

Talbert, Lilly

Subject: VCW VIEW: January 30th On One Measure of the Wage Gap, Vermont Is #1

For Immediate Release

Contact: [Lilly Talbert](#), Vermont Commission on Women (VCW)
802-828-2841 | 800-881-1561 | Cell: 802-498-8806

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ON ONE MEASURE OF THE WAGE GAP, VERMONT IS #1

(Montpelier) – Cary Brown, Executive Director of the Vermont Commission on Women which works to advance rights and opportunities for women and girls, applauded news that Vermont’s most recent gender wage gap number is 91.3%. In several recently released reports on working women from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Vermont’s was best in the nation.

The BLS reports, [Highlights of Women’s Earnings](#) and [Highlights of Women’s Earnings in Region I: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont](#), are frequently used to provide comparison among the states for measuring women’s earnings as a percentage of men’s.

"Some of this results from women doing better and some of it results from men doing worse, especially among those with high school education or less," observed UVM Professor of Economics and Women's Studies, Elaine McCrate. "I'd say we have a lot of work to do at the low-wage end of the labor market to make it better for all workers."

"Our policymakers have made significant improvements in strengthening equal pay laws and in passing laws promoting workplace flexibility, both of which contribute to narrowing the wage gap," Brown remarked.

Improvements since 2002 include the Equal Pay Act, ensuring that employees who do the same job requiring equal skill, effort and responsibility under similar working conditions receive the same pay, regardless of gender; and 2005’s Unlawful Employment Practices Act, ensuring that employees can disclose and discuss their wages without fear of discipline, discharge, or retaliation.

The most recent improvement was An Act Relating to Equal Pay. This 2013 law made Vermont the first state in the country to protect an employees’ right to request flexible working arrangements. In addition, that law strengthened and clarified provisions for equal pay, extended further protections for employees who ask coworkers what they are paid; required compliance of government contractors with Vermont’s equal pay laws; enhanced protections for new mothers who must express breast milk for their babies at work; and established a study committee looking at mechanics of a paid family leave law in Vermont.

The Commission on Women will be at the State House on Equal Pay Day April 14th, joined by Business and Professional Women and Advisory Council organizations. Not a celebration, this day is a reminder: yes, we’re making progress, but pay discrimination continues to exist in Vermont.

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About VCW: The Vermont Commission on Women (VCW) is a non-partisan state government commission established in 1964 working to advance rights and opportunities for women and girls. Sixteen volunteer commissioners and representatives from organizations concerned with women’s issues guide the VCW’s public education, coalition building, and advocacy efforts. VCW offers many services to the public, including a toll-free information and referral service at [800-881-1561](tel:800-881-1561) and many publications, including the handbook [The Legal Rights of Women in Vermont](#) and the new report, [Women in Leadership and Public Life 2015](#).