FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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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

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.

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.

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