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It's a Job Gap, not a Wage Gap

By: Reps. Regina Birdsell (R-Hampstead) & Laurie Sanborn (R-Bedford)

As women and as Human Resources professionals, we believe the national and state-wide Democrat agenda surrounding Paycheck Equity is unnecessary and misleading.

It is against the law to pay women differently than men based on their gender.

This law has been in effect for over 50 years, under the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Pay Act of 1963, and also under New Hampshire's own Equal Pay legislation going back to 1947.

We would know personally, because we have over 40 years of combined experience overseeing Human Resources, recruitment and compensation activities in New Hampshire companies. We take these laws very seriously and have not seen wage discrimination in our professional careers. Employers know - not only is it against the law, but it also is bad policy when you are trying to attract and retain the very best employees for an organization.

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Dems Continue Surprise Amendment Campaign

The Democrats are at it again with their surprise amendments to gun legislation. This time they gutted HB1264, Rep. Hoell's bill that would allow residents of a state that does not require a permit to carry a loaded gun to carry in NH, and added an amendment that turns the bill into a study committee to study the impact of firearms violence, strengthen the universal background check system, and consider measures to promote firearms safety.

We have many concerns with the introduction of this amendment. First of all, this appears to be a non-germane amendment. The vast majority of the subject matter is not associated with the intent of the original bill. Secondly, this amendment was only brought up at the executive session when no member of the public, including the bill's sponsor, was notified or had a reasonable chance to review it. At a minimum this should have been discussed at a public hearing on HB1264. Democrats know they're trying to fix a non-existent problem in New Hampshire by criminalizing law-abiding citizens, and the only way to force their unpopular legislative agenda is to do it without having a public hearing first.

This is not the first time the Democrats have attached surprise amendments. The Democrat leadership did the same thing in the Commerce committee with HB1589. They originally told the committee they would attach one amendment and by the time the executive session began, they had an entirely different amendment that was more egregious than the first. This seems to be the recurring and normal behavior of Democrat leadership, and is just another example of an amendment being rammed through committees.

ICYMI: HOUSE SESSION RECAP

HOUSE VOTES TO PROHIBIT RESIDENCY RESTRICTIONS FOR SEX OFFENDERS

On Wednesday, despite a motion to table that failed 112-215, the House overwhelmingly voted 231-97 to pass HB1237 that will prohibit towns from adopting residency restrictions for sex offenders or offenders against children.

The bill will now move on to the Senate.

HOUSE OK'S PAYCHECK EQUITY BILL

The House passed HB1188 on Wednesday that would prohibit employers from requiring an employee to refrain from disclosing the amount of his or her wages.

The bill passed 183-125 and will now move on to the Senate.

HOUSE PROHIBITS EMPLOYERS FROM USING CREDIT HISTORY

In a vote of 184-119, the House voted to pass HB1405 which prohibits an employer from using credit history in employment decisions.

Not only does HB1405 interfere with business' hiring practices, but will incentivize businesses from coming to New Hampshire.

HB1405 now moves onto the Senate.

HOUSE UNANIMOUSLY PASSES BILL TO NAME DERRY BRIDGE

On a unanimous voice vote the NH House voted to name a bridge in Derry the Lance Corporal Michael E. Geary Bridge.

This bill will move on to the Senate.

Lance Corporal Geary, from Derry, died serving his country while engaged in combat operations in Helmand Province, Afghanistan

Important Upcoming Dates & Events

- Monday, February 24-28 – Legislative Winter Break (Offices will remain open)
- Wednesday, March 5 – Republican Caucus- 9am
- Wednesday, March 5 – House Session – 10am
- Thursday, March 6 – House Session – 1pm

SESSION SCHEDULE

Due to the amount of House bills for this session and reporting deadlines, as previously announced we will be meeting for House session on Wednesdays and Thursdays until Cross over when we return from break. For planning purposes, below is a tentative schedule for House sessions until Crossover:

Wednesday, March 5- all day
 Thursday, March 6- afternoon
 Wednesday, March 12- all day
 Thursday, March 13- all day
 Wednesday, March 19- all day
 Thursday, March 20- afternoon
 Wednesday, March 26- all day
 Thursday, March 27- all day

Note: Half day sessions will begin at 1:00pm, and all day sessions will begin at the usual 10:00am.

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We have learned there have been very little complaints in New Hampshire. In fact, there have been no charges under our state Equal Pay statute over the last 20 years. The NH Labor Department knows of only three investigations, all of which were dismissed when employers showed legitimate reasons for disparity in pay between employees. The Attorney General's office and the Human Rights Commission haven't tracked complaints or violations under the law, but knew of only two cases ever being opened when asked.

Bills such as HB1188 and SB207, currently in the state legislature, do little to fix a real problem or help women; instead they advance the notion that the workplace is hostile to women and reinforce the idea that women are in need of protection.

The Democrat talking point - as heard from President Obama, Governor Hassan, Speaker Norelli and Senate Minority Leader Larsen - is that women are paid 77 cents on the dollar for doing the same work as men.

These statistics represent an average of ALL men and women in ALL full-time jobs across the country. Making such a broad brush statement without understanding the basis behind it shows how some don't want to discuss the facts and instead are looking to create a false hysteria.

There have been countless reports and studies to prove this position. For example, according to a survey done by Payscale in May 2013, the survey find the so-called wage gap nearly evaporates when you control for occupation and experience. It finds "women are not starting off behind their male counterparts, so much as they're choosing different jobs." It also finds that women are more likely to negotiate, so the popular belief that women don't know how to ask for a raise is false. When they compare men and women who have the same education, the same management responsibilities, and similar employers with similar number of employees, the wage gap disappears. They found the gap isn't between men and women doing the same job so much as the different choices people make in their career paths.

Women have earned the majority of bachelor degrees for the last few years. They are well positioned to benefit from a growing professional service economy, and working moms are already the breadwinners in 40% of households with kids. However, if women continue to go into healthcare rather than manufacturing, human resources rather than engineering, we will continue to see the job gap, not the wage gap. It is a personal decision women make for themselves.

Fabricating a crisis in order to enact additional laws and regulations on our state's employers is not solving any problems. Instead, doing so continues to make our state less friendly, especially to the small businesses that make up our state, and who are overwhelmingly already complying with existing law.

2014 LEGISLATIVE WATCH

HB1409

HB1409 will be coming up on the House Regular Calendar sometime in the coming weeks and is a bad bill that should be highlighted.

This bill will prohibit housing discrimination against recipients of rental assistance and victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

This bill will have a devastating effect on the real estate business and NH business owners. In order to get this protection, all someone has to do is make 1 report of domestic violence, and they are protected from housing discrimination. This includes if a tenant has bad credit or a bad reference, but has made a violence claim, then a landlord denying the tenant would be prohibited.

This bill was voted out of committee OTP 11-7.

2014 LEGISLATIVE WATCH

HB1403

In a previous Republican Review, we highlighted HB1403, the Democrats' minimum wage bill.

Studies have shown that raising the minimum wage for low wage workers would reduce employment. Just this past week, the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office [published a report](#) that said raising the minimum wage could reduce total employment by roughly 500,000 workers by the second half of 2016. It would do this two ways. First, businesses facing higher labor costs would be forced to raise prices, causing consumers to purchase less, ultimately causing businesses to need fewer workers. Second, it would make hiring low wage workers more expensive, which could cause companies to opt for less expensive automated systems. HB1403 will hurt NH's economy, hurt NH's businesses, and put many low wage workers out of a job. Democrats keep saying that they are pro-business, but this bill just proves that all their policies do is put people out of work and hurt our economy.

HB 1403 will come up on the Regular calendar in the coming weeks. The bill was voted OTP out of the Labor committee on a vote of 10-7, with all present Republican members voting against it.

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Note from the Republican Leader:

House Republicans,

As I'm sure you are aware, recently the voting system in Reps' Hall was upgraded. As a result, the keys that turned on your voting station are no longer being used.

If you would like to have your key as a souvenir, we have all of them up in State House Room 307. The keys we have available are for your current seat. (Of course, if you would like the key to a former seat, you can always ask the member currently occupying that seat if they would like to make a switch.) Please take a moment to stop by the office to pick up your key!

I'd also like to pass along birthday wishes to both members of our staff for next week; Meg on the 26th and Aaron on the 29th!

Gene G. Chandler

IN MEMORIAM

On Wednesday, Representative Lester Bradley (R-Thornton) passed away. He was serving in his second term in the NH House as a member of the Science, Technology & Energy committee.

His services will be held on Tuesday, February 25 at 2:00pm at the Pemi Valley Church in Woodstock, NH.