



WNY WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

2018 MIDTERM ELECTION CANDIDATE SURVEY RESPONSES

Question - In what ways have you and/or will you address gender barriers and create equitable opportunities in order to ensure economic self-sufficiency for women and families in Western New York?

I have dedicated a lifetime of public service to social justice and equality. I've fought hard to remove barriers to equal opportunity for all, especially those I've had to overcome personally that many other women face in a male-dominated workplace. Under our leadership, New York now has paid family leave, \$15 minimum wage and universal pre-k, all efforts to ensure that women and families in Western New York and across the state have equal access to financial independence and economic security. We still have work to do to protect reproductive health care and make childcare more affordable, and I'm confident we'll continue the fight to lead the way and make a progressive and responsible state government work for all.

- *Candidate for Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul (D)*

I was proud to co-sponsor and vote in favor of the Women's Equality Act, a series of bills to enhance the rights of women by protecting those facing discrimination and harassment in the workplace. The legislation helps ensure equal pay for equal work, prevents discrimination in hiring and promoting people with families, requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations to employees who are pregnant, and protects workers from sexual harassment regardless of the size of the workplace. I also voted in favor of paid family leave, which provides New Yorkers with job-protected, paid leave to bond with a new child or to care for a loved one with a serious health condition. Finally, I have supported the state's MWBE program, which provides economic opportunities for minority and women-owned business to start and expand throughout New York. I will continue to support programs and legislation to help eliminate economic barriers based on gender.

- *NYS Senator Patrick M. Gallivan, New York State Senate District 59 Candidate (R)*

I am a 1978 graduate of Harvard Law School and have spent the last 40 years as a civil rights lawyer, first for the US Department of Justice, then at the NAACP National Office and for the last 32 years at my own law firm.

Your question is a critical one and no simple answers are possible. In my work, I have litigated against unequal pay for women, one barrier to equal opportunity, sexual discrimination. Another barrier, sexual harassment, a third barrier. I have fought for proper early childhood education programs which allow all family members, but most often women, to go to work assured that their children are well accounted for.

I have four daughters and my wife is a master electrician and served as a union President for 25 years. She remains on the state executive board of IATSE. Through their experiences, I believe women are often under-valued at the workplace and subjected to implicit and explicit sexual stereotyping and harassment. This must end.

As Attorney General, I would do these three things to address these issues and take every other proactive and positive step others might suggest:

1. I would STOP defending state agencies which engage in blatant sex discrimination and bias and would both settle individual cases and inculcate into all state agencies an understanding that they must internalize appropriate legal norms, forwarding gender equity, in their every day practice, and that these norms will be enforced AGAINST offending state agencies by my office.
2. I would co-sponsor legislation to better monitor child care facilities and ensure the creation and funding of better after school and child care programs throughout the state.
3. I would enforce pay equity and anti-discrimination through aggressive litigation initiated by my office to enforce section 296 of the Executive Law of the State.

- ***Michael Sussman, the Green Party's candidate for NY State Attorney General***

Public jobs for the unemployed. \$20 minimum wage indexed to inflation and productivity. Guaranteed adequate income above poverty. Affordable housing through rent control and expanded public housing. Single-payer health care. Universal full-time pre-K from age 3. Affordable child care during all shifts. Labor law protections for farmworkers. Education in lieu of work requirements for participants in TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families). Strong enforcement of the Achieve Pay Equity Law.

- ***Howie Hawkins, Candidate, Governor of New York (G)***

I've been a feminist and advocate for women's rights from my days as a Girl Scout, a high school athlete, an activist at the University of Buffalo, a lawyer in government service, and the mother of three daughters. If I'm elected to the Assembly, I will bring a woman's perspective to all issues before me, including the environment, gun safety, and health care. I will be particularly honored to cast a vote in favor of the Reproductive Health Act and the Comprehensive Contraceptive Coverage Act.

- ***Karen McMahon, Candidate, New York State Assembly District 146 (D)***

One tangible way I have done this since being in the State Senate is fighting to save and grow the Facilitated Enrollment Child Care Program for Erie County. In my first year in the Senate, Senator Patrick Gallivan and I became aware funded was not in the budget to continue the program in Erie County, we were able to restore the \$500,000 before the final budget was passed. This program helps low income people pursue job and career opportunities by providing them affordable child care.

- **Chris Jacobs, New York State Senate District 60 (R)**

New York law prohibits paying women less than men for doing the same job, but the reality is that gender wage discrimination remains rampant. While New York may have the smallest wage gap of any state in the country, 89 cents on the dollar is 11 cents too few and that statewide statistic does not capture the massive regional and racial disparities.

For women of color across the state, the wage gap remains a yawning chasm. Black women make only 66 cents, Latina women make 56 cents and Asian women make 82 cents for each dollar a man makes statewide. In many parts of the state, the pay gap is significantly wider than the statewide average regardless of race.

As your organization is well aware, in Erie County, home of New York's second largest City, men make 40% more than their female counterparts and, unlike in New York City, this disparity cuts across racial and socioeconomic lines. As WNY Women's Foundation's Executive Director has testified, white women in Buffalo make just 73 cents for every dollar a white man makes and, in Western New York as a whole, female physicians earn just 71% of what male physicians do. That is unacceptable and we must fight not just to change the laws and the culture, but to ensure there are consequences for those who violate equal pay laws.

Pay inequity is a national problem, and it deserves a national solution, but until such time as the federal government is in the hands of fair-minded people willing to tackle this pernicious social ill, New York State must take action. Throughout my career as a public official, I have always fought to ensure that women have a seat at the table and that equal pay for equal work is more than just a slogan.

As Public Advocate, I passed a landmark pay equity legislation prohibiting employers in New York City from inquiring about a job applicant's salary history. I also passed bills requiring contractors comprehensive reporting on the racial and gender diversity of their workforce and mandating diversity training for contracting decision-makers at New York City agencies. I published a series of reports addressing the gender wage gap including a first-of-its kind report identifying gender and salary data for all 300,000 New York City employees that shed light on the hiring, pay, and promotion practices of every City agency. I am currently working to pass legislation which would help lay the foundation for providing affordable child care for city employees by using space within city buildings.

As Attorney General, I will use every tool available to me to bring industry-changing actions against individuals and companies that discriminate on the basis of gender. Throughout the course of this campaign, I have laid out detailed plans for actions I will take as Attorney General to help close the wage gap and fight for gender equity in the workplace. Some of the measures I will take as the next Attorney General include:

Fighting for statewide legislation to mirror the law I helped to pass in New York City which bans employers from asking workers about their salary history;

Creating a Wage Discrimination Task Force to investigate and prosecute instances of systemic wage discrimination that currently evade enforcement because they are hidden behind deep misconceptions about the role of women in the workplace;

Taking on the wage gap by taking legal action to root out the myriad forms of discrimination against women that result in unequal pay: pregnancy discrimination, caregiver discrimination, and the chronic and wide-spread devaluation of "women's work;"

Making sexual harassment and gender equity a central focus, ensuring that women have a reliable ally in the office who will use the full extent of her powers to defend women's right to equal pay and to equality in all facets of our society.

- **Letitia James, Candidate, Attorney General of New York (D)**

As Co-Managing Partner of Ropes & Gray's 700-employee New York City office, I worked hard to ensure that women are treated with respect, and given equitable opportunities to achieve economic success. In Vault's 2017 and 2018 Top 100 Law Firm Highlights, Ropes & Gray has ranked in the top five for Diversity for Women. When elected New York State Attorney General, nothing is going to change - my government office will be run the same way my private office has run for so many years. Women who work in my government office will be provided with an environment that allows them to live, work, and grow to their fullest potential.

- **Keith Wofford, Candidate, Attorney General of New York (R)**