



Women's Equality is Good Business by Cynthia DiBartolo



Gender based inequality is a moral issue; it's also bad economics. There is no question that providing equal opportunities for women is critical to New York State's economic future. In order for business, labor and our state to prosper, we must work together to improve the workplace for women.

The women of this great State of New York collectively have 10 million voices and it is time to turn up the volume. As an owner of a business, **Tigress Financial Partners**, an **Executive Board Member of the Business and Labor Coalition of New York (BALCONY)** and as **Chairperson of the Greater New York Chamber of Commerce**, it is incumbent upon me to be part of this historic initiative that will effectively work to break down barriers to women's full participation in society and seek to create a sustainable meritocracy in business.

New York has long been a model for equality and fairness on several issues including women's rights, and it is fitting that we lead the way with ground breaking legislation.

Companies that succeed in promoting women to the most senior levels of business tend to perform better than companies that do not. Additionally, companies that invest in women benefit because they attract and retain qualified employees, which increases productivity and reduces costly turnover. These businesses prove to be stronger companies and better long-term investments.

Gender parity is good business, and executives must frame equality as a strategic imperative. Increasing women's economic participation by improving the workplace and enhancing their efficient productivity will dramatically impact the competitiveness and growth of our companies and the economy of New York. Clearly, holding back half the population behind actual or perceived barriers, fosters a toxic environment that leads to a deficit in educational and fair job opportunities, unequal wages, let alone the inexcusable underlying violence and oppression. This is not just morally reprehensible; it's bad economics.

When women control the critical aspects of life, such as jobs, housing, personal health choices, they better participate in the social and economic life of the State. There is no question that providing equal opportunities for women is critical for our State's economic future. We must have our voices heard above those who hurt our progress in the name of free market capitalism. I am a capitalist. I own my business. Ensuring gender equality does not seek to destroy capitalism; rather, ensuring gender equality seeks to change the priorities of business goals. Moreover, gender equality is not a zero-sum equation: Women are already powerful. We only need, deserve and demand an equal playing field to unleash our formidable force.

Haven't women been talking about this for decades already? Yes, we have. While some individual companies have done a stellar job obtaining real measurable diversity and inclusion, sadly the overall progress in the Corporate Sector as a whole has been painfully slow -- at the current rate of change it would take women executives more than 70 years to reach parity.

Therefore, I am thrilled that New York State is about to make history with the first law to take advantage of this convergence of economic trends, extinguish the barriers that perpetuate discrimination, and harness the power of women for sustainable business growth. We join Governor Andrew Cuomo, labor unions and advocacy organizations, as we understand that together we are the **future for our daughters**, we are the **change for mothers and sisters** and we are **part of building a better and stronger New York for all of us.**"



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