

6342

I N S E N A T E

(PREFILED)

January 6, 2016

Introduced by Sen. HOYLMAN -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Investigations and Government Operations

AN ACT to amend the executive law, in relation to prohibiting employers from seeking salary history from prospective employees

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 Section 1. Legislative intent. The legislature hereby finds that New
2 York should lead the nation in preventing wage discrimination.

3 The wage gap between men and women is one of the oldest and most
4 persistent effects of inequality between the sexes in the United States.

5 The 1963 Equal Pay Act and the 1964 Civil Rights Act in the United
6 States established the legal right to equal pay for equal work and equal
7 opportunity. Yet half a century later, women are still subjected to wage
8 gaps and paid less than men.

9 The concept of comparable worth attacks the problem of gender-based
10 wage discrimination by mandating that jobs characterized by similar
11 levels of education, skill, effort, responsibilities, and working condi-
12 tions be compensated at similar wage levels regardless of the gender of
13 the worker holding the job.

14 The goal of pay equity is to raise the wages for undervalued jobs held
15 predominantly by women. Today, women make only 77 cents per every
16 dollar earned by a man for a comparable job, a gender wage gap of 23
17 percent.

18 This translates into thousands of dollars of lost wages each year for
19 each female worker, money that helps them feed their families, save for
20 a college education and afford decent and safe housing.

21 Pay disparities affect women of all ages, races, and education levels,
22 but are more pronounced for women of color. Minority women make as
23 little as 54 cents per dollar for a comparable job held by a man.

24 Female-dominated jobs pay twenty to thirty percent less than male-do-
25 minated jobs classified as comparable in worth and more than one half of
26 all women work in jobs that are over seventy percent female.

EXPLANATION--Matter in ITALICS (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[] is old law to be omitted.

1 Women are more likely to enter poverty in old age for several reasons:
2 A lifetime of lower wages means women have less income to save for
3 retirement, and less income that counts in their Social Security or
4 pension benefit formula.

5 The current life expectancy for women means they will, on an average
6 of three years, outlive men. Yet they will have to stretch their retire-
7 ment savings, which are less to begin with, over a longer period of
8 time.

9 The existence of pay inequity is a manifestation of deep-seated sex
10 discrimination that prevents both equality of pay for women and equality
11 of opportunity for both sexes.

12 More women in the United States are obtaining college degrees and
13 increasing their participation in the labor force and family-friendly
14 legislation, including the Equal Pay Act, Family and Medical Leave Act,
15 and Pregnancy Discrimination Act, and policies such as flex time and
16 telecommuting, have increased options to create a win-win situation for
17 women and their employers.

18 Despite the progress, women continue to suffer the consequences of
19 inequitable pay differentials: in 2010, the average college-educated
20 woman working full-time earned \$47,000 a year compared to \$64,000 for a
21 college-educated man.

22 During 2012, median weekly earnings for female full-time workers were
23 \$691, compared with \$854 per week for men, a gender wage gap of 19
24 percent.

25 Fair pay strengthens the security of families and eases future retire-
26 ment costs while also strengthening the American economy. In order to
27 achieve fair pay, policymakers must enact laws that prevent gender based
28 wage discrimination from when women enter the labor force.

29 In order to do so, it is necessary to prevent employers to base a
30 woman's pay based on her previous pay history. Because the pay is
31 already based on gender discrimination, allowing pay history to be
32 requested by employers is equivalent to maintaining a standard of lower
33 pay for women performing similar jobs as men. This practice of asking
34 for pay history must be outlawed.

35 S 2. Section 296 of the executive law is amended by adding a new
36 subdivision 19-a to read as follows:

37 19-A. IT SHALL BE AN UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICE OF ANY EMPLOYER,
38 LABOR ORGANIZATION, EMPLOYMENT AGENCY OR LICENSING AGENCY, OR EMPLOYEES
39 OR AGENTS THEREOF, TO SEEK A SALARY HISTORY FROM A PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEE
40 FOR AN INTERVIEW OR AS A CONDITION FOR EMPLOYMENT.

41 S 3. The department of labor, in conjunction with the New York state
42 division of human rights, shall establish a public awareness campaign,
43 available on their respective websites, informing employers in the state
44 that it is illegal to seek salary information from prospective employ-
45 ees.

46 S 4. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall
47 have become a law.