

# Equal Pay

# Opportunity Act

HB 1646  
SB 5630



## Unequal pay creates economy-busting jobs

Women make up half of the workforce and earn more college degrees than men. But in Washington, the typical women working full-time, year-round in 2013 took home 80¢ to a man's \$1.00. Nationally, Black women made 67¢ and Latinas 56¢ for every \$1.00 paid to White men.

Unequal pay hits working families in the pocketbook and slows down our economy. The average Washington woman working full-time brings home \$18,000 less each year than the average man. That keeps families strapped, reduces spending in local businesses, and helps explain why 19% of our state's kids live in poverty. It also limits women's ability to invest in education or starting a business, and results in less retirement income.

## Everyone should have an equal chance to succeed

Washington state has prohibited wage discrimination based on sex since 1943, but existing laws are insufficient:

- Many firms prohibit or discourage employees from discussing pay, and may penalize them for doing so, so no one knows if others are getting paid more for similar work.
- Some firms employ only or mostly men in higher paying jobs, and assign work in ways that give men greater access to promotions and future opportunities.
- Courts have allowed employers to use many justifications for paying women less. And existing remedies are so weak that few come forward even when they've experienced discrimination.

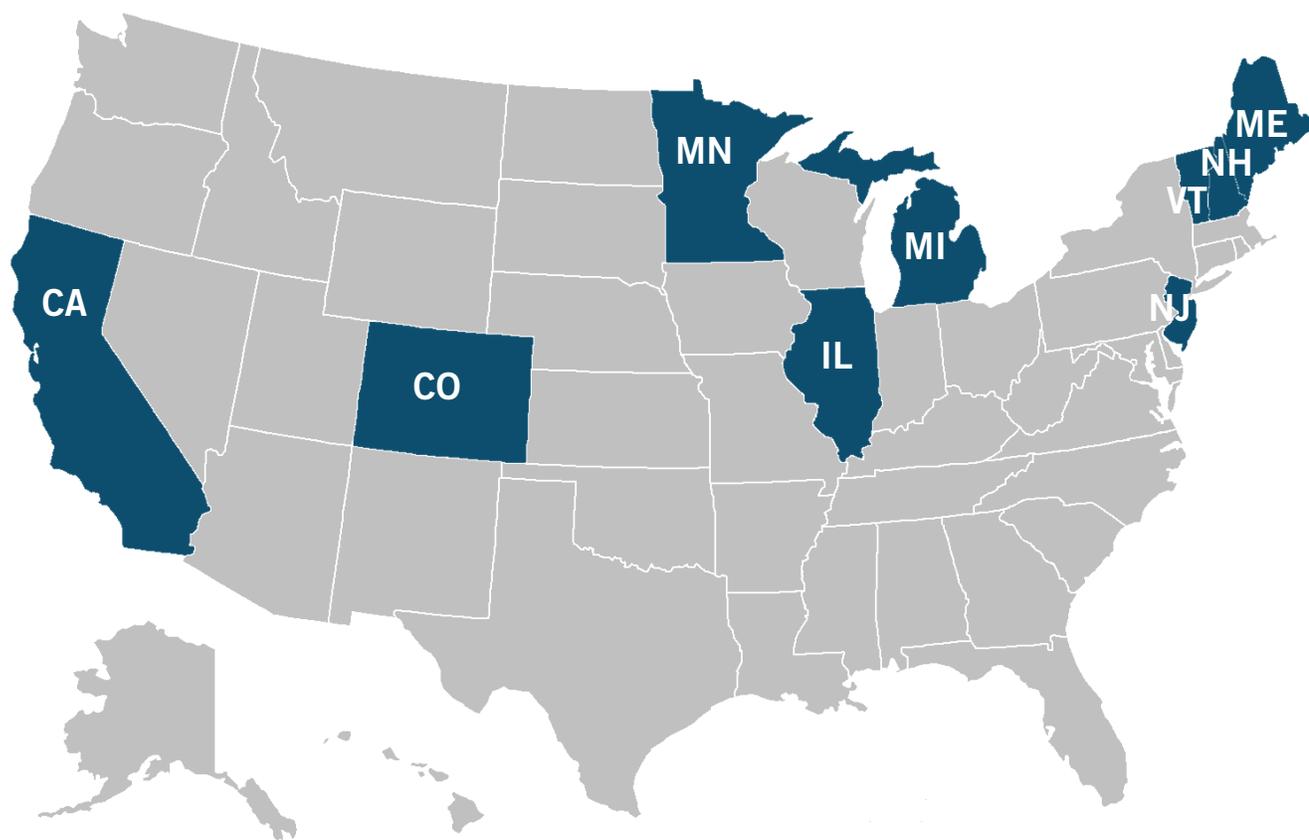
## The Washington Equal Pay Opportunity Act will:

- **Protects employee communication** about compensation and job opportunities, and clarifies that all employees can ask their employer why they are being paid less or don't have the same access to career opportunities as others.
- **Adds being denied more favorable jobs or career tracks** because of gender, in addition to pay discrimination, as a cause of civil action.
- **Strengthens existing enforcement** by requiring a valid business reason related to the job – such as education, training, or experience – for a gender disparity in pay, hiring, work assignments, or career track; and by providing for recovery of damages and expenses in civil suits.

# Washington Equal Pay Opportunity Act



## Statewide Fair Pay Laws



### Wendy's story

Wendy Banks | Grocery Store Meat Cutter | Tacoma

"My dad was a meat cutter. I worked in the meat department for years, but every time I applied for training as a cutter, there was some excuse why I was denied. Then I found out that men without any grocery experience were being hired straight into the role. I filed a grievance, and finally got a shot at the higher paying job."

