



March 31, 2022

The Honorable Jamie Becker-Finn
House Judiciary Finance & Civil Law Committee
559 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Becker-Finn and Members of the Judiciary Finance & Civil Law Committee

I am writing to thank you for including the civil rights components in the committee's policy omnibus bill, House File 1404. As the state's civil rights enforcement agency, the Minnesota Department of Human Rights' mission is to help ensure that Minnesotans can lead lives of dignity, free from discrimination. A critical component of achieving this mission is advancing policy proposals that reduce inequities and disparities across our state. As such, I appreciate the inclusion of our shared civil rights policy priorities within House File 1404.

Specifically, I want to highlight the following proposals that are also reflected in the department's policy agenda:

- **House File 3270, the Take Pride Act:** In 1993, Minnesota became the first state in the country to prohibit someone from being fired or evicted because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. This proposal removes three narrow anti-LGBTQ+ sections in the Minnesota Human Rights Act so Minnesota's civil rights law reflects the values of our state.
- **House File 403, the Preventing Pay Discrimination Act:** Women are still paid less than men for the same job. The pay gap is even larger for women of color and Indigenous women. Ending the use of the pay history question when someone is applying for a job can help close this gap. Eighteen states have already ended the use of the pay history question, and amongst states that have already implemented the policy, pay for all women has increased by 6% and pay for Black workers has increased by 13%.¹
- **House File 1315, the CROWN Act:** Hair discrimination is race discrimination. This was powerfully underscored when community members shared their experiences with hair discrimination during the committee hearing for HF 1315. These Minnesota stories only add to the national stories of Black students who have been unnecessarily forced to cut their hair to participate in school activities or Black employees who have been told their natural hair is unprofessional in the workplace. As such, we

¹ Bessen, Meng, and Denk, (2020). Perpetuating Inequality: What Salary History Bans Reveal About Wages. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3628729>

strongly support the inclusion of this legislation, because it is important to provide plain language clarity in state law.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit this letter detailing our support of the civil rights components in the Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Policy Omnibus. Please feel free to contact me or Eric Armacanqui the department's Government Relations Director, with any questions. We look forward to continuing to work on our shared civil rights priorities as we advance through the legislative session.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Lucero', with a small cross-like mark at the end of the signature.

Rebecca Lucero
Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Human Rights