



COMMUNIQUE

LOCAL 1180 FIGHTS TO HELP COMBAT PAY DISCRIMINATION

There is no disputing the fact that women and minorities earn significantly less than their male counterparts with the same title doing the same job in New York City government. This type of racial and gender inequality is the driving force behind legislation that passed the City Council late last year and became law on January 20, 2019, that will halt pay discrimination throughout City agencies. CWA Local 1180 was the outspoken voice of the working people to make sure the bill became a reality.

Int 633 requires City agencies to annually report their data on gender, pay, and titles, to make sure there are no instances of pay discrimination. The bill, sponsored by Council Majority Leader Laurie Cumbo, requires the Mayor's Office of Data Analytics (MODA) to report on an annual basis, aggregated data from every City agency looking at gender, ethnicity and race to find instances of pay disparities. After receiving the data from DCAS, MODA would issue a report to the Mayor and the Speaker, and post the same report publicly on the MODA and Open NY websites. The Council, on an annual basis, will be given 90-day access, through a computer application, to employment level data for all City workers to conduct its own statistical analysis to find instances of pay disparities across City agencies.

Local 1180 President Gloria Middleton said that pay disparity based on gender and race has been a common practice in New York City for far too long.

"The color of our skin or our sexual orientation should not determine how much we get paid. Gender parity is fundamental to whether and how economies and societies thrive. New York City's talent pool is not comprised of just white men. In fact, there are plenty of minority women with higher educations working far below their pay grade," she said.

At a press conference held on December 20, 2018, just prior to the Council's vote on the bill, Cumbo said, "Women represent half of our city's population and workforce; and yet we have been shortchanged by the very economic system that flourishes because of our contributions. Women in New York City can no longer afford to be nicked and dimed while we are the ones holding down our communities, households and families."

This gender pay gap is especially pronounced among city employees, which Cumbo's office reports to be three times larger than that experienced by women in the private sector. This is especially true for women of color, with black women earning just over half of what white men earn. While this new law is an encouraging first step, Middleton said it's going to be incumbent upon the City Council to act on the information once it becomes available.

"We realized that this was a civil rights issue, not just for our Administrative Managers, but all workers who want to make sure they are being paid the same as their coworkers and that they are being compensated free from discrimination," Middleton said. "This bill will go a long way in correcting the civil rights and equal employment failures in what is supposed to be one of the most progressive cities in America," Middleton said.

"We know this legislation won't end the problem with disparate pay overnight," she said. "But we hope it will be a big first step in helping the City take the necessary steps to increase transparency and join with us in being part of the solution so that discriminatory pay practices and institutional racism in the City of New York will be a thing of the past.

New York City Council Speaker Corey Johnson said that the new law "will certainly benefit women of color and will equally benefit all people, because we recognize that what is good for women, is good for all. Pay disparities among Black and Hispanic men are equally disturbing because they make less than their white counterparts, and women overall make less than men. We are confident that we can start to understand what the pay gap looks like when both gender and race are taken into account."