

Committee:	House Economic Matters Committee
Bill number:	HB 649 - Labor and Employment - Equal Pay for Equal Work - Wage Range Transparency
Hearing Date:	February 21, 2024
Position:	Support

The Women's Law Center of Maryland (WLC) supports *House Bill 649 – Labor and Employment – Equal Pay for Equal Work – Wage Transparency Law*.

The Maryland General Assembly enacted the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act in 2016. Sponsored by a bipartisan group of 90 delegates and 31 senators, the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act was designed to close the pay gap between women and men. The legislation prohibited adverse action against an employee for disclosing their wages. Then, in 2020, the Maryland General Assembly continued to move forward with enacting House Bill 123 with bipartisan support. The legislation required employers to disclose the wage range to applicants upon request.

House Bill 649 would allow Maryland to take another measured step forward in continuing to close the wage gap. The legislation simply requires that the wage range of open positions be posted. Employers are already required to provide this information upon request. However, some people may be hesitant to make such requests or even know that employers are required to respond. Women are more likely than men to be hesitant, but it is important to note that this bill benefits everyone. In a 2023 study by Pew Research Center, 42% of women, as well as 33% of men, did not feel comfortable asking for higher pay. There is also a generation gap, as 46% of young adults between 18 and 29 years of age did not feel comfortable requesting for higher pay vs. 37% of the cohort in the 30-49 years of age range.¹

Maryland would not be the first state in adopting a wage transparency measure. In fact, eight other states have implemented such legislation: Connecticut, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, New York, Rhode Island, Washington, and California. We expect to see more states

added to this list, as bills are pending in 15 states including Maryland, according to the Society for Human Resources Management.ⁱⁱ

Wage transparency is becoming the norm, as more states adopt these laws and employers adopt this best practice. With almost 28% of jobs being remote either full or part-time, people have more choices in where to live and work.ⁱⁱⁱ Wage transparency helps employers be more competitive. According to Automatic Data Processing (ADP), the largest payroll company in the U.S., “employers operating under pay transparency requirements are quickly adopting tools and processes to enable compliance.”^{iv}

The Women’s Law Center of Maryland strongly supports this legislation, as it promotes fairness for all job applicants, especially women and younger adults. The legislation also proposes a best practice for employers if Maryland is to remain competitive.

The WLC urges a favorable report on this bill. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net or (443) 926-3443.

The Women’s Law Center of Maryland is a private, non-profit, legal services organization that serves as a leading voice for justice and fairness for women. It advocates for the rights of women through legal assistance to individuals and strategic initiatives to achieve systemic change, working to ensure physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy for women in Maryland

ⁱ <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/04/05/when-negotiating-starting-salaries-most-us-women-and-men-dont-ask-for-higher-pay/>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/news/all-things-work/pay-transparency-equity>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/brs1.htm>

^{iv} <https://www.adp.com/spark/articles/2023/09/implementing-pay-transparency-best-practices-how-to-prepare-and-what-comes-after.aspx>