

# A Stronger California

*Securing Economic Opportunity  
for All Women and Families*

**2021 Legislative Agenda**

Stronger California Advocates Network

## About the Stronger California Agenda:

California is home to millions of families who rely on common sense public policies to help them build assets, succeed in safe workplaces, and access affordable and quality care for their children. That is why advocates, legislators, and other community members throughout the state stand together in support of the Stronger California Agenda.

The Stronger California Agenda has four pillars that frame the policy initiatives critical to the economic security of women and families in this state. It recognizes that women are critical to a strong and vibrant economy and play a pivotal role in spurring economic growth in California. California is home to 12 percent of the country's women, who comprise almost half the workforce in our state and are the primary income-earners in many households. They influence the economy as decision-makers for their families, as consumers, and as workers.

The Stronger California Agenda provides concrete policy solutions to address the fact that many women and their families in California face obstacles to enjoying economically secure lives. California has the fifth largest economy in the world, but one of the nation's highest poverty rates, which disproportionately harms women and children. Sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination in the workplace, and retaliation for speaking out, continue to push women out of jobs and entire industries. Child care access is lower in California than in other states. Women are paid less than their male counterparts for the same work in virtually every job sector. They are also more likely to work in low-wage jobs and have fewer opportunities to advance in their careers. California's families also suffer without family-friendly work policies that would allow workers to earn a living while also caring for their families.

These challenges have been magnified and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic crisis. Prior to the pandemic, women were already experiencing significant barriers to economic security and were more likely to live in poverty. Financial insecurity was especially pronounced for Black, Latinx, Native, Asian American, and Pacific Islander women in this state. The current crisis is the first economic recession in which more women than men lost jobs. Therefore, policies that address the myriad obstacles threatening women and families are now more important than ever, and it is critical that women are centered in economic recovery efforts.

This Agenda is not just about women. It promotes policies that will improve the economic security of all Californians as we emerge from the current economic crisis. Thank you for standing with the Stronger California Advocates Network in supporting this Agenda. To learn more about this historic effort, visit **[StrongerCalifornia.org](https://StrongerCalifornia.org)**. A list of partners in the Stronger California Advocates Network is on the back page.

Onward,



Noreen Farrell  
Executive Director, Equal Rights  
Advocates; Co-Chair of the Stronger  
California Advocates Network



Jessica Stender  
Senior Counsel, Equal Rights  
Advocates; Co-Chair of the Stronger  
California Advocates Network

# A Stronger California: Securing Economic Opportunity for All Women & Families

## The 2021 Stronger California Advocates Network Agenda

### Ensure Fair Pay, Job Opportunities, & Workplace Justice

- **SB 321 – Eliminating the Exclusion of Household Domestic Service in Cal/OSHA** *(Introduced by Senator Durazo)*

This bill would eliminate the “household domestic service” exclusion in Labor Code §6303 (Cal/OSHA). California occupational health and safety (Cal/OSHA) requirements for employers to provide a safe working environment currently do not apply to “household domestic service.” The term is not defined, and there is no legislative history to help explain why the exclusion was added. This bill would remove a historical exclusion that has no justification in today’s economy and is particularly egregious considering the occupational health and safety hazards domestic workers currently face during the COVID-19 crisis.

- **SB 331 – Silenced No More Act** *(Introduced by Senator Leyva)*

This bill would expand the prohibition on non-disclosure agreements (NDA’s) in settlement agreements involving sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sex discrimination to cover settlement agreements involving all forms of harassment or discrimination. SB 331 would also expand the prohibition on overly broad confidentiality and non-disparagement clauses in employment agreements to cover workers who are required to sign these types of clauses as part of a severance agreement.

- **SB 62 – Garment Worker Protection Act** *(Introduced by Senator Durazo)*

This bill will expand and strengthen enforcement of wage theft liability in the garment manufacturing industry, ensuring that retailers cannot use layers of contracting to avoid responsibility under the law. The bill strengthens protections for garment workers by: 1) Eliminating piece rate pay in the garment industry to ensure garment workers are paid legal wages for all time spent working, while still allowing for incentive-based bonuses above their legal wages; (2) Expanding liability for wage violations; (3) Creating a rebuttable presumption as to the identities of the brands based on garment workers’ testimony; and (4) Explicitly authorizing the Labor Commissioner’s Bureau of Field Enforcement to investigate and cite brand guarantors.

## Expand Access to Affordable, Quality Early Childhood Care and Education

- **Budget Request: Child Care**

The Network supports ECE Coalition budget asks to eliminate family fees, expand child care subsidies and financial support for all child care providers, and build more supply of child care in underserved communities.

- **AB 92 – Eliminating Family Fees (*Introduced by Assemblymember Reyes*)**

This bill alleviates the burdens that families face in paying for child care by creating an equitable sliding scale for family fees and waiving fees for all families until October 31, 2022.

## Support Family-Friendly Workplaces

- **AB 95 – Bereavement Leave (*Introduced by Assemblymember Low*)**

This bill would provide 3 days of unpaid, job protected, bereavement leave for employees who work for companies with 25 or fewer employees and 10 days of unpaid bereavement leave for employees who work for companies with more than 25 employees.

- **AB 1041 – Chosen Families (*Introduced by Assemblymember Wicks*)**

This bill would ensure that California workers are able to be there for their loved ones when it matters most by expanding paid sick leave, the California Family Rights Act, and Paid Family Leave to include family members who are related by blood or affinity.

- **AB 1119 – Family Responsibility Discrimination (*Introduced by Assemblymember Wicks*)**

This bill would protect California workers by ensuring that employers cannot discriminate against employees because of their family responsibilities. In other words, an employer may not treat a worker adversely based on assumptions or stereotypes associated with their family responsibilities.

- **AB 123 – Paid Family Leave Wage Replacement (*Introduced by Assemblymember Gonzalez*)**

This bill would increase the wage replacement rate for Paid Family Leave to 90%, making it possible for millions of Californians to be there for their family when it matters most.

## Build Economic Security by Addressing Poverty & Building Assets

- **SB 1493 – Keeping Survivors Housed (*Introduced by Senator Rubio*)**

This bill would strengthen California's existing protections for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, or elder or dependent adult abuse. It will close loopholes in current eviction protections to ensure that no survivor can be evicted because of acts of abuse committed against them and strengthen the documentation that can be provided to demonstrate that the individual is a survivor of abuse and to assert the eviction defense.

- **SB 364 – End Child Hunger (*Introduced by Senator Skinner*)**

This bill endeavors to dramatically reduce child hunger and create a more sustainable and healthy school food environment by taking several important steps. First, this bill will provide meals to all public school children, free of charge, without having to apply for a means-tested program. Second, it will create the Better Out of School Time (BOOST) Nutrition program to provide food benefits when school campuses close and child hunger spikes. Third, it will support the purchase of California food prepared by California workers at school or district kitchens. Finally, SB 364 will strengthen existing law to ensure that, until school meal applications are no longer necessary to collect, the privacy of children is protected and that additional anti-hunger help is offered when an online school meal application is used by a school or school district.

- **AB 367 – Menstrual Equity (*Introduced by Assemblymember C. Garcia*)**

This bill would require free menstrual products in restrooms in public schools with grades 6-12, community colleges, California State Universities, and public buildings. Research shows that students lacking access to menstrual products experience higher rates of absence and are less able to focus and engage in the classroom. One study found that one in four girls missed class due to a lack of access to menstrual products and that one in five reported not being able to afford menstrual products. Such disruptions cost considerable time and resources, which can be particularly burdensome on youth, low-income people, unhoused people, and other vulnerable populations. By providing menstrual products in schools and public buildings, California helps ensure that people who menstruate have equal access to education and public life, and are empowered to reach their full potential, irrespective of their gender or economic status.

- **SB 373 – Protecting Vulnerable Populations From Coerced Debt (*Introduced by Senator Min*)**

This bill would protect survivors of economic abuse from the consequences of debts incurred in their name without their knowledge or consent, in two specific ways. First, the bill would prevent debt collection against abuse survivors when they can demonstrate that the debt was incurred as a result of economic abuse. The bill establishes a set of documentation that can be provided to demonstrate this. Second, the bill would prevent consumer credit reporting agencies from reporting these debts. SB 373 will protect survivors' economic well-being by preventing them from needing to pay the costs of these debts and protecting their credit report and credit score from being damaged as a result of the debt.

- **SB 691 – Tax Credit Expansions: Low Wage Workers and Unpaid Caregivers (*Introduced by Senator Rubio*)**

This bill would permanently increase the California Earning Income Tax Credit (CalEITC) for workers excluded from the federal EITC, and extend eligibility for the Young Child Tax Credit (YCTC). SB 691 signals that lawmakers believe it is important to make sure that every family with young children can meet basic needs regardless of whether they work for pay.

- **Budget Request: SSI/SSP**

This request asks that SSI recipients be included in any future Golden State Stimulus, and fulfill the Master Plan for Aging by increasing SSI/SSP Grants for people with disabilities and older adults so that their income is no less than the federal poverty line. Per a California Budget and Policy Center report, women and people of color represent a significant majority of SSI/SSP recipients due to labor market inequalities and rely on this benefit as their sole source of income. Further, current grant amounts leave our most vulnerable community either homeless or struggling to stay housed.

## The Stronger California Advocates Network

The Stronger California Advocates Network is a historic collaboration of organizations and advocate coalitions with deep experience working with communities affected by the four pillars of the Stronger California Agenda. The Network capitalizes on the strengths of our members to advance the economic security of women and families in California.

### Network Roundtable

9 to 5

ACLU of California

Act for Women & Girls

Alliance for Community Empowerment

American Association of University Women

California Asset Building Coalition California

Child Care Resource & Referral Network

California Domestic Workers Coalition

California Employment Lawyers Association

California Latinas for Reproductive Justice

California Partnership

California Partnership to End Domestic Violence

California Women's Law Center

California Work and Family Coalition Center for Popular Democracy

Child Care Law Center

Child Care Resource

Center Equal Rights

Advocates Legal Aid at Work

Lutheran Office of Public Policy

Mujeres Unidas y Activas

National Council of Jewish Women

Organization United for Respect

Parent Voices CA

Raising California Together

Restaurant Opportunities Centers (ROC)

United Tradeswomen, Inc.

UFCW Western States

Council Voices for Progress

Western Center on Law and Poverty

Women's Foundation of California

Work Equity

YWCA- San Francisco & Marin

### Network Supporters

Asset Building Strategies

Business and Professional Women of Colorado

California Women

Lawyers

California Immigrant

Policy Center

Center for Responsible

Lending Centro Legal de la

Raza ChangeLab Solutions

Closing the Women's Wealth Gap

Initiative Coalition of Labor Union

Women – CA Capitol Chapter

Community Legal Services in East Palo

Alto Consumer Attorneys of California

County of Santa Clara Office of Women's Policy

Courage Campaign

Equal Justice

Society Feminist

Majority FreeFrom

Friends Committee on Legislation of California

Insight Center for Community

Economic Development

It's Time Network

Justice in Aging

NARAL Pro-Choice

California National Housing

Law Project

National Women's Political Caucus

LA Metro

National Women's Political Caucus

California

Public

Counsel

The Public Interest Law

Project UltraViolet

United Nations Association of

Boulder County

Women Lawyers of Sacramento

Women's March Oakland

*For more information, contact:*  
*Jessica Stender,*  
*[jstender@equalrights.org](mailto:jstender@equalrights.org)* *Noreen Farrell,*  
*[nfarrell@equalrights.org](mailto:nfarrell@equalrights.org)*