



# Ethical Action Report



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## **Human Rights:** Stand up for the Rule of Law

We need to maintain our nation's basic right of habeas corpus--the right to challenge one's imprisonment. Urge your Members of Congress to support the Supreme Court's decision in *Boumediene v. Bush* that upholds this right by not passing any new legislation that would undermine this essential freedom.

### BACKGROUND

In *Boumediene v. Bush*, the Supreme Court ruled in a landmark decision that detainees at Guantanamo have the Constitutional right of habeas corpus – the right to challenge one's imprisonment. Without it, innocent individuals could be detained indefinitely without a trial and with no legal recourse.

Last time the Supreme Court affirmed this essential right, Congress undercut it with the Military Commissions Act. Don't let them do it again – call on your members of Congress to respect the Court's decision and honor our Constitutional rule of law.

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## **Gender Equity: Support Equal Pay for Men and Women (H.R. 1338, S. 766)**

We need to improve upon the ideals of the Equal Pay Act. Contact your senators and encourage them to join the House in closing the Ledbetter loophole: ask all your members of Congress to support the Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 1338, S. 766)

### BACKGROUND

Forty-five years after the Equal Pay Act was signed into law--requiring that women be paid "equal pay for work of comparable value requiring comparable skills"--women earn only 77 cents for each dollar earned by their male counterparts. And now, due to a Supreme Court decision with wide-ranging consequences, women who have proven they have been victims of gender discrimination in the workforce have little to no legal recourse.

In *Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tires* the Court ruled that employers cannot be sued for instituting discriminatory pay unless a lawsuit is brought within 180 days of the first discriminatory paycheck. If employees do not find out that they have been discriminated against within that 180 day period, they are unable to legally hold the companies accountable.

The House has already passed a bill to fix these problems, but it has become clear that there are holes in the Equal Pay Act. While the Senate makes progress on its own version of the Ledbetter bill, the House is working on a more extensive bill that will close more loopholes and further the cause of pay equity. Stand up for equal pay for men and women and urge your members of Congress to do the same.

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## **Stop Hunger: Support Emergency Food Programs (Emergency Supplemental Appropriations FY '08-'09)**

Our foreign food aid programs have proven to be ineffective and are in desperate need of changes. Tell your members of Congress that they should pass the changes in the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations FY '08-'09 to reduce global hunger.

### BACKGROUND

Recent increases in food prices have triggered a worldwide increase in hunger. This current crisis draws attention to a trend that has been ongoing, and underscores the need for an aid program that works. Unfortunately, U.S. food aid programs have not been shown to be effective at reducing chronic hunger. It's time to change our approach.

Congress is debating a bill that would make progress in addressing the underlying causes of hunger while providing aid to those who need it. Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill FY '08-'09 would address the global increase in the price of food with approximately one billion dollars for emergency food programs, and provide \$50 million for a regional and local purchase program to pilot better ways of reducing chronic hunger.

In order for our food aid programs to be more effective and for fewer people to go hungry worldwide, Congress should enact these provisions. Call your representatives today and tell them to fix our food aid programs.

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## **Reproductive Rights: Support Title X Family Planning (FY '09 Health Budget)**

Title X is cost effective and serves an important service for our country by promoting sexual health. Urge your senators to join the House and give Title X the funding increase it needs in the FY '09 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education funding bill.

### **BACKGROUND**

Title X helps to reduce sexually transmitted diseases, unplanned pregnancies, and abortions by providing contraceptives and other preventative healthcare to low-income people. The need to fund this program is evident, as over seventeen million women are in need public contraceptive care--a number that is sure to increase as the number of uninsured Americans grows. Such care is especially important for low-income women, who are four times as likely to have unwanted pregnancies and abortions.

Current funding is unable to keep up with inflation and the growing need for family planning. The House has appropriated a \$15 million increase for the Title X family planning program in 2009. But the Senate needs to agree in order for the increase to take effect.

Title X needs these additional funds. Please take a stand for reproductive health and call or write to your senators today.

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