

September 1, 2011

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

We understand that you are preparing a speech that you will deliver in September about jobs and your ideas for restoring our faith in our economy and in our government and its elected leaders.

As organizations on the national and community level dedicated to promoting the economic security and fair/full employment of women and their families, we welcome your Ideas – old or new, red or blue. Even as the recovery begins, we know that women are falling further behind than men according to the recent report by the Pew Research Center. And other reports make clear that women of color face the greatest inequity in wealth and assets.

That is why we implore you to include our nation's women in your proposals and in your speech. Make sure that our teachers are taken care of as well as our school houses. Make sure that child and eldercare and after school programs are in place as well as roads and buildings. Make sure that community health centers and anti-violence shelters and counseling programs are kept as sturdy as our bridges and jails.

There are any number of proposals to retain and create jobs that can help women support themselves and their families. We mention a few here, including those strategies developed within the Emergency Jobs Bill authored by Rep. Jan Schakowsky. This bill focuses on jobs to improve schools, neighborhood safety, parks, and communities. Among the jobs that will increase women's employment greatly are those that increase the number of teachers, child care and health and human service workers. Under this bill, the needs of students and the long term unemployed would also be addressed. More than two million jobs would be created and the investments made in these jobs would be paid for by closing corporate tax loopholes, encouraging business investment at home and asking millionaires to pay their fair share.

Despite years of affirmative action goals and the demand for equal pay, too few women work in the jobs that are often mentioned as part of any "recovery." Only a handful of women are on the crews building roads and bridges, remodeling and improving our crumbling physical infrastructure. More can and must be done to ensure that women are trained and have access to these jobs. Particular attention must be paid to single mother headed households, a third of whom live in poverty, and who need targeted education and training opportunities so that they can fully participate in the recovery. As the country goes green, building high-speed rail systems and promoting solar energy, women must be on the job.

Women, of all ages, are at the heart of maintaining and enhancing our nation's human infrastructure and that arena of economic activity deserves as much of your attention as any other. Not only must our private sector begin spending money and investing in jobs and people, our non-profit and human services networks must get back on their feet and fulfill their mission to educate, train and serve people and communities across the country.

We have high hopes that our nation can come together for the good of ALL. These are not pie-in-the-sky hopes, but real life goals based on our work with everyday women and families facing everyday challenges and responsibilities. We don't want a hand out, we need a hand up.

As you prepare a call to action on jobs, "don't forget the women" who are increasingly responsible for the economic security of themselves and their families. Acknowledge this important constituency – underpaid, overworked women who are mothers, wives, caregivers, workers, home owners, tax payers, jugglers, penny pinchers, and voters. You have the opportunity to appreciate and acknowledge these women in your upcoming plan and speech to get Americans back to work... We, and the women we count as our members,, need to hear that you know their stories and challenges and, as our leader, you will use your authority and bully pulpit to call women out and bring them home.

Sincerely,

9to5, National Association of Working Women

9to5 Atlanta Working Women

9to5 Bay Area (CA)

9to5 Colorado

9to5 Los Angeles

9to5 Milwaukee

American Association of University Women (AAUW)

American Library Association

Apprenticeship & Non-Traditional Employment for Women (ANEW)

The Association for Women in Science (AWIS)

Black Women 50+ Health & Lifestyles Magazine

The Bucks County Women's Advocacy Coalition

Business and Professional Women's Foundation

Campaign for Community Change

Caring Economics Campaign of the Center for Partnership Studies

Center for Long-Term Care Reform – Health & Medicine Policy Research Group, Chicago, IL

Center of Concern

Chicago Foundation for Women

Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

Coalition of Labor Union Women

Community Action Partnership

Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women

Council for Opportunity in Education

Everywoman Opportunity Center, Inc., Buffalo, NY

Feminist Majority

Gamaliel

General Federation of Women's Clubs

Georgia Women for a Change, Inc.

Global Policy Solutions

Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, Inc.

Human Services Coalition of Prince George's County, MD

Illinois Alliance for Sound AIDS Policy

Iowa Alliance for Retired Americans

Jane Addams Resource Corporation, Chicago, IL

Jubilee Jobs, Washington, DC

Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE)

Legal Momentum

Lutheran Advocacy Ministry, Denver, CO

Mary's Center, Oakland, CA

Michigan League for Human Services

Midwest AIDS Policy Alliance

Mississippi Low Income Child Care Initiative

MoveOn.org

National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity

National Capital Union Retirees

National Council of Jewish Women

National Council of Negro Women

National Council of Women's Organizations

National Employment Law Project

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

National Organization for Women

National Partnership for Women & Families

National Priorities Project

National Women's Law Center

National Women's Conference Committee

NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby

New York State-Wide Senior Action Council

NJ Foundation for Aging

Our Place, Washington, DC

OWL - The Voice of Midlife and Older Women

Older Women's League of Minnesota

Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc.

PathWays PA

Penn Action

Pension Rights Center

PHI – Quality Care through Quality Jobs

Public Justice Center

Project Self-Sufficiency of Sussex County, NJ

Prosperity Works

Region 14 Area Agency on Aging South Central Council of Governments, Trinidad, CO

Sandra J. Rowe, Oak Park, IL

Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law

Sasha Bruce Youthwork, Inc., Washington, DC

SEIU

The Shelter for Abused Women & Children, Naples, FL

Social Security Works

Sugar Law Center for Economic and Social Justice

Tennessee Alliance for Progress

Transportation Equity Network (TEN)

Vermont Works for Women

Washington Area Women's Foundation

West Virginia Long Term Care Partnership

The White House Project

Wider Opportunities for Women

A Woman's Place, Bucks County, Pa.

The Women's Collective

Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis

Women's Intercultural Center

Women In Non Traditional Employment Roles, Los Angeles

Younger Women's Task Force DC: Metro Chapter

YWCA USA

YWCA Delaware