



## **HB0634 – Labor and Employment – Wage History and Wage Range**

Presented to Hon. Dereck E. Davis and members of the House Economic Matters Committee  
February 19, 2019 1:00 p.m.

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### **POSITION: SUPPORT**

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges the House Economic Matters Committee a favorable report on HB0634 – Labor and Employment - Wage History and Wage Range**, sponsored by Delegate Karen Lewis Young. This is a measure designed to, on request, require employers to clearly state the rate of pay for any employment position and prohibit the retaliation of employers in requiring salary history information of job applicants.

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. We strive to ensure every individual has the freedom to decide if, when, and how to plan for their futures and their families. The pay gap today is a threat to these freedoms, in particular the right to be fairly compensated which affects the right to parent with dignity. HB0634 seeks to set standards of transparency so that applicants and employees may identify instances of an unfairly applied pay gap in the workplace while also instituting work environments free from retaliatory actions of employers in seeking this fair compensation.

Pay inequity is a reproductive justice issue. Pay transparency is a method to end the pay gap by making it easier for workers to understand how they are paid, learn how an open job position is compensated, and to better engage in salary negotiations.<sup>1</sup> This is particularly the case for women seeking employment, as studies show not only are women less likely to initiate negotiation for wages or more likely to ask for lower-wages when there is no explicit opportunity for negotiation to occur.<sup>2,3</sup> If women are not properly compensated for their work, they and their talent will leave those jobs. Transparency is the cornerstone of any effective compensation policy. If feelings of injustice are reported, employees want to know what the leadership is willing to do to remedy the situation.<sup>4</sup>

Clear information about compensation helps to prevent wage discrimination. Employers seeking to pay someone less based upon outdated notions of gender expectations and stereotypes could do so without the applicant or employee knowing. Bias against women of child bearing age or those who are parents can contribute to setting wages that are lower than those offered to similarly skilled and experienced workers, as some employers do not trust that the same level of job performance could be expected. Demanding salary histories can undermine the goal of applicants seeking to return to the workforce and seeking a livable wage after staying home to parent, as well as those looking to scale back career plans temporarily while caring for a new baby or another family member.

Equal pay for equal work upholds reproductive justice and gender equity for these workers. Even though this bill counters a small part of the issue, it is a step in the right direction. Evening the playing field for earning potential is important if we want to truly ensure that everyone has control if, when, and how they become parents. Therefore, **NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges a favorable report on HB0634**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> Cabel, L. (2016). *Forget deodorant, we need real work to solve wage gap; Ontario committee studying gender-pay differential says improving data collection and increasing transparency would help a lot*. Globe & Mail (Toronto, Canada).

<sup>2</sup> Small, D. et al (2007). Who goes to the bargaining table? The influence of gender and framing on the initiation of negotiation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 93, 600–613. 10.1037/0022-3514.93.4.600

<sup>3</sup> Artz, B. et al. (May 9, 2018) Do Women Ask? *Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society*. 53 (4).

<sup>4</sup> Arscott, C. H. (2016). Pay Fairness Isn't Just About Teaching Employees to Negotiate. *Harvard Business Review Digital Articles*, 2-4