



An Open Letter to Congress:

Before the State of the Union, we need to talk about the state of women.

During the COVID-19 pandemic millions of women left the workforce, and to date, 1.1 million still have not returned. As the economy recovers for men and corporations, women are often still being left behind.

President Biden laid out an agenda to ensure that we build this country back from the pandemic with equity. And we have made progress. The American Rescue Plan was one of the single biggest investments in women and families in the last decade. The expansion of the child tax credit lowered child poverty by 40 percent. But because of obstruction in the Senate, it hasn't been renewed. Despite the efforts of many in Congress, some members continue to block life-saving legislation. Meanwhile, women are being stretched thin by the demands of work, child care, and caring for their families.

One in three families are struggling to find child care. Yet, the working families of America continue to keep this country running in every industry from education to healthcare, service, small business and more, enabling those at the top to reap the benefits. And Black, Latinx, Indigenous and AANHPI women have been on the front lines continuing to disproportionately bear the cost.

In 2020, 82.2 million women reported casting their ballots - nearly 10 million more women than men. We voted for politicians who promised to enact policies and pass laws to help us recover from the pandemic and support us in building a thriving future for ourselves and our families.

Instead, we see critical legislation continue to stall in the Senate, while state legislatures introduce constant threats to our reproductive rights and our bodily autonomy.

Women are still bearing the brunt of this crisis. But we can change the outcome.

Today, women across the country are raising their voices to tell our leaders what we need. Together, as a movement and with a unified voice, we demand that Congress deliver on five policies women need to survive and thrive across the country, across communities and experiences, and across our lifespans:

1. **Pass the Build Back Better Agenda:** Congress must extend the child care tax credit and guarantee 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave. We need to invest in affordable child care, universal pre-k for all families, expanded home and community-based services, better wages for care workers, and maternal health care. Additionally, we need a long-promised path to citizenship for immigrants.

2. **Protect abortion rights and access:** Pass legislation, including the Women's Health Protection Act, to protect and expand access to abortion care regardless of where a person lives, how much money they make, or their immigration status.¹
3. **Reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act:** This law is essential to protecting and supporting survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and expanding prevention efforts.
4. **Protect voting rights:** Voting rights are a cornerstone of our democracy and a free vote protects all other rights. Our lawmakers must protect every American from the relentless attacks on our right to vote, especially for Black, Brown, Asian American and Pacific Islander, young voters, and voters with disabilities.
5. **Criminal legal reform:** To advance racial and gender equity and justice, we need to reimagine public safety and crisis response through investments in non-carceral, non-punitive public health solutions to community, family, and school safety. We must end mass incarceration/mass criminalization, and root out gender, racial, and disability bias from every aspect of the criminal legal system.

Women don't live our lives in silos - we need all of these policies to build a country where women and families can thrive. The President has laid out an agenda to meet the moment with us. It's up to Congress to deliver.

Our movement stands ready to work with our elected officials and champions in Congress to get this agenda passed. Even now in this moment of global crisis, especially now, the women and girls and families of our country need us to succeed and to make the united state of women strong.

In solidarity,

- 9to5
- ACCESS Reproductive Justice
- American Association of People with Disabilities
- American Association of University Women (AAUW)
- Black Women's Roundtable, NCBCP
- Care In Action
- Caring Across Generations
- Change Begins With ME (Indivisible)
- End Rape On Campus
- ERA Coalition
- Esperanza United (Formerly Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network)
- Feminist Majority Foundation

¹ This country is facing dire threats to abortion access. The Supreme Court greenlit the nefarious Texas bounty hunter abortion ban during the same Term it may overturn *Roe v. Wade*. Moreover, people across the country are fighting a barrage of state bans and restrictions on abortion care, including prohibiting insurance coverage.

- Feminist Women's Health Center
- Girls for Gender Equity
- Institute for Women's Policy Research
- In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda
- Indivisible San Francisco
- It's On Us
- Jewish Women International (JWI)
- Just Solutions
- Justice for Migrant Women
- MomsRising
- Marshall Plan for Moms
- me too International.
- Mississippi Black Women's Roundtable
- NARAL Pro-Choice America
- National Alliance to End Sexual Violence
- National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)
- National Council of Jewish Women
- National Crittenton
- National Domestic Workers Alliance
- National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice
- National Network to End Domestic Violence
- National Organization for Women
- National Partnership for Women & Families
- National Urban League
- Not on Ruth's Watch
- NWAAF- Northwest Abortion
- National Women's Law Center
- Paid Leave for All
- Planned Parenthood Action Fund
- Resilience, formerly Rape Victim Advocates
- Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
- Supermajority Education Fund
- The Center for Reproductive Rights
- UltraViolet
- United State of Women
- Vote Run Lead
- We Demand More Coalition
- Women Employed
- Women's March
- Women's Media Center

- YWCA USA