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## **NNEDV JOINS IN OBSERVANCE OF EQUAL PAY DAY**

### ***Calls for Policies that Secure Economic Justice for Domestic Violence Victims and All Women***

**WASHINGTON, D.C. – April 9, 2013** – Today, the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) joins in the national observance of Equal Pay Day, a day that, since 1996, serves to recognize the wage gap between working women and men, and offer remedies to address pay inequity. According to statistics released in 2012 by the United States Census Bureau, women are paid, on average, 77 cents for every dollar their male counterparts are paid -- a gap of 23 cents. The date of observance is selected to represent how far into 2013 women must work to earn what men earned in 2012.

Equal pay is not simply a women's issue—it's a family issue. Families increasingly rely on women's wages to make ends meet. A large majority of mothers are in the paid labor force, and about one-third of employed mothers are the sole breadwinners for their families. The pay gap affects women from all backgrounds, at all ages, and of all levels of educational achievement, although earnings and the gap vary depending on a woman's individual situation.

For victims of domestic violence, the wage gap creates an especially difficult situation. Domestic violence victims often cite lack of stable employment and financial security as barriers to leaving an abusive relationship, and many abusers control the relationship by limiting the victim's access to financial resources and employment. Among the economic challenges facing domestic violence victims, wage discrimination and pay inequality continue to be barriers for victims striving to be economically independent and to break free from the abuse.

"Too often victims must choose between staying in an abusive relationship and facing poverty or even homelessness for themselves and their children," said Kim Gandy, NNEDV's President and CEO. "Policies that address wage discrimination and other workplace inequalities are essential in helping survivors of domestic violence move from short-term safety to long-term security, and to an economically sustainable independent life."

Federal legislation such as The Paycheck Fairness Act and The Fair Pay Act would make a significant difference in the lives of domestic violence victims and all women. The Paycheck Fairness Act sponsored by Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) and Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT-3), strengthens penalties for equal pay violations and prohibits retaliation against workers who inquire about or disclose information about employers' wage practices. The bill also directs the U.S. Department of Labor to provide public information about strategies for identifying and eliminating wage discrimination, and to issue guidelines for evaluating jobs. The Fair Pay Act, sponsored by Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), would prohibit wage discrimination based on sex, race and national origin by requiring employers to provide equal pay for work

of equal value, whether or not the jobs are the same. States around the country are also introducing pay equity legislation to redress the fact that women and families are being shortchanged thousands of dollars a year and hundreds of thousands of dollars over a lifetime.

April is also Financial Literacy Month, a time to highlight the importance of gaining skills and knowledge that allow each of us to make informed and effective decisions regarding financial resources. Financial literacy is also critical for survivors of domestic violence, many of whom experience economic abuse. As part of their control tactics, many abusers prevent their spouse or partner from acquiring, using, or maintaining financial resources, including accessing a bank or managing credit. Research shows that lacking financial knowledge and resources are among the main reasons why victims of domestic violence return to or remain in relationships with their abusers.

For that reason, NNEDV, through its Economic Justice Partnership with The Allstate Foundation, works to promote financial literacy for survivors of domestic violence. Through its signature “train-the-trainer” approach, NNEDV delivers financial literacy lessons to victim advocates across the U.S., and informs advocates about personal finance tools, resources, and the most recent research available in the field of financial literacy and capability.

“Throughout Financial Literacy Month, and every day, NNEDV is committed to ensuring that victims of domestic violence have the knowledge and skills they need to develop financial stability and self-sufficiency,” concluded Gandy. “It is time for our country to take the next steps toward securing economic justice for survivors and women everywhere.”

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**About NNEDV**

*NNEDV, a 501(c)(3) organization, is the leading voice for domestic violence victims and their allies. NNEDV members include all 56 of the state and territorial coalitions against domestic violence, including over 2,000 local programs. NNEDV has been a premiere national organization advancing the movement against domestic violence for almost 20 years, having led efforts among domestic violence advocates and survivors in urging Congress to pass the landmark Violence Against Women Act of 1994. To learn more about NNEDV, please visit [www.nnedv.org](http://www.nnedv.org).*