



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

**Senate Bill 0217 Labor and Employment - Wage History and Wage Range
Finance Committee – February 13, 2020
SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2020 legislative session. WDC is one of the largest and most active Democratic Clubs in our County with more than 600 politically active women and men, including many elected officials.

WDC urges the passage of SB0217. This bill prohibits employers from relying on past wage history information to determine an applicant's salary, or a current employee's salary when considering that employee for a new position, including a promotion. However, if an employer makes a job offer, an applicant or employee can volunteer his/her salary history to support a higher wage offer. This bill also requires employers to provide salary information to applicants upon request. An employer may not retaliate against or refuse to interview or hire an applicant because the applicant did not provide wage history or requested wage range information. This bill authorizes the Commissioner of Labor and Industry to assess civil penalties on employers that violate the law.

This bill is of particular importance to working women because it increases salary transparency and prohibits discriminatory practices that result in paying lower salaries to women because of their prior salary and work history, even though they are qualified. Relying on salary history can also further penalize women who reduced their work hours to care for children or other family members and those who have worked in the non-profit sector.

Numerous studies have documented that there continue to be persistent gender and racial pay gaps. Women are paid 86 cents for every dollar that men earn and the gap is wider for African American and Hispanic women. Recent studies have correlated salary history, especially starting salary history, with these gaps.

WDC urges Maryland to join thirteen other states in the growing movement to ensure salaries are based on merit and job requirements, not salary history. Salary history is a not a neutral factor. Everyone deserves equal pay for equal skills and equal work.

We ask for your support for **SB0217** and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

Respectfully,

Diana Conway
President