

Labor and Public Employees Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-765

Title: AN ACT ENSURING FAIR AND EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK.

Vote Date: 3/21/2019

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/14/2019

File No.:

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Labor and Public Employees Committee.

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill requires fair and equal pay for equal work. It would allow the Labor commissioner alleging gender wage discrimination to sue employers for lost wages, compensatory damages, attorney's fees, and some cases punitive damages. Employers have the right to defend themselves by showing that their differences in pay are based on seniority, merit, and a system that measures production quantity or quality, or factors such as job related training, education and experience.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Sen. Bob Duff, Majority Leader: Sen. Duff said CT should encourage companies to conduct self-audits of pay equity. There is sexual disparity in pay and we must ensure we are all on equal footing. On average, women make 82 cents for every dollar that a man makes and the disparity is greater among women of color. We should allow pay differentials based on seniority, but maternity leave or FMLA should not be used to reduce seniority. This bill is about fairness and paying two people the same amount for the same work, regardless of gender.

Senator Mae Flexer, Twenty-ninth Assembly District: It is critically important to close the wage gap once and for all. Pay inequity harms families and employers while robbing our economy of billions of dollars. A fair workplace will only be achieved if all employees are guaranteed to receive fair and equal pay for equal work.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Stephen Anderson, President, CSEA SEIU: Regrettably, women have historically been paid less than their male counterparts doing the same work. Addressing this is long overdue.

Lisa Andrews, Director of Public Policy and Communications, CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV): The safety of domestic violence survivors is directly linked to their ability to achieve economic security. The majority of victims of intimate partner violence are women who only stand to benefit from policies that increase women's economic security. Ensuring fair and equal pay for equal work will strengthen the opportunity for many survivors to achieve this.

Bernard Kokinchak, Southbury Resident: Mr. Kokinchak has a 'hidden disability' he chose not to disclose. He said he is vastly under-employed/paid for his background. He submitted 8 printed pages from an unknown source and said he would be willing to come to the LOB or to anyone's district to "give you a better sense how these disabilities affect me personally".

Zak Leavy, Legislative and Political Advocate, Council 4 AFSCME: At a time when our government is working to rapidly increase income inequality, it is important to address and fix the gender wage gap. This legislation would increase the spending power for hundreds of thousands of workers while fixing a moral failing in our state and society.

Sal Luciano, President, CT AFL CIO: A pay gap exists for women, especially those who are highly educated. Women who have attended college but didn't complete a degree earn less than men who never attended at all, and women with graduate degrees earn less than men with only a bachelor's degree. Even within the same occupation women are paid less, especially within high-salary management, business and finance occupations. That's a significant loss for each woman and each family, but businesses and our economy also suffer greatly. Lost wages mean reduced consumer buying power, a key driver of economic growth.

Danielle Morfi, North Haven Resident: Equal pay for equal work is beneficial to our state income tax revenue because millions of dollars are lost due to wage discrimination. This is not just a gender issue; it greatly affects people with disabilities of all kinds. Additional revenue could be raised from enforcement, not only of wage discrimination with people with disabilities, but of all protected classes of people.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None submitted.

Reported by: Marie Knudsen

Date: March 28, 2019