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PRESS RELEASE

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Massachusetts Caucus Of Women Legislators Legislative Priority Signed Into Law

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators is pleased to share that on Monday, August 1st, Governor Charlie Baker signed S.2119, An Act to Establish Pay Equity into law. The pay equity bill was the only legislative priority of the Caucus for the current session.

"This was a great issue to work on and to see Pay Equity finally pass unanimously is a major victory, not just for women but for the families who rely on wage income to support them," said **Senator Anne Gobi (D-Spencer)**, Senate Chair of the Women's Caucus.

In the forty-one year history of the Women's Caucus, members have been involved in advocating for policies and laws that positively affect women and girls throughout the Commonwealth. The unanimous passage of the pay equity legislation in both the House and the Senate and the final signature of the bill into law by Governor Baker marks a huge success for the Caucus and for members who have been working on this issue for many years.

The legislation that was signed into law marks the most comprehensive pay equity legislation in the United States. It provides a much-needed update on the definition of comparable work and further includes employer discretion for performance-based compensation based on industry standards. The law prevents employers from requiring a potential employee to share their past salary history on a job application and also protects employees from termination for discussing wages with colleagues. The pay transparency and removal of previous salary disclosure will create a more level-playing field for all employees.

“Throughout my 31 years in office, closing the gender wage gap has always been a topic of conversation most especially because women of color make even less,” said **Rep. Gloria Fox (D-Roxbury)**, House Chair of the Women’s Caucus. “I am pleased to see the unanimous vote on this bill and that Massachusetts is now a leader on this issue with the strongest pay equity law in the nation.”

“The Equal Pay bill is a reminder to employers to do the right thing. There are already laws that mandate companies to pay men and women equally for comparable work such as the Lilly Ledbetter Act, which was the first bill President Obama signed,” said **Senator Forry (D-Dorchester)**, Senate Vice Chair. “I am proud that once again, Massachusetts is making it clear and reminding employers that men and women doing the same work must be paid the same.”

“I was proud to join my colleagues in the Legislature and the Women’s Caucus, to fight for a pay equity law, which is long overdue,” said **Rep. Jen Benson (D-Lunenburg)**, House Vice Chair. “Passing this historic law will allow us to start closing the unjustifiable wage gap among men and women in Massachusetts, and ensure that women are receiving equal compensation for equal work.”

The involvement of the Women’s Caucus and it’s members in advocating for this legislation, coupled with the work of the Equal Pay Coalition and the business community, helped the bill reach the Governor’s desk.

The equal pay legislation will take effect on January 1, 2018.

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