



September 16, 2025

The Honorable Lori Chavez-DeRemer  
Secretary of Labor  
U.S. Department of Labor  
200 Constitution Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20210

Loretta Greene  
Acting Director, Women's Bureau  
U.S. Department of Labor  
200 Constitution Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Chavez-DeRemer and Acting Director Greene:

As members of the Democratic Women's Caucus, we are deeply concerned that women, particularly mothers of young children, are leaving the workforce at alarming rates.<sup>1</sup> Since January, more than 330,000 women ages 20 and over have left the workforce.<sup>2</sup> Women's labor participation rate has fallen over two percentage points, now reaching a low 58.4%. By comparison, over 103,000 men have entered the workforce, with an increasing participation rate of 70.4%. Black women in particular have been disproportionately impacted, with over 100,000 Black women leaving the workforce since January—hitting an unemployment rate almost double the national standard.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the share of mothers between the ages of 25-44 with young children in the workforce has fallen almost three percentage points since January—the lowest levels since the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>4</sup> Right now mothers are less likely to be working than they were a year ago.<sup>5</sup> This data is deeply alarming, and we urge the Department of Labor (DOL) to take action.

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<sup>1</sup> Semuels, A. (2025, August 5). Why so many women are quitting the workforce. TIME. Retrieved from <https://time.com/7306896/women-leaving-workforce/>

<sup>2</sup> National Women's Law Center (July 7, 2025). *Hundreds of Thousands of Women Are Leaving the Labor Force*. Retrieved from <https://nwlc.org/nwlc-in-the-press/hundreds-of-thousands-of-women-are-leaving-the-labor-force-report/>

<sup>3</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2025, September 5). *The Employment Situation — August 2025*. U.S. Department of Labor. Retrieved from [https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empst\\_09052025.pdf](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empst_09052025.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Bhattarai, A. (2025, August 11). *Mothers are leaving the workforce, erasing pandemic gains*. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/08/11/mothers-leaving-workforce-large-numbers/>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Let us be clear, we firmly believe that all women should have the choice not only to decide if and when to have children, but also the choice to work outside the home or not, depending on what is best for them and their family. However, economic indicators suggest that this exodus of women from the labor force is not entirely voluntary. Instead, women are leaving out of necessity due to the end of flexible remote work policies and lack of support for caregiving needs, among other policy issues. A report in May found that over half the women in the “sandwich generation”, meaning they care for both children and aging parents or relatives, have quit a job due to conflicts with caregiving responsibilities.<sup>6</sup> With the costs of child care rising, the lack of supportive paid family and medical leave policies, and failure by the administration to address these needs, the number of women forced out of the workforce will continue to rise.

We are disappointed to see that the DOL has not taken any actions to investigate this further or help women in this difficult position. In our previous letters, we urged the DOL to stand up for women workers by supporting the Women’s Bureau, which does essential research on these matters and proposes solutions to issues just like this.<sup>7</sup> We have heard that there are very few staff remaining at the Women’s Bureau. At a time when women are leaving the workforce, we are deeply troubled that the agency tasked by Congress to address this issue is not even functioning.

Women leaving the workforce should alarm the DOL, and rather than fire the economists<sup>8</sup> revealing this troubling trend, we urge the DOL to:

- 1) Further investigate why so many women, particularly mothers, are leaving the workforce;
- 2) Provide an update on the current capacity of the Women’s Bureau, including how many staff have left voluntarily or involuntarily since the beginning of this administration;
- 3) Provide an update on active projects at the Women’s Bureau;
- 4) Provide an update on the number of applications received for the Women Apprenticeship and Non-Traditional Occupations (WANTO) grant program and the status of those applications.

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<sup>6</sup> Tenety, E. (2025, May 29). *Why Sandwich Generation Moms Are Leaving the Workforce*. Motherly. Retrieved from <https://www.mother.ly/our-partners/sandwich-generation-moms-workforce-impact/>

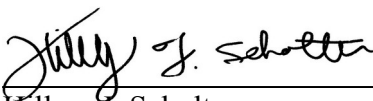
<sup>7</sup> Democratic Women's Caucus. (2025, April 14). *Democratic Women’s Caucus urges Chavez-DeRemer to stand with women workers and protect Women’s Bureau at DOL* [Press release]. Retrieved from <https://democraticwomenscaucus.house.gov/media/press-releases/democratic-womens-caucus-urges-chavez-deremer-stand-women-workers-and-protect>

<sup>8</sup> CNN. (2025, August 1). *Trump fires labor statistics chief over weak jobs numbers*. Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com/2025/08/01/business/trump-job-report-number-fire>

5) Provide an update on the cancelled WANTO and Fostering Access, Rights, and Equity (FARE) grants, including whether they will be restored and if not, how DOL plans to support the work previously encompassed by these grants.

We are fighting every day for women workers and their families to thrive, and we urge the administration to do the same. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Hillary J. Scholten  
Vice Chair  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Emilia Strong Sykes  
Vice Chair  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Pramila Jayapal  
Congressional Asian Pacific  
American Caucus Liaison  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Jasmine Crockett  
Co-Chair  
Communications Task Force  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley  
Co-Chair & Liaison  
Reproductive Health Care Task  
Force  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress



Valerie P. Foushee  
Member of Congress



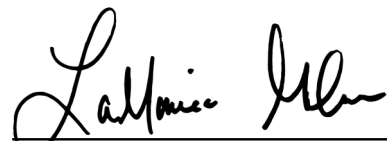
Lateefah Simon  
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress



LaMonica McIver  
New Member Liaison  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Grace Meng  
Member of Congress



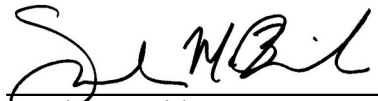
Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress



Val Hoyle  
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress



Sarah McBride  
Whip  
Democratic Women's Caucus



JH Tokuda  
Progressive Caucus Liaison  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



Joyce Beatty  
National Leaders & Advocacy  
Organization Liaison  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Maggie Goodlander  
Member of Congress



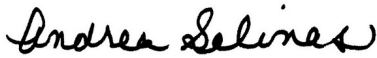
Julie Johnson  
Equality Caucus Liaison  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Deborah K. Ross  
Co-Chair  
Policy Task Force  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress



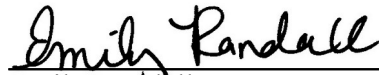
Andrea Salinas  
Congressional Hispanic  
Caucus Liaison  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Teresa Leger Fernández  
Chair  
Democratic Women's Caucus



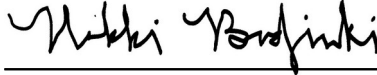
Chrissy Houlahan  
Chair  
Servicewomen, Women  
Veterans, & Military Families  
Task Force  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Emily Randall

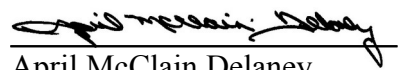
Whip

Democratic Women's Caucus



Nikki Budzinski

Member of Congress



April McClain Delaney

Member of Congress



Laura Friedman

Member of Congress



Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick  
Chair

Global Women's Issues Task  
Force

Democratic Women's Caucus

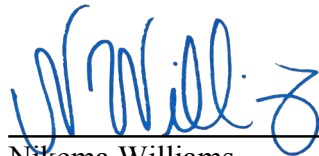


Norma J. Torres

New Democrat Coalition

Liaison

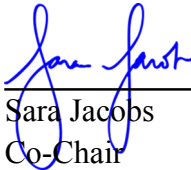
Democratic Women's Caucus



Nikema Williams

Chief Whip

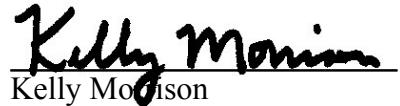
Democratic Women's Caucus



Sara Jacobs

Co-Chair

Member Services Task Force  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Kelly Morrison

Co-Chair & Liaison

Reproductive Health Care  
Task Force

Democratic Women's Caucus



Chellie Pingree

Member of Congress



Lucy McBath

Congressional Black Caucus  
Liaison

Democratic Women's Caucus



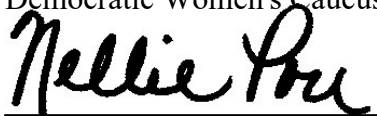
Mary Gay Scanlon

Member of Congress



Veronica Escobar

Member of Congress



Nellie Pou

Member of Congress