

# EQUAL PAY OPPORTUNITY ACT

## ([HB1506](#))



*Opponents of equal pay policies often brush off the wage gap as a myth – or as something that only exists because of the choices women make about jobs. But that is not the case. Even when controlling for job type, education, hours worked, etc., economists consistently find that the gap cannot be fully explained away by anything other than discrimination. And that gap occurs across occupations.*

## DEBUNKING THE CLAIMS

---

### **CLAIM: We already have equal pay laws, we don't need more**

- Existing laws have not ended gender wage discrimination.
- Wage gap has narrowed in the past 50 years at a rate of slightly over 1/3 of a cent per year:
  - 1960s: women earned 60 percent of men's pay
  - Today: women earn 80 percent of men's pay
- But growth has slowed dramatically since the turn of the century. If change continues at such a sluggish rate, women won't reach pay equity with men until 2119.

### **CLAIM: Women should get better jobs if they want better pay**

- In almost every occupation, women earn less than men for the same work.
- Women make up nearly 90 percent of the nursing workforce, and they collect \$1,086 in median weekly earnings. Male nurses take home an extra \$150 each week.
- People should have the right to choose any occupation and know that they will be paid fairly for the work they do, regardless of their gender.

### **CLAIM: Women take time off to have and take care of children. They get paid less because they are less committed to their jobs than men are**

- Saying that women are distracted from their jobs by their children is like saying that men neglect their children to focus solely on work. Both of those assumptions are not only incorrect, but also offensive to both genders.

### **CLAIM: Men need to make more money to support their families. Women are not primary wage earners**

- 40% of women are the primary breadwinners
- 75% of single mothers are the sole breadwinners for their households
- The primary wage earner argument does not hold up because it should not excuse disparities in pay for equal work.
- In today's economy, most families have two wage earners. Pay equity ensures that every worker in the family is earning what they should based on the requirements of their jobs.

**CLAIM: Women earn less because they don't negotiate their pay**

- Women do negotiate, but it's often a catch 22:  
If they ask too assertively, they're turned down for being too pushy, and if they don't ask assertively enough, they aren't good negotiators so they don't get a raise. They're damned if they do and damned if they don't.

**CLAIM: Men make more because they have more education and experience**

- Women graduate from college and attend graduate school at higher rates than men, but are still making less money.
- On average, men with some college but no degree earn about the same as women with a Bachelor's degree.

---

*All jobs, regardless of whether they are performed primarily by men or by women, should be paid based on the level of skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions required by the job.*