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Governor Newsom signs SB 1237 into law, Strengthening the Enforcement of California's Existing Pay Equity Laws

SACRAMENTO, CA (October 6, 2026) -- Governor Gavin Newsom has signed SB 1237 into law, strengthening California's pay equity enforcement framework and enhancing the California Civil Rights Department's (CRD) ability to enforce the state's pay data reporting requirements. Authored by Senator Catherine Blakespear and co-sponsored by HOPE and, Power California Action, SB 1237 is an important step toward strengthening transparency, accountability, and enforcement of California's existing equal pay laws.

Despite California's nation-leading equal pay protections, wage disparities in the state persist. [Women in California earn approximately 88 cents for every dollar earned by men](#), with even wider gaps for women of color. [Black women earn approximately 60 cents](#), and [Latinas working full-time, year round earn just 49 cents](#), for every dollar earned by white men.

Building on the 2025 enactment of [SB 642 \(Limón\), which strengthened the California Equal Pay Act by expanding workers' access to pay information](#), SB 1237 ensures that the California Civil Rights Department has stronger tools to enforce existing pay data reporting requirements and address repeated employer noncompliance. By improving enforcement mechanisms and accountability measures, the law helps ensure that pay data can more effectively inform efforts to address wage disparities across the state.

"California is home to the nation's largest Latina population where they represent 20% of all Californians, yet Latinas continue to face one of the widest wage gaps in the state, a disparity that can translate into more than [\\$2 million in lost lifetime earnings](#)," said **Xiomara Peña, Vice President of Community Engagement & Innovation of HOPE**. "Latinas drive our economy as workers, entrepreneurs, and business owners. SB 1237 strengthens the transparency and enforcement tools needed to identify persistent pay disparities and hold employers accountable. Stronger accountability means stronger pathways to economic mobility and greater opportunity for all Californians."



"When job opportunities are limited, young workers can feel pressured to accept whatever pay they're offered. For young women and workers of color, pay disparities shape whether they can stay in school, build savings, and support their families. SB 1237 holds employers accountable for reporting the pay data California needs to identify those disparities." **said Ruth Sosa Martinez, Senior Policy Strategist with Power California Action** "Especially now when 50% of young people 19-24 have entered the workforce to support their families in this economy. Young workers deserve transparency and fair pay from the start, so they have a real shot at building financial stability for themselves and their families."

Closing pay gaps requires a clear picture of where disparities exist. When employers fail to report complete pay data, wage disparities can remain hidden and more difficult to address. SB 1237 strengthens accountability by providing the California Civil Rights Department with greater tools to address reporting gaps, improve transparency, and ensure pay data can be used to inform stronger protections for workers.

"SB 1237 will strengthen enforcement by increasing the penalty for repeat noncompliance. Increased penalties will serve as a meaningful deterrent against noncompliance and generate additional resources for more proactive enforcement," **said Senator Catherine Blakespear.** "This bill ensures employers can't treat pay data reporting as optional and gives CRD the tools it needs to effectively combat wage discrimination. It's a critical step toward ending persistent wage disparities and delivering real pay equity for women. "

What's Next

With SB 1237 as law, California has stronger tools to identify gaps in pay data and hold employers accountable for repeated noncompliance. HOPE will continue working with partners across the state to use this information to better understand where pay disparities persist and where stronger action is needed.

HOPE will build on this progress by advancing policies that strengthen equal pay protections, support workers, and expand economic opportunity across career pathways. By using data to identify gaps and inform solutions, HOPE seeks to help build a California where economic opportunity is accessible to all.



About HOPE

HOPE® is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization committed to ensuring political and economic parity for Latinas through leadership, advocacy, and education to benefit all communities and the status of women. HOPE® prepares and supports civic leaders through education and advocacy, centering the Latina perspective as a lens for strengthening democracy and economic mobility. Our programs are inclusive and open to all who wish to learn from this experience. We advance civic education, foster community leadership, and advocate for fair and informed policy solutions that expand opportunity for every community. To learn more visit www.latinas.org.