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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2017

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SENATE RESOLUTION

PROCLAIMING APRIL 4, 2017, AS "EQUAL PAY DAY" IN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Introduced By: Senator Gayle L. Goldin

Date Introduced: April 04, 2017

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1 WHEREAS, The Equal Pay Act was signed 54 years ago however, since that year, the  
2 wage gap between working women and working men has narrowed by less than half a cent per  
3 year; and

4 WHEREAS, According to the nonprofit Institute for Women's Policy Research in 2015,  
5 among full-time workers, women still earn less than men, earning only 80 percent of what men  
6 earn. Additionally, a wage gap persists between the genders when further analyzed by educational  
7 attainment, age groups, race and ethnicity; and

8 WHEREAS, Economist Evelyn Murphy, president of The Wage Project, estimates that  
9 during the average 47 years of full-time work the wage gap amounts to a loss in wages for a  
10 woman of:

- 11 • \$700,000 for a high school graduate;
- 12 • \$1.2 million for a college graduate; and
- 13 • \$2 million for a professional school graduate; and

14 WHEREAS, In 2014, Rhode Island women were more likely to live in poverty (16  
15 percent of women compared to 12.6 percent of men). Women therefore have higher rates of  
16 economic insecurity than do men and are thus more likely to rely on public benefits like  
17 Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as Food Stamps) and  
18 housing assistance; and

19 WHEREAS, The wage disparity over a woman's working lifetime has a tremendous

1 impact on Social Security benefits and pensions, and in 2010, women 50 and older received only  
2 56 cents for every dollar received by men in income from pensions and annuities; and

3 WHEREAS, The three time, and current, World Cup champion and four time Olympic  
4 gold medalist United States Women's Soccer Team brought in twenty million dollars more in  
5 revenue in 2015 for the United States Soccer Federation than did the men's soccer team, yet the  
6 members of the multiple world champion women's team are paid approximately four times less  
7 than the men's soccer team members; and

8 WHEREAS, The economic impact of this persistent pay inequality is far-reaching: if  
9 women in the United States received equal pay with comparable men, poverty for working  
10 women would be reduced by half and the U.S. economy would add \$482 billion (equivalent to  
11 2.8 percent of 2014 gross domestic product) to its economy; and

12 WHEREAS, Closing the gender wage gap would not only increase women's earnings, it  
13 would grow each state's economy. Equal pay would provide a significant boost to the economy;  
14 and

15 WHEREAS, With equal pay, a working woman in Rhode Island would see an average of  
16 \$6,066 increase or a 14 percent increase in pay which is 2.9 percent of the state's gross domestic  
17 product (GDP); and

18 WHEREAS, According to federal data, it is estimated that it could take 70 more years  
19 before the wage gap between men and women completely closes; and

20 WHEREAS, The Rhode Island Commission on Women is dedicated to leading reforms  
21 involving equal pay for the women and girls of Rhode Island, and to recognizing the full value of  
22 women's skills and significant contributions to the labor force; and

23 WHEREAS, The Rhode Island Commission on Women encourages businesses to  
24 conduct an internal pay evaluation to ensure that women are being paid fairly; and

25 WHEREAS, Fair pay equity policies can be implemented simply and without undue costs  
26 or hardship in both the public and private sectors; and

27 WHEREAS, Fair pay strengthens the security of families today and eases future  
28 retirement costs, while enhancing the American economy; and

29 WHEREAS, Tuesday, April 4th symbolizes the date on which the wages paid to  
30 American women catch up to the wages paid to American men during the previous year; now,  
31 therefore be it

32 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and  
33 Providence Plantations hereby proclaims April 4, 2017, as "Equal Pay Day" in the state; and be it  
34 further

- 1 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
- 2 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to the Women's Fund of Rhode Island.

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