

## **VCW VIEW: Celebrating Advancements in Rights and Opportunities for Women in 2015**

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VCW (Vermont Commission on Women) shares in celebrating this year's advancements in rights and opportunities for women with Advisory Council member, the [American Association of University Women](#).

**STATE EQUAL PAY LAWS:** This year California passed the nation's strongest statewide equal pay law, providing more legal tools for employees and ensuring stronger salary transparency rules. New York passed a package of five bills that take on discrimination, sexual harassment, and pregnancy accommodations in the workplace. Illinois approved a law to ensure that all employers, no matter how many workers they employ, follow established equal pay policies. North Dakota's new law makes it harder for employers to use non-work-related defenses to defeat pay discrimination claims. Both Oregon and Connecticut passed laws that prohibit employers from discriminating or retaliating against employees who discuss their wages. Finally, contractors in Delaware are now required to pay all employees equally. Learn more about Vermont's equal pay protections in [VCW's workplace laws publication](#).

**FIRSTS IN THE MILITARY:** [Kristen Griest](#) and [Shaye Haver](#) both graduates of West Point, were the **first female soldiers to graduate from the U.S. Army Ranger School**. Just days after this achievement, the Navy Seals announced a plan to allow women into their teams. [Vice Admiral Nora Tyson](#) was nominated by the president to lead the U.S. Third Fleet, making her the **first female commander of a Navy fleet**. [Air Force Lt. Col. Christine Mau](#) was **the first woman to fly an F-35 Lighting II jet**, described as one of the most technologically complex planes ever built. [Capt. Katie Higgins](#) became the **first woman to fly with the Blue Angels**, an elite group of pilots that performs aerobatics.

**THE NEW 10:** In June, the U.S. Department of the Treasury announced that a woman will be featured on the redesigned ten dollar bill in 2020. That year represents the 100th anniversary of women gaining the right to vote under the 19th Amendment.

**PRESIDENTIAL EXECUTIVE ORDER ON PAID LEAVE:** Federal contractors will be required to provide their employees at least seven days of earned paid sick leave, including absences due to sexual assault or domestic violence.

**U.S. WOMEN'S SOCCER TEAM WINS WORLD CUP:** For the first time since 1999, the United States women's national soccer team won the FIFA World Cup. Congress introduced resolutions that call on FIFA to pay men's and women's championship teams equally—not the current \$35 million to \$2 million ratio. Learn more about that [FIFA equal pay resolution here](#) from AAUW.

**RECORD NUMBER OF WOMEN SERVING IN CONGRESS:** A record number of women are serving the 114th Congress: 88 women in the House and 20 in the Senate. Vermont has yet to send a woman to Congress.

**FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALE ATTORNEY GENERAL:** The Senate made the historic confirmation of Loretta Lynch, the first ever African American woman to serve as U.S. Attorney General.

**FIRSTS IN SPORTS:** Sarah Thomas became the **first female full-time referee in the NFL**. She was also the **first female referee in a major college football game**. Jen Welter became the **first woman to coach in the NFL**, for the Arizona Cardinals. Ultimate Fighting Championship's women's bantamweight champion Ronda Rousey was **first-ever female athlete to guest host SportsCenter**, ESPN's flagship program. NBA's San Antonio Spurs hired Becky Hammon last year, but she became the **first woman to coach in the NBA Summer League** this year. Justine Siegal became Major League Baseball's first **female coach this year**, of the Oakland Athletics. Ms. Siegal is also the **first woman to pitch at batting practice for a major league team**.

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Vermont Commission on Women (VCW)

VIEW Message – Vermont Information Exchange for Women

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