

# Maloney's newly introduced Gender Diversity in Corporate Leadership Act of 2016 gains backing of U.S. Chamber of Commerce

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Press Release

*WASHINGTON* – The United States Chamber of Commerce today offered its support for a bill to encourage gender diversity on corporate boards of publicly traded companies. The Gender Diversity in Corporate Leadership Act (H.R. 4718) introduced last week by Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney (D-NY) would establish a diversity advisory group at the Securities and Exchange Commission made up of representatives of different stakeholders which would study and issue a report on gender diversity among corporate directors. It would also require a corporation to report to the SEC on the gender composition of its board.

“If we do nothing, we won’t reach gender parity on corporate boards for at least another 40 years,” said Maloney. “It’s time for women, government, and corporate America to work together in addressing this problem. The endorsement of my legislation from the Chamber and leading organizations supporting diversity, and the work of SEC Chair Mary Jo White show that is finally starting to occur.”

“The Chamber welcomes the introduction of the Gender Diversity in Corporate Leadership Act of 2016,” wrote R. Bruce Josten, Executive Vice President for Government Affairs for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in a letter to Rep. Maloney. “The bill’s goal of promoting gender diversity in the boardroom of American businesses reflects the reality that women, who historically have been statistically underrepresented among corporate boards of directors, possess invaluable insights, experiences, and management skills that can and should be deployed to support the corporate goals of our nation’s producers, innovators, and employers,”

The bill also gained the support of Catalyst, the leading nonprofit organization with a mission to accelerate progress for women through workplace inclusion. “Gender parity on boards and in leadership is desirable not only for the sake of fairness and equity, but it’s necessary to achieve

equal opportunity for everyone” said Deborah Gillis, President and Chief Executive Officer, Catalyst. “It also enhances our country’s ability to compete and flourish in a global economy. Leveraging diverse talent is critical to the United States’ long-term competitiveness. Catalyst believes that by implementing this legislation and tapping into the many available resources for expanding diversity in corporate leadership, organizations can achieve gender parity at every level.”

“Women are significantly underrepresented on corporate boards, to the detriment of these companies, their investors, and the American economy,” said Rep. Don Beyer (D-VA), an original cosponsor of the legislation. “Transparency is critical to improving these gender inequities. That is why I am proud to join Rep. Maloney to propose that the SEC mandate corporations to report the gender makeup of their board room.”

The Gender Diversity in Corporate Leadership Act:

- Convenes an Advisory Group at the SEC to issue a report on strategies to increase gender diversity on corporate boards, including recommendations.
- Requires an annual report from the SEC on the status of gender diversity on corporate boards.
- Requires that public companies report the gender of board directors and nominees—just like they report their name, age, and qualifications.

In January, Maloney unveiled a new [report](#) from the Government Accountability Office, which shows women are severely underrepresented on corporate boards, holding just 16 percent of seats in the boardroom. The study, which Maloney requested in May 2014, shows that even if the rate of women joining corporate boards were doubled, so they were hired at the same rate as men, it would still take at least 40 years (2056) for women to reach parity.

Maloney [wrote to SEC Chair Mary Jo White](#) to encourage the SEC to adopt a proposal submitted by nine leading public fund fiduciaries to make a limited amendment to existing disclosure rules to enhance the transparency of boards and the ability of investors to evaluate companies’ efforts to ensure diversity. Maloney has since spoken with White to thank her for her outspoken support for improving diversity, and to press her to adopt the amendment proposed by the public fund fiduciaries.

**Issues:**

[Women's Issues, Increasing the Role of Women in Corporate Boardrooms](#)