

STATE OF NEW YORK

5982

2015-2016 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

March 9, 2015

Introduced by M. of A. CRESPO, JAFFEE, COOK, RIVERA, JOYNER, MONTESANO, COLTON, SIMON, BROOK-KRASNY, MOSLEY -- Multi-Sponsored by -- M. of A. CERETTO, CLARK -- read once and referred to the Committee on Governmental Operations

AN ACT to amend the executive law, in relation to prohibiting employers from seeking salary history from prospective employees

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Legislative intent. The legislature hereby finds that New
2 York should lead the nation in preventing wage discrimination.

3 The wage gap between men and women is one of the oldest and most
4 persistent effects of inequality between the sexes in the United States.

5 The 1963 Equal Pay Act and the 1964 Civil Rights Act in the United
6 States established the legal right to equal pay for equal work and equal
7 opportunity. Yet half a century later, women are still subjected to wage
8 gaps and paid less than men.

9 The concept of comparable worth attacks the problem of gender-based
10 wage discrimination by mandating that jobs characterized by similar
11 levels of education, skill, effort, responsibilities, and working condi-
12 tions be compensated at similar wage levels regardless of the gender of
13 the worker holding the job.

14 The goal of pay equity is to raise the wages for undervalued jobs held
15 predominantly by women. Today, women make only 77 cents per every
16 dollar earned by a man for a comparable job, a gender wage gap of 23
17 percent.

18 This translates into thousands of dollars of lost wages each year for
19 each female worker, money that helps them feed their families, save for
20 a college education and afford decent and safe housing.

21 Pay disparities affect women of all ages, races, and education levels,
22 but are more pronounced for women of color. Minority women make as
23 little as 54 cents per dollar for a comparable job held by a man.

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[] is old law to be omitted.

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1 Female-dominated jobs pay twenty to thirty percent less than male-do-
2 minated jobs classified as comparable in worth and more than one half of
3 all women work in jobs that are over seventy percent female.

4 Women are more likely to enter poverty in old age for several reasons:
5 A lifetime of lower wages means women have less income to save for
6 retirement, and less income that counts in their Social Security or
7 pension benefit formula.

8 The current life expectancy for women means they will, on an average
9 of three years, outlive men. Yet they will have to stretch their retire-
10 ment savings, which are less to begin with, over a longer period of
11 time.

12 The existence of pay inequity is a manifestation of deep-seated sex
13 discrimination that prevents both equality of pay for women and equality
14 of opportunity for both sexes.

15 More women in the United States are obtaining college degrees and
16 increasing their participation in the labor force and family-friendly
17 legislation, including the Equal Pay Act, Family and Medical Leave Act,
18 and Pregnancy Discrimination Act, and policies such as flex time and
19 telecommuting, have increased options to create a win-win situation for
20 women and their employers.

21 Despite the progress, women continue to suffer the consequences of
22 inequitable pay differentials: in 2010, the average college-educated
23 woman working full-time earned \$47,000 a year compared to \$64,000 for a
24 college-educated man.

25 During 2012, median weekly earnings for female full-time workers were
26 \$691, compared with \$854 per week for men, a gender wage gap of 19
27 percent.

28 Fair pay strengthens the security of families and eases future retire-
29 ment costs while also strengthening the American economy. In order to
30 achieve fair pay, policymakers must enact laws that prevent gender based
31 wage discrimination from when women enter the labor force.

32 In order to do so, it is necessary to prevent employers to base a
33 woman's pay based on her previous pay history. Because the pay is
34 already based on gender discrimination, allowing pay history to be
35 requested by employers is equivalent to maintaining a standard of lower
36 pay for women performing similar jobs as men. This practice of asking
37 for pay history must be outlawed.

38 § 2. Section 296 of the executive law is amended by adding a new
39 subdivision 19-a to read as follows:

40 19-a. It shall be an unlawful discriminatory practice of any employer,
41 labor organization, employment agency or licensing agency, or employees
42 or agents thereof, to seek a salary history from a prospective employee
43 for an interview or as a condition for employment.

44 § 3. The department of labor, in conjunction with the New York state
45 division of human rights, shall establish a public awareness campaign,
46 available on their respective websites, informing employers in the state
47 that it is illegal to seek salary information from prospective employ-
48 ees.

49 § 4. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall
50 have become a law.