



Melissa Erlbaum, MPA
Executive Director

February 23, 2017
House Committee on Business and Labor
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Support for HB 2005

Dear House Committee on Business and Labor Chair Representative Paul Holvey and Committee Members:

I am writing in support of HB 2005, legislation that will help ensure that all Oregonians — regardless of their gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or other protected class — are compensated fairly for their work.

For over 30 years, Clackamas Women's Services (CWS) has supported survivors of domestic and sexual violence, stalking, and elder abuse on their pathways to safety and stability. The women and families we serve are especially burdened by unfair and discriminatory pay practices, whose lower wages impede their ability to afford stable housing, cover food and medical costs for their families, access childcare, secure reliable transportation, and save for retirement. The lack of comprehensive fair pay legislation effectively reinforces generational cycles of poverty, and serves as yet another barrier to safety for women and children fleeing violence and abuse.

Fair pay is an issue that not only affects the women we serve, but rather all Oregon women. According to findings compiled by the Women's Foundation of Oregon, women in our state earn between 53 and 83 cents—depending on race and ethnicity—for every dollar men in Oregon earn, while the gender wealth gap (total assets) is 35 cents on the dollar. Consequently, approximately \$4 billion in the combined total wages of full-time working women in Oregon are lost each year due to the gender wage gap.

In consideration of the prevalence of and impact of unequal pay, I urge you to support HB 2005. This legislation is long overdue and is critical to the well-being of our most vulnerable populations.

Thank you for consideration and your service.

Sincerely,

Melissa Erlbaum
Clackamas Women's Services, Executive Director

Finding a Path Forward to Safety, Justice and Healing
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