



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
March 28, 2017

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Equal Pay Bill Passes Oregon House

SALEM – This afternoon following a long debate on the House floor, the Oregon House of Representatives today passed [House Bill 2005](#). The historic legislation will expand protections to ensure pay equity for every Oregonian, regardless of gender or protected class.

House Bill 2005, which passed 36-24, will:

- Make it an unlawful employment practice to use protected class status as a means to discriminate in payment of wages;
- Expand protected classes beyond gender to include race, color, religion, sexual orientation including perceived or actual gender identity, national origin, marital status, disability, or age.
- Prohibit the practice of screening job applicants based on their salary history;
- Cover three categories of harm to workers: pay discrimination, retaliation against a worker for consulting a lawyer or filing a claim, and retaliation against a worker for inquiring about wages,
- Strengthen penalties for wage discrimination violations

Reps. Ann Lininger (D-Lake Oswego), Janelle Bynum (D-Happy Valley) and John Lively (D-Springfield) and Sen. Kathleen Taylor (D-Portland) are the chief sponsors of the bill.

“For too long we have operated in a system that is fundamentally unfair and fails to compensate every employee equally for doing the same job,” **Rep. Lininger** said. “We owe it to our communities to get to work on this important issue and ensure that future generations have the equity and equality that they deserve.”

House Bill 2005 expands upon existing federal law which provides protections explicitly for women. In spite that legislation which extends back 40 years, national statistics show women make 20 cents less on average compared to men. For women of color the disparity is even larger. African American women only make 63 cents for every dollar a Caucasian male makes while Latinas make just 54 cents for every dollar a Caucasian male makes.

“These pay disparities are morally unacceptable,” said bill sponsor **Rep. Teresa Alonso Leon (D-Woodburn)**. “I have spoken with young women in my district who are learning that if they work hard, do their best, and follow every rule, they’ll end up making just a little more than half of their peers. It is unacceptable to me that this is what we are telling young women and girls all

across Oregon. Today we are sending a strong message and creating good policy that moves us closer to actual pay equity.”

House Bill 2005 adds remedies for individuals facing pay disparities including:

- Extending time limitations for individuals to bring an action;
- Giving individuals the right to jury trial;
- Allowing individuals to seek compensatory and punitive damages.

“I support HB 2005 because I am an African American woman and a mother, with two black boys and two black girls,” **Rep. Janelle Bynum (D-Happy Valley)** said. “When they grow up, I want them to know that their compensation is what they earned, and what they deserve. This bill moves us closer to that goal.”

Rep. Janeen Sollman (D-Hillsboro), another sponsor of HB 2005, said it is vital that we work to level the playing field for every Oregonian. During the floor debate Rep. Sollman told a story about visiting a school and hearing from young students who already recognized the inequity of the current system.

“Let’s be an example for the country,” Sollman said. “But more importantly, let’s make this statement for the all of the young girls and boys who are in classrooms right now: You are worth fighting for, and your skills will determine your pay scale, rather than gender or other immutable characteristics.”

The bill now moves to the Oregon Senate for consideration.

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