U.S. House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi Rallies Local Support for Women’s Economic Agenda at Local Forum Hosted by the Washington Work and Family Coalition

Hundreds of supporters and 29 community organizations gather in support of pay equity, work and family balance and childcare access


“For too long, women in Seattle and across the country have been waiting to receive the equal treatment and opportunities they deserve,” Leader Pelosi said. “The House Democratic economic agenda for women and families knocks down barriers that prevent women from reaching their full potential at home and in the workplace. When women receive equal pay, our economy prospers. When women can balance their work and family life, American society thrives. When all women succeed, America succeeds.”

“When Women Succeed, America Succeeds” recognizes the key role women play in the nation’s workforce. Nearly half of all workers are women and 40 percent of working women are the primary breadwinners in their families.

The event featured remarks from Representatives DelBene and Smith as well as stories from Washington women who are working to improve local and statewide policies impacting their families. Evelin Vargas-Bogarin shared how limited access to paid leave created a family crisis when her father needed kidney surgery. Kristin Bennett discussed how her family’s inability to afford childcare forced her husband to quit his job in order to care for their three young daughters.

“As much progress as we’ve made, we still have antiquated policies that assume every household has a full-time caregiver. That doesn’t match reality,” stated Marilyn Watkins, policy director at the Economic Opportunity Institute and spokesperson for the Washington Work and Family Coalition.

The Seattle-Bellevue metropolitan area has the worst gender wage-gap in the country, with women earning only 73 cents to every dollar earned by men. Yet, childcare in Washington state is the ninth-most expensive in the country, consuming 14 percent of median income for married families and over 46 percent of income for single mothers. Further, an estimated one million Washington workers, one-third of the state’s workforce, have no access to paid sick leave. The pay, child care and work-family balance policies put forth in Leader Pelosi’s agenda address the economic insecurities of Washington women and their families.

Makini Howell, owner of Plum Bistro, also spoke at Monday’s event, and shared how smart working family policies benefit local businesses like her own. “My employees are a big part of my success as a businesswoman,” stated Howell. “Commonsense workplace policies – like strong wages and paid sick leave – allow my employees, my business and my customers’ businesses to thrive.”
Organizations like the **Washington Work and Family Coalition** are working at the state-level to pass the pay, child care and work-family balance policies put forth in Leader Pelosi’s women’s economic agenda to address the economic insecurities facing Washington women and their families. Stated Watkins, “Together, we can pass public policies that support working families and create opportunities for upward economic mobility.”

Monday’s event was sponsored by 29 local advocacy organizations, including:

- American Association of University Women – Washington
- Children’s Alliance
- Economic Opportunity Institute
- El Centro de la Raza
- Faith Action Network
- Healthy Tacoma
- King County Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- League of Women Voters of Washington
- Legal Voice
- MomsRising
- Main Street Alliance
- Seattle & King County National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- NARAL Pro-Choice Washington
- National Women’s Political Caucus of Washington
- OneAmerica
- Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest
- Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action
- Seattle Human Services Coalition
- Seattle Office of Civil Rights
- SEIU 1199
- SEIU 775NW
- SEIU 925
- Teamsters 117
- Teamsters Joint Council 28
- UFCW 367
- Washington Bus
- Washington State National Organization for Women
- Washington Work and Family Coalition
- Women’s Funding Alliance

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*The Economic Opportunity Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy center dedicated to building an economy that works – for everyone. Learn more: [www.eoionline.org](http://www.eoionline.org).*

*The **Washington Work and Family Coalition** includes representatives of seniors, women, labor, health professionals, children’s advocates, faith communities, low-income workers, employers, non-profits and other organizations working to create access to paid sick days, paid family and medical leave and improve modern workplace standards.*