (NCWGE), of which NOW is a founding member, several friends in Congress updated and introduced the act in July as the **Patsy T. Mink Equal Gender Equity in Education Act of 2016**, (S. 3147/H.R. 5682) referred to as GEAA. **Sen. Mazie K. Hirono** (D-Hawaii) and **Rep. Louise M. Slaughter** (D-New York) are prime sponsors in the Senate and House of S. 3147 and H.R. 5682 that would provide more resources for schools, school districts, states and institutions of high education to fully implement the **Patsy Mink Equal Opportunity Act of 1972 (Title IX)** which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in federally-funded education programs and activities.

At a press conference on July 7, Sen. Hirono said, ..."Title IX has opened doors for girls and women from access to higher education to sports. But we have more work to do. This legislation builds on Patsy's legacy by expanding resources to see Title IX's mandate through."

"Gender bias continues to permeate every sector of our society today," Rep. Slaughter said at the press conference. "This legislation will provide the targeted resources necessary to combat gender bias in education and help ensure the doors of opportunity are open for our sisters and daughters."

The legislation would:

--Establish an **Office of Gender Equity** in the **U.S. Department of Education** to coordinate activities within the department and among other federal agencies.

--Combat discrimination, harassment, bias, and violence based on sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions

--Support **Title IX coordinators** with annual training

--Provide competitive grants to K-12 schools, institutions of high education, local educational agencies, or states at the primary applicants, with the option to partner with organizations with relevant experience

--Include evaluation and assessment of how applicants improve on indicators or gender equity

--Disseminate resources and best practices nationwide

Because of the lateness in the **114th Congress** of the introduction of this bill, it is not likely that it will get a hearing. But advocates plan to work with the sponsors and propose additional provisions for reintroduction in the **115th Congress**.

The 45th anniversary of Title IX comes around next year and NCWGE members are beginning work on our every fifth year report of progress under Title IX. To review the coalition report from the 40th anniversary and learn more about the work of the coalition, go to <http://ncwge.org/>

ECONOMIC EQUITY

Strengthening Social Security Act Improves Widow's Benefits

On Sept.9, California Democrats, **Reps. Linda Sanchez** and **Mike Honda** announce their introduction of the **Strengthening Social Security Act of 2016 (H.R. 5952)** that would increase retirement benefits for widows and widowers and would increase Social Security's modest benefits across-the-board for all beneficiaries. There are 59 million persons who receive Social Security. The bill, which has 48 original co-sponsors, would change the widow(er)s' benefit to the greater of 75 percent of combined benefits, or the Primary Insurance Amount.

This is an improvement that NOW has advocated for over many years and would, if the bill is adopted and signed into law, go a long ways to assure economic security in retirement for millions of older women and men. Women, especially, would benefit because many receive more or all of their retirement income from their Social Security check.

Additionally, the proposed legislation would change how the monthly benefit is calculated so that retirees would see an additional \$60 to \$70 per month income. Benefits under the U.S.

Social Security system are very modest compared to those of other industrialized nations. In addition, the disappearance of defined benefit pensions and rise of defined contribution pensions, like 401k plans, has resulted in a retirement funding crisis where a majority of workers have indicated that they are not adequately financially prepared for retirement.

The Sanchez-Honda bill also replaces the method by which the **Cost of Living Allowance (COLA)** is calculated from the **CPI-W** index to the **CPI-E** index which more accurately reflects cost of living requirements for seniors.

Most importantly, the legislation phases out the **cap on payroll taxes** (currently \$118,500) and thereby would assure the long-range solvency of Social Security by requiring higher income earners to pay taxes on income above the current comparatively low cap.

For more information on the bill and what leaders, including NOW President Terry O'Neill, had to say at the press conference, go to, <https://lindasanchez.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/rep-linda-sanchez-introduces-strengthening-social-security-act-2016>

We Take the Credit

NOW first pushed for increasing Social Security benefits eight years ago and despite initial reticence on the part of allied organizations, the proposal for expanding Social Security has been widely adopted by the Democrats. Numerous bills have been introduced, Hillary Clinton has embraced the idea, and it is part of the election year discussion. Additionally, improving the widow's (and widower's) benefit was our idea and we are pleased to see it in the **Sanchez-Honda legislation**.

Social Security Administration Continues to be Under-funded

For many years now, the budget for the **Social Security Administration (SSA)** has been set at amounts well below what is needed to adequately provide services to beneficiaries and to the public, reduced as much as 10 percent. This practice which originated under a Republican administration is believed to be a part of that party's effort to eventually privatize the program; that is, have workers convert their retirement contributions to private stock market accounts. Fortunately, that plan as ventured by the **George W. Bush** administration was soundly beaten back by progressive organizations, including the National Organization for Women and major unions. But some Republican lawmakers haven't given up.

However, the SSA has been so seriously underfunded, the agency has been forced to close rural offices, reduce hours, lay off thousands of workers, require extensive delays on disability appeal decisions, stop sending out annual statements to workers about the amount of future retirement benefits they can expect and, most recently, proposed to make everyone who needs information about benefits (retirement, disability, survivors) to interact with the Social Security Administration electronically (meaning that nearly all offices which serve the public would

probably close). This would not a good idea for a substantial number of retirees and persons with disabilities who may have little or no access to computers.

Fortunately, a few of these plans for reduced services have been modified after strong protest by progressive organizations and activists, but the problem remains and is made more serious by the fact that the number of persons who qualify for Social Security has grown by 12 percent because of the retiring **Baby Boom generation**.

The operating budget comes out of Social Security's payroll tax revenues – not the government's **General Fund** – so there is no excuse for reducing the agency's funding to such critically low levels. What is now recognized as a full-blown crisis for the agency indicates that SSA needs an additional \$350 million to stabilize, otherwise there will have to be an agency-wide hiring freeze. In August, House Republican appropriators proposed to cut the budget even more – by \$250 million!

Republicans Still Trying to Kill DOL Fiduciary Rule

Lawsuits and legislation have been deployed by Republicans and their allies in the financial industry in a massive effort kill a regulation that was adopted earlier this year by the **Department of Labor (DOL)**. That new regulation imposes fiduciary responsibilities on retirement investment advisors. Strongly supported by **AARP**, Democratic lawmakers and progressive organizations, including **NOW**, the rule requires all financial advisers – including bankers and insurance agents to put their client's interests first when recommending retirement investments. Previously advisers could and often did put their own financial interests ahead of their client's best interest. The new rule closed that conflict of interest loophole and stopped financial advisers from reaping huge profits by recommending overpriced and underperforming investment products to workers struggling to save for retirement.

A **DOL study** showed that as much as **\$43 billion** (!) a year or more was siphoned off by advisers because of bloated commissions and poor investment returns. This practice, undoubtedly, has played a big role in promoting the country's yawning wealth gap and contributed to the current retirement funding crisis.

Having failed to stop adoption of the regulation, Republican lawmakers are pushing to repeal the DOL fiduciary rule in the 500-page **“Choice” Act** that repeals much of **Dodd-Frank** (the legislation that was passed in the wake of the Wall Street meltdown in 2007-2009 to rescue the economy) and puts in place barriers to action by the **Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)**. Additionally, an appropriations measure for the Department of Labor prohibits funding to implement the new fiduciary rule. But that is unlikely to be adopted and signed into law: President Obama is a strong supporter of the new fiduciary rule.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS AND WOMEN'S HEALTH

Reproductive Rights Blueprint for the Next Administration

NOW is participating with a large coalition in the drafting of a set of detailed recommendations for the next administration concerning women's reproductive health. The document (which is confidential, at the moment) covers the wide array of topics to be addressed, such as:

- promoting the comprehensive insurance coverage of abortion care, ending the harmful **Helms Amendment** which prohibits use of U.S. foreign assistance funds to provide safe abortion care;
- remove all barriers to abortion care domestically including repeal of the **Hyde Amendment**;
- ensure that the **Religious Freedom Restoration Act** is not misused to undermine access to reproductive health care;
- protect and expand **Medicaid** to ensure accessible coverage, including of sexual and reproductive health services;
- expand access to health care coverage for immigrant women and their families; assure young people access to sexual and reproductive factual information and health care services;
- ensure that health care facilities, regardless of their religious affiliations, provide the health care needed by their patients;
- expand enforceable non-discrimination protections to all federally-funded entities;
- prioritize investigation and prosecution of extremists who commit acts of violence, harassment and intimidation against reproductive health care providers, patients, staff, and others;
- ensure the sustainability of the federal funding streams and the provider network, including health centers that specialize in sexual and reproductive health care, which comprise the nation's safety net;
- double funding for research and development to develop and improve appropriate contraceptives, including those that also prevent **HIV** and other **STIs**, to \$68 million annually from **USAID**, as well as double funding annually through **NIH** and **USAID** for multipurpose prevention technologies;
- protect and expand women's rights and access to health care, including abortion, for women in criminal justice or immigration detention settings, and with substance use disorders; and,
- many other important recommendations.

Republicans Use Appropriations to Undermine Women's Health

As is usually the case these days when Republican conservatives control the budget process, important appropriations measures contain provisions that would prohibit federal funds going to

family planning programs, including **Planned Parenthood**, and many other measures to limit or deny women's health services. NOW signs on to letters sent to appropriators objecting to inclusion of any provisions that would weaken women's health programs. This year more of the same will probably lead to failure of important spending bills faced with Senate opposition and/or threatened with a presidential veto.

Earlier this month, NOW signed on to a letter to **House and Senate Appropriations Committee chairs and ranking members** objecting to a wide array of anti-women's health measures that appear in various spending bills. Among the measures targeted by the Republicans was:

- Sweeping new religious refusal language that would allow employers, insurers, and health care providers to deny other access to critical health care services
- Language blocking the **Reproductive Health Non-Discrimination Act**, a law passed unanimously by the Council of the District of Columbia
- A provision that extends existing harmful restrictions on insurance coverage of abortion by banning all multi-state plans under the **Affordable Care Act (ACA)** from including such coverage
- Language that restricts access to abortion for women in **U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Act (ICE)**
- A sweeping new refusal provision that would allow employers to discriminate against women and LGBT workers
- Reinstatement of the **global gag rule**, also known as **the Mexico City Policy**, a provision that greatly undermines access to family planning services around the world
- Prohibitions on U.S. contributions to the **United Nations Population Fund**

The letter also warned against “efforts to attach language to a **Zika** supplemental funding bill that would limit the types of providers who can provide critical services during a public health emergency. The Zika virus presents a public health emergency that is growing internationally and domestically and the **CDC** has identified family planning as the primary strategy to reduce pregnancy-related Zika complications. Women's health care providers are an important part of the health care ecosystem, providing critical gynecological care in partnership with other providers, and must be part of the Zika response.”

Passage of critical funding to address the Zika crisis was brought to a halt earlier this year when Republican lawmakers included a “rider” in the legislation that block funding for certain health providers in Puerto Rico that, in the words of our allies, were uniquely positioned to provide critical health care services to women and men on the island. Presumably, these providers were able to offer abortion care to individuals who had been infected with the Zika virus.

The **Center for American Progress**, a liberal think tank in Washington, D.C., estimated that over two million pregnant women in the South and Mid-Atlantic regions are at potential risk for Zika transmission during summer and fall months.

A second letter that NOW signed on to decried the failure of Congress to pass a Zika funding measure. A pathetic package to provide only part (\$800 million) of the request funds passed the House, but was defeated three times in the Senate. That legislation appropriated Ebola funds, stripped funding from the Affordable Care Act, failed to provide dedicated funding for family planning and maternal health services, limited the types of providers that can provide critical health services during a public health emergency and gutted important parts of the Clean Water Act. Clearly, the Republicans are not sincere in their response to this impending epidemic.

On a related note, on Sept. 7 the Senate failed again to advance a bill (H.R. 2577 – Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2017) which included funding for a Zika response. Liberal lawmakers opposed provisions in the bill that would deny Planned Parenthood funds meant to increase access to contraceptives. **President Obama** threatened to veto the measure.

There were more than 16,800 cases Zika-infected persons in the U.S. as of late August, with most cases in Puerto Rico. Health officials are tracking more than 1,500 pregnant women in the U.S. that have contracted the Zika virus. The White House has called for \$1.9 billion to fight the virus, but no funding was approved by Congress before their August recess. Both the House and Senate had earlier this year approved differing Zika funding measures (\$1.1 billion in Senate bill, and \$622 million in House bill), but both included anti-abortion rights language --a poison pill.

It remains to be seen what happens next, but the spread of the mosquito with the Zika virus continues. More information is at, <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>

NOW Sends Letter to VA Urging Use of Nurse Practitioners

In late July, the National Organization for Women sent a comment letter in response to a proposed rule for the **Veterans Administration** expanding the use of Advanced Practice Medical Nurses (APRNs). Addressing Veterans Affairs **Secretary Robert A. MacDonald**. We wrote,

“The Veterans Administration is in need of change. Our veterans should not have to wait for medical care due to a shortage of doctors. **Advanced practice medical nurses (APRNs)** work within their training to provide basic medical care such as diagnosis, managing treatments, and writing prescriptions. In the Veteran’s Health Administration, 4,800 nurse practitioners already provide excellent care. Many studies have proven that nurse practitioners provide the same quality care that physicians provide. Twenty-one states and the District of Columbia already allow nurse practitioners to operate at the full practice authority level, and the reported outcomes have been excellent.

We believe that this proposed rule would streamline care for veterans, bringing veterans’ health care systems into the 21st century.

Nurse practitioners are 87 percent female.Qualified women have been caring for our nation's heroes in states across the country for decades; it's time to fix the problem of underserving out veterans by allowing qualified nurse practitioners to perform the jobs for which they were trained."

Interest in the issue was high. Over 223,000 comments were received so it may be awhile before the final rule is announced.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Don't Call it Revenge Porn

Rep. Jackie Speier (D-Calif.) recently introduced the **Intimate Privacy Protection Act (IPPA)**, a bipartisan bill co-sponsored by **Reps. Katherine Clark (D-Mass.), Ryan Costello (R-Penn.), Gregory Meeks (D-New York) and Thomas Rooney (R-Fla.)**. NOW endorsed the legislation (H.R. 5896 and NOW President Terry O'Neill will speak on a panel later in September addressing the problem of posting online pictures –without the consent of the individual in the photo or video – in a very personal or embarrassing circumstance. It has been estimated that there are more than 3000 websites which feature such images!

Specifically, IPPA would make it illegal for an individual to knowingly distribute sexually explicit material with reckless disregard for the victim's lack of consent. The bill recognizes that distribution of nonconsensual pornography is a privacy violation as nonconsensual pornography is not always about revenge or harassment.

At the bill's introduction, Rep. Speier said, "Technology today makes it possible to destroy a person's life with the click of a button or a tap on a cell phone. That is all anyone needs to broadcast another person's private images without their consent."

She added, "What makes these acts even more despicable is that many predators have gleefully acknowledged that the vast majority of their victims have no way to fight back."

There is currently no law to prosecute to individuals who distribute nonconsensual images. Speier's bill would fix that.

Rep. Clark stated at the introduction, "Right now millions of women and girls are online navigating their personal and professional lives. Sadly, they are the targets of the worst types of online abuses, including nonconsensual pornography."

Rep. Costello noted that, "These acts of bullying have ruined careers, families and even led to suicide. The Intimate Privacy Protection Act would establish federal guidelines for this criminal activity and provide a course of response at a federal level."

For more information, go to, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mary-anne-franks/revenge-porn-intimate-privacy-protection-act_b_11034998.html for an informative article, **It's Time for Congress to Protect Intimate Privacy**, by Law Prof. Mary Ann Franks.

MISCELLANEOUS

Scoring the Lawmakers' Votes

If you are looking for information as to how members of your Congressional delegation voted on key legislation in the **114th Congress**, several great resources are available. **AAUW's Action Fund** has one at, <https://www.aauwaction.org/voter-education/congressional-voting-record/>

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has an interactive page where you can enter your Zip Code and get the votes of your representative or senators on key bills, <https://ssl.capwiz.com/aclu/keyvotes.xc/?lvl=C>

The Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights scorecard is here, <http://www.civilrights.org/advocacy/voting/114/>

“Must Read” Sources

Several **free** electronic newsletters that keep activists up to date on a wide range of women's right issues should not be overlooked. For the most comprehensive reporting on reproductive rights and women's health, the **Daily Women's Health Policy Report** is the best source. You can sign up on their home page, <http://www.womenshealthpolicyreport.org/articles/daily.html>

Also, for insightful commentary on the state of women's reproductive rights, **Rewire** is a great source, go to, <https://rewire.news/> The reporting and analysis of the most RR important issues is brilliant.

Women's Policy, Inc. reports on actions in Congress each week at **The Source**, <http://www.womenspolicy.org/our-work/the-source/>