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112TH CONGRESS
2D Session

S. 3220

To amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 22, 2012

Ms. MIKULSKI (for herself, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mrs. HAGAN, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LEVIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. REED, Mr. REID, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. KERRY, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. BENNET, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. COONS, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Ms. CANTWELL, and Mr. INOUYE) introduced the following bill; which was read the first time

MAY 23, 2012

Read the second time and placed on the calendar

A BILL

To amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,
SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Paycheck Fairness Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Women have entered the workforce in record numbers over the past 50 years.

(2) Despite the enactment of the Equal Pay Act of 1963, many women continue to earn significantly lower pay than men for equal work. These pay disparities exist in both the private and governmental sectors. In many instances, the pay disparities can only be due to continued intentional discrimination or the lingering effects of past discrimination.

(3) The existence of such pay disparities—

(A) depresses the wages of working families who rely on the wages of all members of the family to make ends meet;

(B) undermines women’s retirement security, which is often based on earnings while in the workforce;

(C) prevents the optimum utilization of available labor resources;

(D) has been spread and perpetuated, through commerce and the channels and instru-
mentalities of commerce, among the workers of
the several States;

(E) burdens commerce and the free flow of
goods in commerce;

(F) constitutes an unfair method of com-
petition in commerce;

(G) leads to labor disputes burdening and
obstructing commerce and the free flow of
goods in commerce;

(H) interferes with the orderly and fair
marketing of goods in commerce; and

(I) in many instances, may deprive workers
of equal protection on the basis of sex in viola-
tion of the 5th and 14th Amendments.

(4)(A) Artificial barriers to the elimination of
discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis
of sex continue to exist decades after the enactment
201 et seq.) and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42
U.S.C. 2000a et seq.).

(B) These barriers have resulted, in significant
part, because the Equal Pay Act of 1963 has not
worked as Congress originally intended. Improve-
ments and modifications to the provisions added by
the Act are necessary to ensure that the provisions
provide effective protection to those subject to pay
discrimination on the basis of their sex.

(C) Elimination of such barriers would have
positive effects, including—

(i) providing a solution to problems in the
economy created by unfair pay disparities;

(ii) substantially reducing the number of
working women earning unfairly low wages,
thereby reducing the dependence on public as-

(iii) promoting stable families by enabling
all family members to earn a fair rate of pay;

(iv) remedying the effects of past discrimi-
nation on the basis of sex and ensuring that in
the future workers are afforded equal protection
on the basis of sex; and

(v) ensuring equal protection pursuant to
Congress’s power to enforce the 5th and 14th
Amendments.

(5) The Department of Labor and the Equal
Employment Opportunity Commission have impor-
tant and unique responsibilities to help ensure that
women receive equal pay for equal work.

(6) The Department of Labor is responsible
for—

(A) collecting and making publicly available information about women’s pay;

(B) ensuring that companies receiving Federal contracts comply with anti-discrimination affirmative action requirements of Executive Order 11246 (relating to equal employment opportunity);

(C) disseminating information about women’s rights in the workplace;

(D) helping women who have been victims of pay discrimination obtain a remedy; and

(E) being proactive in investigating and prosecuting equal pay violations, especially systemic violations, and in enforcing all of its mandates.

(7) The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is the primary enforcement agency for claims made under the provisions added by the Equal Pay Act of 1963, and issues regulations and guidance on appropriate interpretations of the law.

(8) With a stronger commitment by the Department of Labor and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to their responsibilities, increased information about the provisions added by the Equal Pay Act of 1963, wage data, and more effective rem-
adies, women will be better able to recognize and enforce their rights.

(9) Certain employers have already made great strides in eradicating unfair pay disparities in the workplace and their achievements should be recognized.

SEC. 3. ENHANCED ENFORCEMENT OF EQUAL PAY REQUIREMENTS.

(a) BONA FIDE FACTOR DEFENSE AND MODIFICATION OF SAME ESTABLISHMENT REQUIREMENT.—Section 6(d)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 206(d)(1)) is amended—

(1) by striking “No employer having” and inserting “(A) No employer having”; and

(2) by striking “any other factor other than sex” and inserting “a bona fide factor other than sex, such as education, training, or experience”; and

(3) by inserting at the end the following:

“(B) The bona fide factor defense described in subparagraph (A)(iv) shall apply only if the employer demonstrates that such factor (i) is not based upon or derived from a sex-based differential in compensation; (ii) is job-related with respect to the position in question; and (iii) is consistent with business necessity. Such defense shall not apply where the employee demonstrates that an alter-
native employment practice exists that would serve the same business purpose without producing such differential and that the employer has refused to adopt such alternative practice.

“(C) For purposes of subparagraph (A), employees shall be deemed to work in the same establishment if the employees work for the same employer at workplaces located in the same county or similar political subdivision of a State. The preceding sentence shall not be construed as limiting broader applications of the term ‘establishment’ consistent with rules prescribed or guidance issued by the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission.”.

(b) NONRETAILATION PROVISION.—Section 15 of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 215) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(3), by striking “employee has filed” and all that follows through “committee;” and inserting “employee—

“(A) has made a charge or filed any complaint or instituted or caused to be instituted any investigation, proceeding, hearing, or action under or related to this Act, including an investigation conducted by the employer, or has testified or is planning to testify or has assisted or participated in any manner in any such inves-
tigation, proceeding, hearing, or action, or has served or is planning to serve on an industry committee; or

“(B) has inquired about, discussed, or disclosed the wages of the employee or another employee;”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(c) Subsection (a)(3)(B) shall not apply to instances in which an employee who has access to the wage information of other employees as a part of such employee’s essential job functions discloses the wages of such other employees to an individual who does not otherwise have access to such information, unless such disclosure is in response to a charge or complaint or in furtherance of an investigation, proceeding, hearing, or action under section 6(d), including an investigation conducted by the employer. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to limit the rights of an employee provided under any other provision of law.”.

(e) ENHANCED PENALTIES.—Section 16(b) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 216(b)) is amended—

(1) by inserting after the first sentence the following: “Any employer who violates section 6(d) shall additionally be liable for such compensatory
damages, or, where the employee demonstrates that
the employer acted with malice or reckless indiffer-
ence, punitive damages as may be appropriate, ex-
cept that the United States shall not be liable for
punitive damages.”;

(2) in the sentence beginning “An action to”,
by striking “either of the preceeding sentences” and
inserting “any of the preceeding sentences of this
subsection”;

(3) in the sentence beginning “No employees
shall”, by striking “No employees” and inserting
“Except with respect to class actions brought to en-
force section 6(d), no employee”;

(4) by inserting after the sentence referred to
in paragraph (3), the following: “Notwithstanding
any other provision of Federal law, any action
brought to enforce section 6(d) may be maintained
as a class action as provided by the Federal Rules
of Civil Procedure.”; and

(5) in the sentence beginning “The court in”—

(A) by striking “in such action” and in-
serting “in any action brought to recover the li-
ability prescribed in any of the preceeding sen-
tences of this subsection”; and
(B) by inserting before the period the following: “, including expert fees”.

(d) ACTION BY SECRETARY.—Section 16(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 216(c)) is amended—

(1) in the first sentence—

(A) by inserting “or, in the case of a violation of section 6(d), additional compensatory or punitive damages, as described in subsection (b),” before “and the agreement”; and

(B) by inserting before the period the following: “, or such compensatory or punitive damages, as appropriate”; 

(2) in the second sentence, by inserting before the period the following: “and, in the case of a violation of section 6(d), additional compensatory or punitive damages, as described in subsection (b)”;

(3) in the third sentence, by striking “the first sentence” and inserting “the first or second sentence”; and

(4) in the last sentence—

(A) by striking “commenced in the case” and inserting “commenced—

“(1) in the case”;
(B) by striking the period and inserting “;
or”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(2) in the case of a class action brought to en-
force section 6(d), on the date on which the indi-
vidual becomes a party plaintiff to the class action.”.

SEC. 4. TRAINING.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs,
subject to the availability of funds appropriated under sec-
tion 10, shall provide training to Commission employees
and affected individuals and entities on matters involving
discrimination in the payment of wages.

SEC. 5. NEGOTIATION SKILLS TRAINING FOR GIRLS AND
WOMEN.

(a) Program Authorized.—

(1) In general.—The Secretary of Labor,
after consultation with the Secretary of Education,
is authorized to establish and carry out a grant pro-
gram.

(2) Grants.—In carrying out the program, the
Secretary of Labor may make grants on a competi-
tive basis to eligible entities, to carry out negotiation
skills training programs for girls and women.
(3) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—To be eligible to receive a grant under this subsection, an entity shall be a public agency, such as a State, a local government in a metropolitan statistical area (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget), a State educational agency, or a local educational agency, a private nonprofit organization, or a community-based organization.

(4) APPLICATION.—To be eligible to receive a grant under this subsection, an entity shall submit an application to the Secretary of Labor at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary of Labor may require.

(5) USE OF FUNDS.—An entity that receives a grant under this subsection shall use the funds made available through the grant to carry out an effective negotiation skills training program that empowers girls and women. The training provided through the program shall help girls and women strengthen their negotiation skills to allow the girls and women to obtain higher salaries and rates of compensation that are equal to those paid to similarly situated male employees.

(b) INCORPORATING TRAINING INTO EXISTING PROGRAMS.—The Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of
Education shall issue regulations or policy guidance that provides for integrating the negotiation skills training, to the extent practicable, into programs authorized under—

(1) in the case of the Secretary of Education, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.), the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.), the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.), and other programs carried out by the Department of Education that the Secretary of Education determines to be appropriate; and

(2) in the case of the Secretary of Labor, the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2801 et seq.), and other programs carried out by the Department of Labor that the Secretary of Labor determines to be appropriate.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education shall prepare and submit to Congress a report describing the activities conducted under this section and evaluating the effectiveness of such activities in achieving the purposes of this Act.
SEC. 6. RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND OUTREACH.

The Secretary of Labor shall conduct studies and provide information to employers, labor organizations, and the general public concerning the means available to eliminate pay disparities between men and women, including—

(1) conducting and promoting research to develop the means to correct expeditiously the conditions leading to the pay disparities;

(2) publishing and otherwise making available to employers, labor organizations, professional associations, educational institutions, the media, and the general public the findings resulting from studies and other materials, relating to eliminating the pay disparities;

(3) sponsoring and assisting State and community informational and educational programs;

(4) providing information to employers, labor organizations, professional associations, and other interested persons on the means of eliminating the pay disparities;

(5) recognizing and promoting the achievements of employers, labor organizations, and professional associations that have worked to eliminate the pay disparities; and
(6) convening a national summit to discuss, and consider approaches for rectifying, the pay disparities.

SEC. 7. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL AWARD FOR PAY EQUITY IN THE WORKPLACE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—There is established the Secretary of Labor’s National Award for Pay Equity in the Workplace, which shall be awarded, as appropriate, to encourage proactive efforts to comply with section 6(d) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 206(d)).

(b) CRITERIA FOR QUALIFICATION.—The Secretary of Labor shall set criteria for receipt of the award, including a requirement that an employer has made substantial effort to eliminate pay disparities between men and women, and deserves special recognition as a consequence of such effort. The Secretary shall establish procedures for the application for and presentation of the award.

(c) EMPLOYER.—In this section, the term “employer” includes—

(1)(A) a corporation, including a nonprofit corporation;

(B) a partnership;

(C) a professional association;

(D) a labor organization; and
(E) a business entity similar to an entity described in any of subparagraphs (A) through (D);

(2) an entity carrying out an education referral program, a training program, such as an apprenticeship or management training program, or a similar program; and

(3) an entity carrying out a joint program, formed by a combination of any entities described in paragraph (1) or (2).

SEC. 8. COLLECTION OF PAY INFORMATION BY THE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION.

Section 709 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e–8) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(f)(1) Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Commission shall—

“(A) complete a survey of the data that is currently available to the Federal Government relating to employee pay information for use in the enforcement of Federal laws prohibiting pay discrimination and, in consultation with other relevant Federal agencies, identify additional data collections that will enhance the enforcement of such laws; and

“(B) based on the results of the survey and consultations under subparagraph (A), issue regula-
tions to provide for the collection of pay information
data from employers as described by the sex, race,
and national origin of employees.
“(2) In implementing paragraph (1), the Commission
shall have as its primary consideration the most effective
and efficient means for enhancing the enforcement of Fed-
eral laws prohibiting pay discrimination. For this purpose,
the Commission shall consider factors including the impos-
sition of burdens on employers, the frequency of required
data collection reports (including which employers should
be required to prepare reports), appropriate protections
for maintaining data confidentiality, and the most effec-
tive format for the data collection reports.”.
SEC. 9. REINSTATEMENT OF PAY EQUITY PROGRAMS AND
PAY EQUITY DATA COLLECTION.
(a) BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS DATA COLLEC-
tion.—The Commissioner of Labor Statistics shall con-
tinue to collect data on women workers in the Current
Employment Statistics survey.
(b) OFFICE OF FEDERAL CONTRACT COMPLIANCE
PROGRAMS INITIATIVES.—The Director of the Office of
Federal Contract Compliance Programs shall ensure that
employees of the Office—
(1)(A) shall use the full range of investigatory tools at the Office’s disposal, including pay grade methodology;

(B) in considering evidence of possible compensation discrimination—

   (i) shall not limit its consideration to a small number of types of evidence; and

   (ii) shall not limit its evaluation of the evidence to a small number of methods of evaluating the evidence; and

(C) shall not require a multiple regression analysis or anecdotal evidence for a compensation discrimination case;

(2) for purposes of its investigative, compliance, and enforcement activities, shall define “similarly situated employees” in a way that is consistent with and not more stringent than the definition provided in item 1 of subsection A of section 10–III of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Compliance Manual (2000), and shall consider only factors that the Office’s investigation reveals were used in making compensation decisions; and

(3) shall reinstate the Equal Opportunity Survey, as required by section 60–2.18 of title 41, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on September 7,
2006), designating not less than half of all non-
construction contractor establishments each year to
prepare and file such survey, and shall review and
utilize the responses to such survey to identify con-
tactor establishments for further evaluation and for
other enforcement purposes as appropriate.

(c) DEPARTMENT OF LABOR DISTRIBUTION OF
WAGE DISCRIMINATION INFORMATION.—The Secretary of
Labor shall make readily available (in print, on the De-
partment of Labor website, and through any other forum
that the Department may use to distribute compensation
discrimination information), accurate information on com-
pensation discrimination, including statistics, explanations
of employee rights, historical analyses of such discrimina-
tion, instructions for employers on compliance, and any
other information that will assist the public in under-
standing and addressing such discrimination.

SEC. 10. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
authorized to be appropriated $15,000,000 to carry out
this Act.

(b) PROHIBITION ON EARMARKS.—None of the funds
appropriated pursuant to subsection (a) for purposes of
the grant program in section 5 of this Act may be used
for a congressional earmark as defined in clause 9(e) of
rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

SEC. 11. SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE.

(a) Effective Date.—This Act and the amend-
ments made by this Act shall take effect on the date that
is 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) Technical Assistance Materials.—The Sec-
retary of Labor and the Commissioner of the Equal Em-
ployment Opportunity Commission shall jointly develop
technical assistance material to assist small businesses in
complying with the requirements of this Act and the
amendments made by this Act.

(c) Small Businesses.—A small business shall be
exempt from the provisions of this Act to the same extent
that such business is exempt from the requirements of the
Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 pursuant to clauses
(i) and (ii) of section 3(s)(1)(A) of such Act (29 U.S.C.
203(s)(1)(A)).

SEC. 12. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this Act, or in any amendment made by
this Act, shall affect the obligation of employers and em-
ployees to fully comply with all applicable immigration
laws, including any penalties, fines, or other sanctions.
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