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## New Jersey Pay Equity Bill Now Before Governor Christie

Across the country, individual states and cities continue to try to bridge the gap in gender inequality in pay. New Jersey is the latest state looking to promote pay equality and to prevent salary discrimination.

Several pay equity bills have been floated in New Jersey this year, but one proposal (A3480) passed both houses as of June 26. Votes for the bill were split along party lines, with a handful of Republican legislators voting against the bill. The bill now heads to Republican Governor Chris Christie's desk. Governor Christie previously vetoed a bill barring gender-based pay discrimination, saying it would go beyond federal standards and is unfriendly to New Jersey business.

The bill (A-3480/4119) amends the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination to strengthen protections against employment discrimination and thereby promote equal pay for women. The bill, if signed into law, prohibits:

- An employer from taking reprisals against any employee for disclosing to any other employee or former employee of the employer information regarding the job title, occupational category, rate of compensation, the gender, race, ethnicity, military status, or national origin of the employee or any other employee or former employee of the employer;
- An employer from screening a job applicant based on the applicant's wage or salary history, including requiring the applicant's prior wages, salaries or benefits to satisfy any minimum or maximum criteria, or relying on the applicant's salary history in determining a salary amount for the applicant at any stage in the hiring process, including finalizing the employment contract; and
- An employer from inquiring, in writing or otherwise, about the salary history of a job applicant, including, but not limited to, the applicant's compensation and benefits, except that the employer may seek the history if the prospective employee voluntarily, without employer coercion, provides the employer with a written authorization.

**Comment:** Although Governor Christie has vetoed similar bills in the past, it is important for New Jersey employers to review their hiring policies and practices, job applications and screening procedures in order to implement the changes necessary if this bill is signed and goes into effect. It will also be important for employers to train their human resource professionals, recruiters and managers involved in screening, interviewing and hiring applicants to ensure compliance if this bill should become law. We will update you as to whether this bill is signed into law by Governor Christie.

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