



**Testimony for the House Economic Matters Committee
February 4, 2020**

**HB 14 Equal Pay for Equal Work – Inquiring About Wages – Prohibition on
Adverse Action**

JUSTIN NALLEY
POLICY ANALYST,
EDUCATION

SUPPORT

AMERICAN CIVIL
LIBERTIES UNION
FOUNDATION OF
MARYLAND

MAIN OFFICE
& MAILING ADDRESS
3600 CLIPPER MILL ROAD
SUITE 350
BALTIMORE, MD 21211
T/410-889-8555
or 240-274-5295
F/410-366-7838

FIELD OFFICE
6930 CARROLL AVENUE
SUITE 610
TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912
T/240-274-5295

WWW.ACLU-MD.ORG

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS
JOHN HENDERSON
PRESIDENT

The ACLU of Maryland supports HB 14, which adds a provision to existing law to prohibit employers from taking adverse employment action against an employee for inquiring about their own wages.

The workforce is the backbone of the Maryland economy. Employees from all industries dedicate their talents, knowledge, and time, to provide for their families and contribute to society. Employees must be protected from retaliation when inquiring about their own wages.

Workers often remain in the dark about pay discrimination, because employers enact rules that punish employees for voluntarily sharing wage information with their colleagues. Allowing workers to inquire about their salaries without fear of losing their jobs will help workers, especially those in protected categories, to know whether or not they are being treated equally.

In *Crawford v. Metro. Gov't of Nashville & Davidson County*, the U.S. Supreme Court recognized that “[f]ear of retaliation is the leading reason why people stay silent instead of voicing their concerns about bias and discrimination.”¹ HB 14 would prohibit an employer from such retaliation, allowing employees to voluntarily discuss their wages and learn whether they are being paid equally for equal work.

For the foregoing reasons, the ACLU of Maryland supports HB 14.

¹ *Crawford v. Metro. Gov't of Nashville & Davidson County*, 555 U.S. 271, 279 (2009).