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VERMONT PRESS RELEASES

Vermont Commission on Women highlight wage gap in retirement



by Press Release

Jan 29 2016 | no reader footnotes

News Release — Vermont Commission on Women
January 28, 2016

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(Montpelier) – This week marks the seventh anniversary of the federal Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. This was an amendment to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and expanded the statute of limitations for pay discrimination cases. The Act reduced barriers for women to access the justice system for wage gap remedies.

Lilly Ledbetter, for whom the law was named, learned after 19 years at Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. in Alabama that she was being paid 35-40 percent less than three other men doing the exact same job that she was. She discovered this by reading an anonymous note that had been stuffed in her mailbox. A long court battle ensued, culminating in an appeal to the Supreme Court in 2006 where she lost because she did not file suit within 180 days of receiving her first discriminatory pay check. The Act was largely a result of this decision, resetting the 180 days with each new discriminatory pay check.

On a visit to Vermont, as keynote speaker for Senator Leahy's Women's Economic Opportunity Conference, Ledbetter spoke about the massive loss in income her family suffered as a result of the wage gap she had experienced over 19 years: losses in pension income, contributions to her employer-sponsored retirement fund program, social security income, and less money available to contribute to her own independently managed 401K plan.

Women, Work and Wages, a [report](#) issued this month by Change the Story VT, a multi-year strategy of the VT Commission on Women, the VT Women's Fund and VT Works for Women to align philanthropy, policy and programs to improve women's economic well-being, examined this loss in income in retirement years in our state.

For Vermonters aged 65 and over, women's median Social Security draw is half that of men's, and their overall median income of \$15,500 per year falls well below the \$23,000 needed to cover basic expenses. The report points out the costs to our society: "Given that Vermont's share of elders is

projected to expand to 25% of the state’s population by 2030, and because women are more likely to live longer—and thus are more likely to live alone in old age, women’s relative economic insecurity threatens to put added pressure, not just on elders and their families, but on state subsidies and benefits.”

Women, Work and Wages report can be found at changethestoryvt.org.

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PROJECTED JOB GROWTH 2016-2025: **32,200**

ANNUAL WAGE: **\$84,770**

% GROWTH: **11%**

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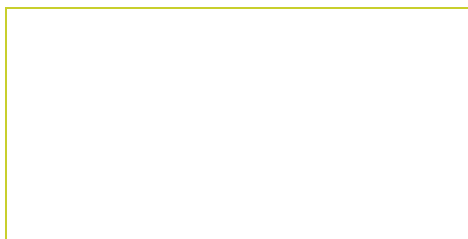
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