



Department of Economic and
Community Development

Connecticut
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Catherine H. Smith
Commissioner

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
3/3/15

RE: HB 6850: AN ACT CONCERNING PAY EQUITY AND FAIRNESS

Senator Holder-Winfield, Representative Tercyak, Senator Hwang, Representative Rutigliano, and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of HB 6850: An Act Concerning Pay Equity and Fairness.

As you may be aware, in 2013 the Gender Wage Gap Taskforce, comprised of public officials and private sector professionals, studied the issue of the gender wage gap and pay equity in Connecticut. The Gender Wage Gap Taskforce published its findings in a report in November of 2013. One of the findings was that the practice of prohibiting discussion among employees about salary information is a contributing factor in perpetuating the gender wage gap.

Governor's Bill HB 6850 would permit employees to discuss wages and salary information freely, potentially eliminating a factor in the persisting gender wage gap. Providing employees the opportunity to discuss salary information without fear of retribution will allow women in the workplace to more accurately gauge their earning potential and will hopefully help Connecticut workers to reach compensation parity.

This Bill strikes an important balance by encouraging open dialogue in the workplace without setting unnecessary rules or reporting requirements on employers. Frankly, it is a win-win for both employers and employees, since the Gender Wage Gap Taskforce also discovered that many companies are unaware of the size of the gender gap in the private sector – and often unaware of any issues with their own employees. Awareness often yields concern and action on the part of employers – the long term goal we should have as a matter of policy.

We at DECD are interested in ensuring that women are compensated justly for their work, and we believe that HB 6850 is a step in achieving this crucial economic driver.

Thanks in advance for your time and consideration of this important measure.