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Fifty Years After the Equal Pay Act: Assessing the Past, Taking Stock of the Future

Fifty years ago, President John F. Kennedy signed landmark legislation to guarantee equal pay for women and men performing equal work for the same employer. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 was the first in a series of major federal and state laws that had a substantial effect on job opportunities and earnings for women over the next half century. Since the passage of this Act, several generations of women have transformed our workplaces and our economy. Although progress has been made, in 2011 the average female worker still earned only 77 cents for every dollar earned by men. Therefore, the work of the National Equal Pay Task Force is not yet complete. This report reaffirms the steadfast commitment of the government to obtaining workplace equality for all.

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Item #: 1000184, 52 pages

Published: National Equal Pay Task Force-White House; reprinted in 2013.

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