

An act relative to fair pay for comparable work

Bill purpose: To eliminate the pay disparity that exists between the salaries of human services workers employed by community-based human service providers and state employees holding similar job titles who perform similar work.

Recent action: Bills reported favorably by the Joint Committee on Children, Families & Persons with Disabilities and assigned new bill numbers in December 2019. House Bill 4236 (Rep. Khan) referred to Committee on Health Care Financing; Senate Bill 2429 (Sen. Friedman) referred to Senate Committee on Ways & Means.

Key Facts:

- Similar job titles and roles exist for individuals employed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and those employed at private, community-based human services nonprofits, but the rate of pay is often drastically different – sometimes by up to 30 percent.
- The Commonwealth is the largest purchaser of human services from community-based human services nonprofits.
- The model budgets often created by the Commonwealth for human services programs contain salaries that are far lower than what the state pays for similar positions.
- Due to this salary disparity, it is becoming increasingly difficult for community-based organizations to recruit/retain qualified workers in the sector, which has nearly 180,000 jobs.
- Without a solution to the workforce crisis, an increasing number of jobs will go unfilled and programs may close, leading to a loss of services for vulnerable Massachusetts residents.

If passed, this legislation would:

- Set a schedule to fully eliminate the pay disparity between state workers and those employed by community-based human services nonprofits who are doing similar work.
- Eliminate the pay disparity between state workers and those at community-based human services nonprofits no later than July 1, 2025.
- Create a report from the Commonwealth to various committees in the Legislature that outlines the current disparity amount and the annual increases necessary to eliminate the disparity amount by July 1, 2025.
- Create a report from the Commonwealth to various committees in the Legislature that makes recommendations about how to strengthen recruitment and retention of human services workers at private, community-based human services nonprofits.
- Apply to human services workers employed by private, community-based human services nonprofits that have contracts with EOHHS, EOE, DHCD and DEEC to provide services.

For more information:

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