



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

## Klein Declares Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act A Victory For Equal Rights

JEFFREY D. KLEIN January 29, 2009



### *Looks Ahead to Passing Paid Family Leave Act in New York*

BRONX, NY- Senator Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester) applauded the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, declaring it a “victory” for equal rights

On Thursday, President Obama signed the **Lilly Ledbetter** Fair Pay Act, a law named for an Alabama woman who at the end of a 19-year career as a supervisor in a tire factory complained that she had been paid less than men.

After a **Supreme Court** ruling against her, Congress approved the legislation that expands workers' rights to sue in this kind of case, relaxing the statute of limitations.

“Women continue to face opposition in the work place, but today’s historic legislation marks a step forward in what has been a centuries old battle to substantiate the fundamental principle of the Declaration of Independence: that all men are created equal. I am exceptionally proud to share this moment with my female colleagues in the Legislature, and all the working women across the state. This is a watershed moment in the fight for equal rights but there is still more ahead,” said Senator Klein.

Klein expressed hope that the Senate would pass the Paid Family Leave Act which last year passed the Assembly and has been introduced in the Senate by Senator Craig Johnson.

Studies by the New York Women's Foundation have found that New York State ranks in the bottom third of states for women's labor force participation (44th); and African American and Latina women are much less likely to be in managerial or professional occupations relative to white and Asian American women. However, women continue to enter the workforce at an increasing rate, and New York is no different. Women represent 53% of the state’s workforce, with 66% of mothers with young children working outside the home and 20% of adults caring for an elderly relative. In addition, 78% of people who need family leave can't afford to take it.

According to a June 2008 estimate by the Department of Insurance, Paid Family Leave would only cost about \$8/person annually or 16 cents/week, which translates into a 10-15% increase in disability premiums.

In polls by the Community Service Society, New Yorkers across income levels said they would be willing to pay for a paid family leave benefit. Seventy-six percent of low-income New Yorkers and 64% of moderate and higher income New Yorkers said they would favor extending TDI to provide up to 12 weeks of paid family leave even if it meant \$1 a week would be deducted from their paychecks. (Source: 2005 Unheard Third Survey, CSS).