

This year, April 2nd will be the day we “celebrate” when the typical woman working full time in the United States catches up to what a white man was paid by the end of the previous year, based on a national average of 80 cents to a white man’s dollar.

As bad as that sounds, however, the pay gap is even worse for most women of color, who have to work even longer for their salaries to catch up. For example, in New York State, in 2016, a white woman earned 82 cents to a white man’s dollar for comparable work. In contrast, Black women that same year in New York State made 66 cents to the dollar of a white man – that adds up to 30 more years of work, at the end of a 40-year career, for a black woman to make what a white male made over his career! For Latina women it’s even worse – they earned 56 cents to a white male’s dollar; they have to work a whopping 42 additional years after a 40-year career to equal the lifetime salary of a white male!*

These figures have a real impact on communities – less money for feeding families, paying debt, buying homes, or saving for retirement. Passing a federal law like the Paycheck Fairness Act would help protect everyone in all states. But until that happens, each state will continue operating under antiquated regulations and piecemeal state and local laws to combat unequal pay. As we wait for Congress to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act, New York AAUW members will continue to demand the state legislature make improvements to laws so that fair pay is an accessible reality for everyone – such as the Salary History Ban, and Prohibiting Source of Income Discrimination, both of which Governor Cuomo has included with his budget bills.

*Resources:

- <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/gender-wage-gap/overview/>
- <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/gender-wage-gap/inside-the-gender-wage-gap>
- <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/gender-wage-gap/power-and-the-gender-wage-gap-how-pay-disparities-differ-by-race-and-occupation-in-new-york-city>
- <https://www.budget.ny.gov/pubs/archive/fy20/exec/artvii/revenue-artvii.pdf>