

Kate Brown
Governor



Oregon Commission for Women
"Advocating Equality and Diversity"
1819 SW 5th Ave., Portland, OR 97201
O 503.302.9725/F 503.473.8519
Email: oaco.mail@oregon.gov
Website: www.oregon.gov/Women

Testimony in support of the SB 752 Pay Equity
February 22, 2017, Hearing Room A, 3:00pm
Senate Workforce Committee

Chair Holvey, Vice Chair Barreto, Vice Chair Bynum, members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 752. The Oregon Commission for Women is a strong supporter of Senate Bill 752 as it believes equal pay for equal work is essential for here in Oregon. We know how critical equal pay legislation is to Oregon and to Oregon families. We know the effect of this legislation will have impacts across age, location, disability status, income, religious affiliation, sexuality, gender identity, citizenship status, and primary language. Pay disparities among African American women is 63 cents to every dollar a white man makes. For Latina Oregonians it is only 54 cents. These striking disparities have critical impacts on Oregon communities of color.

The most recent report by the Oregon Women's Foundation, *Count Her In*, highlights how critical the need for pay equity legislation will be. The report highlights the most urgent issues impacting women in the state of Oregon with pay equity as one of the most critical for Oregon families. The wage gap hurts women and their families with each paycheck and results in lower retirement savings and less wealth to pass on to the next generation. *Count Her In* reports that women tend to be in jobs with unpredictable and irregular scheduling, which leaves them in chronic part-time, lower-paying jobs. The gender and race wealth gap in Oregon is created and perpetuated by discrimination, wage gaps, barriers to workforce participation, a lack of equitable opportunities, disproportionate criminal justice involvement, and unaffordable caregiving.

This proposed legislation takes critical steps to ensure the pay fairness many women need by precluding employers from asking about previous salary history. We know this legislation is one step in course correcting decades of women making less than their male counterparts and we are in full support of any legislation aimed at addressing systemic failures within the existing system.

The Oregon Commission for Women, working towards equity for women and children, applauds the champions of this legislation for introducing fair and equitable practices that will make a solid impact in Oregon. We, Commissioners, believe that this is an urgent matter and support systematic practices to close the pay gap for all working Oregonians. This legislation will work toward ensuring fair pay to all.

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We thank the House Committee on Business and Labor for holding this work session on such a critical subject for all working Oregonians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dr. Barbara Spencer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Barbara Spencer, Chair of Oregon Commission for Women