



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

KRUEGER CALLS FOR STATE ACTION TO ADDRESS DECLINING ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN: Cites Important New Report Showing New York State Women Have Been Losing Ground in the last 20 Years

LIZ KRUEGER June 26, 2008

New York— State Senator Liz Krueger called for State action to address issues raised in the new report released by the New York Women's Foundation entitled "The Economic Status of Women in New York State." The report detailed startling data that showed women in New York are economically worse off today compared to how they were doing in 1989.

"This report proves that the fight for women's equality is far from over," said Senator Krueger. "I was shocked to discover how much worse off women are today than two decades ago."

The report highlighted a number of statistics, such as:

The percent of NYS women living in poverty has increased since 1989. In 1989, 87.2% of women lived above the poverty line, but by 2005 only 83.4% lived above the poverty line. During this time New York's rank fell from 30th to 40th in the nation with regards to women living above the poverty line.

Today, 15.2% of New York's women live below the Federal Poverty Threshold (\$19,806 for a

family of four; two adults and two children), and 36.8% of all female-headed households with children live below the poverty line.

In comparing men and women's median earnings, women earn 78.4% of what men earned. The disparities in earnings between men and women were consistent across all levels of education.

"The dire economic situation for women in New York and the downward trend are not isolated problems," stated Senator Krueger. "Poverty creates ripple effects to the detriment of our entire state, impacting whole families, particularly impacting vulnerable children, elderly family members and whole communities."

Senator Krueger believed that New York could begin to address the problem by:

Passing the Equal Pay for Equal Work Bill (S.3358). This bill, sponsored by Senator Krueger, would amend the State Constitution to require that people of comparable skill receive equal pay for equal work of comparable value, without consideration of sex, race, or national origin.

Creating a system of universal health care for all New Yorkers, independent of employers, so that everyone could be assured access to health care, and would not lose coverage if they temporarily lost their job.

Passing the Paid Family Leave Bill (S.8428), which would allow workers to take paid time off from work to care for sick family member. Employees are currently left with the choice of taking unpaid time off or going to work and leaving their family member alone without care. Adopting living wage legislation so that women or men who work full-time are not living in poverty and can afford basic needs like housing, food, and health care. Low wage jobs are particularly common to industries that employ mostly women, such as the field of child care workers in which the average yearly earnings for women is only \$18,300.

In explaining the need for paid family leave, Senator Krueger related a story about one of her colleagues in the Senate who had to take time off recently to take care of her dying husband. "She was able to do this as a State Senator without risking her job or her paycheck, but the average woman in New York could never have afforded the same decision without paid family leave."

Senator Krueger concluded, "In order to truly solve the economic problems women face we need to create a culture that acknowledges the existence of inequality between men and women, and recognizes that New York State can take the lead in solving these problem. Ensuring equal pay for equal work, universal health care, paid family leave, and implementing living wage legislation, would be a great place to start."