

**TRAVIS NELSON**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
HOUSE DISTRICT 44  
NORTH/NORTHEAST PORTLAND



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 925**

March 16, 2023

Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Bonham, members of the committee,

I am Travis Nelson, State Representative for House District 44 (North and Northeast Portland). I am a Registered Nurse and the first openly LGBTQ+ Black legislator in the 164-year history of our great state. Committee members, I am here today in support of Senate Bill 925 with the -2 amendment. This bill would help Oregon businesses across all sectors attract and retain talent. It would save time and money in hiring and help close gender and racial wage gaps that we know are already present. It's a win for employers, employees, and all Oregonians.

Often, when a person realizes they are under-paid, they are hesitant and often fearful to ask for a negotiation to bring the pay up to par. And if that person is a woman? They're often labeled as greedy and overreaching for doing so. And that goes double for people of color. By creating a law for wage range transparency, we can help employees see where the pay gaps are and give them the protections necessary to help negotiate a fair increase. This would help create trust and loyalty for individuals with their employer and thereby create less turnover in the job market. By leveling the negotiating playing field in this way, salary transparency helps employers avoid gender and racial salary gaps from arising to begin with and therefore avoid liability.

Requiring companies to post their pay ranges would prompt them to proactively review and evaluate their compensation practices and then address any unjustified transparencies between employees. One of my favorite sayings is that sunlight is the best disinfectant. Shine a light on salary across the board and everyone – employers, employees, and candidates – will benefit. Colorado experienced a 1.5% increase in their labor force participation rate after their pay transparency law came into effect, as opposed to Utah, a state that has similar economic and demographic makeup but does not yet have a wage transparency law.

In the past few years, we have seen many of our friends and family make the difficult decision to search for a new job. That is a massive economic decision and one that is not undertaken lightly. No one would ever make an offer on a house without first seeing the listing price. The same should be expected of the jobs that would pay that mortgage. A person's salary determines a person's basic ability to care for themselves and their family. How are we to help Oregonians who are underpaid and unjustly so if no one knows that is the case?

We also must begin to hire the next generation of our workforce – Gen Z. Adobe's Future Workforce Study of upcoming college seniors and recent graduates revealed that 85% are less likely to apply for a job if the company does not disclose the salary range in the job posting. That is a lot of talent for a company to miss out on.

This bill is simply about including one data point in job postings and making the same data available to people already employed. We can help retain and value our incredible workforce by passing this bill. I urge you to pass this bill out of committee.

Thank you,

State Representative Travis Nelson  
House District 44, North/NE Portland