



Legislation Text

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A MOTION acknowledging the executive's implementation of the recommendations and specific actions identified in the women's advisory board's report dated January 23, 2015.

WHEREAS, according to the Institute for Women's Policy Research, full-time working women's earnings were only about eighty-two percent of their male counterparts' earnings in 2020, and

WHEREAS, King County seeks to become a model employer of the future, as described in Attachment A to Motion 14129, titled Creating the Employer of the Future at King County, and family-friendly workplace policies have been found to increase employee retention, which is key for the county's success in providing the highest level of service to King County's residents, and

WHEREAS, the women's advisory board transmitted a report to the executive and the council on January 23, 2015, titled Improving Wage Equity and Promoting Family Friendly Workplace Policies throughout King County: Recommendations for the King County Executive and Metropolitan King County Council Prepared by the King County Women's Advisory Board, and

WHEREAS, the report provided seven recommendations for King County to enact to improve wage equity and promote family friendly policies, and

WHEREAS, recommendation one was to create a public/private compact pledging to end the wage gap and encourage family friendly workplace policies. King County was a founding signatory in the "100% Talent" regional initiative to close the gender wage gap in Washington State. Signatories represent close to one hundred public and private employers who represent a local workforce of more than two million employees, including Amazon, Microsoft, Alaska Airlines, Starbucks, PayScale, Bank of American, Delta Dental, T-

Mobile, the Seattle Mariners, Zillow and others. Each employer pledged to be part of the solution to achieving gender equity in the workplace and to implement best practices in the workplace. Signatories have worked to inspire action in our regional economy by improving awareness around the wage gap and the actions individuals and organizations can take to eliminate it, and

WHEREAS, recommendation two was to promote and encourage employees regardless of gender to take family leave by creating incentives for employees at higher levels to both role model this and to create a work environment where taking family leave is acceptable. King County promotes and encourages all employees regardless of gender to take family leave. King County provides employees with a robust family and medical leave package that goes further than the national leave requirements, by providing six additional weeks of protected leave and by expanding who is a covered family member. Additionally, King County has staff dedicated to helping employees navigate the leave process and understand what leaves are available to them under federal law, state law and county code, and

WHEREAS, following a successful pilot program in 2016, King County established an ongoing Paid Parental Leave program for employees, making King County one of only about a dozen public-sector employers across the country to provide this type of program at the time. To encourage participation, employees are offered the opportunity to use paid parental leave all at once or on an intermittent basis during the 12 months following the qualifying event. The number of employees using paid parental leave has risen each year since 2016, with male employee usage outpacing their overall employee proportion, and

WHEREAS, recommendation three was to offer and promote workplace flexibility, encouraging options such as job sharing, telecommuting, time-shifting and expand part-time employment opportunities to higher level jobs. Workplace flexibility has risen significantly with expanded telecommuting, alternate work schedules, and time-shifting now available to many employees. Prior restrictions on having dependents present during the workday have been removed and instead the focus is on balancing the expectation of productive work with personal or household responsibilities during the telecommuting workday, and

WHEREAS, recommendation four was to achieve wage transparency. King County supported changes to Washington's Equal Pay and Opportunity Act in 2018, which eliminated employers' ability to rely on pay history to justify pay differences between men and women and prohibits policies that require employees to keep wages confidential, and

WHEREAS, recommendation five was to eliminate conscious and unconscious gender bias in hiring and in the workplace. In 2018, the Department of Human Resources implemented the Hiring an Excellent Workforce Toolkit, which provides guidance on how to recruit, hire, onboard, and retain diverse and culturally responsive candidates for county agencies. The toolkit incorporates equal employment, equity and social justice principles and practices, and is intended to eliminate conscious and unconscious bias in hiring. Additionally, as part of King County's commitment to equity and social justice, the county requires all interview panelists to view implicit bias training before participating in an interview, and

WHEREAS, recommendation six was to provide access to affordable childcare. King County has implemented a COVID-19 childcare reimbursement program for the 2020-2021 school year to reimburse parents for childcare or tutoring for children age 12 or younger and children 13 or older with documented special needs. As of March 29, 2021, the program had reimbursed employees more than \$2.1 million. The county is in active negotiations with the Coalition of Unions around the future state of a childcare reimbursement program, and

WHEREAS, recommendation seven was to increase representation of women in traditionally "male" fields. King County has increased the number of women in traditionally "male" fields through participation in the annual Washington Women in Trades Career Fair, the Priority Hire workforce development strategy, Metro Transit's Blue Collar Intern program, and Metro Transit's partnership with the Apprenticeship and Non-Traditional Employment for Women's preapprenticeship program, and

WHEREAS, the county successfully implemented the women's advisory board's 2015 recommendations for improving wage equity and promoting family friendly workplace policies;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. The progress and specific actions taken to implement the women's advisory board's 2015 recommendations for improving wage equity and promoting family friendly workplace policies are hereby acknowledged.

B. The council determines that the reports on outcomes and performance measures requested in Motion 14334 are no longer needed. The executive is no longer requested to transmit reports on the work plan to implement the women's advisory board's 2015 recommendations.