

Testimony in Support of LD 799, “An Act to Report Gender Wage Gaps.”

James Myall, Policy Analyst

March 13, 2025

Good Morning, Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor. My name is James Myall, I am a policy analyst at the Maine Center for Economic Policy, and I’m here before you to testify in support of LD 799, “An Act to Report Gender Wage Gaps.” MECEP supports LD 799 as a way to bring transparency to discrimination in the labor market and to improve employment outcomes for women in Maine.

The concept of the gender “wage gap” is well-established in economics. It represents the difference between the typical wages earned by men and women, and despite decades of anti-discrimination legislation, it has been stubbornly difficult to close. The results vary by how you choose to measure it, but by one commonly-used measure, women in Maine working full-time, year-round, earned only 85 cents for every dollar earned by men.¹ Those gaps are even larger for women of color and immigrants, who face additional barriers in the labor market.²

The wage gap is the result of many factors. Some of it is what we would think of as outright discrimination – deliberately paying someone less, or passing someone over for a promotion because they are a woman. But more often, it’s the result of less obvious factors, such as an employer’s leave policies or culture around salary negotiation. Society-wide factors such as child care affordability or expectations for care work also play a role.

In order to help tackle the gender wage gap, several countries³ have taken actions like those proposed in LD 799 to require large companies to calculate and disclose their own gender wage gap. This has several benefits – it provides employers with an opportunity to look at the situation in their company and to reassess their policies; it provides members of

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the public with information on which companies are taking the problem most seriously; and it helps you as policymakers to understand the scale of the issue.

LD 799 would require the largest employers in Maine to annually collect and report some basic information on their employees. The reporting requirements are designed to dovetail with those already required by the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's annual report by private-sector employers, though LD 799 covers fewer employers than the EEOC's reporting requirements.

In fact, Maine employers have already collected and submitted a version of this information for the EEOC in 2017 and 2018, when the federal agency briefly included it in its reporting requirements.⁴ The proposal in LD 799 is more modest than the EEOC's prior provisions because it does not require calculating wages at different position levels or by race.

Two of the 21 developed countries which currently require annual pay gap reporting, and publish the results online, are the United Kingdom⁵ and Canada.⁶ I've included example reports from those countries as an attachment to my testimony.

Studies have shown that wage gap reporting requirements such as those in LD 799 do help to reduce the size of the gender pay gap.⁷ They can also be a recruitment tool for companies that work to reduce the size of the wage gap. Research shows women are more likely to apply to these companies⁸

LD 799 would help lawmakers and employers make the changes they need to close the gender wage gap and ensure equal opportunities for women in Maine's workforce. By improving outcomes for women, it will also boost Maine's long-term economic outlook and ensure widely shared prosperity.

Thank you for your attention. I'm happy to answer any questions.

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Example: Canada's "Equi'Vision" tool

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This is the employer's overview. The representation and labour market availability rates as well as the mean hourly wage gaps are displayed for each of the 4 designated groups by default. Users can customize the views to display different information or add employers to compare.

The Toronto-Dominion Bank (TD Bank Group)

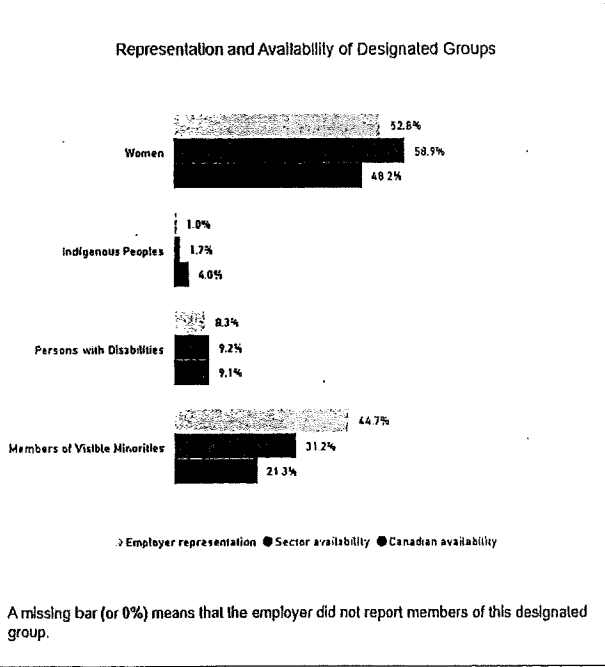
Address: 66 Wellington Street West, Toronto, Ontario M5K 1A2

Sector: Banking and Financial Services

Employer Size: 20,000+

Reporting Year: Latest Reporting Year 2023

Representation and Availability of Designated Groups

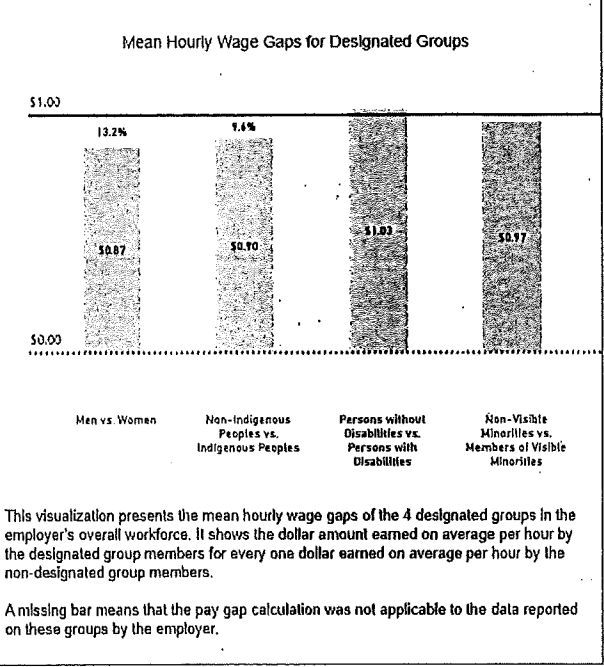


Group	Employer representation	Sector availability	Canadian availability
Women	48.2%	58.9%	52.8%
Indigenous Peoples	4.0%	1.7%	1.0%
Persons with Disabilities	9.1%	9.2%	8.3%
Members of Visible Minorities	21.3%	31.2%	44.7%

A missing bar (or 0%) means that the employer did not report members of this designated group.

Pay Gap Contextual Information

Mean Hourly Wage Gaps for Designated Groups



Comparison	Wage Gap (\$)
Men vs. Women	\$0.87
Non-Indigenous Peoples vs. Indigenous Peoples	\$0.70
Persons without Disabilities vs. Persons with Disabilities	\$1.03
Non-Visible Minorities vs. Members of Visible Minorities	\$0.57

This visualization presents the mean hourly wage gaps of the 4 designated groups in the employer's overall workforce. It shows the dollar amount earned on average per hour by the designated group members for every one dollar earned on average per hour by the non-designated group members.

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Example: United Kingdom Gender Pay Gap Service

CADBURY UK LIMITED 2023-24 Gender pay gap report

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1. Main gender pay gap figures

In this organisation:

- women earned 92p for every £1 that men earned (comparing median hourly pay)
- women made up 7.1% of employees in the highest paid quarter, and 64.7% of employees in the lowest paid quarter
- 11.0% of women received bonus pay, compared with 2.0% of men
- women's bonus pay was 4.5% higher than men's (comparing median bonus pay)

2. Hourly pay

In this organisation:

- women's median hourly pay was 7.5% lower than men's – this means they earned 92p for every £1 that men earn when comparing median hourly pay



- women's mean (average) hourly pay was 6.8% lower than men's

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The concept of the gender “wage gap” is well-established in economics. It represents the difference between the typical wages earned by men and women, and despite decades of anti-discrimination legislation, it has been stubbornly difficult to close. The results vary by how you choose to measure it, but by one commonly-used measure, women in Maine working full-time, year-round, earned only 85 cents for every dollar earned by men.¹ Those gaps are even larger for women of color and immigrants, who face additional barriers in the labor market.²

The wage gap is the result of many factors. Some of it is what we would think of as outright discrimination – deliberately paying someone less, or passing someone over for a promotion because they are a woman. But more often, it’s the result of less obvious factors, such as an employer’s leave policies or culture around salary negotiation. Society-wide factors such as child care affordability or expectations for care work also play a role.

In order to help tackle the gender wage gap, several countries³ have taken actions like those proposed in LD 799 to require large companies to calculate and disclose their own gender wage gap. This has several benefits – it provides employers with an opportunity to look at the situation in their company and to reassess their policies; it provides members of

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Two of the 21 developed countries which currently require annual pay gap reporting, and publish the results online, are the United Kingdom⁵ and Canada.⁶ I've included example reports from those countries as an attachment to my testimony.

Studies have shown that wage gap reporting requirements such as those in LD 799 do help to reduce the size of the gender pay gap.⁷ They can also be a recruitment tool for companies that work to reduce the size of the wage gap. Research shows women are more likely to apply to these companies⁸

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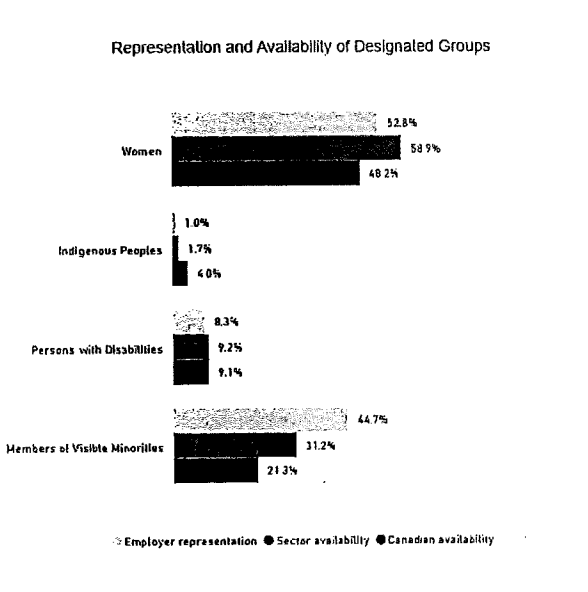
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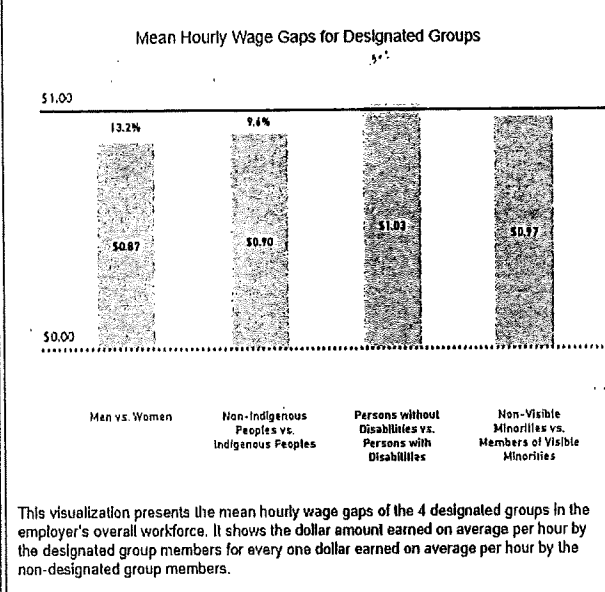
Representation and Availability of Designated Groups



Group	Employer representation	Sector availability	Canadian availability
Women	52.8%	58.9%	48.2%
Indigenous Peoples	1.0%	1.7%	4.0%
Persons with Disabilities	8.3%	9.2%	9.1%
Members of Visible Minorities	44.7%	31.2%	21.3%

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Mean Hourly Wage Gaps for Designated Groups



Comparison	Wage Gap (\$)
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