

In accordance with Article II, Section 17 of the Maryland Constitution, today I have vetoed Senate Bill 250 – *Labor and Employment – Equal Pay Commission*.

Senate Bill 250 establishes an Equal Pay Commission for a period of two years, which is to be staffed by the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation. The commission would study wage disparities and present preliminary and final reports to the Governor and the General Assembly leadership by September 30, 2005 and 2006, respectively. The bill terminates September 30, 2006.

For a number of years, Maryland has been governed by the “*Equal Pay for Equal Work*” Act which has its origin in the federal Equal Pay Act and Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Section 3-304(a) of the Labor and Employment Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland provides: “An employer may not discriminate between employees in any occupation by paying a wage to employees of one sex at a rate less than the rate paid to employees of the opposite sex if both employees work in the same establishment and perform work of comparable character or work on the same operation, in the same business, or of the same type.” This law applies to employers of men and women in a lawful enterprise and provides remedies to employees who are discriminated against under this law.

The Division of Labor and Industry indicated in the fiscal note to Senate Bill 250 that it has not received any complaints relative to the Equal Pay for Equal Work law in the past ten years. As such, I am not convinced that this is a problem in need of a solution. The time and resources necessary to create and staff new task forces and commissions continue to trouble me. Under the State’s current fiscal conditions, Senate Bill 250 is an expenditure of time and resources that the State cannot afford to undertake.

For the above stated reasons, I have vetoed Senate Bill 250.

Yours very truly,
Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.
Governor

Senate Bill No. 250

AN ACT concerning

Labor and Employment – Equal Pay Commission

FOR the purpose of establishing an Equal Pay Commission; providing for the membership of the Commission; providing for the designation of the Chairman of the Commission; providing for the staff of the Commission; providing for certain reimbursement for members of the Commission; requiring the Commission to study certain issues; requiring the Commission to report its preliminary and final findings and recommendations to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Delegates on or before certain dates; requiring the Commission’s preliminary and final reports to include certain findings and ~~recommendations~~ solutions; providing for the termination of this Act; and generally relating to equal pay for equal work.

BY adding to