

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 525**

***Labor and Employment - Equal Pay for Equal Work - Wage Range Transparency***

**Senate Finance Committee**

Thank you to the committee for holding this public hearing.

I strongly support SB 525, which is a common-sense next step to strengthen Maryland's equal pay laws by requiring transparency around salary ranges in job postings.

My name is Hannah Williams, I am the founder of a social media page called Salary Transparent Street, which I began in 2022 after finding out that I was underpaid roughly \$25,000 less than my peers as a Senior Data Analyst.

Pay transparency in a job listing at the company I would ultimately end up working for helped me close my pay gap and earn my fair market rate. This experience inspired me to interview strangers on the street about their careers and pay in an effort to normalize transparency and help close pay gaps.

Since then, I've spoken to over 1,000 different workers across the nation, largely in the DMV area, which I call home. I've heard countless stories from our street interviews, and from our 2M+ strong community nationwide who've been harmed by pay secrecy, both financially and emotionally.

I'd like to highlight some of these stories that have stuck with me, and that directly demonstrate the positive impact of pay transparency.

To start, there's Max, a veteran who spent months unemployed interviewing for countless different jobs. He told us that many companies didn't share pay information until the third or fourth interview, and in most cases they weren't even paying a fair wage, but the time he invested in each interview process made him contemplate accepting offers that he knew weren't competitive because he became more desperate the longer he went unemployed.

Then there's Andrea, who suspected she was underpaid in her sales job for months but didn't want to bring it up to management and 'rock the boat'. Only after her coworker left the company did she learn that she was making \$10,000 less than them. And she learned this from her coworker's lawsuit, who was suing the company

for pay discrimination.

And lastly there's Kiersten, who has a Masters in Social Work and was offered \$48,000 to work at a hospital. It was a lot less than the pay she expected but she was told there was no room to negotiate. After some of her colleagues realized they were all being paid different rates, the hospital conducted a market rate review and increased her salary to \$65,000.

I hope these stories help demonstrate a simple concept: that workers want, and deserve, to be valued and paid fairly for their work. That the system of pay secrecy harms all workers, and lets companies get away with unethical pay practices.

And before I close, I want to also stress that this legislation doesn't only benefit workers. Businesses that practice transparency have reported multiple positive side effects, including cheaper talent acquisition, stronger team morale, enhanced productivity, and lower turnover.

SB 525 would not only empower the over 2M workers in Maryland by closing pay gaps and leveling the playing field for all job applicants, but it would also support Maryland's business owners, both big and small.

I respectfully request that the committee make a favorable report on SB 525. Thank you.