



## **New York Women's Equality Coalition**

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### **Women's Equality Coalition Welcomes 2015 Legislative Progress; Looks for Continued Action to Improve the Lives of New York State's Women and Families**

(Albany - NY) The Women's Equality Coalition (WEC), a statewide coalition of over 850 women's groups, businesses, religious organizations, medical groups, and advocacy organizations, united behind the mission of securing stronger laws for the women and families of New York State, commends the New York State Legislature for advancing a number of crucial measures during the 2015 legislative session to improve the lives of New York women.

Multiple measures of the Women's Equality Act, first proposed in 2013 by Governor Andres Cuomo, were passed and will facilitate much needed updates to New York law. The bills, now awaiting Governor Cuomo's signature, include provisions that will:

- \* Strengthen equal pay laws;
- \* Ensure workplace protections for pregnant workers and parents;
- \* Extend the prohibition on workplace sexual harassment to small workplaces;
- \* Improve safety and resources for human trafficking survivors;
- \* Ease access to the courts for those who prove sex discrimination; and
- \* Add important housing anti-discrimination measures for New York families.

The WEC also recognizes that progress was made to ensure access to health insurance for pregnant women, breastfeeding rights, better handling of sexual assault on college campuses, and a safer workplace for nail salon employees.

However, much remains to be done to address existing inequalities that continue to sharply define and limit women in our state. The WEC looks forward to working with lawmakers in 2016 to address areas which remain in need of action by the New York State Senate, including reforming New York State's antiquated abortion law and legislation to provide family leave insurance because no one should have to choose between their job and their family.

New York women work hard to support themselves and their families and the Women's Equality Coalition continues to support any legislation that advances their rights. We thank the

legislature under the leadership of Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan and Governor Andrew Cuomo for their efforts and we look forward to continued attention to address all areas where women and families are limited by discrimination or inequality.

The Women's Equality Coalition Steering Committee is comprised of representatives from the following organizations: A Better Balance, which provides legal services for hundreds of women; representatives from the American Association of University Women of New York State (AAUW-NYS), with 34 branches and 5,000 members statewide; the League of Women Voters NY with 60 local league chapters; Family Planning Advocates of New York which represents family planning providers statewide, including nine Planned Parenthood Affiliates; the New York Civil Liberties Union with its 8 regional offices and over 50,000 members; the New York State YWCA with 21 regional YW's; the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Planned Parenthood Advocates of New York; the NYS Anti-Trafficking Network with 140 member organizations including Sanctuary for Families; NOW-NYS, with 24 chapters representing over 40,000 members; and the PowHer New York Equal Pay Campaign with more than 60 partner organizations across the state.

Learn more at: [nywomensequality.org](http://nywomensequality.org)

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