

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Community Groups Representing Millions of Californians Launch Effort for Women's Economic Security at State Capitol**

*Package of bills marks ambitious effort to protect women, end poverty, raise pay, improve access to childcare and more*

SACRAMENTO-- Community members from across California are joining with legislative leaders to call for landmark policy reforms to improve the lives of women, children, and families in California.

The multi-year grassroots-led campaign in the Golden State is shaping the national conversation around women's economic security. This year, the campaign and policy agenda, called A Stronger California: Securing Economic Opportunities for All Women, is supporting a number of legislative and budget proposals across four pillars: fair pay and job opportunities, access to childcare, family-friendly workplaces, and building economic security by addressing poverty.

**"When we take care of California's women, we take care of California," said Noreen Farrell, Executive Director of Equal Rights Advocates and Chair of the Stronger California Campaign.** "Women are huge economic players in our state's economy, and must be paid fairly and supported. When women have support at home and at work, everyone wins and our economy thrives."

Home to 12% of the nation's women, California has long been a progressive policy influencer for the rest of the country. It was the first state in the nation to offer paid leave for the birth or adoption of a child. The Stronger California Campaign – which is a partnership between the Stronger California Advocates Network and the California Legislative Women's Caucus – last year helped pass the historic California Fair Pay Act, expanded sick leave options for working parents, and ensured an additional \$265 million dollars in the state budget for childcare and early childhood education.

In 2016, Stronger California is prioritizing legislative measures that seek to improve women's economic security in the state by prohibiting reliance on prior salaries in the hiring process, removing barriers faced by families trying access childcare benefits and increasing state funding for childcare, removing caps on income support for poor children, requiring reliable work schedules, and ensuring all new parents can care for their newborns without the risk of being fired. The bills will not only benefit women, but men and children. They will also influence how women and families are treated across the country.

### **Voices:**

**Lourdes Alarcon, Parent Voices:** "Child care assistance has enabled me to nearly complete my Bachelor's degree at San Francisco State University while I work multiple part-time jobs. My next step is to enter a teaching credential program. While I am grateful for the child care assistance, having to constantly submit documentation to maintain my eligibility has created tremendous ongoing stress for me. If I had 12-months of stable child care assistance, I could focus on my professional goals and help my family get out of poverty."

**Aileen Rizo, County Math Education Specialist:** "When I was working for the County Office of Education I discovered that a newly hired male colleague doing the same job was being paid at a much higher salary, even though I had more experience and education. I couldn't understand why, but it's because me employer set pay based on my prior salary. Since my pay was lower at my previous job, I made thousands of dollars less than someone who was not as qualified as I am."

**Lourdes Deborganes, California Domestic Workers Coalition:** "Estamos exigiendo que se abruene el proyecto de ley SB 1015 porque la dignidad de nuestras familias merece protección permanente." "We are calling for the passage of SB1015 because the dignity of our families deserves permanent protection."

**Vivian Thorp:** "I am an advocate for homeless families who are working to get back on their feet – many of whom have children and were denied help as a result of the unfair Maximum Family Grant rule. I know that if California law didn't leave these families behind, they would recover from economic hardship more quickly and so would our communities. I know because I was there: because of the Maximum Family Grant, my

children and I suffered greatly and it took longer for me to find stable ground economically.”

**Hannah-Beth Jackson, Senator – Santa Barbara:** “We are enormously grateful to the Stronger California Advocates Network for their leadership toward building a stronger economic future for California women and families. The California Legislative Women’s Caucus is honored to be partnering with them to move our economy forward by promoting fair pay, family friendly workplace policies, expanding access to childcare and addressing poverty.”

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

1. [Domestic Worker Bill of Rights](#) (SB 1015)
  - Extends the existing law that ensures domestic workers receive protection against overtime violations.
2. [Increase access to childcare](#) (AB 2150)
  - Invests more in childcare programs that give children a safe place to go while their parents are at work.
3. [Pay Equity for Women](#) (AB 1676)
  - Gives women more bargaining power when negotiating their salaries by removing past salary history from a new salary determination.
4. [Leave Protection for Working Parents](#) (SB 1166)
  - Extends job protection for parents taking paid leave to bond with children.
5. [Reliable Scheduling](#) (SB 878)
  - Makes California one of the first states in the nation to recognize the importance of reliable schedules for workers while also meeting the day-to-day needs of businesses.
6. [Repeal CalWORKs Maximum Family Grant](#) (SB 23)
  - Repealing the Maximum Family Grant will protect the reproductive privacy of poor women and the health and well-being of poor children.

**[The Stronger Calif<sup>♀</sup>ornia Advocates Network](#)**

The Stronger Calif<sup>♀</sup>ornia Advocates Network is a historic collaboration of advocate coalitions with deep experience working with communities affected by the four pillars of the Stronger Calif<sup>♀</sup>ornia Agenda. The Network capitalizes on the strengths of our members to advance the economic security of women in California. We seek to promote policy reform in order to meet basic needs and provide better income support, achieve fair pay and working conditions, support workforce development, encourage asset

building, and ensure work- family flexibility and access to quality child care. To learn more about this effort, see **StrongerCalifornia.org**.

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