



SR-54 (2017-2018)

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CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2017–2018 REGULAR SESSION

SENATE RESOLUTION

NO. 54

Introduced by Senator Mitchell

August 21, 2017

Relative to African American Women's Equal Pay Day

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SR 54, Mitchell.

WHEREAS, The California economy is the sixth largest in the world, with a gross domestic product of \$2.5 trillion in 2015. California is rich in jobs in diverse industries, including computers, electronics, agriculture, beverages, engineering, mathematics, transportation, machinery, chemicals, and construction; and

WHEREAS, California is the most populous state in the nation with 19.7 million women and girls comprising 50 percent of the state's population; and

WHEREAS, African American women and girls number 1,149,813 in California, comprising about 15 percent of the state's entire female population; and

WHEREAS, We strive to be an egalitarian society in which people of diverse profiles and identities can maximize their assets and potential in California, especially as it comes to their labor; and

WHEREAS, Our collective aspirations for societal progress are still obstructed by both structural barriers and biases, as reflected in the data we have about this time in California history with regard to labor and African American women; and

WHEREAS, Women in California are paid \$0.86 on the dollar that men earn, and women nationwide are paid \$0.80 to the dollar that men earn; and

WHEREAS, African American women are paid \$0.63 to the dollar that white men in California earn; and

WHEREAS, In California, the median salary for African American women is \$44,674 per year in comparison to \$55,555 for white women and \$71,164 for white men; and

WHEREAS, Even when college education is accounted for, the wage gap for African American women continues to exist. African American women with a bachelor's degree are typically paid \$46,694 per year as compared to \$46,729 for white men with a high school degree. In addition, African American women with a Master's degree are paid on average of \$56,072 per year as compared to \$54,620 for white men with an Associate's degree; and

WHEREAS, African American women are paid less than their white male and female counterparts even in sectors in which African American women make up a significant share of the workforce, such as in childcare and early education, education, special education, and social work; and

WHEREAS, African American women in the nation are overrepresented in low-wage jobs that pay about \$21,000 a year and underrepresented in high-wage jobs that typically pay \$70,000 a year; and

WHEREAS, The pay disparity for the average African American woman amounts to a loss of \$26,125 a year in California. In the course of a 40-year career, the typical African American woman in the state loses a staggering \$1,045,000 because of the wage gap. As a result, African American women have to work until 83 years of age to make as much as the average white man has made by 60 years of age; and

WHEREAS, Results of the wage gap impact the poverty level of African American women and their families in California. The poverty rate for African American women is 24 percent, in comparison to 10 percent for white women. Thirty-one percent of African American single mother headed households in California live in poverty as compared to 16 percent for white women; and

WHEREAS, Several reasons account for continuing wage gaps, including, among other things, the greater concentration of women and minorities in low-wage jobs, employer's discriminatory hiring or promotion practices for women and minority workers, and pay discrimination based on gender, race, or ethnicity. Other less overtly discriminatory factors, such as differences in job tenure and attachment to the work force, or educational differences, may nevertheless have a differential effect along gender, racial, and ethnic lines because of workers' differences in opportunities, access, and family responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work must include women's unpaid care and domestic work, address the gender deficit in care work, address the gender racial gaps in leadership, entrepreneurship, and ensure gender responsive economic policies for job creation, poverty reduction, and sustainability, and a greater understanding of the role of implicit bias; and

WHEREAS, Unequal pay means that African American women in the United States have to work more than 19 months, until July 31 of the following year, to make as much as white men in the previous 12 months; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, That the Senate designates July 31, 2017, as African American Women's Equal Pay Day, a day upon which we can reflect on the progress made for African American women's pay, examine the data that reveals current inequalities that impact African American women's pay and economic status, and recognize the people in California working to ensure equality for all women, especially working African American women; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.