



**THE WOMEN'S EQUALITY ACT (WEA)** will help the women and families of New York by preserving women's access to reproductive health care, ensuring fair treatment at work, and helping survivors of violence. It's time for an upgrade. We need laws as strong as New York women.

## WORK AND LIVELIHOOD

*Fair and equitable treatment in the workplace, basic respect, the ability to earn a living and provide for one's family*

### **Securing Equal Pay**

WEA would close the loopholes in New York's equal pay laws which allow employers to pay women less than their male colleagues.

### **Expanding Access to Justice**

WEA would allow successful litigants to recover attorney's fees in cases where women prove employment discrimination.

### **Stopping Employment Discrimination**

Employers in New York can discriminate against parents. WEA would make sure employers don't unfairly use parental status in hiring and promotion decisions.

### **Ending Pregnancy Discrimination**

WEA would require employers to make reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers, so that they don't have to choose between a paycheck and a healthy pregnancy.

### **Preventing Sexual Harassment**

WEA would extend prohibitions against sexual harassment to ALL workplaces. Currently, employers with less than four employees are not subject to the state's sexual harassment laws.

### **Safeguarding Reproductive Health**

WEA would align New York's abortion law with federal law and state medical practice, to ensure that women's health is front and center when a provider delivers care.

### **Supporting Domestic Violence Victims**

WEA would create a pilot project to experiment with remote access to the courtroom for victims seeking protection orders, increasing accessibility for victims.

### **Fighting Human Trafficking**

WEA addresses gaps in New York's anti-human trafficking law by allowing victims to avoid prosecution if they are sold into sex slavery and increasing the accountability of the traffickers and buyers who fuel the industry.

### **Making Housing Accessible for Domestic Violence Victims**

WEA would make it illegal for landlords in New York to deny housing to victims of domestic violence.

### **Providing Fair Access to Housing**

WEA would aim to outlaw discrimination against low-income tenants who receive Section 8 housing assistance.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

*Freedom from violence, access to comprehensive healthcare, bodily integrity, the ability to set the course of one's own life and make personal health decisions*

## ESSENTIAL NEEDS

*Home, a basic necessity and vital foundation for survival*

Visit [www.nywomensequality.org](http://www.nywomensequality.org) to find out what you can do for women's equality today!

- 1) Sign our petition in support of the Women's Equality Act.
- 2) Watch and share our video, "Illegal or Just Sleazy?!"
- 3) Call or email your legislators and ask them to please help make WEA law.

# YOUR WEA CHEAT SHEET

**Securing Equal Pay** Over a lifetime, New York women earn at least \$300,000 less than men. That's a college education and then some. Sixty-one percent of private sector employees in the U.S. are discouraged or prohibited from sharing salary or wage information. How can women find out if they are being paid fairly, if they can't discuss salary? **WEA will:** (1) Strengthen our equal pay laws to make it tougher for employers to get away with paying women less; (2) Outlaw wage secrecy policies and prevent employer retaliation; and (3) Increase damages available to a prevailing litigant to 300% of unpaid wages.

**Expanding Access to Justice** Approximately 77% of employment, credit, and lending discrimination cases in New York are filed by women. If a victim of discrimination cannot afford to hire an attorney, she cannot seek redress. Those who do hire an attorney on a contingency fee arrangement are never "made whole," because they must pay their attorney out of their recovery. New York is one of only nine states that prevent those who prove discrimination at trial from recovering attorney's fees. **WEA will:** Allow litigants who win a sex discrimination suit to collect attorney's fees.

**Stopping Employment Discrimination** Women with children are less likely to be recommended for hire and promotion. **WEA will:** Prohibit employers from denying work or promotion to employees simply because they have children.

**Ending Pregnancy Discrimination** Seventy-five percent of women entering the workforce will be pregnant and working at some point in their lives. Pregnant women, especially low-wage women in physically demanding jobs, are forced out of their jobs or must take unpaid leave when they request a modest, temporary accommodation such as a place to sit, access to water, or more frequent bathroom breaks. **WEA will:** Require employers to provide reasonable accommodations to pregnant workers.

**Preventing Sexual Harassment** More than 60% of private employers don't have to comply with New York's sexual harassment laws, because employers with fewer than four employees are currently exempt. **WEA will:** Extend sexual harassment protections to employees of all private businesses, no matter how large or small.

**Safeguarding Reproductive Health** Eighty percent of New Yorkers support updating New York's reproductive health laws. Under New York law, a woman's health is not protected in the rare and tragic case where a serious complication jeopardizes her health later in pregnancy. **WEA will:** Ensure that a woman can access abortion care when her health is at risk by codifying in New York State law the 1973 Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*.

**Supporting Domestic Violence Victims** Up to 77% of domestic violence victims report that the process of obtaining a civil order of protection is overly burdensome. To obtain an order of protection, a victim must testify in front of their abuser in court. **WEA will:** Authorize the creation of a pilot program to allow domestic violence victims to testify by video-conference.

**Fighting Human Trafficking** Women and girls, who constitute the vast majority of victims, are profoundly harmed by this brutal and exploitative crime. New York is a major hub for sex and labor trafficking. **WEA will:** Offer better protection to survivors of human trafficking by treating survivors as victims and holding perpetrators accountable. This will include establishing an affirmative defense for trafficking victims, creating the crime of aggravated patronizing of a minor, and allowing victims to take civil action against their traffickers.

**Making Housing Accessible** More than one in three women experience rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime. Current law lacks important protections, enabling landlords to evict victims of domestic violence under zero-tolerance policies. **WEA will:** Prohibit building owners, managers and leasing agents from refusing to lease or sell to a person, or evicting a tenant, because of her status as a domestic violence victim.

**Providing Fair Access to Housing** Female-headed households account for 76% of those receiving housing assistance. Many households suffer discrimination by landlords unwilling to rent to families receiving such assistance. **WEA will:** Create a task force to study the impact of discrimination based on source of income in housing, particularly discrimination against tenants receiving Section 8 rental assistance. The study will focus on the impact of this type of discrimination on women.