

Issue: MI Pay Gap

Equitable Pay

Protection for Michigan Families

So you grew up mowing lawns as a kid, your big brother taught you how to start the throttle, trim the hedges, sweep the leavings, and smile for a big tip afterward. While you may have done a better job than your brother, you were always paid less because you were viewed as the “little brother.” Even as you started a savings account, adding funds for college, worked longer hours and used newer equipment, customers perceived less value from you, since they knew “your place” in the neighborhood hierarchy.

Welcome to a woman’s reality in the workforce, where the same or even better levels of effort are rewarded with consistently lower pay. It matters not if you are delivering the same quality work, take great pride in your job and your company, have a family to support, have equal or higher education levels than your peers or even better performance reviews, you have “your place” in the corporate pay ladder.

Forget, for a moment, that this is not fair. This hurts your family—every day.

Families in America have gone long past the time when only one parent can work. Making rent or mortgage payments, paying for gas and heat, even buying food and clothes, are basic essentials that families cannot afford without having a dual-income household. Women make up half the workforce, pay half the bills, raise more than half of the kids, and earn 26% less than their counterparts. That means a 26% reduction in your family’s ability to support the local economy, purchase goods in local stores, support local eating establishments, partake in entertainment activities, pay medical bills, make long-term investments, and help in the promise of your children’s future.

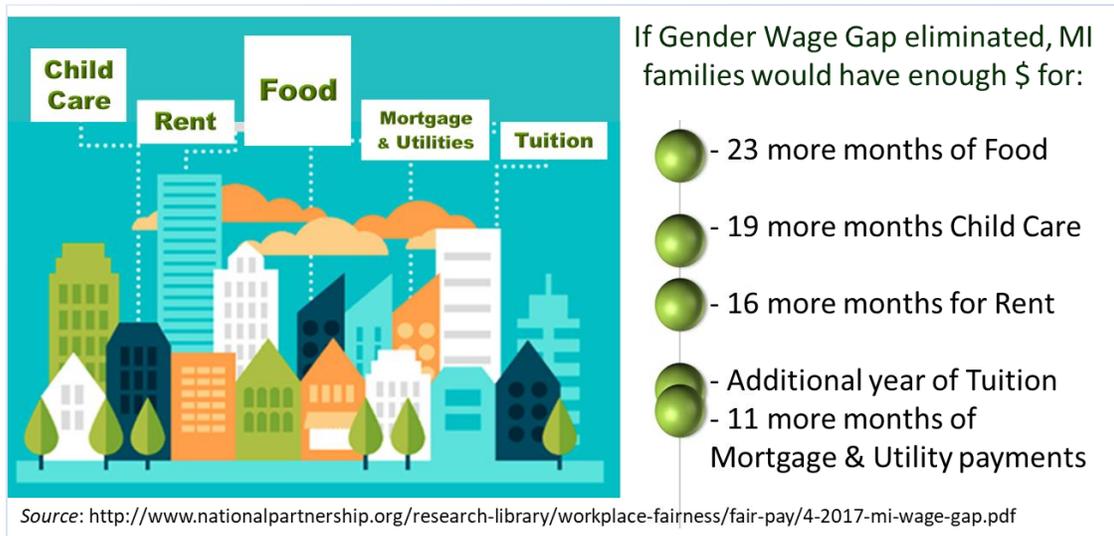
If the American dream is the ability to pull yourself up by your bootstraps, it doesn’t work well when one boot is nailed to the floor. Far from being a “women’s issue,” equitable pay affects every family across the country, and Michigan is far down that list in fairness.

Just the Facts

A plethora of statistics brings the harsh impact of lost wages to light based on the gender pay gap. According to the U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data analysis provided by the National Partnership for Women and Families, in April 2017, it found that:

- Women in Michigan combined lose nearly \$23 billion *every year* due to the pay gap.

- The median annual pay for a woman is \$37,486, while for a man its \$50,479; meaning women in Michigan are paid 74¢ for every \$1 paid to men, amounting to a wage gap of \$12,993.
- The gap is even larger for women of color. Black women in Michigan are paid 64¢ and Latinas are paid 57¢ for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.
- Michigan’s gender wage gap spans the state. In all 14 of Michigan’s U.S. congressional districts, median yearly pay for women who work in full-time year-round jobs is less than that for men.



- In the U.S., *mothers are breadwinners in half of families with children under 18*, including half of white mothers, 53% of Latina mothers, 81% Black mothers, and 44% of Asian/Pacific Islander mothers. Yet the wage gap for mothers is even *larger* than for women overall.
- In Michigan, nearly 476,000 family households are headed by women. About 33% of those families, or 155,609 family households, have incomes that fall below the poverty level. Eliminating the wage gap would provide much-needed income to women whose wages sustain their households, *rather than having to rely upon public assistance*.

Why This Should Matter to People and Politicians Regardless of Party

According to the same study by the National Partnership for Women and Families, women across the country are exceedingly concerned about pay equity:

- *Women consider equal pay a top workplace issue*. Nearly six in 10 women (58%) in the U.S. identify equal pay as one of the most important issues facing women in the workplace.

- *Less than one-third of women believe they are paid fairly.* Just 28% of U.S. working women say they are confident they are paid the same salaries as their male counterparts. 43% say they do not believe they are paid the same – a substantially higher share than in most other leading, high-wealth countries.
- *Women are more likely to support a candidate for office who supports pay equity.* 70% of Republican women, 83% of independent women and 88% of Democratic women say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who supports equal pay for women.

What Michigan Dems are doing about it as GOP suppresses those efforts

While wage equity should not be a partisan effort given its fundamental impact on Michigan's economy and families, efforts to remedy the situation have been led solely by Democrats. Unfortunately, these efforts have been consistently suppressed by the Republican majority in the state House and Senate, further cementing their reputation as the GOP Party of "No". In 2015, and again at the start of the legislative session in April 2017, Michigan Democratic leadership introduced a platform of bills designed to address pay equity and protect workers' rights across the state. Covering everything from establishing a commission on pay equity, to requiring published pay scales, to creating incentive programs for employers to eliminate wage discrimination, the proposed legislation has been overridden time and again by Republican legislators. The list of these recent bills is contained at the end of this document.

In February of this year, Republican Governor Rick Snyder was urged to veto yet another bill which erodes equal pay for prospective job candidates. SB 353, since signed by the Governor, was designed to ensure that employers could ask job candidates for prior salary history—whether that history was pertinent to the job or not. Cynically positioned as a tool for employers to "better assess the applicant" based on past pay rather than current skills, this bill undercuts the ability of entire underpaid classes of workers, such as re-entry workers, skilled high school or college graduates, or women, to ever catch up to equal pay.

Support Democrats' Call to Action

The gender wage gap is an issue that gets pigeonholed as being naïve-feminist, anti-business bravado. Yet it not only negates the principle of equal pay for equal work, those lost wages hurt our state, our children, and our economy. Michiganders are fiercely proud of their individuality. It's time we support those words with action by voting for Democrats who are fiercely fighting for those who are not being fairly compensated. This is not an issue of 'us versus them' or 'men versus women'. This is an issue of businesses—U.S.-based or foreign—taking advantage of a loophole that allows them to keep more income for themselves at the expense of their hardworking employees—your wives, daughters, sisters and mothers. The last we checked, withholding part of someone's paycheck for no reason is illegal. Don't let that 'reason' be because that worker happens to be a woman.

Democratic Wage Equity Initiatives and Republican Obstruction

Date	Bill No.	Bill Subject and Context	Status	Committee Chair
April 25, 2017	HB 4520	Wage Deduction Time Period A bill to amend the time period in which an employer must notify an employee of deductions from that employee's paycheck prior to deducting the wages.	Buried in Committee	Republican
April 25, 2017	HB 4519	Equal Pay Certification A bill to require any business entering into a contract with an agency or political division of the state to receive an equal pay certification.	Buried in Committee	Republican
April 25, 2017	HB 4518	Pay Equity in the Workplace Award A bill to create an incentive awards program for employers who take steps to eliminate wage discrimination in the workplace and establish penalties for companies that don't comply with equal pay laws.	Buried in Committee	Republican
April 25, 2017	HB 4517	Review of Wage Differentials A bill to require the state to include a review of wage differentials in its annual report with the goal of decreasing wage disparity between sexes.	Buried in Committee	Republican
April 25, 2017	HB 4516	Expand Prohibited Employment Practices A bill to prohibit an employer from asking a job applicant for information about the applicant past compensation, or otherwise seek information related to an applicant's past compensation.	Buried in Committee	Republican
April 25, 2017	HB 4515	Requirement for Written Job Descriptions	Buried in Committee	Republican

		A bill to require a company with 5 or more employees to post a written job description for positions, including information about the skills required and the pay scale		
April 25, 2017	HB 4514	Fair Employment Practices Posting A bill to require employers to post and inform employees about equal pay laws.	Buried in Committee	Republican
April 25, 2017	HB 4513	Fines for Wage Discrimination A bill to amend the Michigan Penal Code to prescribe fines for wage discrimination based on sex.	Buried in Committee	Republican
April 25, 2017	HB 4512	Prohibit Wage Discrimination A bill to expand the prohibition of wage discrimination by amending the Workforce Opportunity Wage Act.	Buried in Committee	Republican
April 25, 2017	HB 4511	Disclosure of Wage Information A bill to require employers to disclose, upon request, wage information for similarly situated employees.	Buried in Committee	Republican
April 25, 2017	HB 4510	Actions for Unequal Pay A bill to modify the accrual date for claims of unequal pay.	Buried in Committee	Republican
April 25, 2017	HB 4509	Commission on Pay Equity A bill to amend the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to create a commission on pay equity within the Department of Civil Rights.	Buried in Committee	Republican

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