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**BILL NO.:** House Bill 832  
**TITLE:** Labor and Employment - Equal Pay for Equal Work - Wage Range Transparency  
**COMMITTEE:** Economic Matters Committee  
**DATE:** February 28, 2023  
**POSITION:** **SUPPORT**

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House Bill 832 aims to address the persistent gender wage-gap that leaves women, and Women of Color, particularly, earning and saving less than their male counterparts. While we are grateful to the Maryland General Assembly for passing the 2016 Equal Pay for Equal Work Act, as well as legislation in 2020 that ensures salary history isn't relied upon when determining pay, there is still more work to be done before all women reach salary equity.

Increased transparency about the possible salary range for a position during the hiring process improves the experience both for job-seekers and employers. Transparency can also help address the persistent gender- and race-based wage gaps that are holding back Maryland women.

Comparing all men and all women working full time, year-round, women in Maryland are typically paid 86 cents for every \$1 paid to a man. But the wage gap is worse for many women of color compared to white, non-Hispanic men: Latina women: 46 cents; Black women: 68 cents; Native American women: 74 cents; Asian American women: 83 cents.

HB 832 would help address this by requiring that all job listings include the salary range available for the position. Research shows that when job applicants are clearly informed about the context for negotiations, including the salary range, gender differences in negotiation outcomes diminish, which could help narrow gender wage gaps. Providing applicants with a salary range that the employer is willing to pay helps level the negotiating playing field by giving applicants important information that can inform an initial offer that is less tied to their previous pay levels or personal identity.

Many employers in Maryland, including state and local governments and institutions like Johns Hopkins, already use this best practice. Transparency helps businesses better attract and retain talent, and it avoids the potential wasted time from interviewing candidates who are seeking a salary outside the business's budget for the position. A Glassdoor survey found nearly 2 in 3 employees prefer to work at a company that discloses pay information over one that does not. Another survey found 98% of respondents believe employers should share salary ranges in job postings and more than half would not even apply for a job that does not disclose the salary range.

Women are the primary, sole, or co-bread winners in two-thirds of Maryland families. Therefore, any gender pay gap detrimentally, and unacceptably, affects Maryland's families. Until it is eliminated, women and families in Maryland will disproportionately suffer. As such, the Women's Law Center of Maryland urges a favorable report on HB 832.

*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.*