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## VALUING THE WORK OF WOMEN OF COLOR

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Women of color face a steeper climb to provide financial security for their families because of systemic discrimination. Add your name if you agree: it's time to boost wages and open up new pathways to the leadership positions for women of color.

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*As published on Medium on July 5th, 2019:*

Our society and our economy demand so much of women — but they place a particular burden on Black, Latina, Native American, Asian, and other women of color. **More than 70%** of Black mothers and more than 40% of Latina mothers are their families' sole breadwinners — compared to less than a quarter of white mothers. Black women **participate** in the labor force at higher rates than white women, and Latinas' share of the labor force has nearly **doubled** over the past 20 years. And at the same time, Black and Brown women have more caregiving responsibilities, with Black and Latinx caregivers spending **50%** more hours a week on caregiving than white caregivers.

While millions of families count on Latinas and Black women to deliver financially, they face a steeper climb to provide that financial security. In 2017,

Black women were paid **61 cents** for every dollar white men made. Native women made **58 cents** to a white man's dollar — and Latinas earned just **53 cents** to a white man's dollar\*. And it's getting worse: the gap in weekly earnings between white and Black women is **higher today** than it was forty years ago.

Employers tilt the playing field against women of color at every stage of employment. During the hiring process, employers use salary history to make new **offers** — creating a cycle where women of color are locked into lower wages. Once in the workplace, Black and Brown women are **disproportionately** mistreated. In a recent **survey**, nearly two-thirds of Black and Latina women reported experiencing racial discrimination at work.

The path to higher-level management jobs is also rockier for women of color — a reflection in part of having **fewer** networking and mentorship opportunities with members of their same race and gender. Even though Black women and Latinas are often the leaders and decision-makers in their own homes and communities, they hold only **one spot** on the Fortune 500 CEO list and less than **5%** of Fortune 500 Board positions.

The experiences of women of color are not one-dimensional: sexual orientation, gender identity, and ability all shape how a person's work is valued in the workplace. But our economy should be working just as hard for women of color as women of color work for our economy and their families. For decades, the government has helped perpetuate the systemic discrimination that has denied women of color equal opportunities. It's time for the government to try to right those wrongs — and **boost** our economy in the process.

That's why I have a new plan: **a set of executive actions I will take on day one of the Warren Administration to boost wages for women of color and open up new pathways to the leadership positions they deserve.**

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## ADD YOUR NAME IF YOU AGREE

It's time to boost wages and open up new pathways to the leadership positions for women of color.

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## PROMOTE EQUITY IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR THROUGH HISTORIC NEW REQUIREMENTS ON FEDERAL CONTRACTORS

Companies with federal contracts employ roughly a **quarter** of the U.S. workforce. By imposing new rules on companies that hope to receive federal contracts, we can take a big step towards creating equal opportunities for Black, Latina, Native American, Asian and other women of color. I will issue an Executive Order that will:

- *Deny contracting opportunities to companies with poor track records on diversity and equal pay.* I will build on **existing** disclosure requirements by requiring every contractor to disclose data on employees' pay and role, broken out by race, gender, and age. And I will direct agencies not to enter into contracts with companies with poor track records on diversity in management and equal pay for equal work.
- *Ban companies that want federal contracts from using forced arbitration and non-compete clauses that restrict workers' rights.* Forced arbitration and collective action waivers make it harder for employees to fight wage theft, discrimination, and harassment — harms that fall disproportionately on women of color. And abusive non-compete clauses for low- and middle-wage workers needlessly **hold them back** from pursuing other job opportunities. Companies that impose these restrictions on their workers will be ineligible to receive federal contracts.
- *Ban contractors from asking applicants for past salary information and criminal histories.* Companies will be barred from winning federal contracts

if they request previous salary information or violate the EEOC's criminal records **guidance**, which prevents **discrimination** against formerly arrested or incarcerated people.

- *Ensure fair pay and benefits for all workers.* Federal contractors must extend a \$15 minimum wage and **benefits** (including paid family leave, fair scheduling, and collective bargaining rights) to all employees. This will have an outsized effect on Black and Brown women, who perform a **disproportionate** share of lower-wage work.

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## MAKE THE SENIOR RANKS OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT LOOK LIKE AMERICA

The federal government does a **dismal** job on diversity and inclusion. The share of Latinas in the federal workforce is about half that of the entire workforce. And even though Black women are disproportionately represented in the federal workforce, they are nearly **absent** from its leadership ranks. White workers make up nearly **80%** of the senior civil service despite making up only **63%** of the overall federal workforce. If we're going to demand more of the private sector, we should demand more of the federal government too. My Equal Opportunity Executive Order will recruit and develop leadership paths for underrepresented workers by:

- *Diversifying recruitment:* Direct real resources towards attracting entry-level applicants from HBCUs, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and other minority-serving institutions, and reforming our higher-level recruiting process to attract diverse experienced hires into senior management positions.
- *Supporting development:* Create new paid fellowship programs for federal jobs for minority and low-income applicants, including formerly incarcerated individuals, focusing especially on agencies where Black and Brown women are most **underrepresented**.
- *Opening up promotion pathways:* Require every federal agency to incorporate diversity as part of their core strategic plan and create support networks through a government-wide mentorship program that centers Black and Brown employees.

## STRENGTHEN AND TARGET ENFORCEMENT AGAINST SYSTEMIC DISCRIMINATION

Sectors that **disproportionately employ** Black and Brown women — such as the low-wage service industry — have higher rates of **discriminatory** practices. But women in these sectors are much **less likely** to report violations. My EEOC will more closely monitor these fields and bring in top talent to enforce claims in those areas. It will also issue first-of-its-kind guidance on enforcing claims involving the intersectional discrimination that women of color face from the interlocking biases of racism and sexism.

These executive actions are just a first step. We need to do much more to make sure that women of color have a fair shot at opportunity and financial security. That means everything from enacting my **affordable housing, universal child care, and student debt cancellation** plans to passing legislation to expand protections for domestic workers to creating stronger enforcement mechanisms that protect the right of all workers — especially the most vulnerable — to call out discrimination when they see it.

It's time to build an America that recognizes the role that women of color play in their families and in the economy, that fairly values their work, and that

delivers equal opportunity for everyone.

\* Much of the data doesn't let us fully describe the experiences of people with different and overlapping identities in the workforce. The data here assumes a gender binary — but we know that peoples' experiences aren't. There is much more work to be done to understand the barriers people with different identities face in the workplace.

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