



**Representative Randi Clites**  
75<sup>th</sup> House District  
**Sponsor Testimony- House Bill 304**

**House Commerce and Labor Committee**  
**December 1, 2020**

Chairwoman Manning, Vice-Chair Dean, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and the members of the House Commerce and Labor Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 304. This bill would create more equity for working women in Ohio and strengthen our commitment to improving the lives of all Ohioans.

In Ohio, women were paid 78 cents for every dollar a man makes, regardless of educational background and job description in 2018. This resulted in an average wage gap of \$10,086 a year for working women. Over a 40 year career, women will lose \$449,040 and would have to work to age 71 to catch up to a man's earnings at age 60. This gap exists even at the state level. In 2018, female state employees in Ohio made on average \$3,400 less a year than their male counterparts regardless of job classification.

The wage gap is even worse for women of color. For every dollar a white male earns, Black women make 62 cents, Hispanic women make 55 cents, Asian American and Pacific Islander women make 90 cents, and Native American women make 60. These disparities have real impacts. According to the National Partnership for Women and Families, if the wage gap were eliminated, a Black woman would have enough money for 156 more weeks of food and 22 more months of rent. Latinas must work nearly 23 months to earn what white men earn in 12 months on average.

This is money that working families in Ohio cannot afford to lose. This is money that is missing from the pockets of Ohioans, their children, and the communities they live in. It is unfair to continue paying women less for doing the same work as men here in Ohio, especially when those wages are coming from taxpayer dollars. It affects our economy, working families, and women's ability to get ahead. Ohio must work towards paying women their fair share.

House Bill 304 is a step in the right direction for equity as it would target several contributing factors of the wage gap that are within our direct control as legislators.