



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NOW-NYC Celebrates Inauguration of President Obama First African-American Takes Office and Marks Historical Turning Point for America

NOW-NYC Statement

New York, NY—The National Organization for Women-New York City celebrates, as the first African-American President of the United States officially takes office. Like the hundreds of thousands gathered in the nation's capital, and the millions of people watching across the country, we welcome our new President with hope and great anticipation for change. We look to President Obama for leadership on strengthening our democracy, restoring and advancing individual rights and freedoms, and setting America on a new path toward equality and peace.

There is already some evidence that we are moving in the right direction. Less than two weeks ago, the U.S. House of Representatives passed two critical pieces of equal pay legislation: the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which will ensure that workers can sue their employers in cases of discrimination, and the Paycheck Fairness Act, which holds employers accountable for discrimination. We look forward to the Senate's passage of these bills that we have actively supported and to their signing into law by President Obama.

This week, we will commemorate the 36th Anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* decision to legalize abortion. We are proud to have a pro-choice President in the White House. But we will need to make sure that the public majority that supports choice continues to be heard. Broad public support will be necessary for President Obama to move forward on protecting and advancing our reproductive rights. We hope that he'll set the stage by advancing comprehensive sexual education and reversing the Global Gag Rule and the recently issued Health and Human Services regulations that put women at-risk.

NOW-NYC understands that substantive and lasting change will not happen automatically. The Bush administration is responsible for many damaging policies that negatively impact women, girls, and families. President Obama has called for all citizens to take more responsibility in their neighborhoods and communities. NOW-NYC understands this, because it is the work that we have always done and that we will continue to do alongside our members and volunteers. We must actively seize this opportunity to reverse the damage and initiate positive and pro-active policies that will advance women and girls, including establishing pay equity, protecting choice, ending discrimination, and stopping violence against women and girls.

The National Organization for Women is the nation's largest organization working to advance women's rights and improve women's lives. The New York City Chapter of NOW, founded in 1966, is one of the largest chapters in the country with over 5,000 members locally and 35,000 statewide. NOW-NYC works to protect women's reproductive choices, end violence against women and eliminate sex discrimination in our schools, workplaces, and the justice system in New York.

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