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## **WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT MEANS A STRONGER CALIF<sup>♀</sup>RNIA**

*Community Advocates and Elected Leaders Call for a Women's Economic Agenda that Empowers Women and Brings Equality to the State's Workforce*

Read the Stronger California Advocates Network Case for Support at [StrongerCalifornia.org](http://StrongerCalifornia.org)

Sacramento—Economic equality, poverty, and child care advocates will join legislators at a press conference today to call for new policies that will help secure women's economic empowerment in California, and benefit families and communities across the state. The leaders are calling for state policymakers to support an agenda in the upcoming year that comprehensively approaches women's economic opportunity across multiple policy areas, including the following:

- Reduce poverty and build assets
- Expand access to affordable, quality early childhood care and education
- Ensure fair pay and job opportunities
- Support working families

According to a new policy paper issued today by the Stronger California Advocates Network, women comprise almost half the workforce in California, and are primary income-earners in many families. The paper also highlights that California's recovery from the Great Recession of 2007-2008 was due in large part to women's contributions to the workforce.

However, the jobs that many women hold in California are mostly part-time; one in five women who work part-time are doing so because they cannot find full-time work. In addition, lack of affordable child care and housing makes it hard for women to provide secure environments for their families. And women are disproportionately employed by jobs that pay minimum wage.

The Stronger Calif<sup>♀</sup>ornia agenda includes efforts to:

- *Reduce poverty and build assets:* The agenda includes legislative proposals that would significantly address women's poverty and improve policies that hold women back from building self-sufficient households for their families.
- *Expand access to affordable, quality early childhood care and education:* Quality, affordable child care is the lynchpin to advancing women's economic security: it

allows women to obtain a higher education; find and keep gainful employment; and, attain higher positions in the workplace, society and government. The agenda includes bills that would greatly expand access to child care for low-income families, and signal important reinvestments in California's early childhood education system.

- *Ensure fair pay and job opportunities:* The gender wage gap in California contributes to its high rate of poverty and adversely affects women in nearly every field, no matter their income or educational status. As a group, full-time working women in California lose over \$33 *billion* dollars each year due to the wage gap. The agenda includes bills to improve pay equity and raise the minimum wage.
- *Ensure job opportunities by developing skills for a 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace:* Creating pathways to living wage jobs for low-income women has many dimensions, involving creating partnerships across systems and encouraging and supporting women to enter non-traditional employment as a way to secure better wages. The California Stronger Agenda includes the Earn and Learn bill, which would encourage the administration to prioritize onsite compensated job training to help women get into nontraditional occupations.
- *Support working families:* Policies like paid time off to take care of a sick family member or new child are critical to making the workplace tenable for women. But it is also important to ensure that work schedules are reasonable, and are provided with enough advance notice to ensure that parents can find appropriate child care or juggle the other needs in their lives. The Stronger California Agenda addresses these issues, with a bill that would expand access to the protections of the California Family Rights Act and another that would ensure fair and predictable work schedules for many of California's hourly workers.

For more information about A Stronger California and the key legislation being proposed for A Stronger California in 2015, please go to: [StrongerCalifornia.org](http://StrongerCalifornia.org)

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## A Stronger California Advocates Network

9 to 5

American Association of University Women

California Asset Building Coalition and its members

California Domestic Worker Alliance

California Employment Lawyers Association  
California Hunger Action Coalition  
California Partnership  
California Women's Law Center  
California Work and Family Coalition  
Career Ladders Project  
Center for Popular Democracy  
Child Care Law Center  
Child Care Resource and Referral Network  
Equal Rights Advocates  
Legal Aid Society-Employment Law Center  
National Council of Jewish Women  
Next Generation  
Parent Voices  
Raising California Together  
Tradeswomen, Inc.  
Western Center on Law and Poverty  
Women's Foundation of California