

OWRC Oregon Women's Rights Coalition. . . since 1971

SB 491- Support

Chair Dembrow and members of the committee:

OW RC supports SB 491 which would require those who employ 40 or more and do business with the state to certify that their pay policies are equitable for the same class of employee. This applies to entities doing business with public agencies.

Some might argue that the state is interfering in the market and is inhibiting business.

Let's look at this argument with another lens. Let's look at the cost to society.

When women are not afforded the same opportunities and pay in the workforce they accumulate less worth, they have lower retirement and they are more likely to depend on social services provided by our taxes.

There are many studies regarding reliance on social security by women as their sole retirement income.

There are services on which we could focus: SNAP or food stamps and housing. But let's look at the cost of health care.

If you follow the Medicare/Medicaid program you know that there are citizens that we call "Dual Eligible". Two sets of citizens qualify for subsidies under this program: the aged and disabled enrollees.

Under dual eligibility Medicaid pays for Medicare expenses that would otherwise be paid for by citizens for premiums, co-pays and drugs.

By taking out the disabled and factoring the percentage of women over 65 as dual eligible at the lower 62 percent of dual eligible in 2010 there would be about 17,893 women in Oregon over 65 who were dual eligible. (I used the lowest percentage 62% as it ranges from there to 70% of the aged dual eligible.) These figures are for full dual eligible. At an average cost of \$20,632 these women would account for a little over \$369 million in 2010 for Medicaid expenditures.

Currently it is estimated that there are 285,000 Oregonian women over the age of 65. You can't do anything about the services they will need now and in the future to help them live a dignified life.

However there are about 794,000 women Oregonians between the ages of 18 and 50 who could make a difference in the bottom line for those women and future expenditures of the state.

It makes sense to make sure future women retirees have adequate retirements so they can live a dignified life without resorting to our "safety net" services as much as possible.

Source: Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured

Source: Suburban Stats using the U.S. Census Bureau

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