

# Obama Observes 50th Anniversary Of Equal Pay Act

Jim Kuhnhenn, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama says that 50 years after enactment of the Equal Pay Act, the nation still faces gender wage disparities that must be fixed. "This is the 21st century," he declared. "It's time to close that gap."

Obama raised the issue while observing the anniversary of the law signed by President John F. Kennedy in 1963.

To an audience almost entirely of women at the White House, Obama drew attention to a recent Pew Poll that found women are the primary source of income for nearly 40 percent of households in the United States.

"When more women are bringing home the bacon, they shouldn't just be getting a little bit of bacon," he said.

He cited an often-mentioned statistic that women on average earn about 77 cents for every dollar earned by men. Though some dispute the size of the gap, few argue that there is no gender discrepancy in pay.

"If they're bringing home more of the income and that income is less than a fair share, that means that families have less to get by on, for child care or health care or gas or groceries," Obama said. "It makes it harder for middle-class families to save and retire. It leaves small businesses with customers who have less money in their pockets, which is not good for the economy."

The event's focus on women's pay comes during a week when Obama is paying special attention to Democratic constituent groups. On Tuesday he will speak at the White House in support of an overhaul of immigration laws. He will be fundraising for the Democrats on Wednesday. On Thursday he will observe LGBT Pride Month with remarks at the White House.

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