

Kate Brown
Governor



Oregon Commission for Women
"Advocating Equality and Diversity"
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Testimony in Support of HB 2007 A
May 6, 2015, Hearing Room C, 1 pm
Senate Workforce Committee

Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Thatcher, Senate Democratic Leader
Rosenbaum, and Senators Gelser and Knopp:

The Oregon Commission for Women believes that there are important steps that can be taken to level the field for women and workers of color in the workforce and pay equity, which cost nothing but provide key empowerment. We strongly support HB 2007A as such a bill.

For an employee to be able to talk about wages and earnings in the workplace without fear of retaliation is important to all employees. The OCFW joins the Oregon Council on Civil Rights and concerned groups statewide in considering this a basic protection important to women and employees of color who have experienced pay discrimination in the workplace for many years. Providing a transparent environment for discussions of pay gives needed air and light to the kinds of understanding that nurtures equal pay for equal work. All workers need to know what they are earning in a job position relative to someone with the same skills, experience and responsibility.

Workers in Oregon and especially women and women of color are paid 73 cents or less for every dollar earned by a man in their field and level of education and experience. The statistics are even more stark for women of color: African Americans are paid 64 cents and Latinas are paid just 54 cents for every dollar a white man earns. This wage disparity deeply affects the resources available to themselves and their families and ultimately follows into retirement. This bill can help the overall environment for pay equity with vital protections.

Oregon Commission for Women urges an Aye vote on HB 2007A as an important step toward the goal of achieving equal pay for equal work in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Vardavas, Chair, Oregon Commission for Women

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