



## Women's History Month 2025



This year, [Gallagher Evelius & Jones](#) honors Women's History Month by celebrating the legacy of the late Lilly Ledbetter. Ledbetter served as plaintiff in the 1979 Supreme Court case *Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.*, where she argued that her former employer violated Title VII's sex discrimination prohibition by underpaying her compared to her male colleagues. While there was ample evidence in Ledbetter's favor, she lost on a procedural technicality, as the Court found that Goodyear's alleged discrimination was too old for Goodyear to be held liable at the time of the case.

Following this decision, Ledbetter became a champion for women's equality, particularly on pay equity issues. As a result of her advocacy, Congress passed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act in 2009. This law made it easier for employees bringing an equal pay lawsuit to meet Title VII's timeliness requirements, making it more likely that employees can hold employers accountable for wage discrimination.

Following from Ledbetter's legacy, we have seen significant developments in equal pay and salary transparency laws over the past decade. In 2022, Mississippi became the final of the 50 states to enact an equal pay law. Though protections differ slightly between states, women employed in all states are now guaranteed legal protection for sex-based wage discrimination. Importantly, these laws require that some *bona fide* factor other than sex—such as seniority or experience—explain a difference in pay between men and women performing the same job. That an applicant “didn't ask for more money” or previously made a lower wage do not constitute legitimate reasons for pay disparities between genders.

Additionally, since 2018, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Nevada, New York, Rhode Island, Washington, D.C., and the State of Washington have

enacted salary transparency laws. While requirements and employer applicability vary, each of these laws mandate that employers disclose salary ranges or hourly rates to applicants. In [Maryland](#), for instance, covered employers must include on any internal or external job posting the position's (1) pay range, (2) general description of benefits, and (3) other compensation elements offered. Several additional states are considering their own salary transparency laws, and localities ranging from Cincinnati to Jersey City have created and passed their own versions as well.

At the federal level, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton introduced two bills in 2023 regarding these issues. While neither bill left committee during the last Congressional term, their introduction may serve as a catalyst for additional federal action on wage transparency and equity in the coming years.

The world may have lost [Lilly Ledbetter](#) last October, but just as she hoped, she will long be remembered for making a difference.

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