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Governor Newsom Signs SB 642 on Latina Equal Pay Day, Taking a Significant Step to Close Wage Disparities in California

SACRAMENTO, CA (October 16, 2025) -- HOPE (Hispanas Organized for Political Equality) applauds Governor Gavin Newsom for signing SB 642 into law. Authored by Senator Monique Limón and co-sponsored by HOPE, Equal Right Advocates, the California Employment Lawyers Association, and the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls, this bill strengthens the California Equal Pay Act, giving workers the tools they need to secure equal pay for equal work.

Landmark laws such as the California Fair Pay Act of 2015 and subsequent amendments have transformed the state's Equal Pay Act into one of the strongest in the nation. However, this issue persists, with data showing that the wage gap widened from 2022 to 2023—the first time this has happened since 2003. This highlights an urgent need to modernize our current laws to better reflect contemporary compensation structures and workforce realities.

SB 642 addresses this issue by updating the definition of wages in the Equal Pay act to include compensation practices like stocks and benefits, allowing workers to recover up to six years of lost pay, updating outdated gender-binary language, and placing reasonable limits on excessively broad pay ranges in job postings. These reforms reaffirm California's leadership in promoting pay transparency, closing wage gaps, and empowering workers with the protection they deserve.

“Latinas are a vital force in California's economy, yet they continue to experience the widest wage gap of any group in the state, earning only 42 cents for each dollar paid to White men, amounting to \$2.1 million in lost wages over a lifetime,” **said Helen Torres, Chief Executive Officer of HOPE.** “We commend Governor Newsom for signing SB 642 into law, a measure that signals California's strong commitment to close this gap and equips all workers with the tools they need to challenge unjust compensation practices. These reforms are not only long overdue, but are essential to ensuring that Latinas, and all workers, are fairly and fully compensated.”

“With many families continuing to stretch to make ends meet, we reinforce our commitment to equal pay laws that strengthen the economic security of California families and communities,” **said Senator Monique Limón, California Senate Pro-Tempore.** “On Latina Equal Pay Day, I am incredibly proud that Governor Newsom is building upon our pay equity legacy here in California. The Pay Equity Enforcement Act will help narrow the wage gap by providing workers with more negotiation power at the start of their career, while also strengthening workers’ rights to recover lost wages – this is a win for workers and an even bigger win for California families.”

“One of the biggest barriers to advancing pay equity is that workers often don’t know that they are being paid unfairly until it is too late to recover all that they have lost,” **said Mariko Yoshihara, Policy Director for the California Employment Lawyers Association.** “We applaud Governor Newsom for signing SB 642, which will help close the gender and race wage gap by extending the statute of limitations and allowing workers to recover more of the wages that they have lost due to pay discrimination,” added Yoshihara.

“The gender wage gap costs California women billions in lost wages each year—money that could go toward rent, groceries, child care, and other essentials that families depend on,” **said Jessica Ramey Stender, Policy Director & Deputy Legal Director of Equal Rights Advocates.** “At a time when federal wage protections are under attack, SB 642 is a vital step forward to strengthen California’s equal pay laws. Ensuring women and all workers are paid fairly is not only critical for their individual financial stability, but also for the economic security and well-being of families across the state.”

HOPE remains committed to closing wage disparities for all Californians and ensuring that the persistent wage gap does not continue to limit Latinas’ economic potential. Through policy advocacy, leadership development, and community partnerships, HOPE will continue working toward a future where every worker is valued and compensated fairly, building a stronger economy that benefits all Californians.

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 Latinas as civic leaders while providing inclusive leadership opportunities open to all who want to learn from the Latina perspective. We advance civic education, foster community leadership, and advocate for fair and informed policy solutions that expand opportunities for every community. HOPE programs and educational events are open to all individuals who support Latina leadership to strengthen our democracy and advance economic mobility. To learn more visit www.latinas.org.