



## SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

Oregon State Legislature  
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### NEWS RELEASE

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#### **Legislation will require state contractors to undergo equal pay training**

*SB 491 will increase fairness in the workforce and protect workers who discuss pay*

SALEM – The Senate approved legislation this morning that requires large state contractors to complete training on equal pay laws and protects contractor employees who discuss their wages from retaliation by their employers. Senate Bill 491 is one of a number of bills introduced this session to help close the gender pay gap by eliminating employment bias and discrimination based on gender.

“This legislation will help us level the playing field for Oregon women,” said Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson (D-Gresham), chief sponsor of the bill. “Women are not receiving equal pay for equal work, and that hurts Oregon families. We must address these challenges if we are going to expand opportunities for women and grow Oregon’s economy.”

According to work done by the Oregon Council on Civil Rights in 2014, women in Oregon earn 79 cents on the dollar compared to men’s wages for comparable work. Both Governor Kate Brown and Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian cited these facts in letters of support of SB 491 submitted to the Senate Workforce Committee.

“Educating employers and protecting employee rights are critical to working toward pay equity and were specifically recommended by the Oregon Council on Civil Rights,” said Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland). “It is our obligation to hold those who do business with the state to a high standard. Senate Bill 491 is a simple, straightforward requirement that will help raise employer awareness of wage disparity and stereotypes while

protecting workers who have questions or concerns about equal pay for equal work in their workplace.”

SB 491 requires vendors bidding on state contracts over \$500,000 and who have 50 or more full time equivalent employees to submit certification of training on pay equity with their project bids. The state Department of Administrative Services is charged with developing a free online training and certification program for contractors.

SB 491 will now go to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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