

**Testimony of
Gloria Middleton, President
New York Administrative Employees
Local 1180
Communications Workers of America,
AFL-CIO**



**Commission on Gender Equity
Office of the Mayor, City of New York
September 19, 2019**

Good afternoon panelists.

My name is Gloria Middleton, President of Communications Workers of America, Local 1180. My union represents 9,000 active City administrative workers – the majority of whom are female and minority -- and almost 6,000 retirees. I am here today to speak about pay equity – making sure that **ALL** City workers – **especially women and minorities** – receive the compensation they are entitled to for the work they do.

We all know that salaries and compensation packages should **not** be tied to the color of your skin...your gender...your sexual orientation...or your religion. They **simply** and **clearly** should be in direct correlation to the work expected of you in your given title, and nothing else. In other words, a black female doing similar work to a white male should be paid equally. That's just common sense. But in New York City, the most progressive City in America, that common sense was nowhere to be found.

That is until Local 1180 took the reins and filed a lawsuit against the City bringing the problem to light.

Our case goes way back to December 2013 when my union filed charges with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission against the Bloomberg Administration based on the fact that the wages of Administrative Managers we represent were being **grossly suppressed**. These Administrative Managers had been in the City's Managerial Pay Plan prior to Local 1180 becoming their union – and it appeared that the minimum salaries had been suppressed once women and people of color started being placed in the title.

At the same time that the **minimum** wage was being suppressed, the **maximum** wage for the title increased. We also noticed that women of color were at the minimum, while men and whites tended to be at the maximum. The salary range started at \$53,000 and went to more than \$150,000. Yes, almost a **\$100,000 difference** just based on the color of your skin, your gender, or both.

The entire history of our EEO case is quite lengthy – and would take hours to delve into. If you are interested in the entire timeline with all the details, you can find it on the Local 1180 website at www.cwa1180.org.

However, I will tell you now that in April 2015, the EEOC found in our favor that there was reasonable cause to believe there was widespread discrimination against women and people of color in the title of Administrative Manager throughout all City agencies, including NYCHA. They calculated that the disparity over time was worth **MORE THAN \$246 MILLION**.

After years of stonewalling by the City ... and the fight of our lives ... Local 1180 accomplished what we set out to on behalf of our Administrative Managers – **level the PAYING field**. We won!

With a few too many trips to court behind us, we are now currently waiting for the City to begin issuing checks to members who faced discrimination.

In his first State of the City address of his second term, Mayor Bill de Blasio pledged to enact policies to make New York City the “fairest big city in America.”

Two years ago, he said that it is QUOTE “unacceptable that we’re still fighting for equal pay for equal work. The simple fact is that women and people of color are frequently paid less for the same work as their white, male counterparts.”

The Mayor of the **greatest** and **most progressive city** has admitted the ongoing unfairness ... yet not enough is being done to remedy the situation.

I would like to be able to sit here today and tell you that CWA Local 1180 is the **ONLY** union in the City of New York that has encountered this pay inequity problem. But unfortunately, I cannot.

CWA Local 1180 has paved the way for those unions to follow that are battling the same pay discrepancies for their members that we have already

dealt with. Yet, it's a shame that we had to have this battle at all. And it remains a shame that other unions are in the same boat today.

We need change. We need all workers regardless of gender, race, color, religion, sexual orientation, or anything else for that matter, to be paid equally for equal work. That's the bottom line.

We are reminded every day by the me too, black lives matter, and times up movements that despite the passage of the civil rights and equal pay acts as the law of the land more than a half century ago, the legacy of racism lingers in American culture – and unfortunately, the City of New York.