

**REVISED MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HOLLY J. MITCHELL
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March 19, 2024

Celebrating Women’s History Month: Closing the Gender Pay Gap

The origins of Women’s History Month emerged in Santa Rosa, California. In 1978, “Women’s History Week”¹ was planned to correspond with International Women’s Day. Two years later, President Jimmy Carter formally proclaimed the week of March 2-8 as Women’s History Week. On March 12, 1987, Congress passed Public Law No. 100-9, proclaiming March 1987 as the first Women’s History Month.² This year, Equal Pay Day³, the symbolic date representing the number of days women have to work into the current year just to make the same amount of money men made in the prior one, took place on March 12, 2024. However, across the intersectional lines of race and ethnicity, some women have to work much longer for their earnings to equate to that of their male counterparts for the same work performed. Based on current data from the American Association of University Women (AAUM), Black Women have to wait until July 27 for their Equal Pay Day. Latina and Native Women’s Equal Pay Days take place on October 5 and November 30 respectively.

¹ <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/introduction-womens-history-month>
² <https://www.womenshistorymonth.gov/index.html>
³ <https://www.aauw.org/resources/article/equal-pay-day-calendar/>

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MOTION

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While women now make up 35% of workers in the 10 highest-paying jobs – compared to 13% in 1980 – they still lag behind men.⁴ Pay equity legislation is one of the most effective strategies to close the gender pay gap, and it continues to expand throughout local jurisdictions across the Country. A commitment to workplace equity and pay transparency embraces this year's Women's History Month theme, "Women who advocate for equity, diversity, and inclusion." Measuring and monitoring the effectiveness of workplace equity initiatives⁵ is vital for organizations committed to creating inclusive cultures.

Considering the gender pay gap, on July 25, 2023, the County Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted a motion directing the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA), in collaboration with the Directors of the Departments of Economic Opportunity (DEO) and Human Resources (DHR), to report back within 120 days with recommendations on addressing the pay gap disproportionately burdening Black women in the County. Moreover, the motion asked County Counsel to report back with options for a pay transparency ordinance requiring County departments to report and publish salary and demographic information on a periodic basis for both the County workforce and County contractors.

On February 6, 2024, DCBA provided a written report back noting a robust ecosystem of strategic policies to abolish the wage gap would likely result in decreased poverty levels, economic growth, and increased financial stability and wealth generation for Black and Latina women. Research shows that if women were paid the same as men, poverty among women would drop 50 percent in the United States, and it would be reduced by 51 percent in California. Moreover, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) would grow by at least 2.8 percent nationally. Given the reality of the wage gap and its implications for all women, *especially* Black and Latina women here in California, there is urgency for immediate action.

Pay transparency is beneficial to both employers and employees as it can help detect

⁴ <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/11/02/women-have-gained-ground-in-the-nations-highest-paying-occupations-but-still-lag-behind-men/>

⁵ https://trusaic.com/blog/7-metrics-for-monitoring-the-effectiveness-of-dei-initiatives?utm_content=inbody-10

and avoid discriminatory pay patterns. When conversations about pay happen in secrecy, discrimination and bias are more likely to factor into compensation decisions. When salaries are accessible and transparent to all workers, women can more easily discern if they are underpaid compared to their male colleagues.

In its report, DCBA recommended continued support for its Office of Labor Equity, the establishment of Paid Family Leave for County employees, an increased minimum wage for certain industries, a Board adopted pay transparency policy, and the establishment of a retirement readiness assistance program for self-identified women in the County who are disproportionately impacted by the pay gap. Moreover, in order to further transparent pay reporting, the Board may establish a Countywide pay transparency Board Policy, requiring County departments to publish pay and demographic data. For contractors, the County does not currently possess comprehensive information on its contracted workforce as only a limited number of contracts contain any requirement that the contractor provide data on its workforce. However, contractors with 100 or more employees can provide the County with a copy of the data submitted to the State of California to comply with the Pay Transparency Act, which requires all employers to provide de-identified demographic and pay data to the State on an annual basis, in formats specified by the State, providing uniform simplicity for submission to the County. Through its Equity in County Contracting Initiative, the Internal Services Department could also explore additional data points to capture that would provide further information on the pay and demographics of the County's contracted workforce.

DCBA, DEO, and DHR, in consultation with County Counsel, have provided several actionable recommendations, and in the spirit of Women's History Month, the County must move forward as outlined to close the gender pay gap, particularly for women of color.

WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Direct the Department of Human Resources (DHR), together with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)'s Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations Branch, the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA), the CEO's Women and Girls Initiative, and other relevant departments, to within 60 days,

take appropriate action to sign onto the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls California Equal Pay Pledge, reflecting the County's commitment to conducting annual Countywide gender pay analyses; reviewing hiring and promotion processes and procedures in order to reduce bias and structural barriers for marginalized groups; and promoting equal pay best practices.

2. Direct the CEO and DCBA, in collaboration with the Aging and Disabilities Department, the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), DHR, the Los Angeles County Employees Retirement Association (LACERA), and other relevant departments, to report back to the Board in writing in 90 days with recommendations on how the County could establish a County retirement readiness assistance program (Program) for women across all sectors and industries, public and private. This Program should include wealth building opportunities, curriculum for those nearing retirement, and the exploration of a "Closing the Gap" cash assistance program to provide unconditional, monthly cash payments to women at or nearing retirement age who, in spite of a full work history, are or will be unable to afford their basic needs once they retire from the workforce as they will fall below the Federal Poverty Level based on all sources of income, due to the legacies of pay discrimination, low wages, and lack of paid family and medical leave. The recommendations should also explore potential funding sources for the Program.
3. Direct County Counsel, in coordination with DCBA, DHR, the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), the Auditor Controller (A-C), the Department of Economic Opportunity, and other relevant departments to draft a Pay Transparency Board Policy in 120 days that would require:
 - a. The A-C and DHR to collaborate and publish, on a publicly available dashboard, existing salary and demographic information into one consolidated report. The A-C and DHR should aggregate existing demographic information with existing salary information for County classifications and contractors, to the extent feasible, combining race,

ethnicity, gender, age, sexuality, County item, length of time on current item, type of item (such as executive, management, or line staff), pay band/step, time since last promotion, and total number of employees within each department or contractor agency, in one place. Further direct A-C and DHR to submit confidential semi-annual reports to the Board consisting of individualized data that may not be publicly available.

- b. The A-C and DHR to de-identify data to ensure employee privacy, including deleting employee names and providing only salary ranges rather than precise figures.
- c. The OCIO to work with departments to collect any necessary data not already reflected in available datasets.

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