



State Senator  
**TINA MAHARATH**

**3rd District**

**Sponsor Testimony**  
**Senator Tina Maharath**  
**Senate Bill 92**  
**General Government and Agency Review Committee**  
**Wednesday, March 20, 2019**

Good afternoon, Chairman Schuring, Ranking Member O'Brien, Vice Chair Rulli and members of the General Government and Agency Review Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present Senate Bill 92, the Fair and Acceptable Income Required Act, which will revise the enforcement of the prohibitions against discrimination in the payment of wages.

Current law provides that an employer may not base differences in pay on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, or ancestry, but has proven ineffective in closing the wage gap between men and women in Ohio. The FAIR Act would strengthen Ohio's wage discrimination laws by requiring employers to substantiate pay differences—for causes other than seniority, merit, or quantity or quality of employee production—with legitimate, job-related or skill-based reasons. It would also prohibit retaliation against workers who discuss salaries with colleagues or raise concerns about wage inequality, and prevent wage discrimination based upon sexual orientation.

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. This legislation aims to provide workers with the assurance that they will not have to face wage discrimination in Ohio; and any person who has been discriminated against may sue in court to recover damages, injunctive relief or any other appropriate relief.

A 20-year old woman just starting full time, year round work today stands to lose \$418,800 over a 40-year career compared to her male colleagues. And when her male colleague retires at age 60 after 40 years of work, she would have to work 10 more years to close this lifetime wage gap. 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.

Coupled with the rising number of single-mother households—about 600,000 of which are in Ohio, according to the U.S. Census Bureau—fair wages and fair treatment is an economic imperative for Ohio families. When a woman 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 our communities are economically secure.

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