



SUPPORT

House Bill 1051 – “Equal Pay for Equal Work”
House Economic Matters Committee
The Honorable Dereck Davis, Chair
March 10, 2015

Advocates for Children and Youth is a statewide non-partisan non-profit focused on improving the lives and experiences of Maryland’s children through policy change and program improvement. Our multi-issue platform helps us to improve the entirety of children’s worlds—the systems they touch, the people they interact with, and the environment where they live.

In fulfilling our mission, Advocates for Children and Youth identifies opportunities to improve the well-being of Maryland’s young people. ACY supports HB 1051 because it will improve the lives of children and families. We strongly support this HB1051 because eliminating pay disparity is the right thing to do and benefits women, families and our state’s economy.

Despite state and federal protections that require employers to pay male and female employees equally for substantially equal work, women in Maryland earn, on average, just 85 cents for every dollar earned by men in comparable jobs. For women of color that number is even lower, with African American women earning just 70 cents and Latino women earning just 47 cents for every dollar earned by a man doing comparable work.

Due to wage discrimination, Maryland women who are employed full time lose more than eight billion dollars every year. Beyond the obvious unfairness, this also means that families, businesses and the economy suffer because these lost wages mean families have less money to spend on goods and services that help drive economic growth.

More than 300,000 households in Maryland are headed by women. About 21 percent of those families, or 64,068 family households, have incomes that fall below the poverty line. Eliminating the wage gap would provide much-needed income to women whose wages sustain their households.

This bill will strengthen the state’s Equal Pay for Equal Work Act by prohibiting employers from paying disparate wages to workers of different genders by establishing clearer definitions. It will also bar employers from providing less favorable employment opportunities based on gender and retaliating against workers for sharing information about pay.

We urge a favorable report for this important legislation.

Rebecca Wagner, Executive Director