

DATE: January 19, 2017

TO: Committee on Business and Labor; In Support of HB 2005

RE: Pay Equity and Related Gender Inequities in the Workplace

I am writing in support of the Fair Pay initiative and to offer examples and observations of pay and job related inequities in the workplace that work against women.

I have worked in both the private and public sector over the course of my thirty plus years in the workplace and have observed and experienced the effect of pay inequity in both sectors. My private sector experience included finance jobs in the gaming industry and with technology companies, while my public sector experience includes working through the ranks from low level clerk positions through the ranks of accounting and finance positions to the senior, CFO, level for one city, three special districts, and two transit districts.

While trusting that I would be paid fairly, I learned very quickly that this was not the case, especially in lower level positions. During the early years of my career, I saw the difference through my job working with pay records but did not feel empowered at the time, or was afraid to raise the issue.

It was also my personal experience over the years that opportunities to apply for higher level positions were withheld in favor of promotions for male employees who did not have as much experience or education. I chose to promote myself by applying for higher level positions at other agencies or companies and found that in order to compete, I needed to achieve progressively higher levels of education gaining an Associate's Degree, Bachelor's Degree, and eventually a Graduate Degree, changing jobs at every level of higher education.

Many women in the workforce are not able to change jobs for better pay due to family or other financial commitments, so they continue to work in jobs where pay levels, especially entry pay levels, are subjectively applied. Fair pay does not require employers to pay women more simply because they are women, it does, however require the same pay for the same value of work regardless of gender.

I am doing what I can in my current position as Executive Director of Finance and Administration for TriMet, to keep pay equity in mind when hiring for my Division. Even in the Public Sector where pay ranges are prevalent, placement within the range is often a subjective decision based on the hiring manager (or HR's) opinion of their worth which to some extent is based on past salary history.

If women are able to start working careers at the highest pay possible, it will rise from there. If they start low, the loss over a lifetime based on past salary history can never be recovered. Fair Pay can help in this respect.

Please pass this on in consideration of a vote for Fair Pay in Oregon, and feel free to give me a call if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dee Brookshire

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