



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Rich Funke

Funke Helps Pass Senate Women's Equality Act

RICH FUNKE January 12, 2015

| ISSUE: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, WOMEN'S HEALTH, HUMAN RIGHTS, WOMEN, JOBS & EMPLOYMENT



*Senator casts first legislative votes for historic package of eight laws;
Equal pay for equal work, expanded protections from harassment & discrimination pass bipartisan
Senate*

Casting his first legislative votes as State Senator, **Rich Funke** today supported a historic package of eight laws that comprise the Senate Women's Equality Act. The Act, which passed the Senate with unanimous, bipartisan support, delivers equal pay for equal work, expands protections from workplace harassment, and increases restrictions on sexual discrimination, among other measures.

*"Today I cast my vote for eight bills that make-up The Women's Equality Act, delivering on a promise I made to make our State a fairer, more equitable place for all," said **Funke**. "Together, we passed equal pay for equal work, expanded workplace harassment protections, and increased restrictions on*

discrimination in employment, credit, and housing. I thank my Senate colleagues on both sides of the aisle for casting politics aside to make New York work better for all women.”

The Senate Women’s Equality Act:

1. **Guarantees Equal Pay for Equal Work (S.1):** On average, women in New York earn only 84% of what their male colleagues earn. The Act closes a loophole that allows employers to justify paying female employees less, outlaws workplace wage secrecy policies, and increases damages available to a prevailing litigant to 300% of unpaid wages.

“Years ago, I was the first TV sports director in our region to start covering girls’ high school sports,” said Funke. “What was true then is true now. If the competition is the same, it deserves the same coverage. If the work is the same, it deserves the same pay. I’m proud this legislation ensures women will earn the same for doing the same job as their male colleagues.”

2. **Expands Workplace Sexual Harassment Protections (S.2):** Over 75% of all workplace sexual harassment complaints are filed by women and over 60% of workplaces in New York have fewer than four employees. The Act extends the State prohibition on sexual harassment in the workplace to workplaces with fewer than four employees.

3. **Allows for Attorney’s Fees in Discrimination Cases (S.3):** New York is one of only nine states in the nation that do not allow successful discrimination defendants to recover attorney’s fees. The Act empowers litigants who win a sex discrimination suit to collect those fees.

4. **Ends Familial Status Discrimination (S.4):** Existing State law does not protect against familial status discrimination in employment, while mothers are less likely to be recommended for hire and promotion. The Act outlaws discrimination against parents in the workplace.

5. **Ends Domestic Violence Victim & Income Discrimination in Housing (S.5):** The Act prohibits building owners, managers, and leasing agents from refusing housing to a tenant because of their status as a domestic violence victim. The Act also creates a task force to study the impact of discrimination based on source of income in housing.

6. **Creates a Pilot Program for Remote Access to Orders of Protection (S.6):** To obtain an Order of Protection, a victim of domestic violence must testify against their abuser in court. The Act creates a pilot program to allow domestic violence victims to testify remotely.

7. **Strengthens Laws Against Human Trafficking (S.7):** The Act increases penalties for human and labor trafficking; Creates new offenses for the aggravated patronizing of a minor; Creates a civil action for victims of trafficking against their perpetrators; and creates an affirmative defense to a prostitution charge if the individual was a trafficking victim.

8. **Ends Pregnancy Discrimination (S.8):** Pregnant women, especially low-wage workers, are often forced to leave their jobs or take unpaid leave by their employers. The Act requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations to pregnant workers to keep them on the job.

“Some leaders in Albany have held these common sense laws hostage to force the adoption of another point, where no such consensus exists. They’ve put partisan politics before the people they serve, and that’s wrong,” said Funke. “Republicans and Democrats worked together to get it done in the Senate. Now we respectfully call on the Assembly and the Governor to join us.”

Senator Funke’s video reaction to the passage of the Senate Women’s Equality Act is available on his YouTube Channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IgpEsCNEDmo>

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