

HB 1862 -- EQUAL PAY COMMISSION

SPONSOR: Newman

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass by consent" by the Committee on Workforce Development and Workplace Safety by a vote of 11 to 0.

This bill requires, by January 1, 2013, the Director of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish the Equal Pay Commission. The commission will consist of 15 members appointed by the department director from specified areas of business, experience, and expertise including two members of the Senate appointed by the President Pro Tem and two members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker. The commission must make a full and complete study of:

- (1) The extent of wage disparities, in both the public and private sectors, between men and women, and between minorities and nonminorities;
- (2) The factors that cause or tend to cause the disparities;
- (3) The consequences of the disparities on the economy and affected families; and
- (4) The actions, including proposed legislation, that are likely to lead to the elimination and prevention of the disparities.

The commission must make a report to the department director, President Pro Tem of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Governor within 12 months after the members are appointed. The report must include the results of the study as well as recommendations, legislative and otherwise, for the elimination and prevention of the disparities.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2013, FY 2014, and FY 2015.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the root cause of wage disparity in Missouri is unknown, and the establishment of the commission will aid in understanding the problem. Given that single mothers increasingly are the heads of households, the importance of economic stability and pay equality cannot be overstated.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Newman; Missouri National Education Association; Office of the Attorney General; Missouri Women's Network; Holly Burgess, American Association of University Women; Missouri AFL-CIO; American Federation of Teachers; and United Steelworkers District 11.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.