



## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS TESTIMONY ON HB 1

April 26, 2017

Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Jill Fuchs, President of the League of Women Voters of Delaware. We ask that you support HB 1.

It fits within one of our guiding principles – namely, the importance of meeting basic human needs. One of the main goals in our advocacy is to support those initiatives that can prevent or reduce poverty and promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

If women are not compensated fairly, it reduces their income, potentially putting them into poverty -- both during their work years and in retirement, thereby inhibiting self-sufficiency.

The gender pay gap is particularly severe in our state for women of color. African American women are paid 77 percent and Hispanic and Latina women here in Delaware earn just 68 percent of what white men do.

Indeed, this wage gap snowballs over time. An analysis of wage gap figures by the National Women's Law Center concluded that, on average, women in Delaware lose approximately \$388,000 over the course of a 40-year career. For African American women in Delaware, the losses reach \$688,000. For Hispanic women, career losses can climb to \$970,000.

We must take steps to change this – and the bill before you is one good measure that can help ensure that women are paid fairly. Wage history should not be a factor in determining an employee's salary in a new job. This is true for men, as well as women.

Actually, prior pay has very little to do with a worker's ability to perform in a new position. Using that information is a kind of crutch, allowing employers to avoid the real questions: What value does the company place on the work to be done? And does this individual have the necessary skills and experience for the job? Answers to these questions should determine the salary to be paid.

The League of Women Voters thanks the Committee for the opportunity to testify. We strongly support HB 1 and urge its expeditious passage. Thank you.