

April 8, 2014

Catching up with our clients . . .

April 8 is Equal Pay Day!

Did you know that women still only make on average 77 cents for every dollar that men earn? There are a number of initiatives designed to address this gender gap.

The Paycheck Fairness Act. On April 9, 2014, the Senate is set to vote on the Paycheck Fairness Act (PFA), which is intended to address this pay gap. Among other things, this bill would make it illegal for employers to retaliate against workers who inquire about or disclose their wages or the wages of another employee in a complaint or investigation. Currently only non-managerial employees (those protected by federal labor law) are protected if they obtain information about coworkers' compensation. The Act would also compel the EEOC to collect pay information from employers.

Executive Orders. Although the House is unlikely to consider the PFA bill this term, Obama took several measures today designed to reduce the pay gap in federal contractors:

- He signed an executive order that bars federal contractors from retaliating against employees who discuss their salaries.
- He also issued an executive memorandum that instructs the Labor Department to collect statistics on pay for men and women from such contractors.

Minimum Wage legislation. There is legislative activity in Massachusetts and elsewhere to increase the minimum wage, which may lead to a decrease in the wage gap. According to Fatima Goos Graves, Vice President of Education and Employment at the National Women's Law Center, women make up a "supermajority" of minimum wage jobs. According to her, in six of ten states where the gender gap is narrower, the minimum wage is higher than national law requires.

In Massachusetts, the Senate just has approved a bill that would increase the minimum hourly wage from \$8 to \$11 over the next three years. The House passed a bill a couple weeks ago that would increase the minimum wage to \$10.50 over the next two years. Both chambers will need to agree on a compromise version before sending it to Governor Patrick.

Minimum wage increases went into effect in California, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey and Rhode Island in 2014.



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UPCOMING EVENT:

On April 11, Justine will be the Guest Speaker at the Women's Principals Group of the Boston Society of Architects as they kick off their 2014 first quarter meeting.

Justine will be speaking on the topic "Stand Up and Push Back: Understanding and Conveying Your Own Value."

The meeting takes place from 8:30 to 10:00 at the offices of the Boston Society of Architects.