Middlebury Branch AAUW

January 31, 2018

To the Vermont Legislature re: H.294 and S.275:

Anyone living in this country and in the state of Vermont today must be aware of the discrepancy in pay and opportunity afforded to women. Women working in all areas of employment average 16% less income than men in comparable jobs. This inequality affects not only the women, but also their children.

If women were paid at the same level as their male peers, the poverty rate would be reduced by 57% by some estimates. If that estimate is even half accurate, the need for social services will be reduced, stress and illness will be lessened, and homelessness will become less likely. It is no secret that many working people cannot afford decent housing, and it is single parents, usually mothers, who are most impacted.

Anyone who enters a new job or seeks a promotion and who is offered a wage or salary based on prior income is disadvantaged regardless of qualifications. If prior pay was low due to the former job, employers are often inclined to offer less than they would pay somebody with a higher wage or salary, even if their qualifications are equal. As women mostly work in sectors such as education and service, they tend to arrive with a lower pay history. Why should anyone earn less than a peer in the same or comparable position, assuming equal skills and experience?

If we take into account the cumulative influences on savings, pensions, and retirement income, women are never able to make up for this income gap during their lifetime.

Passing the bills H.294 and S.275 is a small step towards removing pay discrimination for all, regardless of gender, race, or national origin.

Please consider carefully how you vote.

Sincerely,

Anne Fisher and Margaret Galgano
Co-Chairs AAUW Middlebury

Branch members supporting these bills:
Claire Ayer, Dinah Bain, Susan Baldridge Campbell, Liane Barrera, Klara Calitri, Diane Z. DeBella, Karin Hanta, Barbara Kieran, Priscilla Leng, Mary A. Longey, Patricia Mraz, Anne Marie Richard, Gail D. Smith, Alison H. Stigers, Ann Straub, Maureen Williams, Janet Winkler