



## SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Senate supports pay equality, passes ‘Oregon Equal Pay Act’**

*HB 2005: Equal pay for equal work, regardless of gender, race or other factors*

SALEM – The Oregon Senate voted to require women and other protected classes statewide to be paid the same wages for the same work as others in the same positions.

House Bill 2005 – the Oregon Equal Pay Act of 2017 – was championed by Sen. Kathleen Taylor (D-Portland) and Rep. Ann Lininger (D-Lake Oswego). The bill – which passed overwhelmingly with bipartisan support on the Senate floor today – requires that employers pay equal wages for the same work, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status, disability, age or veteran status. Terms, conditions and privileges of employment also are required to be equal under the bill.

“This is a victory for women, people of color and others who earn less even though they do the same work as their coworkers,” Taylor said. “This bill requires that compensation decisions be fair and based only on legitimate job-related factors.”

According to the National Partnership for Women and Families, women in Oregon are paid 82 cents for every dollar that men are paid, amounting to an annual wage gap of around \$8,393. That disparity is even bigger for women of color. African American women are paid 70 cents; Latinas 51 cents; and Asian women 75 cents compared to every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men, the group reported.

Given the rising number of woman-headed households, as well as those that rely on two incomes for survival, this is a serious issue. In Oregon, the gender-based pay gap means that women are earning altogether \$8 billion less than men annually, according to the National

Partnership for Women and Families. More than 30 percent of the 160,000 Oregon households headed by women are living in poverty.

House Bill 2005 requires that differences in compensation among employees must be based on job-related reasons such as merit, seniority, quantity or quality of production, workplace locations, travel, education, training or experience. The bill also prohibits employers from using salary history to screen applicants or determine compensation, as well as acquiring salary history from applicants or employees from current or former supervisors. An applicant still can disclose salary history after a compensation offer has been made.

“Unfortunately, even in 2017, there are many inequality issues that we still need to address, and fair pay is one of the most critical,” Taylor said. “The wage gap that we’re currently seeing is morally unacceptable. Two people doing the same type and quality of work should be compensated equally. This bill ensures we are doing that. It even requires us to look at ourselves, as a government employer, to make certain our employment practices across state government are in line with the values that we are advancing today across all sectors.”

Taylor – who chairs the Senate Committee on Workforce – worked closely with Vice Chair Sen. Tim Knopp (R-Bend), as well as a variety of stakeholders. Knopp applauded Taylor’s efforts to move the groundbreaking legislation forward.

“Chair Kathleen Taylor provided the leadership that was needed to craft the Oregon Equal Pay Act,” Knopp said. “She showed incredible principle, courage and integrity that led to this historic agreement having broad bipartisan support.”

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