

MAY 11, 2000

STATEMENT OF U.S. REPRESENTATIVE JAN SCHAKOWSKY ON EQUAL PAY DAY

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Today is Equal Pay Day, a day that symbolizes the financial struggles that women must endure because of the ever-present wage gap.

In the workforce, women are at a clear disadvantage. They are paid less than their male counterparts for doing the same job. Women are paid on average 74 cents for every dollar men receive or \$148 less each week. Women of color are faced with an even worse prospect. African American women earn 64 cents for every dollar men earn or \$210 less each week. Hispanic women fare the worst. They earn only 54 cents for every dollar men earn.

This pay inequity is hurting families in every part of our country. A working woman's family loses on average \$4000 each year due to this inequity. And in Illinois, the numbers are even worse. Women in my home state lose on average \$4,913 a year.

The inequity compounds over the years. A 25-year-old working woman will lose \$523,000 during her lifetime as a result of this wage gap. And when she retires, she'll collect a smaller pension and less Social Security.

There is no denying that a pay gap exists today. When comparing the wages of women and men who have the same job, qualifications, education and backgrounds, men win.

As we begin the 21st Century, we must eliminate inequities in the workplace. We must do this for the sake of our next generation of women leaders. When my granddaughters Isabel and Eve are ready to enter the workforce, I want to make sure that they earn the same as their male counterparts. It is only fair.