



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 4th, 2020

**House Bill 123**

**Testimony of Delegate Shaneka Henson – Favorable**

**ECONOMIC MATTERS COMMITTEE**

DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE ECONOMIC MATTERS COMMITTEE,  
Chairman Davis, and Vice-Chairwoman Dumais, thank you for hearing House Bill 123. It is an absolute privilege to be a tertiary sponsor alongside the sponsor and secondary sponsors, Delegate Karen Lewis-Young and Delegate Diane Fennell respectively.

My journey toward HB123/SB127 started with a question -- “Why does Jack get paid more than me?” After several years of trying to distinguish myself through hard work, I discovered that Jack, another staff attorney at the firm, was being paid more than me. Like any good attorney, I argued my case for a raise. I showed our boss how I had outperformed Jack every quarter all while diversifying my practice area, to which our boss regrettably told me that the firm didn’t have merit-based pay; our salary was calculated using the number of years since an attorney’s admission to the bar. Well this was great news! As it turns out, Jack and I were law school classmates. We had been admitted to the Maryland bar at the same

time. I was certain a salary more reflective of my contribution was sure to come. Only, I didn't receive a raise. Instead, I got a return visit from my boss who was pleased to have tracked down an answer for me: Jack was offered a higher salary than me simply because Jack was paid more at his prior job than I was paid at my last job.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Black women earn \$0.61 for every \$1.00 of their white male counterparts. The intersection of gender and racial bias is reinforced by well-intentioned employers like mine when salary history is the determining factor for salary offering. In 2020, I think we can do better as a State to support the professional and financial well-being of our minority employees. That is why I am here today alongside Delegate Karen Lewis-Young and Delegate Diane Fennell to respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 123. Thank you for your time and consideration.