

Women in Oregon make 79 cents for every dollar men make

By ALINA HARWAY

The Oregon Council on Civil Rights recently released its report exploring the wage gap between men and women in Oregon.

Its findings show that while Oregon's current workplace policies and practices have helped lower the wage gap below the national average (where women earn 77 cents for every \$1.00 earned by men), Oregon women still make more than 20 percent less than Oregon men, on average. For women of color, the wage gap is more than 40 cents per dollar.

How is it that Oregon — and the nation at large — still have such a long way to go? From the report:

"The 'second shift' of housework and family care falls more frequently to women than men. Women are less likely than men to have access to paid sick time and paid family leave and are more likely to need that time to take care of a child or other family member. Women take home less income, are less likely to earn raises and promotions at the same pace, earn fewer retirement benefits, and accumulate lower lifetime

wealth. [Yet...] two thirds of working women are the primary or co-breadwinners in their families. Pay inequality impacts adults and children who depend on women's incomes."

While the social injustice is more than alarming enough, the economic impacts should cause concern for everyone across the broad spectrum of political beliefs. When women are paid less for equal or comparable work, it brings overall household wages down. And for single working mothers, that's a deep impact: About one-third of single working mothers are living below the poverty line.

The Oregon Council on Civil Rights' report points to several policy changes Oregon could undertake to address this issue, including:

Paid Leave: Expanding paid sick leave, creating a statewide paid family leave insurance program, and supporting leave time for child-related activities;

Safe, affordable childcare: Expanding employment-related day care and extending tax credits for childcare;

Oregon Paycheck Fairness Act: Providing protections against discrimination and retaliation;

And others, including increasing minimum wage.

Further, the council recommends, Oregon should increase outreach, public awareness, and partnerships with employers and private sector leaders; provide more educational and occupational opportunities; and provide employer incentives and workplace best practices for women.

These recommendations have been sent to Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) Commissioner Brad Avakian, who is tasked with developing proposals to address the issues identified in the report. Avakian told the Statesman Journal that no proposals will be submitted in time for the 2014 legislative session, but that BOLI will

begin working to develop "a set of recommendations that works for the business community and the labor force."

(Editor's Note: Alina Harway is the communications and research manager for Our Oregon, a labor-backed non-

profit organization that promotes economic and social fairness for all Oregonians.)

Texas Hold'em poker tournament March 15 for Doernbecher kids

The third annual Unions for Kids Texas Hold 'em Poker Tournament will be held Saturday, March 15, from 4 to 10 p.m. at Sheet Metal Workers Local 16 Hall, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland.

Buy-in is \$50. Top three winners will receive Visa gift cards of \$1,000, \$500 and \$250.

All proceeds from the tournament, which is in association with the Union for Kids Motorcycle Poker Run held in June, go to Doernbecher Children's Hospital.

For more information or to register, call Emmy at 503-254-0123.



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