

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

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June 4, 2021

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States
Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Comptroller General Dodaro:

I am writing to request that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) conduct an updated analysis of Current Population Survey (CPS) data to assess the gender pay gap in the United States, workplace inequities for women, and steps the federal government can take to better track these disparities.

On March 24, 2021, the Committee on Oversight and Reform held a hearing to examine the roots of the gender pay gap and its impact on women and families, including how pay inequity disproportionately burdens women of color. The hearing took place on Equal Pay Day, which marks how far into the year an average woman must work to earn as much as her male counterpart earned in the previous year.

Women on average are paid 82 cents for every dollar paid to a man, and the gender pay gap is wider for many women of color. For every dollar paid to white men, Asian American women are paid 85 cents, although women in various groups within the Asian American Pacific Islander community experience a much larger wage gap.¹ Black women are paid 63 cents for every dollar paid to white men, Native American women are paid 60 cents, and Latinas are paid 55 cents.²

In 2002, I released a report with Representative John D. Dingell titled “A New Look Through the Glass Ceiling: Where Are the Women? The Status of Women in Management in Ten Selected Industries.” The report analyzed information compiled by GAO based on CPS data for the years 1995 and 2000. The review concluded that, for the ten industries studied: (1) women managers over that time earned less than men managers, (2) the earnings gap between

¹ Center for American Progress, *The Economic Status of Asian American and Pacific Islander Women* (Mar. 4, 2021) (online at www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2021/03/04/496703/economic-status-asian-american-pacific-islander-women/).

² American Association of University Women, *Equal Pay Day Calendar* (online at www.aauw.org/resources/article/equal-pay-day-calendar/) (accessed May 28, 2021).

women and men managers widened in seven of the selected industries over the time period, and (3) in 2000, the percentage of women managers in four of the industries studied was lower than the percentage of women in that industry's workforce.³

Nearly 20 years later, the gender pay gap has barely budged, and it remains a major obstacle to women's economic well-being, career advancement, and ability to save for retirement.⁴

I request that GAO use the most current CPS data available, or other appropriate data sources, to examine the gender pay gap in a sample of industries that constitutes a critical mass of the U.S. workforce. In particular, I request that GAO update the data compiled in its 2001 analysis and presented in "Women in Management: Analysis of Selected Data from the Current Population Survey" (GAO-02-156) and expand upon its previous analysis to answer the following questions:

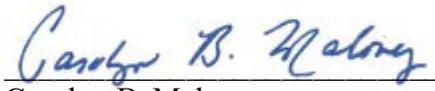
1. Over the five-year period preceding the most current year's data, how much were women in each industry paid on average compared to men in similar positions? Are there certain categories of positions in an industry where the gap tends to be larger or smaller (e.g., entry-level or managerial roles)?
2. Over the five-year period preceding the most current year's data, how has women's representation in management positions changed? During that period, how does it compare to women's representation in an industry's total workforce? What is the representation of women of color in management positions, and how does it compare to their representation in an industry's total workforce?
3. How does a woman's age affect her earnings as compared to men in the same groups? When accounting for race, ethnicity, and age, what impact do these traits have on women's earnings at different employment tiers compared to men?
4. Other than the CPS, what other federal government information sources can be used to answer the questions above? Are there limitations to available information sources that make it difficult to answer these questions? Are there improvements the federal government can make in collecting and reporting data on pay disparity by gender, race, or other demographic groups?

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-5051.

³ *A New Look Through the Glass Ceiling: Where Are the Women? The Status of Women in Management in Ten Selected Industries*, Rep. John D. Dingell and Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney (Jan. 2002) (online at <https://maloney.house.gov/sites/maloney.house.gov/files/documents/olddocs/womenscaucus/dingellmaloneyreport.pdf>).

⁴ Economic Policy Institute, *What Is the Gender Pay Gap and Is It Real?* (Oct. 20, 2016) (online at www.epi.org/publication/what-is-the-gender-pay-gap-and-is-it-real/).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carolyn B. Maloney". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Carolyn B. Maloney
Chairwoman

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Ranking Member