



State Senator
TINA MAHARATH

3rd District

Sponsor Testimony
Senator Tina Maharath
Senate Bill 149
Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee
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Good morning, Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Antonio, Vice Chair Johnson and members of the Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present Senate Bill 149, which will prohibit employers from asking job applicants about their wage or salary history.

Nearly six decades since the Equal Pay Act of 1963 was passed, women continue to earn less than men for the same work. Women who work full time, year round in the U.S. are typically paid just 80 cents for every dollar paid to their male counterparts, which translates into a loss of \$10,470 in median earnings every year. Women of every race are paid less than men, at all education levels. For example, an Asian American woman in Ohio makes eighty-four cents to every dollar that her white, non-Hispanic male counterpart earns. This gap remains even when accounting for personal choices, industry, and educational attainment.

When employers rely on a job candidate's prior salary in hiring or establishing pay, any pay disparity or discrimination the candidate faced in his or her past employment can be perpetuated throughout their career. The use of salary history in hiring also penalizes candidates who are returning to the workforce full time after raising a family or reducing their hours to care for a loved one. In these ways, salary history questions can inadvertently cause inequalities to snowball over time.

To correct this, Senate Bill 149 prohibits employers from the following: First, no employer shall refuse to interview or consider an applicant based on the prospective employee's wage or salary history. Second, no employer shall request or seek information regarding a prospective employee's wage or salary history from the prospective employee or their current or former employer. Finally, no employer shall require that a prospective employee's wage or salary history satisfy any minimum or maximum criteria.

This legislation does not prevent employers from asking about a prospective employee's wage or salary expectations or requirements. It also does not prohibit employers from providing information regarding the wages, salary, benefits, commissions, or any other forms of compensation offered in connection with any position for which the prospective employee is applying.

Fair wages and equal treatment is an economic imperative for Ohio families. When Ohioans can earn a fair wage, it means more food on the table, more gas in the car, bills are paid on-time and that more homes in Ohio are economically secure.

Thank you for your attention to this important legislation and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.