



MOVING OREGON FORWARD WITH  
SMART POLICIES FOR TODAY'S FAMILIES.

SB 744

May 16, 2013

Dear Members of the Oregon House,

This year it took until April 9<sup>th</sup>, over a quarter of the year, for women in the United States to finally earn what their male counterparts earned in 2012. It took women 15 months to earn what men earned in twelve because they still aren't paid equally for equal work.

Despite the fact that the Equal Pay Act was passed in 1963 under President John F. Kennedy, women across the United States earn, on average, 77 cents for every dollar men earn for equal work -- a 23 percent gap. And the gap widens for women of color: African American women are paid 64 cents and Latinas are paid just 55 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men. This is for the same work -- controlling for variables by income, education, job type and more. It comes down to discrimination for the value of women's work, and this is a significant problem for women and the families they support.

Here in Oregon, working women fare slightly better than the national average, earning about 78 cents for every dollar Oregon's men earn. That's hardly cause for celebration, though, when Oregon women and their families are being shortchanged nearly \$10,000 a year, amounting to hundreds of thousands of dollars over a lifetime. Women don't pay less for housing, health care, transportation, food or anything else, but they do have far less buying power because of this persistent and insidious discrimination.

Not surprisingly, this wage gap affects mothers' economic stability disproportionately. The "motherhood penalty" is estimated to be 5 percent per child, and mothers are earning a mere 60 cents for every dollar a father makes. And, most alarming: Motherhood is a leading predictor of poverty in old age in our country. The wage gap contributes greatly to this problem.

With three of four mothers now working outside the home and 40 percent of them serving as primary breadwinners, mothers' wages are critical to their own and their family's economic well-being. With more and more families relying solely or partially on women's paychecks for their livelihood, we must do all that we can to ensure the financial stability of Oregon's women and families.

We support Senate Bill 744 and efforts to launch a study conducted by the Oregon Council on Civil Rights to provide lawmakers with a clear understanding of the barriers to wage equality in Oregon and concrete, state-specific recommendations for needed changes.

Please join this effort to shift the way we see women and families in the workplace so that we can create a path toward wage equality in Oregon -- before another 50 years go by.

Thank you for your consideration,

Andrea Paluso, Executive Director  
Family Forward Oregon

  

From the Desk of Representative David Gomberg
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