



**State Representatives  
Stephanie Howse & Brigid Kelly**

House Bill 403  
Sponsor Testimony  
Government Accountability and Oversight  
December 11, 2018

Good afternoon Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke and Ranking member Clyde, Representative Kelly and I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 403, legislation that would create a Gender Pay Disparity Task Force to determine the extent of pay disparity between men and women in Ohio.

This past April, we recognized "Equal Pay Day, which signifies the day when women's earnings "catch up" to men's earnings from the previous year. Today, women make up nearly half of Ohio's workforce; though an Ohio woman working full-time, year-round is typically paid less than her male counterpart.

The bill creates the Gender Pay Disparity Task Force, which must determine the extent of the pay disparity between men and women in Ohio, identify the causes of that disparity, and develop recommendations for the legislative action to decrease the pay disparity between men and women in Ohio, and issue a report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the Senate President, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives not later than six months after the bills effective date.

Specialized task forces are nothing new to this General Assembly as they provide us the opportunity to take a deeper dive into matters that affect Ohioans in their everyday lives. This task force would be no different. Through its efforts to collaborate with experts and relevant organizations to foster deeper understanding and develop new ideas, we can forge a pathway forward to build better lives for Ohioans and their families. This group will be charged with determining the extent of the pay disparity between men and women in Ohio, identifying the cause of such disparity, and developing recommendations to eliminate it.

It is a persistent fact that across time and across countries women earn less money than men. Fortunately, the discourse around the gender wage gap has shifted from whether or not it exists - to **why** the gap exists.

Some believe the wage gap is a result of historical sexism - an economy that doesn't believe women can perform as well as men. Others think it's due in part to women preferring a career in certain fields that the market values less - others cite gaps in the types of education men and women pursue and others make a compelling case for the gender wage gap being a penalty for bearing children.

According to a report conducted by the National Partnership for Women and Families, the gender pay gap in Ohio is the 14th worst in the nation with the wage gap between men and women being \$0.22 cents per dollar - or the average Ohio woman earns \$0.78 cents to every Ohio man's dollar<sup>i</sup>

By creating a task force to further research and explore gender pay disparity, it will provide the information we need to create appropriate policy to remedy this important issue.

Thank you Chairman Blessing, and the committee for your attention. Representative Howse and I would be happy to answer any questions from the committee.

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/workplace/fair-pay/americas-women-and-the-wage-gap.pdf>