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***Washington State Women's Commission launches campaign to close the state's wage gap***

OLYMPIA, WA – Washington State has one of the worst gender wage gaps in the nation. On Friday June 28<sup>th</sup>, the Washington State Women's Commission (WSWC) officially launched Activate 3.8: The Pay Equity Tour, a statewide initiative dedicated to raising awareness and generating solutions to bring Washington from bottom 10 to the top 10 states in the nation for pay parity.

The sold-out launch event at Nectar Lounge in Fremont brought together over 200 civic leaders, volunteers, students, and community members. The event featured speeches from seven prominent gender equity advocates, including Governor Jay Inslee, who discussed strategies to advance economic empowerment for Washington women.

Speakers included:

- Governor Jay Inslee
- Grace Yoo, Executive Director, Washington State Women's Commission
- April Sims, President, Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO WA
- Cami Feek, Commissioner, Employment Security Department
- Lekha Fernandes, Executive Director, Office for Minority and Women's Business Enterprises
- Andrea Anderson, CEO, Girl Scouts of Western Washington
- Veronica Bronkema, Board Chair WSECU

Two columns of stacked blocks on stage represented Washington's wage gap. After each speaker addressed the audience, they contributed a block to the shorter column until it reached the height of the taller column, symbolizing "closing the gap" between women's and men's earnings in our state. This on-stage moment highlighted the collective efforts needed across various sectors to achieve pay parity.

WSWC Executive Director Grace Yoo emphasized the opportunity within the challenge: "While the gender wage gap is disheartening, it's also an opportunity to ensure more women in our state are benefitting from Washington's thriving industries and high-paying jobs."



April Sims, President of the Washington State Labor Council, underscored the importance of a multifaceted approach: "What we can't win through policy, we can bargain for in our contracts." She presented data showing unionized women of color earning significantly closer to their male counterparts compared to those in non-union settings.

WSWC Chair, Quinn Dalan honored Governor Inslee and First Lady Trudy Inslee with a portrait of Mt. Rainier for their advocacy efforts, including improved caregiver benefits and protections for reproductive rights.

Governor Inslee addressed threats against reproductive care access during his remarks, citing discussions in the first presidential debate Thursday night.

"As we know, unfortunately, a woman's right of choice is under attack. We saw that last night. We've seen that from the U.S. Supreme Court... Washington is a choice state, and it will remain that way."

The Washington State Women's Commission's [Activate 3.8](#) campaign seeks to test and scale solutions to close the wage gap by bringing together thought leaders from government, business, and labor, while also introducing the next generation of girls to opportunities in STEM careers, the trades, and other high-paying occupations. The agency is partnering with the Girl Scouts of Washington on a state-wide tour across 10 cities to spotlight these opportunities and connect girls to women leaders in these fields.

The Pay Equity Tour kicks off on July 27th in [Spokane](#) at the Hemmingson Auditorium and HEMM Den on the Gonzaga University campus. The tour also stops in Bellingham, Olympia, Pullman, Redmond, Seattle, Sequim, Spokane, Tri-Cities, Vancouver, and Yakima.

**Photos for use:**

[Activate 3.8 launch event](#)

Credit: ClaymoreMac Media

Please contact [eliza.craig@swsc.wa.gov](mailto:eliza.craig@swsc.wa.gov) if you have any issues accessing the link.

**Interview Availability:**

Washington State Women's Commission Executive Director [Grace Yoo](#), Gov. Jay Inslee's lead cabinet director on women's policy, is available for virtual or in-studio interviews to speak on:

- Washington State Women's Commission's analysis of driving factors behind the gap
- WSWC's Activate 3.8 campaign to close Washington's staggering gender pay gap

Reach out to [eliza.craig@swsc.wa.gov](mailto:eliza.craig@swsc.wa.gov) to coordinate.



**ABOUT THE WASHINGTON STATE WOMEN'S COMMISSION**

The Washington State Women's Commission (WSWC) is an executive branch cabinet agency in the Office of Governor Inslee serving as the primary voice in government for Washington women and girls. Signed into law in 2018, WSWC develops policies and initiatives to address critical issues that disproportionately affect women, including childcare access and affordability, domestic and gender-based violence, equal pay, health care access, and intersectional inequities. Through strategic listening and collaboration, we represent the 3.8 million women and girls across the state.

Learn more at [wswc.wa.gov](https://www.wswc.wa.gov) and [activate38.com](https://activate38.com).