

She Decides

- Media Statement -

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Maine Women to Dean Scontras: Time for a Reality Check on Gender Wage Gap

*Statement of Sarah Standiford,
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“Twice in the past few weeks, candidate for Congress Dean Scontras has suggested equal pay legislation is unnecessary. In fact, he’s gone so far as to say that the law should have no place at all in fighting workplace discrimination.

“Most recently, on Tuesday, Dean stated, *‘The free market works because bad decisions like that are penalized. We don’t need Washington, DC telling the free market what to do. If you don’t hire somebody because you don’t like them, you’re penalized for it.’*

“Unfortunately, decades of research paints a very different picture about workplace discrimination. What’s worse, Dean’s comments fly in the face of the real-life experiences that Maine women encounter every day. So, let’s set the record straight: Maine and U.S. Equal Pay laws are fundamental protections for women who continue to earn, on average, 24% less than men do in the very same jobs.

“Here’s another unfortunate fact—the wage gap is getting worse, not better. The most recent census data shows that in 2009, women working full-time, year round in Maine were earning even less than the previous year – just 76 cents to their male counterparts. In this tough economy, more families are counting on women’s earnings. For this reason, pay discrimination harms more than just women’s pocketbooks – it affects our families and communities. That’s why common-sense policies to prevent discrimination are so important. The Paycheck Fairness Act, which is soon to be considered in the U.S. Senate, would deter pay discrimination by closing loopholes in the Equal Pay Act and ban penalties against workers who share salary information.

“It’s long past time we stopped debating the existence of pay discrimination and took steps to stop it. Dean Scontras should stand up for equal pay for Maine women.”

SheDecides.org is a project of the Maine Women's Lobby. The Maine Women's Lobby is a non-partisan, nonprofit, membership organization working since 1978 to increase opportunities for women and girls through advocacy and legislative action.

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