

Key Findings and Recommendations of the Alabama Workforce and Wage Gap Task Force

Workforce and Wage Gap Task Force Members

Jenna M. Bedsole, Managing Shareholder, Baker Donelson (Birmingham)

Melanie R. Bridgeforth, MSW, President and CEO, Women's Foundation of Alabama, Alabama Workforce and Wage Gap Task Force Chair (Birmingham)

Representative Adline Clarke, Alabama House District 97 (Mobile)

Amanda Foster, CFP®, CRPS®, Practical Financial Solutions, American Association of University Women Huntsville (Huntsville)

Kendra Key, Principal, Community Economic Development (Birmingham)

Representative Joe Lovvorn, Alabama House District 79 (Auburn)

Mike Polis, VP of Human Resources at Morris Group International, Director of AL Society for Human Resource Management State Council (Montgomery)

Dr. Cynthia Warrick, President, Stillman College (Tuscaloosa)

Representative Andy Whitt, Alabama House District 6 (Harvest)

Dr. Kelly Collins Woodford, Associate Dean and Professor of Management, University of South Alabama (Mobile)

Dr. Stephanie Yates, Endowed Professor and Director of Regions Institute for Financial Education, University of Alabama at Birmingham (Birmingham)

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Workforce and Wage Gap Task Force Members | 1 |
| Executive Summary | 3 |
| Introduction | 4 |
| Strengthen Equal Pay Protections to Close the Gender Wage Gap | 5 |
| Key Findings..... | 5 |
| Recommendations..... | 5 |
| Recommendation: Prohibit employers and third-parties from requesting pay history from job applicants..... | 5 |
| Recommendation: Incentivize equal pay audits by creating a good faith defense to litigation for the CF-EPA..... | 6 |
| Invest in Childcare to Support and Grow Alabama’s Workforce..... | 7 |
| Key Findings..... | 7 |
| Recommendations..... | 7 |
| Recommendation: Create tax incentives to increase the supply and affordability of quality childcare in Alabama..... | 7 |
| Recommendation: Utilize all available federal funding, including temporary COVID relief, to support access to affordable, quality childcare..... | 8 |
| Recommendation: Explore innovative ways to close the childcare supply gap, such as a revolving fund or start-up grants for childcare facilities and capital expenses..... | 8 |
| Recommendation: Prioritize childcare in Alabama’s future workforce policy planning by creating an intra-agency council on workforce and childcare..... | 8 |
| Strengthen the Workforce Development Pipeline for Women and Girls..... | 9 |
| Key Findings..... | 9 |
| Recommendations..... | 9 |
| Recommendation: Add representative(s) to the Alabama Workforce Council(s) to focus on gender dynamics in workforce development..... | 9 |
| Recommendation: Increase funding for early intervention programs that expose and prepare girls for careers in STEM..... | 9 |
| Recommendation: Increase funding for apprenticeship programs and “earn and learn” pathways..... | 10 |
| Recommendation: Increase funding for workforce navigators and career coaches..... | 10 |
| Conclusions | 11 |
| Task Force Member Signatures | 12 |
| Acknowledgements..... | 13 |
| Citations..... | 14 |
| Appendix..... | 15 |
| House Joint Resolution 115..... | 15 |

Executive Summary

The Alabama Workforce and Wage Gap Task Force was commissioned by the State Legislature via House Joint Resolution 115. The body was charged with identifying evidence-based policies to assist lawmakers in implementing laws to close the gender wage gap and bolster female workforce participation. Armed with data from leading experts on the status of pay inequality, workforce participation dynamics, and equal pay protections, the Task Force prioritized the following specific and actionable recommendations for consideration by the Alabama Legislature.

Key Findings:

- Alabama's gender wage gap is one of the largest in the country, where women are paid only 67 cents for every dollar a man earns. Black women and Hispanic women are paid even less, making only 52 cents and 41 cents, respectively, for every dollar a white man earns.¹
- The gender wage gap in Alabama is a result of several structural and systemic factors including occupational segregation, discriminatory practices, and low labor force participation among women.
- The labor force participation rate of women in Alabama is the lowest in the Southeast (52%) and must be addressed to meet the state's hiring needs.
- Quality, affordable, childcare is essential to a healthy and productive workforce, and is particularly important for women who are more likely to step back from the workforce to shoulder family responsibilities.

Recommendations:

- Strengthen equal pay protections by adding a salary history ban and incentivizing businesses to conduct equal pay audits.
- Invest in childcare to support and grow Alabama's workforce using targeted tax credits and innovative financing to build and expand access to quality, affordable childcare.
- Streamline and scale the workforce development pipeline for women and girls, including additional funding for programs that increase awareness of and access to high-demand, high-paying jobs.

Introduction

Alabama's economic prosperity depends on removing the barriers that hold women back from fully participating in and benefitting from the state's economy. Women in Alabama already contribute \$43 billion to the state's economy despite experiencing one of the largest gender wage gaps (67 cents for every dollar a man earns) and one of the lowest female labor force participation rates (52% of working-age women).¹ While Alabama continues to attract new businesses bringing thousands of new jobs to the state, industries continue to struggle to find the talent they need. Simply put, the state is on a trajectory where there will be more work than workforce. Alabama must act now to create policies and practices that enable women to fully participate in the economy.

In 2022, the State Legislature commissioned the Alabama Workforce and Wage Gap Task Force to identify evidence-based policies to assist lawmakers in implementing laws to close the wage gap (via House Joint Resolution 115). The 11-member Task Force, comprising lawmakers, business and industry leaders, higher education experts, and community leaders, contributed a diverse range of professional experience including economic development, public policy, human resource management, financial planning, and employment and labor law. Throughout the convenings, the Task Force heard from experts who shared cutting-edge research that quantified the economic impact of women in Alabama, defined factors that drive labor force underutilization, and compared the efficacy of equal pay laws across the United States. After the learning and research phase, the Task Force set forth to craft specific policy recommendations to help close the gender pay gap and bolster the workforce participation rate of women in Alabama.

The impact of closing the pay gap and workforce participation gap is significant. Achieving pay parity in Alabama is estimated to create 59,000 new jobs, generate \$15 billion in new income that could be deployed in businesses throughout the state, and grow the state's economy by up to \$22 billion.¹ Furthermore, if women participated in the workforce at the same rate as men, the state economy is estimated to grow by an additional \$12 billion. Beyond the statewide economic impact, ensuring equal pay and access to occupations would have a profound impact on the lives of individuals, children, and families – 74% of which rely on a female breadwinner to pay for necessities like food, housing, and childcare.² When the path is cleared for women in Alabama to reach their potential, families and communities prosper.

This report includes an overview of key findings and recommendations from the Task Force to close the gender pay gap and increase workforce participation in Alabama. The following report is divided into three sections highlighting and supporting recommendations to (1) strengthen the state's equal pay protections, (2) invest in childcare to support and expand the workforce, and (3) streamline and strengthen the workforce development pipeline for women and girls.

Strengthen Equal Pay Protections to Close the Gender Wage Gap

Key Findings

Women in Alabama are paid considerably less than men — across education levels, occupations, and counties — and closing the wage gap would substantially boost Alabama’s economy. According to research commissioned by the Women’s Foundation of Alabama, the gender pay gap in Alabama is one of the largest in the country, with the average woman earning only 67 cents for every dollar a man earns.¹ This translates to a lifetime wage gap of over \$510,000, where women in Alabama would need to work to age 74 to catch up to what men make by age 60.³ These disparities are even worse for women of color in the state, where Black women and Hispanic women earn only 52 cents and 41 cents, respectively, for every dollar a white man earns.

The gender wage gap in Alabama is a result of many factors including occupational segregation, low labor force participation, the “motherhood penalty”, and the lasting impact of past discriminatory practices.¹ While the Clarke-Figures Equal Pay Act (CF-EPA) was a significant step towards equal pay in Alabama, the law is currently underutilized and could be improved to assist in closing the wage gap in Alabama.

Recommendations

Recommendation: Prohibit employers and third-parties from requesting pay history from job applicants.

Rationale: While asking job applicants about their prior pay may seem innocuous on the surface, it can have unintended and harmful consequences including perpetuating the gender wage gap. Employers’ reliance on salary history to make hiring and compensation decisions is particularly harmful for women, as the practice can unintentionally relegate women to lower pay based on prior discrimination.⁴ Employers who have conducted pay equity audits say that differences in salary history are a key driver of their gender pay gaps.⁵ Furthermore, salary history is often not an objective measure of a worker’s value, as it fails to capture labor market conditions and the applicant’s current qualifications, experience, abilities, and capacity to work.

While Alabama’s equal pay statute prohibits retaliation against individuals who refuse to provide salary history, 17 other states actively prohibit employers from inquiring or seeking salary history. Emerging research on existing salary history bans shows that these policies are effective and are helping narrow the gender wage gap in participating regions.⁶ Across dozens of states, individuals who changed jobs after the implementation of a salary history ban received pay increases that were 5% higher than those received by comparable individuals who changed jobs in the absence of a salary ban.⁷ Similarly, this research showed that salary history bans have been most beneficial for job changers who were female and/or people of color.

Each state’s salary history ban includes unique language to address the scope, definition, and timing of pay history prohibitions. A subcommittee discussed the key differences and recommended the following components to be included in the Clarke-Figures Equal Pay Act. First, prohibit employers – including third-parties such as staffing agencies – from seeking wage history information during the application, screening, and interview process. Second, exceptions should be allowed for voluntary disclosures and disclosures required by law. Lastly, the definition of wage history should remain consistent with current statute.

Recommendation: Incentivize equal pay audits by creating a good faith defense to litigation for the CF-EPA.

Rationale: A pay audit is a critical tool that helps employers identify pay disparities and opportunities to improve pay equity. According to a survey conducted by the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM), 83% of organizations that have conducted pay equity audits have adjusted employees' pay following the conclusion of the review.⁸

Acknowledging the direct and immediate impact that pay audits can have on an employer's compensation practices, several states have policies to incentivize pay equity audits. For example, Rhode Island, Colorado, and Massachusetts allow recent equal pay audits to serve as evidence of "good faith" when considering violations and penalties of their equal pay statutes. Allowing recent pay audits to serve as a good faith defense provides a means to incentivize employers to conduct these audits and reduce any identified pay disparities.

The subcommittee considered ways to structure a good faith defense to litigation for the CF-EPA that would incentivize equal pay audits. An appropriate good faith defense would require a recent bona fide equal pay audit conducted by an independent outside party and proof of corrective action if applicable. The good faith defense could be used to lessen damages in wage disparity cases, but not violations pertaining to the salary history ban. As an affirmative defense, equal pay audits would not be mandatory.

Invest in Childcare to Support and Grow Alabama's Workforce

Key Findings

The labor force participation rate of women in Alabama is the lowest in the Southeast, and Alabama must increase women's participation in the labor force to meet the state's hiring needs. According to the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, family responsibility and childcare are leading factors that contribute to the underutilization of women in the labor force.⁹

Childcare is essential to a healthy and productive workforce. Yet, according to the Bipartisan Policy Center, Alabama has a childcare supply gap of 85,550 children. This represents 40% of children under age 6 who may need childcare but whose families cannot reasonably access it.¹⁰ Furthermore, the workforce of childcare is predominately female; 90% of Alabama's childcare providers are women.¹¹

Across the country, states are acknowledging the importance of childcare as a critical support for working parents and early learning opportunity for its youngest citizens. For example, in April 2022 Kentucky enacted a public-private partnership to administer an Employee Child-Care Assistance Program, where the state will match employer childcare benefits with state dollars and commit \$15 million over the next two years to support the program. In November 2022, New Mexico became the first state to create a permanent fund for childcare and is planning to spend approximately \$150 million annually to support early learning. Childcare is a complex issue that requires multi-faceted solutions from government, business, and local communities to address affordability, accessibility, and quality in a sustainable way.

Recommendations

Recommendation: Create tax incentives to increase the supply and affordability of quality childcare in Alabama.

Rationale: While the Alabama Legislature made a historic \$17.8 million investment in quality childcare in 2022, additional investment is needed to support childcare as a critical workforce infrastructure. Tax credits aimed at families, employers, and childcare providers are powerful tools that can increase access to quality and affordable childcare for families at all income levels.

In 2009, Louisiana pioneered comprehensive childcare tax credits to incentivize parents, providers, and employers to participate in the state's Quality Start program (Quality STARS/QRIS equivalent).¹² Briefly, their School Readiness Tax Credits include:

- (1) *Tax credits for families* with young children (under 6) who are enrolled in a qualifying licensed childcare program, with the value of the credit increasing with higher ratings of the childcare program.
- (2) *Tax credits for childcare business owners* who participate in the state's quality program based on the rating of their program and the number of high-need children served.
- (3) *Tax credits for childcare teachers and directors* if they teach in a program that participates in the quality program based on the level of education obtained by the individual.

(4) *Tax credits for businesses* that provide financial support to childcare programs that participate in the quality program or that donate to childcare resource and referral agencies.

Since the implementation of these tax credits, Louisiana has seen a significant increase in the number of children participating in quality childcare programs, and an increase in the number of childcare instructors receiving training and credentials to improve their teaching practices.¹³ In 2014, \$16.7 million in tax credits was utilized to positively impact 14,468 families, 3,770 educators, 405 childcare centers, and 190 businesses. A similar investment in Alabama's childcare would go a long way towards closing the childcare gap and boosting labor force participation for women in the state.

Recommendation: Utilize all available federal funding, including temporary COVID relief, to support access to affordable, quality childcare.

Rationale: Alabama has a limited time opportunity to direct federal funds from COVID-relief to support childcare, whose workforce and customers (working parents and their children) were deeply impacted by the pandemic. While some COVID-relief funds have been successfully deployed to subsidize childcare worker salaries and address ongoing health and safety needs of current providers, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds could also be used to expand the supply of care by providing start-up grants for new and expanded programs.

Recommendation: Explore innovative ways to close the childcare supply gap, such as a revolving fund or start-up grants for childcare facilities and capital expenses.

Rationale: Start-up and expansion costs can be prohibitive for childcare business owners seeking to launch or expand their operations. To address this problem, states like Maryland and California have created revolving loan funds to provide zero-interest financing to cover capital expenses and facilities costs for licensed childcare providers. Alternatively, the state could explore funding start-up grants for aspiring childcare business owners and childcare providers who are currently operating with a religious exemption to licensure. Providing a funding mechanism for currently unlicensed or exempt childcare providers would create a much-needed incentive for childcare providers to become licensed and expand.

Recommendation: Prioritize childcare in Alabama's future workforce policy planning by creating an intra-agency council on workforce and childcare.

Rationale: Childcare is essential to building and maintaining a healthy and productive workforce, and all of society benefits when those closest to an issue weigh in on the solution. To facilitate multi-sector collaboration to address Alabama's complex childcare needs, an intra-agency council on childcare and the workforce should be formed to bring together integral state agencies as well as representatives from employers, childcare providers, and childcare resource and referral agencies. With input from the Alabama Department of Human Resources, Department of Early Childhood Education, Alabama Community College System, Department of Commerce, and Department of Labor, the council will be able to coordinate and collaborate on approaches that are currently fragmented.

Strengthen the Workforce Development Pipeline for Women and Girls

Key Findings

Occupational segregation – or the over-representation of women in low wage jobs – is a key driver of the gender wage gap in Alabama. Men and women tend to work in different occupations, and the occupations that employ more women (e.g., retail, childcare, food preparation) usually pay the least.¹ Differences in occupations and employment within industries account for as much as half of the gender wage gap. As such, disrupting occupational segregation will go a long way towards closing the earnings gap and ensuring women’s broader participation in the economy.

To increase the number of women in the workforce and address occupational segregation, Alabama must invest in thoughtful interventions across the lifespan that disrupt traditional gender stereotypes and remove barriers to accessing quality, high-wage jobs. Fortunately, there is no shortage of workforce development organizations, programs, and initiatives taking place throughout the state. However, awareness of and access to these education and training resources poses a challenge, reducing the reach and impact for those who could benefit most. Coordination, cooperation, and communication within and across such initiatives could be improved to ensure that all Alabamians have an equal opportunity to access the education and training necessary to secure sustainable employment.

Recommendations

Recommendation: Add representative(s) to the Alabama Workforce Council(s) to focus on gender dynamics in workforce development.

Rationale: AlabamaWorks! and AlabamaWorks! Success Plus have outlined a structured path for our state to add credentialed workers to the workforce and have created the organizational infrastructure to support workforce development in all regions of the state. Expanding and improving the coordination of state-wide and regional workforce development efforts could have a meaningful impact on the labor force participation of women in our state.

To ensure that those closest to the problems facing women in the workforce are contributing to their solutions, the Task Force recommends adding a representative to the Alabama Workforce Council(s) to focus on gender dynamics in workforce development (e.g. pay gap, labor force participation, occupational segregation, and childcare), as well as oversee programs that are targeted to women in the workforce.

Recommendation: Increase funding for early intervention programs that expose and prepare girls for careers in STEM.

Rationale: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields account for some of the fastest growing and highest paying jobs of the future. Yet, girls and women are less likely than boys and men to prepare for and enter these fields. Girls experience implicit and explicit gender bias in school and at home that tells them that boys and men are better at math and science – even when there is no evidence to support that.

There are many steps that can be taken to create a lifelong pathway of opportunity for girls and women in STEM.¹⁴¹⁵ However, the National Science Foundation has shown that interventions

aimed at 12- to 13-year-old girls are particularly effective at interrupting mindsets about their capabilities and career opportunities. Immersive camps focused on STEM careers, like the [Tech Trek Camp](#) hosted by the University of Alabama at Huntsville, have been successful in reversing stereotypes and convincing young women that competency in spatial learning, math and science is learned through study and experience, not determined by innate abilities. Similarly, career expos that target students and young people – like the [Worlds of Work](#) – provide a valuable venue to showcase regional workforce opportunities and increase awareness of high-demand, high-paying jobs.

Furthermore, increasing the number and availability of STEM camps for adolescent girls is a relatively small investment with potential for great impact. For reference, the cost of such a camp for 65 girls is around \$50,000.

Recommendation: Increase funding for apprenticeship programs and “earn and learn” pathways.

Most people in Alabama – women especially – do not have the financial security to take time away from lower paying jobs to complete a training or certifications that would increase their wages in the long term. For this reason, “earn and learn” pathways are beneficial for women because they enable trainees to learn a valuable skill or trade while continuing to earn a living. Apprenticeships are one such pathway successfully deployed in Alabama to train and employ people in trade and manufacturing occupations. According to the Urban Institute, the most successful models are apprenticeship programs that collaborate between multiple employers, intermediaries, and community colleges.¹⁶¹⁷

Reimagining the types of jobs that are eligible to achieve certification through apprenticeship is essential to filling worker shortages as well as opening doors to higher paying jobs for women. Other states are pioneering – with success – earn and learn programs in professions historically viewed as unsuitable for apprenticeships. For example, Tennessee is pioneering a teaching apprenticeship program that allows educators in training to achieve certifications and even four-year degrees while gaining paid experience in the classroom. Similarly, tech training programs that provide data science and coding bootcamps and professional development opportunities are preparing the next generation of analysts and software engineers for stable, high-paying jobs.

Recommendation: Increase funding for workforce navigators and career coaches.

Rationale: Women face considerable barriers to completing workforce training programs, entering the workforce, and staying employed. Among the leading challenges are transportation, health care, childcare, and wage disparities. Workforce navigators – such as those employed by regional Alabama Works – help job seekers access the resources they need to access quality jobs, including transportation, childcare, and housing. Similarly, career coaches provide personalized support to community college students while they are completing their studies and starting their careers. Increasing the number of workforce navigators and career coaches would expand the number of students and job seekers that can be supported, trained, and employed.

Conclusions

Alabama must address its wage gap and barriers to workforce participation that keep its citizens from fully contributing to the economy and benefiting from their hard work.

Alabama's gender and racial wage gaps arise largely from occupational segregation, low labor force participation, and the legacy of discriminatory practices. Women face unique barriers that make it harder for them to work and earn a fair wage, including an increased burden of family responsibilities and shortage of quality, affordable childcare.

Here, the Workforce and Wage Gap Task Force has identified specific and actionable recommendations for the legislature to consider that would help strengthen the state's equal pay protection, expand access to childcare, and reinforce the workforce development pipeline. If implemented, these recommendations will pave the way to an Alabama where all residents, including women, are paid an equal wage for equal work.

Task Force Member Signatures

As appointed members of the Alabama Workforce and Wage Gap Task Force, I endorse the recommendations as laid out in this document.

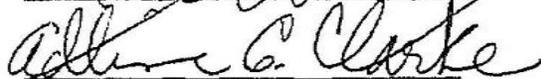
Jenna M Bedsole
Managing Shareholder, Baker Donelson



Melanie R. Bridgeforth, MSW
President and CEO, WFA, Task Force Chair



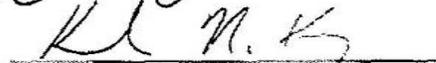
Rep. Adline Clarke
Alabama House District 97



Amanda Foster CFP®, CRPS®,
Practical Financial Solutions, AAUW Huntsville



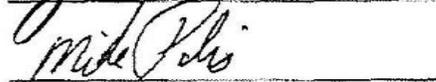
Kendra Key
Principal, Community Economic Development



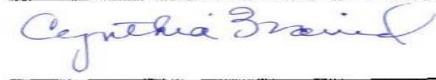
Rep. Joe Loworn
Alabama House District 79



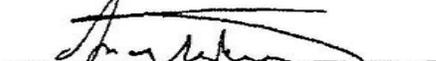
Mike Polis, VP of Human Resources at Morris Group
International, Director of AL SHRM State Council



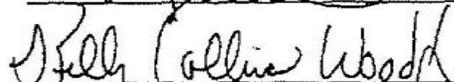
Dr Cynthia Warrick
President, Stillman College



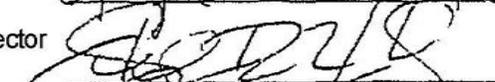
Rep. Andy Whitt
Alabama House District 6



Dr. Kelly Collins Woodford
Associate Dean and Professor of Management, USA



Dr Stephanie Yates, Endowed Professor and Director
of Regions Institute for Financial Education, UAB



Acknowledgements

The Alabama Workforce and Wage Gap Task Force offers their sincere appreciation to the following expert presenters, panelists, consultants, and administrators who lent their time and expertise to these recommendations:

Allan M. Freyer, Ph.D., *Principal and Founder of Peregrine Strategy Solutions*

He is a public affairs professional with more than 20 years of experience driving policy change at the intersection of politics, advocacy, and policy-making. He was also the lead researcher for the 2022 Clearing the Path report on the Economic Impact of Women in Alabama.

Linda Smith, *Director of the Early Childhood Initiative, Bipartisan Policy Center*

She most recently served as the deputy assistant secretary for early childhood development in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Andrea Johnson, J.D., *Director of State Policy, Workplace Justice & Cross-Cutting Initiatives, National Women's Law Center*

In this role, she coordinates efforts to advance state policies across NWLC's priority issue areas while working directly on legislation and litigation related to pay discrimination, sexual harassment, pregnancy discrimination, and unfair scheduling practices.

Alex Ruder, Ph.D., *Principal Advisor, Community and Economic Development Team, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta*

As an affiliate of the Atlanta Federal Reserve's Center for Workforce and Economic Opportunity, he specializes in community and workforce development as well as public policy.

Anoop Mishra, *VP/Regional Executive, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, Birmingham Branch*

He oversees the Birmingham Branch's economic and financial education program and provides regional input into the Atlanta Federal Reserve's monetary policy process.

Rhonda Kay Gaede, Ph.D., *Interim Associate Provost, Associate Chair & Professor of Engineering, University of Alabama Huntsville, Chair of Tech Trek (a week-long immersive STEM camp for 12–13-year-old girls)*

Bernard Houston, *Childcare Services and Workforce Development, Alabama Department of Human Resources*

Donny Jones, *Executive Director, Region 3 Workforce Development Council/West Alabama Works*

Ashley Smith, *Legislative Attorney, Legislative Services Agency*

Mary Ruth Davis, *Committee Clerk for Alabama House of Representatives*

Citations

- ¹ Women's Foundation of Alabama. (2022). [Clearing the Path: Galvanizing the Economic Impact of Women](#).
- ² Women's Foundation of Alabama. (2020). [Status of Women in Alabama](#).
- ³ National Women's Law Center. (March 16, 2021). [The Lifetime Wage Gap, State by State](#).
- ⁴ Bleiweis, R. (March 24, 2021) [Why Salary History Bans Matter to Securing Equal Pay](#). Center for American Progress.
- ⁵ Harvard Business Review Analytic Services. (2019). [Navigating the Growing Pay Equity Movement: What Employers Need to Know About What to Do](#). Harvard Business School Publishing.
- ⁶ Hansen, B & McNichols, D. (April 2020). [Information and the Persistence of the Gender Wage Gap: Early Evidence from California's Salary History Ban](#). National Bureau of Economic Research.
- ⁷ Bessen, J.E., Meng, C., & Denk, E. (June 2020). [Perpetuating Inequality: What Salary History Bans Reveal About Wages](#). SSRN.
- ⁸ Society for Human Resources Management. (2021). [Bridging the Pay Gap: Why Pay Equity Pays Off](#)
- ⁹ Ruder, A. (2022, September 22). [Labor Force Underutilization in Alabama](#). Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.
- ¹⁰ Bipartisan Policy Center. (2019). [The Supply Of, Potential Need For, And Economic Impact Of The Gaps In Child Care In Alabama In 2019](#).
- ¹¹ Women's Foundation of Alabama. (2021). [Clearing the Path, Strengthening Childcare, Strengthening Alabama](#)
- ¹² Stoney, L. (2009, June 10). [Using Tax Credits to Promote Quality Early Child Care and Education](#). New America.
- ¹³ Louisiana Policy Institute for Children. (2016, October). [Giving Credit Where it is Due: School Readiness Tax Credits Benefit Louisiana Families and Communities](#)
- ¹⁴ American Association of University Women. (2013). [Why So Few? Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics](#)
- ¹⁵ American Association of University Women. ([Closing the STEM Gap](#)).
- ¹⁶ Urban Institute. (2022). Best Practices for Being an Apprenticeship Friendly State.
- ¹⁷ Elliott, D., Marotta, J., Hernandez, F., and Rayfield, J. Urban Institute. (June 2022). [What Works in Tech Apprenticeship: Best Practices for Expanding Registered Apprenticeships in the Tech Sector](#). Urban Institute.

Appendix

House Joint Resolution 115

CREATING THE ALABAMA WORKFORCE AND WAGE GAP TASKFORCE

WHEREAS, accelerating economic opportunity for women is central to solidifying the positive economic trajectory that Alabama enjoys; and WHEREAS, the wage gap for women in Alabama is larger than for women in the United States overall; women in Alabama earn only 73 cents for every dollar a man earns, while women in the United States earn 82 cents for every dollar a man earns; if the current trend continues, Alabama women will not reach pay equity until 2089; and

WHEREAS, women are more likely than men to have filed claims for unemployment during the COVID-19 pandemic, accounting for 55.37 percent of total claims; and WHEREAS, women with children who wish to enter the workforce face steep child-care costs as the annual child-care costs for an infant under 12 months of age in Alabama is estimated at \$5,858 per year, which is nearly 17 percent of women's median annual earnings; and

WHEREAS, paying employed single women the same amount as comparable men would reduce the state's poverty rate by nearly half; and

WHEREAS, raising the labor participation rate of women in Alabama to the national average could add more than 380,000 women to the workforce; and

WHEREAS, women remain disproportionately represented in certain occupations, such as teaching, nursing, social work, and office and administrative jobs, which are demanding and tend to pay less; and

WHEREAS, more than 74 percent of women in Alabama are the breadwinners in their households and more than 10 percent of employed mothers have young children; the wage gap is even larger for Black women and Latina women in Alabama, indicating racialized structural barriers to well-being; Black women made 58.5 cents and Latina women made 48.8 cents for every dollar that a white man earned in Alabama in 2017; and

WHEREAS, identifying evidence-based policies that can close the wage gap would assist policy makers in their efforts; and

WHEREAS, creating a task force that will gather those policies and report to policy makers is a necessary step in the quest to close the wage gap between men and women; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, that there is hereby created the Alabama Workforce and Wage Gap Task Force to identify evidence-based policies to assist lawmakers in implementing laws to close the wage gap.

(a) The task force shall be composed of the 4 following members:

(1) Three members appointed by the Governor, who shall be representatives of university colleges of business and management, including at least one from a Historically Black College or University.

(2) Two members appointed by the Senate President Pro Tempore upon recommendation by the Women's Foundation of Alabama and the American Association of University Women, one of which shall serve as chair as selected by the Senate President Pro Tempore.

(3) One member appointed by the Senate Minority Leader.

(4) Two members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives upon recommendation by the Business Council of Alabama and the Alabama Department of Labor.

(5) One member appointed by the House of Representatives Minority Leader

(6) One member appointed by the Women's Section of the Alabama State Bar.

(7) One member appointed by the Society of Human Resource Management.

(b) The appointing authorities shall coordinate their appointments to assure that the task force is inclusive and reflects the racial, gender, geographic, urban, rural, and economic diversity of the state.

(c) The task force shall hold its first meeting within 60 days of this resolution's passage, at a time and place designated by the chair. Each appointing authority named herein shall be provided a copy of this resolution upon its passage.

(d) The task force shall report any findings or recommendations to the Legislature and stand dissolved and discharged of any future duties and liabilities no later than December 31, 2022.