

MOTION

The COVID-19 recession has been tougher on women, particularly women of color, than men. The parts of the economy that were hardest hit early on in the pandemic were dominated by women leading to more job loss among women. On top of that, with closures of child care facilities and schools, working mothers have been forced to reduce their hours, take lower paying positions, or leave the workforce altogether. In the month of September alone, approximately 865,000 women dropped out of the workforce, compared to 216,000 men. In addition, this fall there are about 1.6 million fewer mothers in the workforce than would be expected if schools were open.

While women were making strides in reaching gender equity in the workplace and breaking the glass ceiling in industries dominated by men prior to COVID, this global pandemic threatens to wipe out decades of progress for women. Already, on average, women in the United States are paid 82 cents for every dollar paid to men. Black women, Native American women and Latinas are paid even less than that. One of the reasons why women make less than men is that they work fewer or more flexible hours once they have children. Even when that isn't the case, employers assume that it will be the case. There is plenty of pre-pandemic evidence showing that workplace policies weren't accommodating to working mothers and that women were being punished for their child bearing responsibilities. The pandemic has further revealed just how bad these workplace inequities have been, and they are now getting worse. If these conditions persist, the gender pay gap will widen, leaving more women in lower paying jobs and with fewer opportunities for advancement and resulting in less workplace diversity.

Currently, workplace policies do not accommodate and value those with caregiving responsibilities. While other countries have policies and programs that assist women and families with their caregiving needs, the United States simply relies on mothers to bear those responsibilities, providing little or no support. Women, particularly mothers, are expected to be the safety net. During the COVID pandemic, women have disproportionately taken on the responsibilities of homeschooling and housework and have been forced to choose between their careers or caring for their families. The City needs to offer long-term support and programs that will help women, particularly women of color, recover from the COVID pandemic. The longer it takes to address this issue, the tougher it will be to repair the damage caused to women by the pandemic.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council direct the Commission on the Status of Women, Chief Legislative Analyst, and all other relevant departments to report back on how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected working women in Los Angeles with an emphasis on mothers and women of color. The report should consider childcare issues, paid leave policies, the potential long-term consequences of women leaving the workplace during COVID, and related issues. Additionally, the report should include

DEC 08 2020



recommendations on how companies, organizations, and policymakers can create policies and program to support women in the workplace.

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Council direct the Commission on the Status of Women, Chief Legislative Analyst, and Personnel Department to evaluate the impact of COVID on women in the City's workforce, especially mothers and women of color, and report back with recommendations on how to strengthen city policies to support women in the workplace.

PRESENTED BY:


NURY MARTINEZ
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SECONDED BY:



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