Working Together, We Made History

PATTY RITCHIE   May 4, 2015

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Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

It's hard to believe, that in many places across the county, many women are still being paid less than their male counterparts for the same work. In fact, repeated studies have shown that despite a 50-year-old federal law aimed at prohibiting paycheck discrimination, women continue to earn just 78 cents for every dollar paid to men doing the exact same job.

These disparities in pay are not fair. That's why, for more than two years, I've been working to strengthen New York's law to stop that practice. Now, I'm pleased to report that, after first passing the Senate in January, the bill has now finally cleared the Assembly, where it was being held hostage by the Majority party over politics. The Governor has promised to sign the bill into law.

Passage of Equal Pay is a major victory for women, but there's more work to be done when it comes to improving the quality of life for thousands of families throughout our community, as well as across our state. The Assembly Majority continues to hold hostage several other important bills designed to ensure greater equality. These reforms are designed to:

- Combat sexual harassment in the workplace;

- End discrimination based on gender including discrimination in employment, and obtaining housing and credit;

- Require reasonable work accommodations for pregnant women; and

- Afford stronger protections for domestic violence victims

These measures will help to bring new opportunities to millions of women across New York State. As the 2015 Legislative Session continues, I'll be working just as hard to urge the Assembly to follow our lead and pass these important pieces of legislation. I want to thank those who took the time to show their support for equality for women by signing my online Equal Pay petition, as well as those who called their Assembly representatives, urging them to act on this very important measure. We've proven that working together, we can make history.