



**Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development  
In Support of H.2020/S.1196 An Act relative to transparency in the workplace  
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The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts supports the pay discrimination legislation H.2020/S1196, *An Act relative to transparency in the workplace*, because the League supports equality of opportunity for all under state and federal law regardless of race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or disability. Beginning in the 1980's the League has actively endorsed legislative efforts that foster the implementation of pay equity for both public and private employees.

In 1945, Massachusetts became the first state in the country to pass an equal pay law. On July 1, 2018, an updated equal pay law went into effect in Massachusetts. The new law, **An Act to establish pay equity**, updates the **Massachusetts Equal Pay Act** (MEPA). This new law provides clarity on what is unlawful wage discrimination and adds new protections to ensure that workplace pay practices are fair. The law does not have a compliance mechanism. The gender wage gap is a serious economic issue that affects women and families in our state. It exists because women on average are paid less than men for doing the same job. The data shows that women in Massachusetts earn just 83 cents on the dollar compared to male coworkers. This ratio is even worse for most women of color with Asian women earning 84 cents, Native women earning 64 cents, African American women earning 59 cents, and Latina women earning 51 cents on the dollar.<sup>1</sup> The research is clear that the wage gap has not been improving in spite of our good state laws.

H.2020/S1196 would require entities that employ 100+ full-time workers to evaluate wage data by gender and race annually. Businesses would submit this data to the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development which would make the information available to the public. Many businesses have not studied their pay practices for possible discriminatory patterns. Companies that have conducted internal audits of pay practices most often find discrepancies in pay by gender and race. However, anonymous reporting has not produced measured progress and has even found wage backsliding.<sup>2</sup> H.2020/S1196 requires business pay practices to be transparent. Given the absence of a compliance mechanism, this is expected to generate social pressure that will motivate businesses to make fair pay a priority.

The League, which represents 47 local Leagues from Cape Cod to the Berkshires, urges you to report H.2020/S.1196 favorably.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> *EqualPayMA: Closing the Wage Gap in Massachusetts: An initiative of the Office of Economic Empowerment to close the wage gap in Massachusetts.* (<https://www.mass.gov/equalpayma-closing-the-wage-gap-in-massachusetts>)

<sup>2</sup> The Boston Women's Workforce Council (BWWC) conducts biannual anonymous reporting by employers who have pledged to examine their wage gaps and eliminate them. The most recent report of the BWWC (2019) showed backsliding of the composite gender wage gap of these employers.