

# Callahan: proposal regarding equal pay for women

The Bethlehem Gadfly City government, Gadfly's posts, Serious Issues February 14, 2019

*“We are not in the 50s and 60s where the guy is the breadwinner.”*

*“If a woman is doing the same job as a man,  
she should be paid the same amount of money.”*

*Bryan Callahan*

CM Callahan has initiated the process to introduce an ordinance banning employers from asking questions about previous salary for the purpose of reducing racial and gender salary inequality.

Hear him describe the ordinance and the rationale in a brief presentation at the monthly meeting of the [Bethlehem City Democratic Committee](#) this week:

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See also: [Nicole Radzievich](#), “Councilman Bryan Callahan wants to stop Bethlehem businesses from asking job applicants this question.” [Morning Call](#), January 31, 2019.



“Looking to close the pay gap between men and women, Bethlehem City Councilman Bryan Callahan on Thursday called for a wage equality ordinance that contains a provision struck down in federal court.”

“The proposed ordinance would require employers in the city to compensate workers based on job function and experience, rather than what the applicant made at a previous job. Those who do business in the city would be banned from asking an applicant that question, he said at a news conference.”

“The rationale is that basing new salaries on past salaries perpetuates any racial and gender inequities. Women in Pennsylvania are paid 79 cents for every dollar a man makes. . . . The court ruled employers can be prohibited from basing compensation on previous salary, but it was a violation of the First Amendment to stop them from asking the question.”

“Bethlehem would be subjected to that ruling — at least under current case law — because it falls within the same federal court jurisdiction as Philadelphia, [Callahan] said. The ruling has been appealed to the U. S. Third Circuit Court

of Appeals, a level below the U.S. Supreme Court. In recent years Bethlehem City Council passed ordinances of questionable enforceability in order to send a policy message to higher levels of government.”

“Mayor Robert Donchez said he supports pay equality but wants to review Callahan’s proposal before taking a position on it. In Bethlehem, a job application posted on the city’s website asks its prospective employees for starting and ending salary at previous jobs. But Donchez said Thursday the city plans to remove that question from applications.”

“Callahan said he expects to review the details of the proposal in committee and would look for guidance from counsel about penalties and how it would work.”