

December 18, 2008

(Separately to President-Elect and Congress)

We, the undersigned organizations, applaud your commitment to creating or saving 2.5 million jobs at this critical juncture. An investment in infrastructure, school modernization, and the retrofitting of public buildings for energy efficiency will stimulate the national economy and contribute to the economic security of the newly employed workers and their families. However, specific provisions are needed to guarantee that women have fair access to the job opportunities created through the economic recovery plan, to preserve and create jobs in fields where women currently represent a majority of the workforce, and to provide work supports essential to vulnerable families.

We urge you to work with Congress to ensure that the economic recovery legislation benefits all Americans and takes positive steps to eliminate the workforce segregation that exists today in many of the infrastructure and green jobs that will be funded through the economic recovery package. To that end, we recommend the following:

I. Set goals for women's hiring and retention in nontraditional jobs funded by federal contracts, and ensure compliance to reach these goals. In nontraditional job categories, employers who receive federal economic recovery funding should be required to set ambitious goals for the hiring of qualified women. Women continue to be underrepresented in many of these jobs, particularly in the construction industry. Typically, these jobs provide family-supporting wages and benefits far beyond those earned by other women with the same level of education. Contract compliance should be enforced both by on-site independent monitors and by the Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance (OFCCP), which must be given a mandate and funding to engage in meaningful oversight and enforcement activities.

II. Ensure funding for recruitment, training, and supportive services programs for women in nontraditional occupations. Dedicate funds within each project funded by the economic recovery package to recruit women, support a range of training programs dedicated to preparing women for these projects, and provide necessary work supports including child care and transportation assistance. Short-term skill training programs exist and should be funded to meet the requirement of getting employees to work quickly and to respond to employers' concerns about the shortage of skilled workers. The contractor selection process should give priority to projects and contractors that provide family-supporting wages, good benefits, and family-friendly leave policies.

III. Fund programs that will create quality jobs in human service fields that currently employ large numbers of women. For instance, investments in education, libraries, child care facilities, and domestic violence prevention and treatment programs will not only promote important policy goals, but also increase job opportunities for women. Legislation creating such jobs should include provisions to encourage self-sufficiency-level wages, benefits, and career pathways.

IV. Increase funding for safety net and education programs. Dollars spent on Unemployment Insurance modernization, TANF, nutrition and energy assistance, child care, child support enforcement, housing, health care, transportation assistance, and education assistance are vital to supporting women at work, will increase our nation's human capital, and will be quickly channeled back into the economy.

We look forward to working with you and Congress to enact these provisions and contribute to an economic recovery that works for all Americans. Additional information can be obtained from Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) and Women Work! The National Network for Women's Employment, co-chairs of the National Coalition on Women and Job Training. Please do not hesitate to contact Joan Kuriansky, Executive Director of WOW, at (202) 464-1596 or jkuriansky@wowonline.org or Tiffany Boiman, Women Work! Director of Programs and Policy, at (202) 467-6346 or tboiman@womenwork.org.

Sincerely,

9to5, National Association of Working Women
American Association of University Women
Americans for Democratic Action, Inc.
Business and Professional Women/USA
Center for Law and Social Policy
Coalition on Human Needs
Community Action Partnership
Compliance USA
Equal Rights Associates
Healthy Teen Network
Insight Center for Community Economic Development
Legal Momentum
Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund
Ms. Foundation for Women
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of Social Workers
National Association for State Community Services Programs
National Coalition of Women of Color in Construction
National Congress of Black Women, Inc.
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of Women's Organizations
National Education Association
National Employment Law Project
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National Organization for Women
National Women's Law Center
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
The New Agenda
Tradeswomen Now and Tomorrow
Tradeswomen Inc.
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
USAction
Wider Opportunities for Women
Women Employed
Women Work! The National Network for Women's Employment
Women's Law Project

Women's Research & Education Institute
Women's Voices. Women Vote Action Fund
YWCA USA

Arizona Advocacy Network
California Women's Foundation
9to5 Colorado
Colorado Progressive Action
Connecticut Association for Human Services
Connecticut Citizen Action Group
Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
DC Jobs Council
Florida Consumer Action Network
Florida Federation of Business & Professional Women, Inc.
Georgia Rural Urban Summit
Bridge to Hope, University of Hawaii System
United Vision for Idaho
Citizen Action/Illinois
Iowa Citizen Action Network
Maine Centers for Women, Work and Community
Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Maine People's Alliance
Maine Society of Women Engineers
Women's Employment Issues Committee, Maine Jobs Council
Progressive Maryland
Public Justice Center, Maryland
Michigan Citizen Action
Missouri Progressive Vote Coalition
Missouri Women In Trades
New Hampshire Citizens Alliance
New Hampshire Commission on the Status of Women
New Jersey Citizen Action
NDPeople.org
Center for Women in Government and Civil Society, New York State
Citizen Action of New York
NorthEast Women in Transportation
Ohio Women Work!
ProgressOhio.org
Oregon Action
Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc.
Ocean State Action (Rhode Island)
South Dakota Women Work!
Tennessee Alliance for Progress
Tennessee Citizen Action
Vermont Works for Women
State of Washington Employment Security Dept. WorkSource Standards & Integration
Washington Community Action Network
West Virginia Citizen Action Group

West Virginia Women Work!
Citizen Action of Wisconsin

9to5 Bay Area, San Jose, CA
9to5 Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA
Coalition for Equal Pay, Campbell, CA
San Francisco Department on the Status of Women, San Francisco, CA
Women in Industry and Technology, El Camino College and Compton Educational Center,
Torrance, CA
YWCA of Darien/Norwalk, Darien, CT
Bread for the City, Washington, DC
Mary's Center for Maternal and Child Care, Washington, DC
Atlanta 9to5 Working Women, Atlanta, GA
Veterans Social Justice Program, Morrow, GA
Women's Policy Group/Women's Policy Education Fund, Atlanta, GA
Chicago Women in the Trades, Chicago, IL
Des Moines Human Rights Commission, Des Moines, IA
Family Crisis Services, Portland, ME
Mainly Girls, Rockport, ME
Training & Development Corporation, Bucksport, ME
Women's Resource Center, University of Maine, Orono, ME
Crittenton Women's Union, Boston, MA
Oakland Community College Womencenter, Farmington Hills, MI
Office of Special Populations, Lake Michigan College, Benton Harbor, MI
Women's Resource Center, Grand Rapids, MI
Center on Women and Public Policy, Minneapolis, MN
META 5 Displaced Homemaker Program, Central Lakes College, Brainerd, MN
Career Futures, Inc., Butte, MT
Career Training Institute, Helena, MT
Women's Center of Fayetteville, Fayetteville, NC
Cleveland ACORN, Cleveland, OH
Hard Hatted Women, Cleveland, OH
Southern State Community College, Hillsboro, OH
Downtown Shawnee, Inc., Shawnee, OK
New Choices/New Options, Altoona, PA
New Choices/New Options, Butler, PA
Southeast Technical Institute, Sioux Falls, SD
Apprenticeship and Non-Traditional Employment for Women, Seattle, WA
9to5 Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI