



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 22nd, 2024

Testimony in Support of SB525  
Labor and Employment - Equal Pay for Equal Work - Wage Range Transparency

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, Members of the Committee:

I am before you today to speak about **SB525 Labor and Employment – Equal Pay for Equal Work – Wage Range Transparency**. Maryland has taken strides in recent years by passing two bipartisan pieces of legislation aimed at increasing wage transparency. In 2016, the Maryland General Assembly passed Senator Lee’s Equal Pay for Equal Work Act, which amended our state’s equal pay law to protect against wage discrimination based on sex and gender identity. In 2020, the Maryland General Assembly passed Senator Lewis Young’s HB123 and Senator Beidle’s SB217 which requires employers to disclose the wage range to applicants upon request..

Still, Maryland has wage disparity among gender and race. SB525 would allow Maryland to take a step forward in closing the wage gap. In Maryland, women are paid 13.4% less than men, and this gap is even more drastic for women of color ([US Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)). Black women earn 68 cents and Hispanic women earn only 46 cents to every dollar a man makes ([MD Commission for Women](#)).

SB525 expands Maryland’s Equal Pay for Equal Work Law. Delegate Queen previously introduced this bill in 2023. It requires employers to disclose the wage range and general description of benefits and compensation in the public or internal posting for a job. The wage range must be set in good faith, and this legislation prohibits employers from taking retaliatory actions against employees exercising their rights. Employers must keep a record of compliance with the provisions for at least 3 years.

Employer secrecy about pay allows discrimination and pay gaps to grow and keeps women from knowing if they are being paid fairly and equally to their male coworkers. Including the pay range in a job posting helps women negotiate for higher pay and make more informed choices. This legislation also supports businesses in evaluating their hiring and compensation procedures to close wage disparity and helps them attract talented employees and save time and costs in hiring.

Maryland businesses are already familiar with sharing pay ranges because current law states that employers must give applicants a wage range upon request, but they aren’t reaping the recruiting

edge in attracting talent and the time and cost savings that comes when employers must specifically include ranges in job announcements.

A recent poll from the National Women's Law Center shows that nearly three in four (74%) of Marylanders support implementing pay range transparency practices at their own workplaces; nearly two in three (62%) prefer job postings with a pay range when applying for a job; and 46% have applied for a job opening that wouldn't have otherwise interested them as a result of the pay range listed alongside it.

Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, New York, Washington, and California have passed pay range transparency laws. Each chamber of the Virginia legislature recently passed pay range transparency legislation, each bill has crossed over and is now working its way through the opposite chamber.

Delegate White Holland and I have had conversations with the Department of Labor and stakeholders within the business community. The Department of Labor has drafted amendments which address the fiscal note and would ensure general fund expenditures for the Maryland Department of Labor will increase by no more than \$100,000 in FY 2025. This amendment is available on the floor system and will be highlighted in the Department of Labor's testimony.

Per our conversations with the business community, we have included the following in SB525:

- New language that provides a definition and clarification of "posting";
- Further clarification with examples in setting a wage range in good faith;
- Added language to specifically define the jobs that would be applicable;
- Provides further clarification of when wage ranges are shared with applicants;
- Includes language clarifying and cabining the requirement that an employer keep a record of compliance to three years;
- and increased civil penalties were removed for the second violation and subsequent violation, respectively.
- removed the requirement that a wage range be provided to current employees annually

We are in an ongoing conversation with stakeholders to address any additional concerns.

Today you will hear from my sponsor panel, Department of Labor Secretary Portia Wu and Commissioner Devki Virk, Jasmin Aramburu with the Maryland Center on Economic Policy, and Da Hae Kim with the National Women's Law Center, Sarah Mogol, Chair of Executive Alliance, and Hannah Williams of Salary Transparent Street.

Thank you for your time. I urge a considerable report on SB525.