

*The University of Chicago*

**Another Day, Another Dollar (or 83 Cents):  
Gender Pay Equity Policies in Chicago's Sister Cities and Next-Step  
Recommendations**

by

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**Abstract**

Since the 1860s, with the advancement of women's working rights, the gender wage gap has been a heavily contentious issue in U.S. political debate. While many efforts have been made to alleviate this disparity, few significant outcomes have resulted. Chicago's recently passed Executive Order 2023:1 provides a stepping stone towards assuaging this aspect of gender parity, but it represents only a first step towards true pay equity. In this thesis, I analyze the outcomes of similar policies in two of Chicago's sister cities to determine beneficial next steps towards women's workplace equality. I also include a counterfactual analysis and conduct a differences-in-differences linear regression analysis of all 50 states, followed by the same analysis for 8 select cities, to determine whether past policy initiatives have been successful or impactful on a larger scale. Following a discussion of these analyses, including testimonies from City officials, I discuss suggest policy interventions for Chicago with an emphasis on long-lasting change.

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*Another Day, Another Dollar (or 83 Cents):  
Gender Pay Equity Policies in Chicago's Sister Cities and Next-Step Recommendations*

## **I. Introduction**

The gross underpayment of women across almost all industries compared to their male counterparts is a notorious phenomenon that has seen marginal improvement but no resolution throughout past decades. On average, women working full-time in the United States earn approximately 87.3% of the amount that men working full-time in the United States earn – this trend is sustained at all levels of educational attainment, as demonstrated by Figure 1 in the appendix (Chun-Hoon, 2023) (Women's Bureau, 2022). This trend extends further: women exhibit lower median compensations than men within the same broad occupational categories as well (Hegewisch & Mefferd, 2021, p.6).

A significant issue is the versatility of compensation strategy: male-dominated occupations tend to offer higher pay than female-dominated occupations, meaning that occupational segregation is a primary factor in the prevalence of the wage gap (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2020). The added elements of education and race further complicate this phenomenon. It is notable that while on average, “women have more years of education and are more likely than men to have completed [advanced] degrees... overall, women must complete one additional degree in order to be paid the same wages as a man with less education” (Chun-Hoon, p.1). Additionally, American Progress notes that “Hispanic women... earned just 57 cents for every \$1 earned by white, non-Hispanic men in 2020,... Black women... earned just 64 cents for every \$1 earned by white, non-Hispanic men in 2020,... [and] white, non-Hispanic women... earned 79 cents for every \$1 earned by their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts in 2020” (Bleiweis et al., 2021, p.1).

This issue exists at the city level in Chicago as well. Figure 2 in the appendix demonstrates the gender pay gap across various occupations in Chicago, highlighting a 10.6% difference between the median income of men versus women from 2011 to 2015 (LiveStories, n.d.). While numerous initiatives have been taken in the past to address this – such as the Equitable Transit-Oriented Development project within the Chicago Recovery Plan and “civic infrastructure” initiatives within We Will Chicago – the wage gap continues to persist (City of Chicago, 2023, p.41).

The recent passing of Executive Order 2023:1 in the City of Chicago, which mandates bi-annual audits of company-wide compensation strategies across different demographics of employees, is a notable initiative towards the proposed outcome of assuaging gender-based wage inequities. By providing data transparency and therefore a prolonged set of figures for subsequent analysis, this intervention establishes a baseline to enable the development of further efforts. This Executive Order itself will likely have minimal outcomes other than the required release of critical information, but examining its effects will be undertaken primarily through basic analysis of compensation trends over time, with race and gender in mind.

Ultimately, this thesis aims to address further initiatives that Chicago can take in the context of initiatives implemented in similar cities. By examining St. Louis, New York City and Mississippi – and then through further analysis of all 50 states and 8 key cities – this work aims to address the question of which initiatives will prove the most beneficial for the decrease of Chicago’s gender-based wage gap.

## **II. Background**

The gender wage gap has been a longstanding element of economic inequality, particularly during the latter half of the 20th century as more women have entered spaces of

higher education and, by consequence, employment positions of higher status and pay. Of greatest concern is not only its seemingly impossible resolution as illustrated by multitudes of failed policy initiatives in the recent past – discussed in the following section and later on – but also its implications on the future of equitable compensation practices. Simply put, “on average, women employed in the United States lose a combined total of nearly \$1.6 trillion every year due to the wage gap,” meaning that “women and their families have less money to support themselves, care for their families and communities, and save and invest for the future” (National Partnership for Women & Families, 2023, p.1).

Some of the most critical causes for the gender gap include “uneven access to education,... lack of employment equality,... job segregation,... lack of legal protections,... lack of bodily autonomy,... poor medical care,... societal mindsets” and many more (Human Rights Careers, n.d., p.1). These will be explored in detail throughout this piece, following a history of the rise of the wage gap phenomenon.

#### A. United States

The United States has a long and troubled history of gendered wage inequality. The late 19th century found “primarily poor, uneducated single women” entering “the workforce, often as piece workers in manufacturing or as employees in other people’s homes,” and eventually leaving the workforce upon marriage, a trend which continued on its uphill rise until the late 1920s (Jacobs & Bahn, 2019, p.1). The latter half of this period saw more women involved in teaching and clerical positions, which led to the second major period of evolution in terms of women’s participation in the workforce. Throughout the 1930s until the 1950s, as a result of World War II and the subsequent demand for clerical workers, “married women entered the workforce in significant numbers, their rate rising from 10 percent to 25 percent... [and] while 8

percent of employed women in 1890 were married, that figure rose to 26 percent in 1930 and 47 percent by 1950” (Jacobs & Bahn, p.2). This period of time also saw an increase in women striving towards higher education. As “the growing availability of scheduled part-time employment” became increasingly notable and as “societal barriers, and in some case legal barriers, to married women continuing to work were dropping,” more and more women entered the workforce with determination to pursue higher roles (Jacobs & Bahn, p.2).

Then arose the “quiet revolution” – “the period from the late 1970s up to the very early 21st century... [where] the percentage of women of childbearing age with a child under the age of 1 in the workplace rose dramatically, from 20 percent to 62 percent... [additionally, women would] invest more in their education... thus preparing them for careers that gave them status closer to men in the workplace” (Jacobs & Bahn, p.3). Ultimately, as opportunities for women began to present themselves throughout the course of the 19th and 20th centuries, the gender wage gap evidently began to close due to rising levels of education and job status amongst women. But this gap has yet to close fully. After all, the notion of women’s involvement in the workforce is an unfortunately recent one. Only by the 1970s did “young women more commonly expect... that they would spend a substantial portion of their lives in the labor force, and they prepared for it [by] increasing their educational attainment and taking courses and college majors that better equipped them for careers as opposed to just jobs” (Yellen, 2020, p.1). Further setbacks, such as the fact that “in 1974, women gained, for the first time, the right to apply for credit in their own name without a male co-signer” contributed to the historical disadvantage contributing to this discrepancy (Yellen, p.1). As Janet Yellen states:

By the early 1990s, the labor force participation rate of prime working-age women—those between the ages of 25 and 54—reached just over 74 percent, compared



with roughly 93 percent for prime working-age men. By then, the share of women going into the traditional fields of teaching, nursing, social work, and clerical work declined, and more women were becoming doctors, lawyers, managers, and professors. As women increased their education and joined industries and occupations formerly dominated by men, the gap in earnings between women and men began to close significantly... But evidence suggests that barriers to women's continued progress remain (Yellen, p.1).

As such, it becomes clear that women's work has only recently seen an uptick in recognition of importance. Even now Yellen notes that "recent research has shown that although women now enter professional schools in numbers nearly equal to men, they are still substantially less likely to reach the highest echelons of their professions" (Yellen, p.1). So while historical narratives are partly to blame for the delayed start that women had to promote their career opportunities, it is undeniable that there are still structural barriers at play in the modern day which further contribute to these disparities. The question is, how far do those disparities extend today?

Sources from recent years gauge a baseline understanding of the modern-day standing of the gender wage gap and how it has shifted. "In 2019, the ratio of women's to men's median weekly full-time earnings was 81.5 percent, an increase of 0.4 percent since 2018,... leaving a wage gap of 18.5 percent" (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2020, p.1). This exists in comparison to the fact that "in 2021, the gender wage gap for full-time year-round workers was 16.3 percent (a gender earnings ratio of 83.7 percent)" (Hegewisch & Prewitt, 2022, p.1). In short, as of 2022, women earned 83 cents to the dollar. As such, reputable literature notes that the wage gap has seemingly been diminishing – in fact, Q2 of 2023 exhibited a 15.5 percent gender wage gap of full-time year-round workers – although this has been a gradual occurrence (rather than spurred by any particularly effective policy or institutional modifications – as will be discussed later), and can be viewed in Figure 3 in the appendix (Brown, 2023).

While 8.7% of men work in jobs with salaries that leave a family of three in near poverty, an exorbitant 17.9% of women work in jobs with salaries that leave a family of three near poverty (Shaw & Mariano, 2021). The consequences of unequal wages mean that the average working woman faces more barriers in efforts to provide for her family than the average working man. Additionally, while white women face undeniable systemic disadvantages in the workplace, the “median weekly earnings [of Latinas] in 2020 were just 58.7 percent of White men’s, and... 63.6 percent” for Black women (Hegewisch & Mefferd, p.6). Therefore, the equity issue of the gender pay gap reveals the importance of using an intersectional lens that can account for the interactions of gender and race effects.

Ultimately, the multidimensional nature of the persistence of the gender wage gap cannot be discounted – something that many historical efforts have either ignored or failed to adequately take into account. As researchers Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn assert:

Gender differences in occupations and industries, as well as differences in gender roles and the gender division of labor remain important, and research based on experimental evidence strongly suggests that discrimination cannot be discounted. Psychological attributes or noncognitive skills comprise one of the newer explanations for gender differences in outcomes (Blau & Kahn, 2016).

As such, it is necessary to form a thorough understanding of the extent of past initiatives that have been undertaken to combat the prevalence of the gender wage gap both nationally and locally, and particularly how their particular components led them to ultimate failure. By studying and discussing these outcomes, it may be possible to delineate recommendations that avoid these pitfalls and instead revolutionize the realm of economic inequalities.

## B. Chicago

The state of Illinois and the city of Chicago do not differ substantially from national trends: as of 2019, “the average woman in Illinois still only earns \$43,149 annually compared to her male counterpart making \$55,585, an earnings ratio of 78% and ranking 38th in the nation” (Klementowich, 2019, p.1). As issues arise at the national level, it is equally, if not more, important to consider them at state-wide and regional levels as well. The pandemic served to further exacerbate these issues, as “of the 22 million jobs lost nationally between February 2020 and April 2020, roughly 54% were jobs held by women. In Chicago, 10,957 fewer men were in the labor force compared to 36,092 fewer women in 2020 compared to 2019” (Mayor’s Women’s Advisory Council et al., 2022, p.4). While considering the scope of the gender wage gap and recent events which may have further amplified its effects, understanding how Chicago fits in context with the rest of the country is important to keep in mind regarding various proposals, initiatives, outlooks, and policies. A further insight into key actors and organizations related to this initiative can be explored in the appendix.

This work will go into further detail on prior efforts to achieve gender parity in the workplace and the core tenets of good and effective policy making – details which will structure the remainder of this piece and subsequent policy recommendations.

## **III. Literature Review**

The primary purpose of this review is to touch upon two central topics as a whole: (i) examine previous policy initiatives taken with the express purpose of ameliorating the gender wage gap and how they failed to do so and (ii) understand the principal tenets of good, effective, and long lasting policy making. By expanding upon these two topics, this literature review will

set down a foundation for the eventual concluding remarks I make as to suggested courses of regulatory action for Chicago to take.

#### A. Previous Policies Enacted to Combat the Pay Gap

From 1945 through today, efforts have been undertaken to attempt to resolve the critical issue of the gender pay gap. The first “piece of national legislation proposed to address gender pay inequality was the Women's Equal Pay Act of 1945,” which aimed to provide comparable compensation for comparable work, although this was never signed into law as Congress wanted to “ensure employers did not reduce wages to the detriment of men upon their return to the civilian workforce after World War II” (DuBose, 2017, p.447). Two decades later saw the proposition of the Equal Pay Act of 1963, which mandated that “no employer... shall discriminate... between employees on the basis of sex by paying wages to employees in such establishment at a rate less than the rate at which he pays wages to employees of the opposite sex” (DuBose, p.449). While this was eventually signed as an amendment onto the Fair Labor Standards Act, much work was still needed: on “the day President Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act, women earned 59 cents for every dollar earned by men in the United States” (DuBose, p.450).

The 1964 development of the Civil Rights Act: Title VII addressed equal treatment towards women in the workplace and created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for the purpose of prohibiting employers from “fail[ing] or refuse[ing] to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin” (DuBose, p.451). The *Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.* case was a monumental case in the history of women’s advancements in the workplace, as “the plaintiff

alleged that female supervisors were denied raises in a discriminatory manner as compared to male supervisors throughout her employment with Goodyear,” resulting in, “the court rul[ing] against Goodyear” (DuBose, 452). Each of these initiatives were key to addressing major discriminatory practices against women in the workplace, but none proved enough to catalyze change towards actual equality – rather, they simply discouraged outright inequity.

In addition to benefits in the workplace, the United States eventually passed the “Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993,” which required “covered employers to provide employees with job-protected, unpaid leave for qualified medical and family reasons,” including maternity leave (Propel HR, 2022, p.1). While not exclusively an act catered towards resolving the gender wage gap, this resulted in transformative changes for the success and capabilities of mothers and families within the workplace.

2016 saw the expansion of Executive Order 13665, which “was issued to require transparency concerning compensation among private entities doing business with the federal government and to prohibit discrimination against employees” – this expansion did not produce any noticeable change, with the overarching gender wage gap remaining at roughly 82% (just slightly below what it is even now) (DuBose, p.445). Overall, while many efforts have been put into place to resolve the gender wage gap at a federal level, nothing thus far has resulted in total equity.

Attitudes about household economics in the 1950s set up structured perceptions about the lack of necessity or importance of employing women, as “entities of national notoriety, such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Retail Merchants Association, justified the lower wages paid to women with explanations including the claim that women were more expensive to employ due to higher absenteeism and higher turnover rates” (DuBose, p.448).

These sentiments have unfortunately seemingly seeped into unconscious hiring practices and attitudes today, essentially rendering many policy initiatives following the 1950s ineffective in swaying the general public or organizational heads. DuBose introduces the criticism that perhaps “cultural gender norms also contribute to the unexplained portion of the gender wage gap,” in addition to general psychological workplace biases which have not been addressed by legislation (DuBose, p.459).

In tandem with this idea is the fact that attention must be paid to “to not look at gender and racial bias as two completely different issues,” as racial diversification in employee hiring is needed in addition to gender diversification in order to bode significant results (Connley, 2018, p.2). Paying attention to one does not necessitate the proliferation of the other, and as a result, companies are not seeing their wage gaps improve as a result of only focusing their attention on one or the other (rather than both simultaneously). In addition to the point of considering multiple dimensions contributing to wage inequalities, care is taken by many sources to take into account the importance of cost-effectiveness. David Anderson and colleagues opine that “closing a gender gap without regard to cost-effectiveness can be prohibitively expensive; however, only focusing on cost (as many managers do) creates more problems than it solves” – essentially stating that careful consideration of incentives, allocations, and a shift of actual pay rather than simply observing raw salary numbers, are ways to avoid falling into the common pitfall of failed initiatives towards equitable compensation practices (Anderson et al., 2019, p.1).

In accordance with arguments from these sources, common issues with policy making in regards to solving the gender wage gap revolve around three prevailing issues: (i) a lack of consideration towards psychological biases and common cognitive heuristics in the workplace which encourage attitudes that drive the wage gap, (ii) a hyper specific focus on gender

discrimination without considering other applicable factors such as race, socioeconomic status, education, and other intertwined issues (including an inability to focus on initiatives which can be taken towards male employees, such as a push to “incentivize fathers to take paternity leave”), and (iii) a disregard of the cost-effectiveness of various solutions, inhibiting their ability to last sustainably over a period of time adequately long enough to produce viable outcomes (Chicago Booth Review, 2016). However, it must be noted that bureaucracies function differently in various cities due to economic rigidity or even just plain feasibility given a state or city’s population and size, adding another layer of complexity to the already convoluted task of ‘solving’ the gender wage gap.

#### B. Elements of Good, Effective, and Long Lasting Policy Making

This necessitates a conversation on how to bring about policies that have powerful and feasible impacts on the issues which they aim to resolve. The first criterion of effective policy making is the critical nature of understanding the structure, workings, and formatting of a bureaucratic institution. Sociologist Max Weber discusses this in length, noting that the “three elements [that] constitute ‘bureaucratic authority’” are that “1. the regular activities required for [its] purposes... are distributed in a fixed way... 2. the authority to give the commands required for the discharge of... duties is... strictly delimited by rules concerning the coercive means... which may be placed at the disposal of the official,” and “3. methodical provision is made for the regular and continuous fulfillment of these duties” (Weber, 1984, p. 4). The key identifiers of a bureaucratic organization therefore are its hierarchical structure, emphasis on departmental specialization, strictly enforced and defined rules, and a strict division of authority. These organizations, ideally, “are based on rational, clearly-understood rules, and they are applied in a manner that is never influenced by interpersonal relationships or political alliances,” although

this rarely manifests in reality (Longley, 2022, p.3). Thus, Weber proposes elements of restructuring bureaucracies to help them adhere to these ideals, including solutions such as “merit-based hiring and promotion,” judgment by productivity, “a clearly defined set of goals” and division of labor, and “well-established formal rules that all people in the organization follow” (Longley, p.5). Importantly, this is much easier said than done – idealistic claims can set the stage for future policy initiatives, but their feasibility and verisimilitude vary greatly in practice.

Keeping this definition of bureaucracy in mind, this paper can move on to a conglomerate of other theorists’ ideas and proposals for efficacy in the realm of public policy. Some theories stem directly from this understanding of bureaucracy: Michael Lipsky offers the idea of utilizing “relatively high degrees of discretion” as well as “relative autonomy from organizational authority” – that is, making sure that policies utilize language in a way such that those who enact the policy can make decisions about how best to meet their goals (Lipsky, 1980, p.14). Similarly, Sarah Goodrum and colleagues set forth the thought of how a lack of transparency and communication in an organization (stemming from the “information lost within loosely coupled organizations [referred to] as ‘structural secrecy’”) must be combated in policy making because otherwise, “critically important details about a person or case remain unknown to other decision makers” (Goodrum et al., 2022, p.259). The furtive nature of information in a bureaucracy directly opposes the ideal of generally available knowledge amongst employees and supervisors alike. In order to make decisions and pass useful policies, open communication and easily accessible information are a must. The surreptitious nature inherent to bureaucracies hinders this possibility of transparency.



Other theories pertain more to the necessity of invoking actual reform rather than simply the *idea* of reform. Frederick M. Hess maintains that rather than simply proposing organizational reform proposals, legislators must take actual steps that go further than merely symbolizing the intent to change in a show of “symbolic reform,” given that “reform is the status quo” (Hess, 1999, p.5). Effectively, rather than wanting to *show* the intent to change, one must actually *heed* the intent to change.

The final necessary element is the longstanding patience required to achieve this outcome. Charles Payne emphasizes the importance of avoiding “studies that focus just on outcomes,” and rather focusing on those “done with fidelity and sustained over time” to create “significant positive effects” (Payne, 2008, p.161-165). That is, when considering suggested and recommended interventions for making policy changes to bureaucratic organizations, one must resist the urge to act with haste and instead await the intended outcomes to manifest (or perhaps not) in order to gauge whether or not the policy was actually effective. By rushing the analysis process, one does a disservice to the now inchoate policy as a whole by not allowing it to work in its totality. This also allows for time to note any onerous consequences that might arise as a result of the policy: Susan Himmelweit asserts that “unintended impacts on the... economy may limit how effective any policy can be,” and time must be taken to anticipate, observe, and mitigate those effects (Himmelweit, 2020, p.1). In a world that prioritizes the immediate impacts of any given political candidate or administration for re-election and poll popularity purposes, policies that require sufficient time to be adequately implemented tend not to hold much importance to government officials.

The critical nature of intersectionality also plays a key role in the determination and creation of governmental initiatives to close the gender wage gap. When approaching this

concept, it is necessary to consider the fact that gender wage disparities tend to be even more extreme for Black and Latina women, disabled women, LGBTQ+ women, and more – which makes attempting to solve the problem of inequitable compensation practices an extremely nuanced issue. As such, throughout the entirety of this piece, intersectionality is to be implied throughout analysis, recommendations, and discussions.

Figure 4 in the appendix from Payne summarizes arguments made by prolific figures in this field which have been discussed throughout the latter third of this literature review. Moving forward through this thesis, including my analysis of actions taken by various states and cities in correlation to the gender pay gap, shortcomings and successes of these past initiatives, and subsequent recommendations for future Chicago legislation to pursue, it is imperative to keep these theories in mind.

#### **IV. Methodology**

This paper uses a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the efficacy of past policy initiatives at both a state-wide and city-wide level to determine next-steps with the highest likelihood of actual success. The methodology used to present findings in this paper includes a content analysis of the relevant Executive Orders and policies in Chicago and its sister cities alongside a secondary analysis of published reports about their efficacy and published demographic data on compensation trends from the U.S. Census Bureau. I further evaluate the shortcomings and successes of various components of each initiative. Furthermore, I conduct a linear regression analysis at a state-wide and city-wide level. These are then tied back to Executive Order 2023:1 of the City of Chicago and from there, policy proposals are offered to result in actionable change.

I argue for transferability here on the basis of the similarities between each city. Demographic data in consideration included gender breakdown, racial breakdown, education levels, and socioeconomic divisions. Outcome variables are city-wide, state-wide, and nation-wide trends in the gender wage gap in the years following the implementation of each proposed piece of legislation.

In the linear regression section, I collected and compiled data from 2010 to 2022 on the median salary of men working full-time over the age of 15 in all 50 states and the median salary of women working full-time over the age of 15 in all 50 states, then calculated the percentage earnings of women compared to men for each state in each year. I also included a separate binary variable in this dataset indicating the year in which a policy similar to those explored in NYC and St. Louis was implemented and the years in which this policy was in effect. By compiling all of this information, I was able to run a wide-scale linear regression, regressing the calculated gender wage gap on policy implementation, controlling for year and state effects. The resulting coefficient for this regression indicated the impact of any given policy implementation on the gender wage gap, at a state-wide level. I also conducted an add-on regression to this following its results in order to gauge for lead and lag effects of the implementation of any given policy. Given the large scale of this regression analysis, I also conducted a similar one at a city-wide level, regressing the calculated gender wage gap of the city in question on policy implementation, controlling for year and city effects. Again, the resulting coefficient for this regression indicated the impact of any given policy implementation on the gender wage gap, at a city-wide level.

Finally, I conducted key stakeholder interviews with City of Chicago employees on their thoughts regarding closing the gender wage gap, efficacy of previous initiatives, and next-step

processes that were likely to occur. The individuals interviewed for this all worked in the City of Chicago's Office of the Mayor, particularly in the Gender-Based Violence team, where Chicago's Executive Order 2023:1 originated.

Every connection will consider both theory and practice: analysis within the context of tangible outcomes of other city implementations as well as in the context of what prominent authors in policy literature have discussed in their works. Ultimately, I analyze each city's methods and outcomes in isolation, and then use the learned effects of their strengths and weaknesses to propose a recommended course of action for Chicago.

#### **V. Executive Order No. 2023:1**

As a former Gender-Based Violence (GBV) policy intern at the City of Chicago's Office of the Mayor, I was assigned with writing an official Executive Order (EO) concerning gender pay equity in Chicago for the purpose of accelerating the process of closing Chicago's gender wage gap. With this goal in mind, I set to work on producing an initial document of the EO. In accordance with the City of Chicago's legal team, I underwent back-and-forth communication to fit legal guidelines and ensure statistical accuracy. After producing iterative drafts, to my delight, EO 2023:1 was soon thereafter signed by Mayor Lori Lightfoot on March 13th, 2023. The purpose of this EO was to make "efforts towards closing the gender and racial wage gap... available for public viewing in order to align with the City's values of equity and governmental transparency" (Lightfoot, 2023, p.2). This transparency takes the form of bi-annual audits containing compensation information of City of Chicago governmental employees, to be carried out by the "Commissioner of Human Resources, in partnership with the Executive Director of the Office of Budget Management and the Commissioner of Assets and Information Services" and "include at least a pay comparison by job title, bargaining unit, sex, race, and ethnicity"

(Lightfoot, p.2). These decisions are to be made after the completion of a Cumulative Impact Assessment exam for companies, which will thereby provide information on salary discrepancies. Within this overarching goal are promises made towards women of color: given that “women currently make up approximately 29 percent of the City of Chicago government workforce [and] Black women are paid 64 cents [and]... Latinas are paid 54 cents... for every dollar that a White man is paid for the same work” – a primary goal of making this information publicly available is to achieve the outcome of raising “the floor to ensure women, especially women of color, have access to quality jobs that support them and that allow them to support their families” (Lightfoot, p.1).

This EO fits into Chicago’s overall strategy to reduce the wage gap by expanding upon past initiatives such as “We Will Chicago [and] the 2022 Climate Action Plan” (Mayor’s Press Office, 2023, p.1). We Will Chicago, implemented in February of 2023, asserted “pillar goals and objectives... created by research teams that identified Chicago’s most pressing needs... Each goal includ[ing] multiple objectives to realize progress over time, as well as baseline data on social, health, and economic inequities to monitor throughout implementation” (We Will Chicago, 2023, p.1). The 2022 Climate Action Plan consisted of “updated climate goals... designed to reduce carbon emissions while also increasing household savings, advancing environmental justice, and improving community health” (2022 Climate Action Plan, 2022, p.1). While both of these plans were dedicated towards tackling equity-based issues in Chicago, EO 2023:1 explicitly addresses the issue of the gender wage gap, specifically mentioning enterprises and efforts to undertake in that regard. As the city continues to maintain its policy on equity and inclusion, there will likely be more initiatives addressing specific issues – something which EO 2023:1 seems to be setting a framework for.

Importantly, data pertaining to this EO's impacts (including future spin-off policies) will not be known for quite some time – therefore, I aim to predict its trajectory and any mitigating political strategies that could be enacted if needed by using examples of similar policy initiatives in St. Louis, New York City, and Mississippi, and later by analyzing similar policy initiatives in all 50 states and a select few cities.

## **VI. Overview of Parallel Sister City Policy Implementations**

For the following sister cities chosen to be of comparable analysis metrics to Chicago, similar racial population demographics, similar percentages of women making up the civilian labor force, and similar city-wide executive orders pertaining to gender pay equity were key deciding factors. Ultimately, I chose St. Louis and New York City based on these facets rather than their geographic location or population size. For reference, as of April 2021, of Chicago's population of 2,746,388, 51.2% were female, 29.2% were Black or African-American, 28.7% were Hispanic or Latino, 41.7% of those aged 25+ had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 63.4% of those in the civilian labor force were females aged 16+ (United States Census Bureau, 2022). Furthermore, the percentage of the full-time Chicago labor force consisting of Black women over the past 12 months was approximately 5.1% (United States Census Bureau, 2023).

### **A. St. Louis, MO**

St. Louis, Missouri was chosen as one of Chicago's notable sister cities due to similarities regarding its population's gender demographics, and percentage of women in the labor force. Of St. Louis's population of 286,578 – as of July 2022 – 51.3% were female, 44.8% were Black or African-American, and 66.2% of those in the civilian labor force were females aged 16+ (United States Census Bureau, 2021). The percentage of the full-time St. Louis labor force consisting of

Black women over the past 12 months was approximately 6.7% (United States Census Bureau, 2023).

I will be analyzing St. Louis's Ordinance No. #15-09, signed by Governor Jay Nixon in 2015. This order aimed to combat the "gender wage gap... in Missouri, resulting in women not receiving equal pay for equal work... across all age ranges, racial groups, ethnic groups, and educational training levels" (Nixon, 2015, p.1). This ordinance called for the "development of Pay Equity Best Practices Guidelines... to help identify and address gender wage gaps in Missouri's public and private sectors" (Nixon, 2015, p.1). This ordinance was passed at a state-wide level with a focus on gender equity.

#### B. New York City, NY

New York City, New York (NYC) was also chosen as a notable sister city due to similarities regarding its population's racial and gender demographics, percentage of women in the labor force, and education levels. Of NYC's population of 8,804,190 – as of April 2021 – 52% were female, 28.9% were Hispanic or Latino, 23.4% were Black or African-American, 39.6% of those aged 25+ had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 59% of those in the civilian labor force were females aged 16+ (United States Census Bureau, 2022). The percentage of the full-time New York City labor force consisting of Black women over the past 12 months was approximately 9.7% (United States Census Bureau, 2023).

I will be analyzing NYC's Executive Order 84 (EO 84) signed by Mayor Bill de Blasio in 2021. This EO asserted the establishment of "a Cabinet on Pay Equity" (De Blasio, 2021, p.1). This newly founded cabinet holds the power and responsibility to provide "an annual analysis of pay and employment equity in public employment; collaborate with and support the Department of Citywide Administrative Services in the development and implementation of... equity action

plans to address any inequitable practices that may be found to exist; [and] develop recommendations” (De Blasio, 2021, p.1).

## **VII. Similarities and Differences Between Sister City Policies**

With a brief understanding of each of these sister cities and their respective policies, this paper now delves into key similarities between each policy initiative to each other as well as to Chicago to better understand the unique impacts of each one. It is important to understand the connections of each policy to Chicago’s EO 2023:1’s main goal of mandating “a report... includ[ing] at least a pay comparison by job title, bargaining unit, sex, race, and ethnicity” for the purpose of “equity and governmental transparency” (Lightfoot, 2023, p.2). Consideration is given to whether these following policies include or leave out the elements of good policy making outlined in the literature review section.

### **A. Similarities**

St. Louis’s Ordinance #15-09 emphasizes the value of data publication and transparency: its primary goal is to ensure that organizations are able “re-evaluate their current compensation system in order to create an employment structure that promotes equal pay for equal work, and to ensure transparency concerning organizational compensation policies” (Nixon, 2015, p.2). This is critical to its subsequent mandates which work “to identify and address the gender wage gap” in Missouri state overall (Nixon, 2015, p.2). Ordinance #15-09 shares one crucial similarity to Chicago’s EO 2023:1 – prioritizing initiatives to “promote and ensure pay transparency” as a first step in acknowledging and confronting the ever-present wage gap for women in Missouri (Erickson, 2015, p.14).



NYC's EO 84 also takes this notion of data publication seriously. A significant component of this bill requires publicly available "pay and employment equity in public employment" for further analysis (De Blasio, 2021, p.1). With this data, the City intends to identify and "address any inequitable practices that may be found to exist" among women and people of color in NYC's public employment system (De Blasio, 2021, p.1). Therefore, one must note the key fact that all three relevant policies share an emphasis on the collection and subsequent publication of pure data about compensation information amongst city employees. After an understanding of the similarities between policies, this paper will explore the key differences between these three initiatives.

### B. Differences

St. Louis's Ordinance #15-09 operates at a much grander scale than Chicago's EO 2023:1, working as a statewide ordinance for Missouri as a whole. In this regard, Ordinance #15-09 also operates on a larger scale in the sense that it addresses both "public and private sectors" with its mandates and suggestions (Nixon, 2015, p.2). EO 2023:1 instead only addresses compensation information of public City employees. The other prominent difference between these two ordinances is Ordinance #15-09's emphasis on further action past the publication of data. The bulk of Ordinance #15-09 centers on the creation of "preliminary guidelines and, eventually,... Pay Equity Best Practices Guidelines... to identify and address any gender wage gap in order to ensure that all Missourians receive equal pay for equal work" (Nixon, 2015, p.2). These Best Practice Guidelines take measurable steps to address these disparities in contrast to Chicago's EO 2023:1, which mandates the publication of data for public viewing but not any further actions towards achieving gender pay equity. Therefore, there seem to be two key differences between EO 2023:1 and Ordinance #15-09: Ordinance #15-09 operates on a grander

scale both in the sense of public and private sectors as well as statewide versus citywide mandates, and Ordinance #15-09 pursues the development of further actionable measures using publicly available data.

Finally, this paper tackles the primary differences between NYC's EO 84 and Chicago's EO 2023:1. Much like Ordinance #15-09, EO 84 emphasizes the importance of actionable next steps using the publication of compensation information by establishing a Cabinet on Pay Equity. This Cabinet holds the goals and responsibilities of advising "the Mayor's Office... [using the] annual analysis of pay and employment equity in public employment," collaborating with agencies "to address any inequitable practices," and subsequently developing "recommendations for consideration to the Mayor" regarding gender pay discrepancies in the public NYC workforce (De Blasio, 2021, p.1). Therefore, NYC is making compensation information publicly available for transparency purposes with the further step of intentional action. While EO 84 is arguably the most similar to Chicago's EO 2023:1, it still holds the significant difference of mandating the analysis of wage inequity information and identification through the concrete establishment of a department with vested powers necessary to begin combating gender-based pay inequity in NYC.

Additionally, the size of New York City is important to consider in relation to St. Louis and Chicago. Having a population of roughly 8 million (5.5 million more than Chicago and 7 million more than St. Louis), the elements of bureaucracy which may have hindered the promotion of each policy were likely much larger factors at play in NYC's implementation. Given the size of the city, NYC inherently has to undergo a more bureaucratic process with their governmental policy initiatives, and therefore have more layers to parse when attempting to implement effective and feasible initiatives.

There are two primary parts of the literature review section coming into play here: bureaucratic complexities and symbolic reform. The vastness and publicity of these initiatives were necessary to their completion, and perhaps even just an inherent part of policy making in the modern day. However, the dangers associated with mass publication of efforts striving towards equity must be noted – particularly the danger that after the initial distribution of media and symbolism that the government is *willing* to take actions to achieve change, the follow-through of these initiatives may not necessarily play out with full effort or capacities. While it is too early in this paper to draw conclusions about the validity and efficacy of these policy initiatives, one can note these factors and begin to understand the thought that Chicago's policies could exhibit success if these fatal pitfalls are avoided.

## **VIII. Results and Analysis**

The following sections focus on four primary themes: the outcomes of each policy in NYC and St. Louis (including both shortcomings and successes), a counterfactual analysis of Mississippi (which lacks any gender-based pay equity legislation as of 2022), a linear regression analysis of curated state-wide and city-wide data, and connections back to Chicago. An important question to consider throughout this piece is how success and the resolution of the gender wage gap are defined. For the purposes of this paper, solving the wage gap focuses primarily on achieving quantitatively equitable numbers between male and female salaries. While this excludes some qualitative information, such as treatment in the workplace and gender-based employment segregation, this paper is interested in identifying elements that are potentially accelerating or hindering progress towards this ideal.

## A. Policy Outcomes and Potential Implementation Successes and Shortcomings

### 1. *St. Louis, MO*

In the 6 years following the implementation of Ordinance #15-09, reports from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics demonstrate that the gender wage gap in Missouri diminished from female full-time salary workers only earning 81% of the median weekly earnings of male full-time salary workers in 2015 to 83.4% in 2021 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). Ordinance #15-09 therefore seemingly had a slightly positive impact on the gender wage gap in Missouri, although further analysis must be conducted given that other contributing factors may have resulted in this outcome rather than this policy itself – one cannot assume that it was the sole causal factor of this minimal increase.

However, it must be noted that very few additional policies regarding equitable pay practices have gone forward in Missouri following the signing of Ordinance #15-09. It is then critical to dive into the specifics of why this ordinance in particular was perhaps successful in its implementation. There are three primary arguments for this: combating structural looseness, an intermediary level of both loose and tight coupling, and immediate feasibility.

Structural looseness is defined as autonomy when an individual “works alone, . . . relatively hidden from colleagues and superiors, so that he has a broad discretionary jurisdiction within the boundaries of his” organization (Bidwell, [1965] 2001, p.4). Structural looseness plays a role in policy shortcomings when communication between agencies is unclear or incomplete. This information isolation – or siloing – is directly tackled in Ordinance #15-09 by its direct call for “all Executive Branch agencies, as well as . . . all private employers” to work in tandem to “review and determine how the practices, contained in the preliminary guidelines and, eventually, the Pay Equity Best Practices Guidelines, can be utilized by their agency or business”

(Nixon, 2015, p.1). This cooperative practice directly ties the separate entities of government, private agencies, and employees together in the fight against gender wage discrepancies. By providing these Best Practices Guidelines, the aforementioned 'broad discretion' is slightly more structured, allowing for a more standardized and uniform approach to the implementation that this ordinance is calling for.

Also contributing to the apparent success of Ordinance #15-09 is the concept of coupling. Authors Goodrum et al. cite Bidwell's argument that "in a loosely coupled organization, the parts are minimally interdependent of each other for everyday functioning such that a problem in one part does not typically disrupt work in another part" (Goodrum et al., 2022, p.259). The countering definition states that "in a tightly coupled organization, the match between policies and procedures is strong and is maintained through formal bureaucratic controls and leaders' close oversight" (Goodrum et al., 2022, p.259). Neither of these ideas are beneficial in their extremes: rather, arguments are made that an intermediate amount of both should be enacted in order to achieve maximized results. Ordinance #15-09 displays exactly that: private employers are encouraged to review and implement the recommended Best Practices Guidelines provided as an overview by statewide research, but "management" also has the power to "conduct broad, organization-wide pay equity audits, or more focused audits" in order to gauge best practices specific to their institution (Erickson, 2015, p.6). With this diversity in structural organization, this ordinance promotes tight coupling in the sense of governmental action items but simultaneously promotes loose coupling in the sense of heightened discretionary practices by individual private entities and employers. This balance provides an equilibrium between overarching guidelines and individual judgment (and also allows for the previously discussed

critical concept of communication with employees), resulting in the balanced success of this ordinance amongst the many entities which it includes.

Finally, the notion of feasibility strengthens the ordinance's implementation. Behavioral studies have shown "that overstretched goals [meaning goals outside of near achievability] can be counterproductive, as they do more harm than good" (Alammyan, 2021, p.1). This system of "how outcomes are perceived and experienced, and how decisions are made and subsequently evaluated" plays a huge role in the eventual success of any goal, whether at the personal or organizational level (Thaler, 1999, p.183). The key difference between Missouri's Ordinance #15-09 and NYC's EO 84 is the former's immediate feasibility. NYC attempts to tackle the prevalent issue of race-based pay discrepancies at a grand scale with the creation of a cabinet, but fails to task it with tangible responsibilities, deliverables, and deadlines which makes its goals appear more abstract. Missouri instead takes a very intentional approach with the guidelines of its ordinance. By utilizing publicized data to create Best Practices Guidelines, rather than creating a department with vague roles and responsibilities (and doing nothing else to ensure measurable impact), this policy shows feasible actions being taken toward diminishing the gender pay gap. This smaller goal, which clearly outlines intended future impacts, is easily understandable and therefore easily digestible.

Additionally in the realm of the the apparently successful implementation of St. Louis's Ordinance #15-09 lies the critical baseline notion of data transparency: Best and Dunlap recommend that to promote continuous improvement, policymakers should "compile and assess information on data collection, data systems, data use, and data sharing" (Best & Dunlap, 2014, p.5). This notion holds for the success of both noted policies (St. Louis and NYC), as both share

this emphasis on data transparency and therefore follow these guidelines for successful outcomes.

This is not to say that St. Louis's Ordinance #15-08 was perfectly executed and without any strategic implementation oversights. In fact, far from it. For the purpose of this discussion, however, the question of this policy's shortcomings will need to be discussed later.

## 2. *New York City, NY*

Following the implementation of NYC's EO 84, the city's workforce also saw an apparent benefit over the two subsequent years, although it must be noted that this is a small period of time so these shifts may be temporary. In the years prior to its implementation, NYC saw a "women's-to-men's earnings ratio of... 83.8 percent in 2019 [and]... 84.5 percent" in 2020 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). In 2021, when EO 84 was introduced, white "women in New York earned 88 cents for every dollar earned by men" and "Black or African American women [were] paid about 68 cents on the dollar while Hispanic and Latina women [were] paid only 63 cents on the dollar" (Hochul, 2023). In 2022, this figure increased to white women earning "90 cents for every \$1 earned by men" (Hu, 2023). Some contextual information that must be included within subsequent analysis is that "New York's gender wage gap is the second smallest in the United States" (Hochul, 2023, p.1). Therefore, the differences in this value between years must be treated with more care than figures with larger thresholds, such as those noted in Missouri.

It must also be noted that NYC's EO 84 demonstrates the political successes mentioned in the St. Louis success section of Best and Dunlap's notion of the importance of data transparency for good public policy. Despite the short timespan following EO 84's

implementation, it would appear that it had a positive impact on the gender wage gap discrepancy in NYC at first glance.

However, NYC's EO 84 showed certain shortcomings and still has elements of implementation imperfections. De Blasio notes that the purpose of the Pay Equity Cabinet is to “undertake any... duties deemed necessary by the Mayor to eliminate racial and gender pay gaps across the City's workforce” (De Blasio, 2021, p.1). This is a large and intangible concept: by adding few specific guidelines pertaining to the powers and duties of the Cabinet to achieve this end goal, EO 84 fails to outline a set of understandable actions to reach attainable outcomes. Additionally lies the notion of bureaucracy: Max Weber notes key elements of bureaucratic institutions, particularly that the bureaucratic nature of a government inherently calls for “a discharge of business according to calculable rules and ‘without regard for persons’” (Weber, 1946-1973, p.12). This ‘cold’ nature is more or less ignored in EO 84: the assumption that the establishment of the Pay Equity Cabinet and its collaboration with the Mayor will inherently result in more equitable practices is too large of a leap to be made, especially given the complex nature of public administration and employment. EO 84 also prioritizes achieving numerous outcomes at once rather than focusing on the quality of recommended policy procedures. While intersectionality has been prioritized and remains important to future policy recommendations, emphasis on efficacy without regard for quality can lead to impractical and poorly thought-out policies. In Elizabeth Popp Berman's work *Thinking Like an Economist*, she notes the historical trend of policymakers “ma[king] efficiency the main criterion for determining... quality” in attempts to maximize any “cost-benefit analysis” performed on the policy initiative itself (Berman, 2022, p.155). By establishing a Pay Equity Cabinet including cooperation from “all agencies of the City of New York,” attempting to “address any” and all “inequitable practices,”



EO 84 emphasized political quantity and the appearance of efficiency over actual quality policy procedure (De Blasio, 2021, p.1). These large and nonspecific mandates do not inherently tackle any one area of the policy issue at hand: instead of focusing on smaller parts of compensation reform, EO 84 created a group bound to attract publicity and discussion without the need for particularly informed tasks or responsibilities.

Despite these implementation-based oversights, EO 84 seems to have had a positive outcome on NYC's gender pay gap, although this is taken with extra consideration given the short timespan of analysis.

#### B. The Counterfactual

Within the world of policy, events typically do not have one sole causal factor. It would therefore be incomplete to end this analysis with these two cities which have implemented similar policies to EO 2023:1 and assume that those are the sole elements leading to the slightly ameliorated gender wage gap over the past few years. Perhaps this is simply an instance of reversion to the mean, where these outcomes would have occurred regardless of the decision to implement these policies.

In order to resolve this debate, ideally one could observe a reality where every other factor remained the same other than the implementation of each of these policies, observing what would have occurred in this scenario. However, this is the fundamental problem of causal inference: one cannot observe the outcome where these policies were not implemented while simultaneously observing the outcome where these policies *were* implemented. To make up for this impossibility in the world of causality and correlation observations, one could look at a counterfactual – a city with similarities to Chicago which never implemented any policy in this regard. Ideally, in observing this ‘counterfactual’ of sorts, further contributions can be made

towards the primary claim and analysis of this paper. If the counterfactual notes an increased or stagnant gender wage gap, there is more reason to believe that the policies in question were effective in their own regard. If the counterfactual notes a decreased gender wage gap – as observed in the treatment cities – then some doubt is cast over whether the policies contributed to a decreased gender wage gap or if this outcome was due to external factors.

Unfortunately for the sake of this study (but fortunately for the sake of progressive policy), not many examples of cities in the United States which have not passed any policies pertaining to the gender wage gap exist.

However, the state of Mississippi is notoriously regarded as “being the last state in the nation to not have either an equal pay law or a non-discrimination statute that impacts employment,” only passing a relatively low-effort policy dubbed the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act, effective July 1, 2022 (McGregor, 2022). Experts find it troubling in the sense that it “only protects workers against sex discrimination in pay, is otherwise narrower than the federal protections available to workers in Mississippi and provides broad defenses to employers” – or rather, that it offers little additional policy efforts compared to already-existing national federal guidelines (U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission, n.d., p.1). Essentially, many experts say that implementing this bill is as good as implementing nothing at all.

For this reason, Mississippi will be used as a counterfactual of sorts – while it is certainly imperfect in regards to its policy action history, it is one of the few real-life examples which can tangibly be connected to the point at hand here.

The use of an extreme case for a counterfactual is not necessarily crucial to this realm of analysis. In fact, it could be seen as relatively incomparable to the question at hand. I justify the use of an extreme counterfactual in this portion of my analysis not as a standalone method of

analysis, but rather a precursor to the following section. While I do feel that the subsequent linear regression section provides more insight into the gender wage gaps trends over time in major American cities, even a barebones counterfactual can help form a sense of intuition when dealing with a problem as large, widescale, intersectional, and complex as the gender wage gap. For this reason, I conduct a minimal study of a ‘counterfactual’ example, observing apparent results but diving more into following linear timetables than these conclusions.

With a female population of 51.4%, Mississippi somewhat compares to NYC’s female population of 51.9% and to St. Louis’s female population of 51.4% (United States Census Bureau, 2022). Though its racial demographics somewhat differ – Mississippi’s White population of 58.8% counters NYC and St. Louis’s White populations of 37.5% and 46.3%, respectively – for a zoomed-out analysis, Mississippi will be considered for counterfactual purposes (United States Census Bureau, 2022). In 2019, Mississippi observed that women in the state earned approximately 75 cents for every dollar a man earned, or a wage gap of 75% (National Women’s Law Center, 2020). By 2023, this number changed to a “22.6% difference between the earnings,” of men and women, translating to women’s earnings being roughly 77.4% of men’s, or a 2.4% difference (Dent, 2022). Recall that from 2019 to 2023, NYC’s gender wage gap changed from 83.8% to 90% (a 6.2% difference), and St. Louis’s gender wage gap changed from 81% to 83.4% (a 2.4% difference).

In the example of this counterfactual, in a state where little to no action was taken to actively combat the gender wage disparity amongst its workers, results were exactly the same as the outcome of St. Louis’s implementation of Ordinance #15-08 but did not achieve as much as the outcome of New York City’s EO 84. The implications of this are that the policies which have been implemented have actually had very little impact on the closing of the gender wage gap –

and that in an area where no policy intervention was carried out, comparable results were achieved as those in areas where seemingly significant policy interventions were implemented. NYC's seeming policy successes (a 6.2% difference as opposed to Mississippi's 2.4% difference) could be attributed to a variety of factors, which will be discussed later on in this piece.

### C. Linear Regression Analysis

It must be noted that this counterfactual is in no way a perfect method of analyzing the effect of policy initiatives on the gender wage gap. However, I included it in the final version of this analysis paper because it provides a somewhat larger-level overview to the problem at hand in a more digestible way. There also exists the possibility of introducing a linear regression in order to study policy impacts – more specifically, observing the gender wage gap percentage in numerous cities and/or states over time (and with the implementation of more policies and ordinances related to pay equity). While this is a more quantitatively rigorous method of analysis – especially in comparison to the more qualitative outlook of the counterfactual section – it provides a valuable insight into the objective efficacy of past policy initiatives and efforts. This regression took the form of a differences-in-differences analysis, which compares a treatment group to a control group and observes and compares the changes in outcomes for each group over time in relation to each other.

#### *1. State-Wide Regression*

In the first linear regression, I collected data from all 50 states and calculated the gender wage gap percentage from 2010 to 2022 in each state. In addition to this, I added an additional variable for each state – a binary variable exhibiting when each state implemented an executive order, ordinance, bill, or updated policy related to ameliorating gender wage discrepancies. An

example of this is denoted in Figure 5 in the Appendix, which shows the collected and calculated data from the state of Alaska from 2010 to 2022. Here, the year column indicates the year of data figures, nc indicates the implementation of a policy, gwg indicates women's earnings as a percentage of men's for that year in that state for all full-time workers over the age of 15 years old, and policy indicates when the policy took effect. Examples of policies considered in the state-level analysis included Louisiana's Equal Pay for Women Act, effective in 2014, and Minnesota's Equal Pay for Equal Work Law effective in 2017. Policies such as these were collected for all 50 states, compiled into a database, and wage gap statistics were found for each year in each state.

After collecting this data for every state over this time period, I regressed the gender wage gap (gwg) on the time of policy implementation (nc) while controlling for state and year effects. The dependent variable in this regression equation was the percent difference of earnings between men and women – or the gender wage gap (gwg) column as a whole. I regressed this on the actual implementation of a given policy for that state – that is, the regression aimed to understand if the implementation of a given policy in a state had any tangible impact on the gender wage gap for the years following the policy's birth. The idea with this regression was to note the impacts of policy initiatives (within the realm of salary history bans, equity cabinet establishments, and best practice guideline creations) on women's earnings as a percent of men's. If the regression found a significantly positive correlation between the two (indicating that implementing these policies significantly increased women's earnings as a percent of men's), then further analysis would aim to understand why these policies have been successful and how they can be taken one step further to accelerate the path towards equitable salary practices. If the regression found an insignificant, near-zero, or negative relationship between the two (indicating

that implementing these policies either did not significantly increase women's earnings as a percent of men's, or actually even decreased them), then more work would have to be done to understand why current policy initiatives have failed to achieve worthwhile results and how future efforts could shift accordingly.

The results of this analysis can be seen in Figure 6 in the Appendix section, which demonstrates a policy coefficient of 0.3143795 – meaning that on average, the implementation of a policy in any particular state caused about a 0.3 percentage point increase in women's earnings as a percentage of men's. This is certainly troubling, as this very small figure seems to indicate that the recent implementation of bills similar to those in NYC and St. Louis has had a negligible effect on the gender wage gap even at a state-wide level. Instead, what this seems to imply is that the gender wage gap, which has been slowly but gradually approaching parity over the years, has not achieved this trend due to any outstanding efforts made on a governmental level, but rather is just a time trend that has not seen significant improvements from its natural course of action.

To rule out the possibility of the negligibility stemming from inadequate time for implementation and effect, I approached the question of whether or not there was a lag on the policies – or rather, if the effects of the policy would not show up until 1 to 2 years later, once it had time to produce tangible results. By testing the impact of the policies with a lag time of 1 year and 2 years, I ran another regression to test for this possibility. The results for these tests can be seen in Figure 7. However, these results showed similarly negligible results, with the impact of the policy after 1 year actually being -0.0099 and the impact of the policy after 2 years being 0.534. We therefore conclude that, at least at a state level, the implementation of recent policies has had very little impact on actual gender wage gap statistics, and are therefore mostly ineffective in their aims.

## 2. *City-Wide Regression*

The question then comes to mind of whether or not the slow decrease of the gender wage gap has been a result of policy initiatives at all, or simply a time trend that will eventually achieve equity regardless of external efforts. In order to approach this question, I decided to take a slightly narrower look at the gender wage gap trends, using the same methodology in the linear regression above but at a city level. For this regression, I collected data on 9 cities, each of which passed a policy on pay equity between the years of 2014 and 2022 (Houston: 2014, St. Louis: 2015, San Francisco: 2016, Philadelphia: 2017, Chicago: 2018, Cincinnati: 2019, Detroit: 2020, New York City: 2021). Further information on the specificities of each bill can be found in the Appendix section, but each bill is in some way related to the NYC, St. Louis, and Chicago policies which have been previously discussed. Again, I included a binary variable for each state indicating when the policy was implemented. An example of the layout of this data can be seen in Figure 8 in the Appendix section.

After collecting this data for each city from 2014 to 2022, I regressed the gender wage gap (GWG) on the time of policy implementation (Policy\_Implemented) while controlling for state and year effects. Again, the goals of this regression were to determine if there existed a significant correlation between the act of implementing a policy geared towards gender pay equity and an actual increase in women's earnings as a percent of men's (or a decrease in the gender wage gap). While I had a suspicion that the city-wide analysis would follow the same trend of insignificance as the state-wide analysis, I wanted to collect tangible data to ensure that my hypothesis was correct. The results of this analysis can be seen in Figure 9 in the Appendix section, which demonstrates a policy coefficient of 0.567 – meaning that on average, the implementation of a policy in any particular city caused about a 0.6 percentage point increase in

women's earnings as a percentage of men's. Yet again the regression yields a very small – and statistically insignificant – figure that seems to indicate that past initiatives have had very few, if any, effects on the overall trend of the gender wage gap over time at a city-wide level. In an ultimate outlook of both regression analyses, the results exhibited that there has been little to no impact derived from policy efforts created for the purpose of gender pay equity thus far. In fact, the data seems to show that virtually no policy has had any tangible impact on the pay discrepancy to date. This is a daunting thought which potentially requires future policymakers to consider even more radical measures to accelerate the rate of the closing of the gender wage gap – a notion which I will expand upon further in the following section.

It is important to note that this form of analysis also contains many limitations, such as assumptions pertaining to parallel trends and some form of combining different policies in different cities to observe similar results. The parallel trends assumption is inherent to a differences-in-differences analysis, and necessitates that for the time in which no policy was implemented for some cities, the difference between these cities and those which did implement efforts in earlier years is constant over time. This is also known as the equal trends assumption. Additionally, a small dataset for a differences-in-differences analysis can lead to misleading statistical outputs. Indeed, for the analysis of city-wide policies, one must note that the estimates are likely somewhat imprecise due to the number of categories being limited to 8 cities. Because of this, p-values and estimated standard errors are not as reliable as those seen in the state-wide levels. While the scope of these regressions are perhaps too large to even consider at such a minute level, they provide a clear look into a more quantitative analysis of the policy efforts in question.



These initiatives, even at a city-wide level, have had very few impacts on gender wage gap trends over the past 8 to 9 years. Perhaps, then, one could arrive at the claim that much more radical initiatives must be undertaken in order to make a significant change in the current standing of the gender wage gap, or else simply wait out the seemingly positive trend until these discrepancies – theoretically and hopefully – resolve themselves. But how do these findings relate back to the City of Chicago specifically?

#### D. Connections to Chicago

Chicago's EO 2023:1 is not as far into development as these policies – the primary reason for this analysis is to analyze these policies which are further into the implementation stage to gauge potentially beneficial next steps for Chicago. Ordinance #15-09 shows the importance of communication and small steps in the world of public policy – good policy entails measurable results which are possible to be envisioned in both the short- and long-term. It also demonstrates the importance of larger-scale policies having a potential for impact. NYC furthers this argument of intentional policy-making through the nature of its developed cabinet.

But my earlier analysis of the state of Mississippi in comparison to St. Louis decreases confidence in the methodology behind the city's ordinance. Additionally, my data analysis through linear regressions showed the ultimate ineffectiveness of these policy types. So what exactly about Ordinance #15-09 – and its sister policies – resulted in its ineffectiveness? It is now that the previously deferred question of this policy's shortcomings can be discussed.

Very few additional policy initiatives with the goal of addressing gender-based and racial wage discrepancies followed the implementation of Ordinance #15-09. In 2019, Kansas City's City Council passed Ordinance No. 190380, which aimed to “generally prohibit... employers

from inquiring about an applicant's salary history" (Hemenway & Long, 2019, p.1). Besides this and other basic statewide human rights policies, Missouri has not even attempted performative action. As brought up in Charles Payne's work *So Much Reform, So Little Change*, in many instances with the need for "fundamental reform... the support offered is 'too thin and too superficial'... [and] th[is] lack of a support structure [is] deliberate to some degree" (Payne, 2008, 166). This phenomenon is clear here: the marked lack of action toward equitable pay for women in the workforce can theoretically be attributed to intentional negligence. While Missouri's gender wage gap has improved in years following the implementation of Ordinance #15-09, this change has not been significant enough to justify halting all political action toward achieving equitable gender compensation strategies by Missouri policymakers.

Applying these lessons to the Chicago context requires an analysis of policy implications, accounting for inherent differences between various cities and populations as well as time frames. It is first and foremost important to note that perhaps NYC's strategies proved slightly more effective, and therefore more attention should be paid towards its policy actions than St. Louis's. As I continue into the next section leading up to my ultimate policy recommendations, one must keep in mind the knowledge that Ordinance #15-08 proves to be weaker than EO 84's approach to tackling the gargantuan problem of inequality amongst women in the workspace.

In addition to the collected data and analysis above, personal testaments have also been collected from three representatives from the City of Chicago's Office of the Mayor who were directly involved in the creation of EO 2023:1. This 'insider' perspective is interesting and valuable to note before diving into data-based policy recommendations. These individuals are Darci Flynn, a noted stakeholder and director of the GBV taskforce; as well as Arya Nagraj and

Anushka Somani, previous GBV policy interns under Flynn's management in addition to myself during the same time when I wrote EO 2023:1 for publication.

The primary element of interest here was knowledge and understanding of prominent barriers to achieving equitable payment for women in the workplace. The intersectional nature of gender-based discrimination, such as “(1) the persistence of gendered stereotypes and patriarchal thinking... [causing individuals] in leadership roles to undervalue women's contributions in the workplace, (2) the lack of childcare options provided by employers and the government, disadvantaging mothers in the job market, and (3) the lack of pay transparency” were noted by Nagraj as three primary obstacles to address in policy practices. In addition to these systemic issues also lies sociocultural issues: Somani mentioned that “cultural challenges and norms” were noted to play a significant role in the persistence of the gender wage gap due to the subsequent need “to change people’s perceptions and understandings of the problems they observe”. Flynn took this from a more legal and operational standpoint, stating that “mandates don’t work, and people want mandates... [meaning] instead you have to do the laborious work of getting businesses to transform their thinking around this”. Additionally, she remarked that “we still have societal barriers as to why women are not promoted because the higher up you go, there’s more responsibility and leadership... and you have the ‘mom tax’ as I call it, [meaning] we don’t have that upper mobility”.

Similarly, all three expanded upon thoughts on Chicago’s best possible next steps following EO 2023:1. Nagraj stressed the importance of policies promoting “(1) pay and raise transparency... (2) supporting women's education and training, which would help women break through in traditionally male-dominated fields, and (3) guarantee[d] maternity protections”. Somani emphasized the benefits of “helping with childcare costs” along with “investing in

programs/businesses/educational programs that encourage working women”. Flynn acknowledged that the upcoming mayoral administration intends “to socialize [the idea of]...disparities from a gender wage gap as well as a racial wage gap, and the intersection of those 2 identities... with the new administration to say ‘we actually need to do this audit now and be prepared to be transparent about findings and also to act on findings’”.

Furthermore, Flynn posits that the upcoming administration is “working on an idea” related to “the Boston Women’s Workforce Council,” which they intend to “take... one step further... [by] collect[ing] data on wages and pay wages... to demonstrate to sectors that these are ways in which [they] improve [their] workplaces, retain talent,... [and] put pressure on businesses to really start to make these changes, particularly bringing businesses who are already doing it well”. All of this goes to show the marked importance of next step actions – the upcoming mayor is already considering these action items and deliverables, and Flynn predicts that “the governor is going to sign a pay transparency bill which requires job descriptions to have a pay range” and notes the importance of “starting to move the needle and really call[ing] out that the gender wage gap is persistent and we need to address it”.

Finally, all three interviewees were asked what they personally believe are the best elements of ‘good’ public policy. Nagraj noted “clarity, flexibility, specificity, and accountability”, Somani noted “directly target[ing] a clear problem with a clear solution [and] some sort of oversight mechanism or board”, and Flynn posited the idea that “the law’s the law, but really it’s the implementation that is most important, and that implementation has to center those who are most impacted”.

Overall, the pitfalls of previous policy efforts towards closing the gender wage gap have been observed, analyzed, and discussed – both at a general level and in the context of

Chicago-centric initiatives – and it is therefore time to address the overarching question of what this information tells us about next-step actions. The ineffective nature of previous policies has been concluded. However, this information is relatively ineffective without taking it one step further and postulating how future policymakers can circumvent these inefficiencies in later equitable pay policies.

## **IX. Policy Recommendations and Discussion**

It is monumental to note the importance of intersectionality within policy implementation in the challenge to achieve equal pay practices: through statistics, figures, and accompanying texts, it becomes clear that the gender wage gap is not the result of one singular cause. A plethora of factors, such as childcare, maternity leave, occupational segregation, education opportunities, inherent employer biases, and many others remain modern-day inhibitors to equitable workplace compensation practices.

Particularly prevalent in the literature is the importance of childcare options to women pursuing roles in upper management – and therefore higher paying – positions. The Michigan Journal of Public Affairs notes that “countries with universal child care options, such as Norway, Canada, and Sweden, also have high rates of women’s labor force participation—and higher rates for mothers compared to the U.S... If the U.S. similarly increased mothers’ attachment to the workforce, our economy would grow by \$1.6 trillion” (Lyons, 2020, p.1). This trend persists within the United States as well – Megan Leonhardt points out that “in states that offer benefits like paid leave and child care, the gender pay gap is smaller, on average, and women have a slightly higher labor participation” (Leonhardt, 2021, p.1). Intuitively, this makes sense: mothers are typically perceived as their childrens’ primary caretakers rather than fathers, so with the postulation that women will leave the workforce upon having children and potentially return

later at a commensurate or even lower level than when they left, hiring practices shift accordingly. Increased options for childcare – especially in the modern day where typically both parents have to work full-time in order to provide for their families – will undoubtedly contribute towards a decrease in the gender wage gap, as noted in studies inside and outside of the United States. The Urban Institute sums this up well: “on average, women who have children forfeit 15 percent of their earnings to provide family care, which costs them \$295,000 in lost wages... over a lifetime. Unless affordable paid child... options become widespread, parity in earnings between women and men will be difficult to achieve” (Johnson et al., 2023, p.1).

One question remains of why previous initiatives have failed in their efforts to resolve the gender wage gap and compensation disparities per sex. The primary element in question here likely calls back to Hess’s notion of symbolic policy reform, as introduced in the literature review. The main initiatives brought to light in this analysis included those that prohibited employers from inquiring about salary history, established pay equity cabinets of some sort, or city-wide executive orders prohibiting sex-based discrimination. One thing to keep in mind with all of these policy initiatives is that they all encompass relatively grandiose claims – from establishing new cabinets in state-level government to publicly announcing the detrimental effects of sex-based discrimination, all of these policies are certainly at least in part focused on denouncing the gender wage gap to the public eye. That is, the government figure in question undoubtedly has a vested interest in showing their disdain for sex-based discrimination in compensation practices, and by passing a bill or establishing a cabinet that emphasizes this viewpoint, they are able to demonstrate that they are dedicated towards the cause.

As Hess notes, “reform essentially becomes a tool that legitimizes the performance of [organizations]. By embracing reform, policymakers recognize public dissatisfaction with

[organizational] performance and promise that improvement is around the corner” (Hess, 1999, p.5). These promises and recognitions are key parts of a government official’s role – if a mayor does not promise change in the face of discriminatory practices, their chances at reelection become slim to none. However, if a mayor focuses the majority of their time and efforts on one initiative that they feel is particularly important, they risk failures in other areas of their jurisdiction and therefore again risk their chances at reelection. These initiatives require some forethought – Hess further notes that “members of... boards seen as irresponsible can face harsh political consequences. Consequently, board members use reform to demonstrate their unity and competence, and this perception of unity helps to protect the reputations and political prospects of board members” (Hess, 1999, p.68). It therefore stands that, to any reasonable government official, their best chances of success come from legislations and policy initiatives which promise change, but do not require an abundance of time, resources, or efforts. Thus arises the policies which have been discussed throughout this piece: equity cabinets and salary history inquiry bans and the like. These initiatives are beneficial in theory, and despite their long lasting failure to actually resolve the issue at hand, they continue to be implemented at high levels of publicity and acclaim – precisely because they offer the alluring *appearance* of change at low levels of exertion.

Each city in question was careful to spread public communications and awareness about their respective initiatives. Official statements were crafted, press conferences were held, and interviews for local and national newspapers were given. The continuous process of messaging from officials of each of these cities further indicate the symbolic nature and intent of these initiatives – while perhaps there may have been good intentions at some point, it inevitably

became such that publicity and press likely dominated the goals of these efforts more so than their original equity-based intentions.

Recommendations have been carefully drawn from interviews and previous analyses for next best steps for the City of Chicago to follow to achieve equitable compensation practices. Additionally, as noted above, it is crucial to attempt to introduce policy changes which may seem (and certainly can be) difficult to implement, but hold new and possibly durable changes. These recommendations stem from the historical initiatives taken in sister cities – taking into account both successes and shortcomings seen within this realm. However, they primarily derive from the linear regressions demonstrating that initiatives in the past few years have proven to be relatively ineffective. The gender wage gap is a multidimensional issue that cannot have one concrete solution, but could be further combated with more ‘extreme’ or unorthodox methods. How, then, can one attempt to close the gender wage gap, which does not have one singular cause, persists as women progress in their careers, and has no simple solution? The following list exhibits recommended policy actions, both for the Mayor’s Office and for Federal consideration in order to plausibly take effect:

- 1) Reform the education and/or workforce systems to minimize working parents from sacrificing time with either their child or their career for the purpose of the other.
  - a) Implement paid paternity leave in addition to paid maternity leave to encourage both sexes to take a commensurate role in parenting and professional work.
  - b) Reform either the education system or the workplace system to end earlier in the day to ensure that working parents can complete their professional schedules and still take care of their children.



- c) Reform the education system to tackle systematic biases pertaining to gender roles and stereotypes – implementing courses at elementary school ages to encourage leadership and domestic development for children of all genders.
- 2) Implement gender-blind employment practices, both internally and externally, for new hires and for promotions.
- 3) Fundamentally change the availability and quality of government-sponsored childcare to allow for safe, reliable and affordable childcare options for working parents.
  - a) Though ideally, external childcare would not be a frequently needed resource with the reformation of the education and workplace systems and timelines, increasing parents' confidence in available childcare options would likely contribute to a decrease in parents taking time off from work for childcare reasons.
- 4) Create supporting policies with feasible and actionable next steps to begin the process of closing the wage gap.
  - a) Incorporate intersectional solutions to the complex issue of the gender wage gap (rather than focusing on individual factors in isolation). For example, adding the task of reforming education and workplace systems onto established equity cabinets, and considering all socioeconomic, cultural, racial, and other discrepancies in these decisions.
  - b) Supporting policies must be expansive enough to be interdisciplinary but narrow enough to ensure feasibility in the short- and long-term. For instance, increasing the quality of government-sponsored childcare could happen in a relatively short-term period if realistic expectations and goals are set (such as ensuring safe

and educational settings for children rather than promising private-school level montessori classes.

It is important to note that these policy recommendations are radical and require more effort than previously implemented bills. The salary transparency initiatives and pay equity cabinet establishments observed in the linear regression between cities did not take long to implement or pass, but, as noted here, failed to produce significant results in the direction which they were intended. However, current policies could be given a leg up through the execution of these types of add-on policies: for example, by changing the roles of a pay equity cabinet to include responsibilities such as reforming the education system, governments could begin to see actionable change as a result of policy-based initiatives. While promising, however, these efforts are far-fetched, radical, and would require abundantly more time and resources to put into action – and even more consensus from oft-belligerent party representatives on an undoubtedly contentious initiative.

These efforts could also very well prove to not make a difference at all. No study has been conducted to evaluate the impacts of these radical policy shifts, simply because they have never taken place. While there is plenty of evidence to support the underlying notion that current initiatives have failed to result in significant change, no evidence exists to support the idea that radical changes could produce meaningful reductions in the gender pay gap. Regardless, something must be done, and it is evident that past policies have not worked – therefore, something more drastic is required in order to accelerate the pace of women's equality in their professional pursuits.

While EO 2023:1 is a start to the fight against gender-based pay discrepancies in the workplace, it is simply a stepping stone to achieving equity. The current mandate of bi-annual audits for pay transparency is valuable, but should soon be accompanied by tools for further analysis and action for next steps. While somewhat vague, these policy recommendations must be considered as alternatives to previously established policies in order to accelerate the closing of the gender wage gap over the near future. As Flynn remarks, “the pay equity audit EO is a great first step for the City of Chicago to walk the walk,... but [we] actually have to do the work now to bring it to life”. Without these add-on policies, Chicago risks perpetuating the wage gap for future generations to come.

## **X. Conclusion**

Between St. Louis’s Ordinance #15-09, NYC’s EO 84, and historical examples of attempts to tackle the persistent gender wage gap in public workspaces, Chicago has historical information and examples to go off of in terms of determining next steps. However, the highlighted information demonstrates that past initiatives have failed to significantly impact the closing of the gender wage gap. EO 2023:1 has acted as a stepping-stone policy with its mandate of bi-annual audits of compensation information amongst City of Chicago employees sectioned by race, gender, and other categories of consequence. Without calling for any actual analysis of this data within EO 2023:1 itself, the City of Chicago has set itself up to be in an advantageous position regarding next steps: with the scrutiny of external information, best practice policies still have the chance to be determined and implemented in next-step initiatives. Similar sister city policies have posited unique and essential information on how these next steps should be planned and carried out.

The successes in NYC's implementation process – regardless of its tangible outcomes – shows the demonstrated political power of acknowledging coupling, structural looseness, incrementalism (stacking policies atop of each other), intersectionality, and achievability of proposed outcomes. Each of these concepts illustrates the idea that Chicago should not only be considering follow-up policies intending to further EO 2023:1 rather than immediately solving the issue of the gender wage gap at large, but also should be considering how governmental agencies can and should work alongside each other to maintain a defined balance between structure and discretion.

Similarly, the apparent shortcomings of St. Louis's initiative – despite its initial appearance as being an effective and resultant policy – hold valuable insight into prospective political procedures which Chicago should take into account when drafting next-step actions. Some of these concepts included emphasizing widespread and overarching policy rather than intentional policy with results, ignoring the bureaucratic structure of governmental entities, and unattainable and unrealistic goal-setting. Each of these concepts exemplifies reasons why the City of Chicago should consider drafting follow-up policies tackling specific areas of issue at a time, actions with historical results of benefits rather than what appears to be the most 'influential,' accounting for the governmental structure which does not emphasize individuality in organizations, and crafting actions to reach smaller and specific goals for sustainable long-term systemic benefits. Bureaucracy plays more than one role here – in his interview, Nagraj noted that one "eye-opening aspect" of his GBV policy internship "was experiencing just how slow bureaucracy was at actually getting anything done," which is certainly an important factor to note when drafting policies for time-sensitive issues.

The linear regression analysis section highlights the ineffectiveness of past policy initiatives. The policy recommendations included in the previous section considered this analysis output, and thereby implemented somewhat more radical policies in efforts towards gender pay parity. These findings demonstrate that while efforts have been taken, they have produced insignificant results and need to be altered as future initiatives take place. Again, while no literature or studies exist to definitively prove the efficacy of these specific recommendations, they are a step in the right direction of at least testing new methods of policy making to accelerate the closing of the persistent gender wage gap.

While these policy recommendations are the results of comprehensive analysis, there is always room for further analysis, counter-arguments, policy extensions, and other areas of change. With the mayor's noted goal being "to utilize the executive authority vested in [her] office to address the issue of gender-based and racial wage gaps and consequent issues as soon as possible," efforts can and must be made to further the goal of achieving gender pay equity in Chicago's public and private sectors (Lightfoot, 2023, p.2). This goal must be approached intentionally and with small steps: the journey to an equitable future is a trek, not a jump, and policy can only work if it reflects this inherent notion of the human brain, evolution, and progress.

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## XII. Appendix

### Introduction: Figures 1 and 2

Median weekly earnings by sex and educational attainment

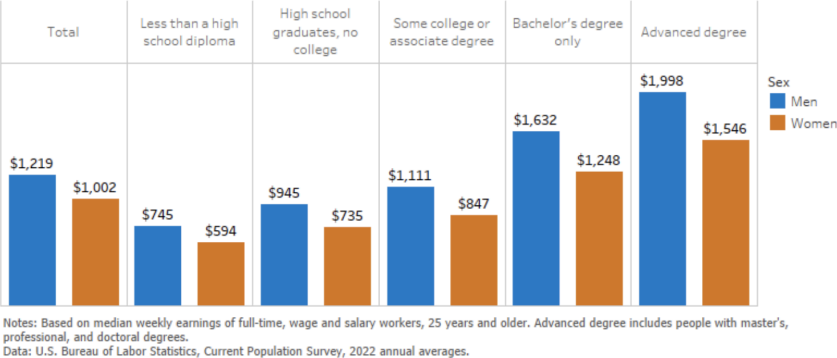


Figure 1: Women’s Wage Gap Across Educational Attainment Levels, 2022.

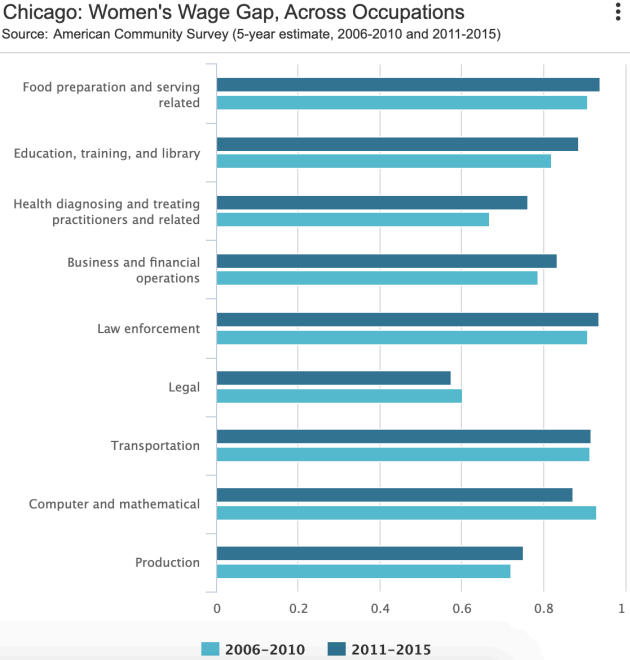


Figure 2: Women’s Wage Gap Across Occupations, 2006-2011; 2011-2015.

### Background: Figure 3 & Key Actors

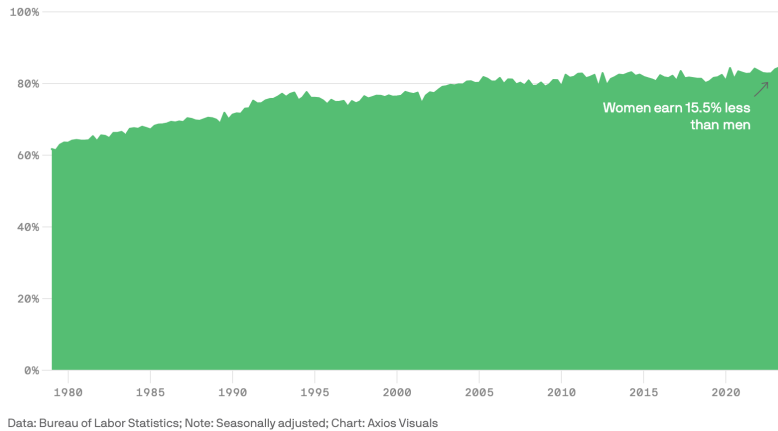


Figure 3: Median weekly earnings of full-time workers; Q1 1979 to Q2 2023

### *Key Individual & Organizational Actors*

The writing process, signing, and implementation of EO 2023:1 required the conjunctive collaboration of several key actors and organizations within the government, collateral institutions, data-based sources, and City of Chicago workers themselves. Understanding each of these relevant people and groups will provide crucial background insight into the Chicago-specific nature of this EO.

#### a. State and Local Government Actors

##### *Lori Lightfoot*

Former mayor Lori Lightfoot officially signed EO 2023:1 “in recognition of Women’s History Month and of Equal Pay Day” (Lightfoot, 2023, 0:06-0:12). Lightfoot holds the ability to veto proposed ordinances, appoint department heads according to values and contributions, and has a strong influence on policy-making processes (MRSC, 2023, p.1). In her words, “this new pay equity audit seeks to better understand what, if any, discrepancies exist within Chicago’s workforce related to gender, race, and ethnicity” (Lightfoot, 2023, 2:53-3:03). With her name on

this EO, Lightfoot holds a particular stake in its success as an indicator of her own political career and contributions.

*City Agencies/Employers: Commissioner of Human Resources, Executive Director of Office of Budget Management, & Commissioner of Assets and Information Services*

While these are three separate entities, for the purpose of EO 2023:1 their roles are identical. Each of these agencies is responsible for the development and publication of the aforementioned biannual audit. The acknowledgment of gender pay discrepancies in public employment in the City of Chicago is dependent upon these audits, and therefore the power vested in these three sectors is monumental to achieving a more equitable future. Each of these agencies has the responsibility to ensure that the standards laid out in detail by this EO (and expected by the Mayor’s office at large) are internally met and consistent with standardized guidelines.

b. External Institutions/Organizations

*Women Employed*

Women Employed is a non-profit organization with a mission “to improve the economic status of women and remove barriers to economic equity” (Women Employed, 2023). Women Employed played a critical role in the generative process of implementing EO 2023:1, closely working in tandem with the City of Chicago’s GBV Task Force to create a passable yet effective policy implementation. In previous similar efforts, Women Employed worked as a lead partner with “the Illinois Department of Labor (IDOL)... on the FARE Grant... to educate women in Illinois about their pay equity and pay transparency rights” (Watkins-Asiyanbi & Ellens, 2022, p.3).

*FUTURES Without Violence*

FUTURES Without Violence is a health and social justice nonprofit with the mission to produce “groundbreaking programs, policies, and campaigns that empower individuals and organizations working to end violence against women” (FUTURES Without Violence, 2023). Highly focused on domestic and workplace violent victimization, FUTURES worked closely with the GBV Task Force on the development process of EO 2023:1. FUTURES is well-known for its past endeavors and partnerships which have “reshape[d] federal workforce development laws and policies so they advance gender equity and gender-based violence” (Soler, 2022, p.11).

#### *Chicago Federation of Labor*

The Chicago Federation of Labor (CFL) is an umbrella organization for unions in Chicago (specifically representing Cook County) with approximately 320 affiliated member unions. Particularly prominent is CFL’s goal of achieving “economic, social, and racial justice for all working people” (Chicago Federation of Labor, 2023). Consequently, by representing women employed in in public sectors in the Chicago, CFL has a significant interest in the success of EO 2023:1 as a correlation to its interest in the furtherance of equitable compensation practices in Chicago.

#### c. City Workers/Employees

##### *Darci Flynn*

Darci Flynn is the Director of the GBV Task Force Committee and therefore oversaw the creation and planned implementation of EO 2023:1. By leading strategic planning initiatives for the success of the Chicago’s women (and women in the workforce), Flynn holds a vested interest in the success of this initiative and the standardized regulation of its mandates to see a more equitable compensation strategy for Chicago City employees in years to come.

##### *Public Chicago Employees*

The public employees being impacted by this EO and other related policy interventions are perhaps the most important group to consider in the mix of all of this analysis. Women and people of color employed in public sector jobs in the City of Chicago hold arguably the largest stake in the implementation, regulation, and success of EO 2023:1. The diminishment of the gender wage gap from its currently reported rate of occurrence is critical to this group. If women and women of color in public sector employment start to see more equitable compensation practices as a result of EO 2023:1, the development of further policies and analysis can be critical to maintaining these patterns and benefiting the public at large.

### Literature Review: Arguments by Prolific Political Scientists

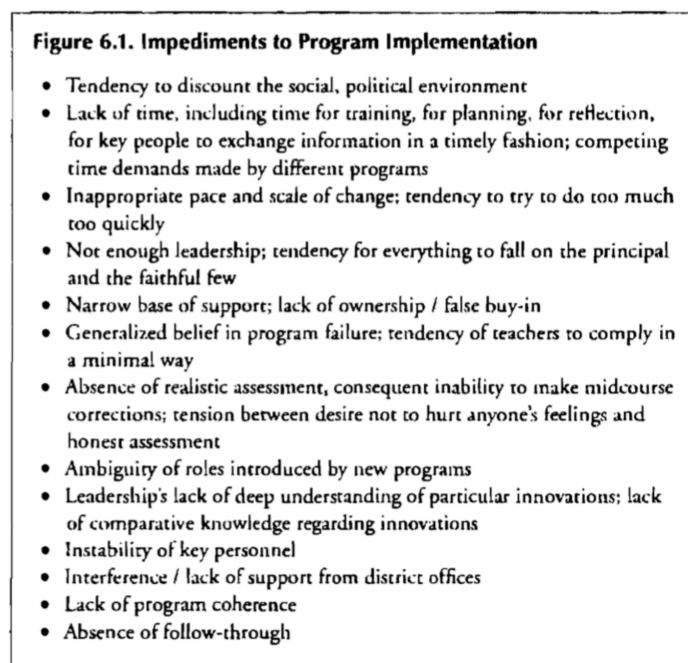


Figure 4: Impediments to program implementation as outlined by Charles Payne

The figure above from Payne sufficiently summarizes the arguments made by prolific figures in this field which have been discussed throughout the latter third of this literature review.



Results & Analysis:

year	state	nc	gwg	policy	lead_policy	lag1_policy	lag2_policy
2010	AK	0	66.13	0	0		
2011	AK	0	63.45	0	0	0	
2012	AK	0	63.72	0	0	0	0
2013	AK	0	65.6	0	0	0	0
2014	AK	0	68.75	0	0	0	0
2015	AK	0	68.68	0	0	0	0
2016	AK	1	71.86	0	1	0	0
2017	AK	1	75.24	1	1	0	0
2018	AK	1	75.59	1	1	1	0
2019	AK	1	77.88	1	1	1	1
2020	AK	1	78.78	1	1	1	1
2021	AK	1	80.23	1	1	1	1
2022	AK	1	84.14	1		1	1

Figure 5: Collected and calculated data for Alaska (state) gender wage gap trends and policy implementation times. gwg is the percentage of women's earnings to men's earnings. A 0 in the policy variable indicates that no policy had yet been passed, and a 1 indicates that a policy had been passed.

```
. xi:areg gwg policy i.year, a(state) cluster(state)
i.year      _lyear_2010-2022 (naturally coded; _lyear_2010 omitted)

Linear regression, absorbing indicators      Number of obs   = 623
Absorbed variable: state                   No. of categories = 48
F(13, 47)                                 = 35.29
Prob > F                                   = 0.0000
R-squared                                  = 0.9396
Adj R-squared                              = 0.9332
Root MSE                                   = 1.9094

(Std. err. adjusted for 48 clusters in state)

-----+-----
|               Robust
|  gwg | Coefficient  std. err.   t   P>|t|   [95% conf. interval]
-----+-----
policy | .3143795  .3418886   0.92  0.363  -.3734117  1.002171
_lyear_2011 | 1.23657  .239122   5.17  0.000  .7555187  1.717621
_lyear_2012 | 1.428262  .2399709   5.95  0.000  .9455031  1.911021
_lyear_2013 | 2.563679  .2784407   9.21  0.000  2.003528  3.123829
_lyear_2014 | 3.570397  .2872035  12.43  0.000  2.992618  4.148176
_lyear_2015 | 3.885567  .3369151  11.53  0.000  3.207781  4.563353
_lyear_2016 | 4.356008  .3361668  12.96  0.000  3.679728  5.032289
_lyear_2017 | 5.096386  .3883411  13.12  0.000  4.315145  5.877627
_lyear_2018 | 5.082322  .3795605  13.39  0.000  4.318745  5.845899
_lyear_2019 | 5.81615   .3868135  15.04  0.000  5.037981  6.594318
_lyear_2020 | 6.261319  .4119563  15.20  0.000  5.43257   7.090069
_lyear_2021 | 6.258103  .4421488  14.15  0.000  5.368614  7.147591
_lyear_2022 | 8.624495  .7597395  11.35  0.000  7.096097  10.15289
_cons | 67.56143  .2811059  240.34  0.000  66.99591  68.12694
-----+-----
```

Figure 6: State-wide linear regression results.

```

Linear regression, absorbing indicators      Number of obs = 527
Absorbed variable: state                  No. of categories = 48
                                          F(13, 47) = 27.52
                                          Prob > F = 0.0000
                                          R-squared = 0.9393
                                          Adj R-squared = 0.9315
                                          Root MSE = 1.9088

(Std. err. adjusted for 48 clusters in state)
-----
|               Robust
| gwg | Coefficient std. err.  t  P>|t|  [95% conf. interval]
-----+-----
policy | .143019 .3349947  0.43  0.671  -5309033 .8169414
lag1_policy | -.0098522 .2616644  -0.04  0.970  -5362532 .5165488
lag2_policy | .533537 .3742294  1.43  0.161  -2193154 1.286389
_year_2011 | 0 (omitted)
_year_2012 | -6.996885 .7264076  -9.63  0.000  -8.458229 -5.535542
_year_2013 | -5.796168 .7292701  -7.95  0.000  -7.26327 -4.329066
_year_2014 | -4.7974 .7446592  -6.44  0.000  -6.295461 -3.299339
_year_2015 | -4.46356 .7718636  -5.78  0.000  -6.016349 -2.91077
_year_2016 | -4.029413 .7085599  -5.69  0.000  -5.454852 -2.603975
_year_2017 | -3.326352 .6417634  -5.18  0.000  -4.617413 -2.03529
_year_2018 | -3.33306 .6364222  -5.24  0.000  -4.613376 -2.052744
_year_2019 | -2.631747 .5868972  -4.48  0.000  -3.812432 -1.451062
_year_2020 | -2.256419 .5915937  -3.81  0.000  -3.446552 -1.066286
_year_2021 | -2.321731 .5814233  -3.99  0.000  -3.491404 -1.152058
_year_2022 | 0 (omitted)
_cons | 75.8876 .6569845  115.51  0.000  74.56592 77.20928
-----

```

Figure 7: State-wide linear regression results taking 1 and 2 year lag effects into account.

Specificities of each bill in the city-level linear regression (with the exceptions of NYC, St. Louis, and Chicago, which have already been discussed) can be found below.

Houston’s Equal Rights Ordinance No. 2014-530 was passed in 2014 and amends chapters 2, 15, and 17 of the code of ordinances to prohibit “discrimination based on sex, race, color,... familial status, marital status,... sexual orientation, gender identity, or pregnancy” (Parker, 2014, p.1). This article is particularly in reference to employment and fair housing.

2015, as mentioned previously, saw the passing of St. Louis’ Ordinance No. 15-09.

San Francisco’s Compensation Audits, passed at the end of 2015 for 2016 implementation, established an Equal Pay Advisory Board and “requires certain contractors to file Equal Pay Reports annually with the City’s Human Rights Commission... to analyze and recommend how to collect wage gap data in a meaningful way while maintaining a minimal burden on contractors reporting the data” (San Francisco Equal Pay Advisory Board, 2015, p.4).

Philadelphia's Wage Equity Ordinance was passed in 2017 and prohibited "employers, employment agencies, or their agents to ask [prospective employees] about [their] current or prior salary history during the application or hiring process" (Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations, 2017, p.1). It is a part of the city's Fair Practices Ordinance attempting to mitigate inequitable compensation practices on the basis of sex.

Chicago passed an executive order in 2018 "prohibiting any city department from asking job applicants about their previous salary history" in an effort to close the gender wage gap (Emanuel, 2018, p.1). While not the EO in question originally, it serves as a close relative to that passed in Philadelphia and therefore should have similar results, in theory.

In 2019, Cincinnati passed Ordinance No. 83-2019, a salary history ban similar to those seen in Chicago and Philadelphia. In addition to this, they established a "Salary History implementation working group...whose purpose is to assist and advise Cincinnati employers on the impact and implementation of this ordinance" (Cranley, 2019, p.4).

In 2020, Detroit's mayor Mike Duggan established the Detroit Equity Council, which was "given the mission of eliminating barriers to equity in eight key areas of city government – human resources, procurement, land and development, entrepreneurship, housing, jobs, climate and criminal justice" (Duggan, 2020, p.1). Similar to NYC's established pay equity cabinet and San Francisco's equal pay advisory board, this was created in an attempt to ameliorate the gender wage gap in Detroit.

New York City, as mentioned previously, saw the implementation of Executive Order No. 84 and establishment of the pay equity cabinet.

Year	Policy_Implemented	GWG	City
2015	0	74.47	Cincinnati
2016	0	75.49	Cincinnati
2017	0	77.69	Cincinnati
2018	0	77.92	Cincinnati
2019	1	78.41	Cincinnati
2020	1	78.05	Cincinnati
2021	1	76.84	Cincinnati
2022	1	80.65	Cincinnati
2014	0	69.56	Detroit
2015	0	68.39	Detroit
2016	0	70.26	Detroit
2017	0	73.36	Detroit
2018	0	73.51	Detroit
2019	0	75.51	Detroit
2020	1	77.59	Detroit
2021	1	77.61	Detroit
2022	1	79.76	Detroit

Figure 8: Collected and calculated data for Cincinnati and Detroit (city) gender wage gap trends and policy implementation times. GWG is the percentage of women's earnings to men's earnings. A 0 in the Policy\_Implemented variable indicates that no policy had yet been passed, and a 1 indicates that a policy had been passed.

```
. xi:areg gwg policy i.year, a(city) cluster(city)
i.year      _Iyear_2014-2022 (naturally coded; _Iyear_2014 omitted)

Linear regression, absorbing indicators      Number of obs   =    72
Absorbed variable: city                   No. of categories =    8
                                           F(7, 7)         =    .
                                           Prob > F         =    .
                                           R-squared        = 0.8585
                                           Adj R-squared    = 0.8174
                                           Root MSE        = 1.9443

                                           (Std. err. adjusted for 8 clusters in city)
-----+-----
```

	gwg	Coefficient	Robust std. err.	t	P> t	[95% conf. interval]
policy_implemented		.5665225	.8111852	0.70	0.507	-1.351626 2.484671
_Iyear_2015		-.2283156	.5139798	-0.44	0.670	-1.443685 .9870536
_Iyear_2016		.7946191	.6733806	1.18	0.277	-.797673 2.386911
_Iyear_2017		1.687554	.4263975	3.96	0.005	.6792838 2.695824
_Iyear_2018		.2817402	.9794903	0.29	0.782	-2.034386 2.597867
_Iyear_2019		.505924	1.206551	0.42	0.688	-2.347115 3.358963
_Iyear_2020		.5713583	1.155507	0.49	0.636	-2.160981 3.303697
_Iyear_2021		.8155425	1.340913	0.61	0.562	-2.355213 3.986298
_Iyear_2022		1.639294	1.455741	1.13	0.297	-1.802987 5.081575
_cons		79.27793	.87445	90.66	0.000	77.21019 81.34568

```
-----+-----
```

Figure 9: City-wide linear regression results.