



Oregon

Bureau of Labor and Industries

Brad Avakian
Commissioner

Chair, Senator Michael Dembrow
Senate Committee on Workforce

March 4, 2015

Re: SB 491, Equal Pay certification for public contractors

Dear Chair Dembrow and Committee Members,

At the Bureau of Labor and Industries it is our job to see that the civil rights of Oregonians are respected and preserved. Equal pay for equal work is a critical civil rights issue in our state. I directed the Oregon Council on Civil Rights to study the issue and make recommendations for how to address the reality that women in Oregon make just 79 cents for every dollar a man makes.

Last year, the Council produced the "Pay Inequality in Oregon" report. The report put forward recommendations to address pay inequality. While there is no single overarching solution to ending wage disparity, this is something we can do something about.

Meaningful changes to our laws are critical to true cultural shift. One key recommendation by the Council was expanding access to well-paying careers. Another was making sure women and employers are educated about wage disparity. The Council also recommends that employees' rights to discuss wages be protected. Senate Bill 491 addresses all three of these recommendations.

SB 491 will help to ensure public contractors are educated about equal pay. Requiring employers to provide education will keep employers mindful to avoid the pitfalls of wage disparities and stereotypes. Education and enforcement together are the crucial combination to making a real change in workplace culture.

I encourage the committee to pass SB 491 and continue to move Oregon forward towards equal pay.

Respectfully submitted,

Brad Avakian, Commissioner
Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries

800 NE Oregon St. Suite 1045
Portland, OR 97232-2180
(971) 673-0761
Fax (971) 673-0762

SALEM
3865 Wolverine St. NE; E-1
Salem, OR 97305-1268
(503) 378-3292
FAX (503) 373-7636

EUGENE
1400 Executive Parkway, Suite 200
Eugene, OR 97401-2158
(541) 686-7623
FAX (541) 686-7980

BEND
Apprenticeship and Training
Worksource Bend
1645 NE Forbes Rd, Ste 106
Bend, OR 97701-4990
(541) 322-2435
FAX (541) 389-8265

Oregon Relay TTY:711

www.oregon.gov/boli
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

MEDFORD
Apprenticeship and Training
119 N Oakdale Ave.
Medford, OR 97501-2629
(541) 776-6201
FAX (541) 776-6284

