



Maine Women's Lobby

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Labor Committee Must Act To Promote Fair Pay

Maine Women's Lobby Applauds Bill to End the Wage Gap in Maine

(Augusta) Today the Joint Standing Committee on Labor considered L.D. 84, "An Act to Ensure Fair Pay," sponsored by Senator Deborah Simpson.

Said Maine Women's Lobby Public Policy Director Laura Harper in her testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor, "The bill before you today seeks to rectify a simple problem that current Maine law doesn't yet address, an employee's inability to address wage disparities—for the sole reason that they do not know that those disparities exist. By removing barriers to sharing salary information, Maine lawmakers can more fully realize the promise of our model Equal Pay Law."

This public hearing comes at a significant time. It was only last week that President Obama signed into law the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, thereby rectifying the Supreme Court's decision against fair pay. Thanks to Maine lawmakers, our state has been at the forefront on recognizing the importance of fair pay. This bill is necessary, however, to remove a major barrier to ending gender wage discrimination. Employees' lack of information about wages and salaries is a key obstacle to knowing about and correcting pay disparities.

Protecting employees who discuss wage and salary information with their co-workers ensures that inequities can be identified and resolved. Unfortunately, some employers specifically forbid employees from discussing or sharing such information, and that's one reason why the wage gap persists.

Said Harper, “The simple fact is that the wage gap keeps women poor—women can lose thousands of dollars every year as a result. The Maine Women’s Lobby supports fair pay not simply because it’s a question of equity; we support fair pay because *it will alleviate poverty.*”

The Maine Women’s Lobby calls upon Maine lawmakers and leaders in Congress to continue their leadership in support of fair pay.

The Maine Women’s Lobby is a non-partisan, non-profit, membership organization working since 1978 to increase opportunities for women and girls through advocacy and legislative action.

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