



**Testimony for the Senate Finance Committee
February 13, 2020**

SB 217 – Labor and Employment – Wage History and Wage Range

FAVORABLE

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The ACLU of Maryland supports SB 217, which would prohibit employers from asking about wage history in the job application process, in order to help ensure that Maryland workers are paid fair wages.

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When employers require job applicants to provide their salary history, they perpetuate race- and gender-based discrimination and pay disparities. This bill would help ensure that salary negotiations between employers and potential employees are based on job-related skills and experience, not wage history, which is irrelevant as a marker of what an employee's labor is worth.

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Maryland's current practice of allowing employers to consider hiring and pay decisions based on applicants' wage history disproportionately hurts women and people of color in the job application process, who already face bias and discrimination in the workforce. This practice hurts employers as well as applicants, because it makes a workplace less attractive to a diverse and inclusive workforce. While the lack of inclusivity perpetuates further discrimination, it also weakens collaboration, innovation, and growth for Maryland businesses.

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When employers provide job applicants with a salary range for a position, they allow applicants to fairly advocate for themselves in wage negotiations. When Maryland workers are empowered in these negotiations, they become more satisfied and appreciated on the job.

Employers in Maryland and across the country understand that the provisions in this bill are good for business. A growing number of companies, including Amazon, Starbucks, Facebook, American Express, Bank of America, and Google, have already announced that they no longer ask job applicants to provide their salary history. These companies understand that removing wage history from the hiring process diversifies their applicant pool and attracts smart, qualified, and committed employees.

Maryland is already a leader on equal pay, and it is time for our state to join the 17 other states across the country that already have laws prohibiting employers from asking about wage history. This bill will allow our state to



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continue building a workplace culture that values leadership, experience, and diversity, and most importantly, improve the career prospects of applicants who have experienced wage discrimination and pay disparities in prior jobs.

For the foregoing reasons, the ACLU of Maryland supports SB 217.