



Testimony for the Senate Finance Committee

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SB 481 Labor and Employment - Equal Pay for Equal Work

SUPPORT

The ACLU of Maryland supports SB 481, which would make significant steps toward ensuring pay equity for Maryland's workforce.

According to the U.S. Census bureau, in 2013, women who worked full time earned, on average, only 78 cents for every dollar men earned. The figures are even worse for women of color. African American women earned only approximately 64 cents and Latinas only 56 cents for each dollar earned by a white male. This injustice is particularly troubling in today's economy where almost 40 percent of women are acting as the primary breadwinners in their households.

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Some further statistics show:

- Just one year out of college, women working full time who are of similar age, education and family responsibilities are paid on average just 82 cents of what their male peers were paid.
- If the wage gap were closed, women and their families, on average, would have \$11,000 more in their pockets.
- If women received pay equal to their male counterparts, the U.S. economy would produce \$447.6 billion in additional income.¹

Especially in this economic climate, we need concrete action to improve the economic security of working families. Pay equity is critical, not only to families' economic security, but also to Maryland's economic recovery.

It is not surprising, then, that Americans across the political spectrum strongly support a law to strengthen equal pay efforts. In a recent national survey, 84% said they support a new law that would provide women more tools to get fair pay in the workplace. High levels of support for this bill held true regardless of political party, gender, race, ethnicity, or regions of the country. For example, 77% of Republicans support it, along with 91% of Democrats and 87% of Independents. Large majorities of both men and women support the law as well 81% and 87% respectively.

For the foregoing reasons, the ACLU of Maryland supports SB 481.

¹ See <https://www.aclu.org/blog/womens-rights/equal-pay-numbers> and the citations therein.