

Councilman Callahan's wage equality proposal discussed in committee tomorrow

The Bethlehem Gadfly City government February 24, 2020

 Latest in a series of posts on City Government 

“The premise of this ordinance is that salary offers should be based upon the specific job responsibilities of a position, and not based upon an applicant’s prior wage history, so as to avoid the perpetuation of gender wage inequalities.”

Councilman Callahan’s Wage Equality ordinance proposal will be considered at the Human Relations committee meeting 6PM, Tuesday, February 25, Town Hall.

Councilman Callahan talked about this proposal at a meeting of the Bethlehem Democrats a while back. Gadfly probably won’t be able to attend Tuesday night and report on the discussion, so he urges you to hear the Councilman talk about his idea.

Audio Player not available in this archive

CITY OF BETHLEHEM

City Council Memorandum

SUBJECT: Proposed Ordinance - Wage Equality
TO: Members of Council
FROM: Bryan G. Callahan, Member of Council
DATE: December 13, 2019

Attached is a proposed ordinance to establish a new Article of the City's Codified Ordinances. This ordinance is designed to combat widespread gender-based wage inequalities by prohibiting employer inquiries into prospective employee wage histories, as well as employer reliance on such wage histories for determining compensation.

In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, women are paid 79 cents for every dollar a man makes, according to a United States Census Bureau 2015 report. Women of color are paid even less. African American women are paid only 68 cents to the dollar paid to a man, Latinas are paid only 56 cents to the dollar paid to men, and Asian women are paid 81 cents to the dollar paid to men. The gender wage gap has narrowed by less than one-half a penny per year in the United States since 1963, when the Congress passed the Equal Pay Act, the first law aimed at prohibiting gender-based pay discrimination.

Since women are paid on average lower wages than men, basing wages upon a worker's wage at a previous job only serves to perpetuate gender wage inequalities and leave families with less money to spend on food, housing, and other essential goods and services. The premise of this ordinance is that salary offers should be based upon the specific job responsibilities of a position, and not based upon an applicant's prior wage history, so as to avoid the perpetuation of gender wage inequalities.

I would appreciate Council's consideration of the attached ordinance.

Thank you.


Bryan G. Callahan, Member of Council

For the full proposed ordinance, go here:

[Wage Equality Memo \(1\)](#)