

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 43

BY SENATOR COLOMB

A RESOLUTION

To recognize Tuesday, April 12, 2016, as Equal Pay Day in the state of Louisiana.

WHEREAS, for more than fifty years after the passage of the Equal Pay Act, women, especially minority women, continue to suffer the consequences of unequal pay; and

WHEREAS, House Concurrent Resolution No. 145 of the 2013 Regular Session of the Legislature, by Representative Leger, established the Louisiana Fair Pay Task Force to study wage disparities between men and women and to make recommendations for policy changes and legislation to prevent and eliminate the disparities of unequal pay; and

WHEREAS, the findings of the Louisiana Fair Pay Task Force were published and submitted to the Legislature of Louisiana on March 1, 2014; some of the findings are included within this Resolution; and

WHEREAS, according to the United States Census Bureau, full-time working women who worked year-round in the year 2013 earned an average of 78% of the earnings of their male counterparts, which indicates minimal progress in pay equity; and

WHEREAS, nationally, women's median annual earnings were \$39,621; the highest paid women workers were in the District of Columbia with annual earnings of \$61,718, while the lowest paid women were in the state of Idaho with annual earnings of \$31,019; and

WHEREAS, in the state of Louisiana, women represent a steady number of the work force, comprising 44.3% of the full-time, year-round Louisiana labor force; and

WHEREAS, in Louisiana, women working full-time, year-round in 2014 earned an average of \$31,586, which is a decrease of \$276 from the 2011 earning average of \$31,862; and

WHEREAS, the decrease in Louisiana women's earnings dropped Louisiana's ranking from forty-sixth to forty-seventh lowest among the fifty states and the District of Columbia; and

WHEREAS, in contrast, Louisiana men working full-time, year-round earned on

average \$48,382, which is an increase of \$2,069 from 2011, ranking Louisiana men twenty-second with average earnings greater than the earnings of men in twenty-nine other states; and

WHEREAS, nearly four in ten mothers are primary income producers in their households, and nearly two-thirds are primary or significant earners, which makes pay equity critical to families' economic security; and

WHEREAS, in Louisiana, poverty is most prevalent among female-headed families with children under eighteen years of age; and

WHEREAS, poverty rates were highest in Louisiana for black women and girls at 36.1%, Hispanic females at 27%, Asian females at 25.6%, and white females at 14.3%; and

WHEREAS, in Louisiana, educational attainment is greater for women than for men who are twenty-five years of age or older; and

WHEREAS, according to one study, 84.7% of Louisiana women have a high school degree or higher education, compared to men at 81.2%; 15% of women have attained a bachelor's degree, compared to men at 13.7%; and 7.8% of women have a graduate or professional degree, compared to men at 7.3%; and

WHEREAS, in Louisiana, women and men are not paid equitably for their educational attainment; and

WHEREAS, according to an estimate, college-educated women who work full-time earn more than a half-million dollars less than their male peers earn over the course of a lifetime; and

WHEREAS, a lifetime of lower pay means women have less income to save for retirement and less income that is calculated in a Social Security or pension benefit formula; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus who support equal pay join with the American Association of University Women and other women's organizations across the state of Louisiana and the United States to share information regarding equal pay; and

WHEREAS, fair pay equity policies can be implemented simply, without undue costs or hardships in both public and private sectors; and

WHEREAS, fair pay strengthens the security of families and eases future retirement costs, while enhancing the American economy; and

WHEREAS, Tuesday, April 12, 2016, symbolizes the time in 2016 when the wages paid to American women catch up to the wages paid to men from the previous year.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby recognize Tuesday, April 12, 2016, as Equal Pay Day in Louisiana and urges the citizens of Louisiana to recognize the full value of women's skills and their significant contributions to the labor force and further encourages businesses to conduct an internal pay evaluation to ensure women are being paid fairly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the chairperson of the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE