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Columbus City Attorney Announces Support in Legal Defense of Wage Equity for Women, Minorities

Federal appellate case involving the City of Philadelphia's efforts to combat pay inequity could have impact on other cities

COLUMBUS, OH—City Attorney Zach Klein announced that the City of Columbus is joining New York, Oakland, Seattle, San Francisco and other cities as a signatory on an [amicus curiae brief](#) in support of Philadelphia's wage equity ordinance that has been challenged in court by their local chamber of commerce. The brief was filed in the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit.

The Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia sued the city after it passed an ordinance to address the intractable problem of wage gaps by prohibiting employers from: 1) asking job applicants about their salary history, and 2) relying on that history to determine their prospective salary.

“Mayor Ginther and our Women’s Commission have been leading the way here locally in asking employers to commit themselves voluntarily to addressing pay inequity,” said City Attorney Zach Klein. “The brief being filed today is a way for the City of Columbus to lend support from a legal perspective to both our local efforts and the attempts by cities nationwide to close wage gaps.”

Mayor Andrew J. Ginther announced on November 2, 2017, along with the Columbus Women’s Commission, that the City would no longer ask about salary history when conducting interviews for City positions. Also, as part of the “Columbus Commitment” to achieving pay equity, the Women’s Commission encourages businesses that sign the commitment to adopt best practices which include not asking about salary history.

Currently, Ohio law broadly limits the ability of any employer to elicit, make a record of, or use an application seeking to elicit information regarding an applicant’s race, color, religion, sex, military status, national origin, disability, age, or ancestry. Columbus City Code contains a similar but broader provision that covers all of the state’s categories plus sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and familial status.

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